



Historical Highlights

v. 1, n. 4



Nov. 2012

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President's Message

by *Debra Bisel*, SCHS President

Looking over our website I am reminded of all that has transpired over the past months. My Goodness!!! The Ritchie Houses have been buzzing with activity, exactly what many of us had envisioned years ago when the John Ritchie House became available and we turned our covetous eyes to the Hale Ritchie home next door! With events ranging from the first Shawnee County Attic Sale to summer programs for students to the Shared Stories of the Civil War, there is rarely a day that something is not happening. Kudos to each of you!



As we look toward our annual meeting wrapping up 2012 and planning for a shiny new year, let us be reminded of why we exist and what we want our future to be.

When I was a history student at Washburn University, I was blessed with wonderful professors, each uniquely gifted and with such varied interests. I think of them often and how each contributed to my understanding and how I define my own mission in this world. Bill Wagnon, of course, has been involved in my life for so many years and it is because of Bill that I am president of the society today (yes, you all have him to blame). I think often of Gunnar Alksnis, Don Danker, Bill Cecil-Fronsman—all gone but whose dedication to history has made such an impact on countless people. I was a good student, mostly A's. But it was Ken Cott who nearly kept me from my degree with his horribly tough class on the history of Latin America. I took it three times before I passed it with a B. It was the toughest B I ever earned.

For one thing, I did not care about Latin America. I knew nothing of Latin America. I wasn't even sure what exactly constituted Latin America. Whatever it was, it certainly did not matter to me. While I am no scholar on the subject now, I gained a most valuable insight and it is one that Ken stressed passionately: ALL history is all OUR

—continued on p. 2

President's Message, cont.

history. In studying Latin America I found individuals whose struggles touched me; I sympathized with their plights. There were universal themes.

This understanding is so relevant today and we struggle to interpret America's past for generations of people who are not among the Daughters of the American Revolution nor are they descendants of the Mayflower's passengers. America's doors have been open to the world. Some of us have ancestors who have been in this country for more than ten generations. Others have only recently arrived. What do we care of their past and why does our past matter to them? Because, "all history is all our history."

The world becomes smaller and more intimate by the minute, allowing us access to more and more information, and allowing us increasingly to understand how inter-connected we all are. Presenting this is a challenge to all historic sites and organizations. Our membership chair, Martie Rison, started a group on Facebook called "Topeka History Geeks." It has nearly 2,000 members.

That is two thousand people who care about the history of Topeka and Shawnee County. What are they interested in? Themselves mostly, like each of us. I am interested in the Civil War because I have ancestors in the Civil War. Many of those history geeks are interested in neighborhoods, schools, drive-ins—because those places live in their memories, or in the memories of their parents. We must acknowledge that "all history is all our history" and to tap into the interests of a varied group of citizens if we are to remain relevant as an organization.

We have a tremendous foundation; we have the roots, the trunk, and now we are branching out. The myriad activities of the past year are only the beginning. Let us continue to think of innovative ways to involve our community, all our community, in all our shared history.

Have an historic new year!



Civil War Roundtable of Eastern Kansas

The Civil War Roundtable of Eastern Kansas is now using the Hale Ritchie House as its regular meeting place. The group meets the last Thursday of each month, September through May, at 6:30 p.m.

The public is invited and membership costs only \$15 and goes to support the expenses of speakers.

All topics and aspects of the Civil War are discussed. Past presenters include Lincoln scholar Michael Burlingame, as well as local historians Bill McFarland and Herschel and Jacque Stroud. Contact **Tim Rues** for more information: consthall@kshs.org

Whereas the Kansas Capitol interior is now free of fake wallboard walls, looks great, and is open for viewing and enjoying, the **dome tour** will *not* re-open for tours until sometime in 2014...so enjoy the newly restored interior, but be prepared for a possible delay of up to two years before planning any climbs atop the dome of our glorious State Capitol.



Topeka Community Cycle Project

The Topeka Community Cycle Project stopped by on their October 6, 2012, visits of Central Topeka historical sites, arriving about 1:30 p.m. on their Saturday ride. The purpose of the ride was to "introduce folks to the sites and give them some background on the Underground Railroad."



Educational Opportunities

by *Melinda Abitz*, Education Program Developer

Four school field trips have been planned so far for this school year. These field trips are featuring our “Rediscover Freedoms Pathway” together with our partners, the Kansas Capitol and the Brown v. Board Historic Site. This theme explores a Topeka Community that experienced the enduring struggle for freedom.

The Ritchie House saw 65 visitors in the month of September. The doors of the Cox Communications Heritage Center were open to family reunions, visiting teachers from other cities, vacationers, people coming for the first of a series of three “Focus on Historic Preservation in Shawnee County” series programs, and the first of four “Shared Stories of the Civil War Reader’s Theatre” project. They all seem to have something in common; an interest in our local history.

Our visitors that take the tour all have interesting stories of their own. One visitor told of wishing she would have paid more attention in her high school history classes. That’s when she decided that “today was the day” that she was going to check out the Historic Ritchie House. It was really a pleasure to see her eyes light up with amazement and pride as she learned a little more about the Ritchies and our city.

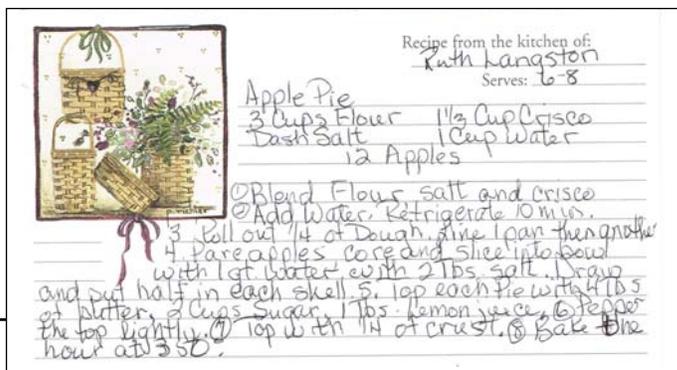
Darryl and Nancy Warren, of Topeka, came to visit us in August. When walking through the Ritchie House, Nancy was reminded of a friend and coworker of hers from the 1970s. Her friend was Ruth Langston who lived in a “soddie” in central Kansas with her family in the 1930s. Ruth explained that money was very tight and their meals sometimes had to get a little “creative.”

She spoke of an **apple pie** made with pepper instead of cinnamon, which they didn’t have. Nancy returned recently with the recipe to share. I couldn’t wait to try it out that same night and it was delicious!! The recipe is provided here:

Apple Pie – makes 2 pies

3 cups flour	1 cup of water
1 1/3 cups Crisco	12 apples
Dash salt	2 cups of sugar

1. Blend flour, salt, and Crisco (use a fork until mixture is pea-sized)
2. Add water and refrigerate 10 minutes
3. Roll out ¼ of dough. Line 2 pie pans
4. Pare and core apples and slice into big bowl with 1 quart of water with 2 Tbs. salt. Drain (don’t rinse) and put half in each pie shell and top each pie with 4 Tbs. of butter.
5. Add 1 cup of sugar and ½ Tbs. lemon juice to each of the two pies. Add a sprinkle of pepper to each pie.
6. Add the top crusts (make slits in top crust) and bake 1 hour at 350°.



More than 600 attended the October 5, 2012, “Bare Bones” Open House, sponsored by



Friends of the **Free State Capitol Inc.**, and commemorating the 157th anniversary of the **Topeka Constitutional Convention** and **Free State Constitution**. The open house was held in conjunction with October’s First Friday Art Walk, inviting entry into the partially restored Free State Capitol building, 429 S. Kansas Avenue.

← Photo, left: Stepping back in time at Constitution Hall with “**James Lane**” (**Tim Rues**), **Claricia Mize** (GGG-Granddaughter of William Weymouth, who built the hall), Kansas senator **Laura Kelly** and **William “Rex” Patty** (GGrandnephew of Lot Pugh Patty, who served in the first territorial legislature in January/February, 1856).

Distinguished Local Preservation Projects

All programs are scheduled for Sunday afternoons at the Cox Communications Heritage Education Center, 1118 SE Madison, Topeka, at 2 p.m.

- **September 16:** Elizabeth Taylor spoke about **The Woodward** block on Fillmore.
- **October 21:** Barb Quaney spoke about **JQ Properties** in Old Town area, near Topeka High School.
- **November 18:** Nova Cottrell will discuss the **Charles Curtis House Museum** on Topeka Boulevard.

This series is managed by Robin Shrimplin, who is also planning a series for Spring, 2013. Call Robin, (785) 670-2060, or the Ritchie House (785) 234-6097 with questions, or to volunteer as a 2013 presenter.

Nov. 18: Nova Cottrell
Charles Curtis House Museum



Shared Stories of the Civil War

In keeping with the sesquicentennial commemoration of the Civil War, SCHS offered a fall series of **Shared Stories of the Civil War Readers Theatre**.

- **September 30:** **Rhetoric of the Civil War Press** directed by Ken Kerle and narrated by Ron Harbaugh.
- **October 7:** **Wyandotte Constitutional Convention, 1859** directed by Mary Feighny and narrated by Ron Harbaugh.
- **October 14:** **The Cherokee Nation in the Civil War** directed by Margaret Wood and narrated by Ron Harbaugh.
- **October 28:** **Skirmish at Island Mound (October 27, 1862)** directed by David Tangeman and narrated by Ron Harbaugh.

These scripts were provided by the **Kansas Humanities Committee** in partnership with **Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area**, composed by experts in the field. Each was created from historical documents from the 1850s and 1860s. A moderator led discussions after each performance.

A similar series on Bleeding Kansas was produced in Spring, 2012. Further such events are planned for 2013.

"Focus on Historic Preservation in Shawnee County" Series
 SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2012
 2:00 - 4:00 PM
 1118 SE Madison - Topeka
THE WOODWARD INNS
 Presented by Elizabeth Taylor (Owner & Proprietress)
 Ms. Taylor's "The Woodward," much more than a bed and breakfast, was the start of a major improvement to the Holiday Park Area in Topeka. Restorations now include 1283 Fillmore, 1257 Fillmore, 1252 Fillmore, 1248 Fillmore, 1099 Huntoon and 1268 Western in Topeka.
 Join us and learn about historic preservation happening in Topeka and Shawnee County.
FREE - PUBLIC WELCOME

For More Information Contact
Sponsored by the Shawnee County Historical Society

"Focus on Historic Preservation in Shawnee County" Series
 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2012
 2:00 - 4:00 PM
 1118 SE Madison - Topeka
JQ HISTORIC PROPERTIES
 Presented by Barb Quaney (Owner)
 What began with the restoration in 2001 of the Halsey House (821 Western) in the Historic Old Town Neighborhood has led to a revival of surrounding homes in the neighborhood. JQ Historic Properties offers unique historic apartments and homes for lease within the beautiful Historic Old Town Neighborhood here in Topeka.
 Join us and learn about historic preservation happening in Topeka and Shawnee County.
FREE - PUBLIC WELCOME

For More Information Contact Robin Shrimplin at (785) 670-2060
Sponsored by the Shawnee County Historical Society & Washburn University History Department

Enduring Struggle For Freedom

All programs are scheduled for Sunday afternoons in November, 2012, at the Cox Communications Heritage Education Center, 1118 SE Madison, Topeka, at 2 p.m.

- **November 4:** **Dr. Walt Menninger**, president of the Menninger Foundation, will give a talk on the pioneering role of the Menninger family and associates in fostering greater compassion and support for the mentally ill, freeing them from isolation and disrepute.
- **November 11:** **Thom Rosenblum**, National Park Service historian at the **Brown v. Board NHS**, will make a presentation on Kansas and Topeka area Free Thinkers, posing the question of whether they were visionaries or were demented.
- **November 25:** **Dr. Bill Wagnon**, emeritus Professor of History at Washburn, will analyze a local issue prompted by J. B. Billard and his son, Phillip, over **daily compulsory Bible reading** to begin the school day in Topeka public schools.

These talks are free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Bill Wagnon (785) 230-6481 or the SCHS at (785) 234-6097.

Bulletins — a reminder

Eighty-five SCHS Bulletins were published between 1946 and 2011. Some are still available for sale. Prices vary between \$5 and \$30 per item, and include the cost of postage.

Visit <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/history/bulletins.html> to see a listing of past Bulletins.

SCHS Biography: Susannah Weymouth, Part II

A Topeka Pioneer

by Douglass Wallace, SCHS Board Member

Fom a manuscript ¹ by one of Topeka's first settlers, Mrs. Weymouth continues her account of living in the new town in the Bleeding Kansas era—

Our bed was placed in the southwest corner of the room, and our stove in the northwest corner. Here, November 20, 1855, my baby, William H. Weymouth, Jr., was born. Dr. Martin was attending physician, and the second Mrs. E.C.K. Garvey was nurse. She was our neighbor and kindly offered her services. I had also secured the help of a little girl of 16, from Lawrence, whose name I cannot remember. My child was the first one born in Topeka, whose parents remained as residents. He died in September, 1880. He was never robust, and I have often thought that the exposure to which he was subjected on the day of his birth and the winter succeeding, had much to do with undermining his health.

When the baby was five days old, Mr. Weymouth came in and stood at the bedside looking at me. I guessed what was going on his mind, for I had heard that the Topeka men had been requested to come to Lawrence to take part in protecting that town during the Wakarusa war. I asked him if he wanted to go. He said that if it were not for me and the baby, he would like to, but that under the circumstances he thought he had better remain. I told him to go ahead, that god would take care of us if we did what was right. He went and remained away seventeen days. During all this time we heard nothing from each other. As soon as I was well enough, Mrs. Garvey took me into her house and kept me until his return.

My bedstead was home made, and consisted of two poles perhaps six feet high, connected by a pole for the support of the front of the bed, and also two rough poles supported by the wall at the other end. Slats were nailed across. Upon this I used a hay tick [mattress]. I had bought and made some comforters, my mother refusing to fit me out, thinking by so doing to prevent my coming into the wilderness. I hung a large double shawl on the posts about the bed for a curtain to keep out the cold, and to secure greater privacy, and still recall the little mice that ran around on the border, gnawing the

fringe. I had divided my room in half, from north to south, by a muslin curtain. The panel door in the northeast corner...my husband hewed and made out of native walnut....

After describing her cabin², particularly its flooring and siding, she tells about food and water:

Our water was brought from the river in a barrel on a drag until the spring of 1855, when my husband and the Rev. Mr. [David] Seagraves, an old Baptist minister, sunk a well, which still remains on the grounds of the Topeka club³ in the southwest corner of the parking, it never having been filled up. It cost them about \$100.00 a piece. In September, 1860, we dug the well at our present home. The neighbors said we would never get water here on the high ground, but we struck it at twenty-one feet. There has always been plenty of it and of a very good quality....

Milk was a very scarce article when we first came in 1855. Once in a while I used to run over to Mrs. Anthony A. Ward's for milk and butter.⁴ Mr. Peter Wendell⁵ ...kept a cow, and I used to go across there and get a little milk for my coffee. In 1856 Mr. Wendell brought us some chickens from his old home in Missouri. He opened a baker shop that year. He also kept other provisions, potatoes, etc. In June, 1855, we purchased a cow for ourselves of Mr. Joseph Young, who was driving a herd of cattle west, for sale in California, I think. He had taken droves of cattle overland before...

In the spring of 1855, during my absence one day, two men camped a few miles south of our cabin, near the ravine, about where the Harrison school now is.⁶ One of them came to the house for something and I refused to let him have it. After my husband's return he came again for some milk, and mentioned to him that I



**Susannah
Harwood Weymouth**

Susannah Weymouth, cont.

was evidently afraid of them. He came in and sat down, and my husband introduced him to me as Martin G. Conway.⁷ I passed some cookies to him in a basin. He helped himself and appeared to be amused at something which I did not comprehend. Afterwards I found that the tin wash basin, in which the cookies were held, had attracted his attention. Being out of pans of any kind, I had sent to Kansas City for a supply, but finding none for sale, my husband brought back three tin basins with handles. I used one of them for milk, one for bread, and one for cookies, crullers, etc....

I used to become very tired of the food, there being little variety. We seldom had fresh meat. Mr. Weymouth would sometimes shoot a duck at the river, and perhaps once in six or eight weeks some one killed a beef. In the summer we could hang fresh meat on the north side of the house, and it would dry without spoiling. The flies would not seem to bother it. When we could get the staples, there was cornmeal, flour, ham, and bacon, molasses, sugar, coffee, dried apples, dried peaches, with the skins on, and for shortening, generally tallow if anything. Once in a great while we could get a little lard. Butter and eggs were difficult to obtain. At times in 1856 we had to grind our corn in coffee mills.

Before our first well was dug I suffered a great deal for drinking water. In the summer time the water from the river was roily⁸ and warm. In the winter time it froze in the bucket. One day in the summer of 1855 I was so thirsty for a fresh drink of water that Mr. Weymouth said he would get it for me. He walked out west of town to Colonel Horne's place⁹...and brought water from a spring. It was warm by the time he reached home, greatly to my disappointment. Once or twice in the year 1856 the men collected a train of a half dozen wagons and went to Kansas City for provisions, with an escort, as a single team going down was sure to be overhauled on the road and the provisions confiscated, while the driver was scarcely sure of his life.

I used to get some articles of food from the Indians. They would bring in dried beans and squaw corn, apparently boiled on the cob and afterward cut off and dried. They brought hazel nuts, for which they asked ten cents a quart, and strawberries at the same price, but they were so messy that I never bought any. They also brought other wild fruit, but I preferred to gather my own. There was one Indian who came for years,

and I used to let him sit at the table and eat with us. He seemed to take great pride in this privilege, and once brought his squaw. It was no uncommon thing to see an Indian's face stuck up against our window panes.

When anyone would come to town, Colonel Holliday would come over to my house and say: "Now, Mrs. Weymouth, Mr. So-and-so is here, and as you have the best house in town, you must take him in." As our house was the most commodious, we could not do otherwise than make the guests welcome, although, of course, they had to sleep on the floor.

Whenever there was any meeting or convention, the few women folks of the town were expected to prepare a supper. This we cheerfully did, with the means at our disposal, making dried apple pies, sweetened with molasses and shortened with tallow. Doughnuts when fried in tallow and eaten hot, are quite palatable. On one such occasion Mr. Weymouth was absent in Lawrence and expected to bring me some shortening, a scarce article in Topeka. Loring Farnsworth came in and inquired, with some anxiety, as to what I was going to do about the pies. He told me that Mrs. C.J. [J.C.] Miller was going to shorten hers with corn meal. However, my shortening came before I was reduced to that extremity.

When we built here there was a ravine running from about the State house grounds to the river. I have sat in the doorway and watched the wolves run up and down that ravine.

Her next paragraphs focused on the reason for all the hardships endured on the Kansas prairie: slavery and its abolition and names men including John Ritchie.

The slaves of Missouri, having heard that there were people in Kansas who would protect them if they ran away, used to come on the underground railway.... With such men as John Brown, John Richie (sic), and Captain Henry to pilot them they were safe when they got as far as here. All have passed to the other shore, we have only pleasant memories of them, and if we aided them in their work in any way it was with willing hearts and willing hands.

I remember a pleasant little episode which happened while my husband was cutting and hewing the timbers for Constitution Hall. I used to go in the woods and watch him work and gather wild flowers for there were lots of them then. The late Colonel Ritchie [had come into] the timber and camped and when I went for a walk

Susannah Weymouth, cont.

in the woods I met him, and he was as much surprised as I was, and said, "Well, my little Miss, what are you out here for?" I told him I came out here to live. He said, "With whom?" I said, "My husband." He asked, "Where did you come from?" I answered, "The city of Boston." He looked me over very carefully and raised up his head and said, "You won't find the city of Boston here," which I can assure you I did not.

Once more "border ruffians" threatened Lawrence:

I think it was the second time she needed our help but there had to be a lot of cartridges made. They gave me a pattern to make them from. I made a water bucket full and wished every one would kill a man, not that I was a murderer at heart but we were being murdered at every chance...

After more about frontier warfare, Mrs. Weymouth returns to domestic topics; i.e., life without a proper chimney:

When we first had a house, (I mean one room) we had no chimney, the stove pipe had to be put through the side of the house and of course would only draw when the wind was the right way, and such a time as my neighbor Mrs. Dr. Martin and myself, had in baking. When the wind was right for my stove it was wrong for hers. We would take our bread each to the other's house with our eyes almost smoked out and crying as if there was nothing to live for—we could get nothing to eat, and the stove would not draw. That was in 1856 and 1857, but they began to make brick and we got a chimney, and our tears on that score were ended.

Husband William was contractor for Topeka's first permanent building—Constitution Hall—which soon figured importantly in the clash between federal officials and Free State Kansas settlers. Susannah Weymouth's version of the Independence Day Dispersion of the Free State Government at Topeka:

With all our trials and hardships we had no protecting hand from our Government. When we appealed to our president, James Buchanan [and Pierce before him], for help, he set [sent] it, but not in a way to encourage us but to give us to understand we must submit to his authority, even to the dispersing of the free-state legislature by General Sumner on the Fourth of July.

Topeka had sent for all the help from over the state she could get, and the men were camped all around Constitution Hall. Every one furnished what they could

to feed these men and we were expecting a battle if the government interfered with our rights and not a man would have given his life for his rights if it had been necessary, but General Sumner¹⁰ seeing the situation, and being a free-state man at heart, told them to wait until he got to the Shunganunga and he would not turn back and he kept his word.

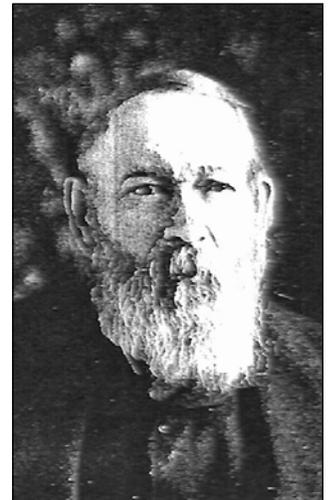
The legislature convened amid great rejoicing,¹¹ never to be disturbed again by a rebel president.

I had to get dinner for fifteen that day and I was very much alarmed for fear when of the cannon, which pointed right toward my house, should be shot, it would blow up my house. I would stand on a chair and with my heart in my mouth which [watch] the burning torch which I thought would send destruction to my little home and myself. But as years have passed by and I have more judgment and look over the same ground and think how alarmed I was, I laugh, for if they had shot off that cannon it would have gone 200 feet over my house for there was more than that much difference in the grade of Kansas Avenue and Harrison Street.

Writing more about availability of food:

I don't think people worried much about their appetite, the only thing I can recall was how we wished we had one good square meal such as we used to have.... One time after the river had been high and had fallen, a large catfish was on a sand bar and could not get off, so the men got an axe and killed it, and divided it with all who were here. When any one got something which was nice it was divided with all....

After the 1888 death of husband William, Susannah married Topeka pioneer Harvey D. Rice in 1902. A farmer, Rice arrived in Kansas Territory about the same time as the Weymouths and like them was an ardent Free-State advocate.¹³ After the Civil War he aided in the relocation of Washburn College to its present location, as did John Ritchie and others. Rice oversaw construction of its first academic building, named Rice Hall in his honor.



William H. Weymouth, Sr.

Susannah Weymouth, cont.

Susannah's third husband was E.W. Parker, father of Charles Parker, proprietor of the Parker Shows. While away for one of these shows, she died December 3, 1906 and was buried in Topeka Cemetery.

Very little of the town Susannah Weymouth knew yet

remains. Still visible from the location of her Harrison Street cabin is Constitution Hall and its restored west and south walls, which were familiar to all in Territorial era Topeka.

¹ Susannah Weymouth, Kansas Historical Society.

² Now a parking lot, today this would be approximately 416 Harrison Street..

³ The Topeka Club was at 6th and Harrison.

⁴ The Anthony Ward farm, now part of Topeka, is the Ward-Meade Park or "Prairie Crossings."

⁵ Wendell was a private in the local free state militia formed to protect area towns.

⁶ At the time, the Harrison Street School was in the 600 block (east side) of Harrison Street, less than a mile from Weymouths' home.

⁷ Martin Conway (1830-1882) was a Justice of the Supreme Court under the Topeka government and subsequently President of the Leavenworth Constitutional Convention.

⁸ Muddy, full of sediment.

⁹ The Daniel Horne house was on the northwest corner of 6th and Clay alongside a road from Papan's Ferry that later joined with what is now Burlingame Rd. and led to the Santa Fe Trail.

¹⁰ Sumner's rank then was Colonel.

¹¹ The Free State legislature reconvened several times beginning January 6, 1857.

¹² "Death Comes to Harvey D. Rice," *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 12, 1903, p. 1. The article indicates that Susannah married Rice to care for him in his failing health and cites an "ante-nuptial contract" regarding his estate.

¹³ Rice published the pamphlet, "Reminiscences," describing the Underground Railroad in Shawnee Co. and development of Washburn College. A copy is in the Topeka Room at the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library.



Ice Cream Social & Santa Fe Band Concert
Sunday, August 5, 2012



Local historical societies and tourism groups have partnered with the National Park Service to bring the fight for civil rights alive in downtown Topeka.

After October 3, historical sites throughout Topeka began using free cell phone audio tours to highlight local stories. A three part strategy will also include the publication of driving guides as well as interpretive signage at the sites. The historical alliance hopes this will lead to an increased focus on historical tourism that capitalizes on Topeka's rich history.



Sites on the cell phone tour include the **Historic Ritchie House**, **Brown v. Board of Education**, the **Kansas State House**, the **Topeka Cemetery**, and **Constitution Hall**, among others. All sites are part of **From Brown to Brown: Topeka's Civil Rights Story** and are tied to the story of the struggle for freedom.

Guides are being finalized now and will be available free to the public by the end of October. Meanwhile, listeners can sign on to the audio tours by calling (785) 338-4041 and listen to information about the current list of sites. Additional sites will be added once the brochure goes to print.

"Topeka has been on the forefront of important struggles for freedom, as well as being an important part of the **Freedom Frontier National Heritage Area**. The Brown to Brown tour will emphasize the importance of these sites and will be a significant means to encourage all Topekans to promote historic tourism in our community," said David Smith, park superintendent.

Tidbits

by *Jeanne Mithen*, SCHS Trustee & Reference Librarian, Topeka Rm., Topeka & Shawnee Co. Public Library

► **Kansas Medical College, 1890-1913:** Although a preparatory medical course was incorporated in the curriculum of the state university in 1880, the first regularly established medical college in Kansas was the Kansas Medical College of Topeka... The College opened on September 23, 1890 in a building located at the corner of Twelfth and Tyler streets... with a faculty of twenty-four members including many prominent Topeka physicians. At the time the college was established there was no provision of law furnishing subjects for the dissecting room, and in 1895 the robbery of a number of graves in adjacent cemeteries created a great excitement and led Governor Morrill to call out the militia.

The enrollment in 1890 numbered 22, and in 1901 there were 104 students. The first graduating class included eleven young doctors who had concluded a two year course of study. Enrollment declined as curriculum requirements made it mandatory to extend the course to a four-year one, and later to six years.

In 1903 the College became the medical department of Washburn College and the old building at Twelfth and Tyler streets was torn down as the College moved to a new location between Fifth and Sixth on Quincy. In the college year 1909-10, there were 68 students enrolled in the department, 13 of

whom graduated at the close of the year. In 1913 the College became a part of Kansas University.

The purpose of the Kansas Medical College was for the advancement of Kansas doctors and to instruct students in the medical profession. It was the only college in Kansas to confer the degree of Doctor of Medicine. —By Preston O. Hale and Hazel Bruce, SCHS *Bulletin* No. 40 (Dec.1963)

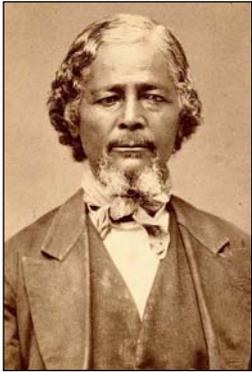
► A Topeka Sanborn Fire Insurance map indicates that the building at 10th & Quincy, NW corner, was erected in 1925-26; and the address first appears in the 1926 Topeka Polk City Directory, occupant C.R. Cameron Motor Co., Chevrolet dealer. The 1929-30 Polk Directory indicates that Charles Blevans had taken over the dealership at 128 E. 10th, and ran it until 1942, when he sold it to Lloyd Scott, Gerald Puffer and Chester Wahle. From 1942-1952 it was well-known as Scott-Puffer-Wahle, Scott-Puffer, and then Scott Chevrolet after 1952. Van-T Chevrolet had the dealership from 1962-1972. By the late 1960's, Van-T had moved to 3731 S. Topeka Blvd. (now Bozarth Chevrolet). Since 1967, the Kansas Department of Education has been the tenant of the 10th & Quincy building. (Research question, Topeka Room, TSCPL)

Recent Activities
photos by: Dan Hudgens, Melinda Abitz, Carol Yoho

Readers' Theatre, Fall, 2012

Father of the Negro Exodus

Information below includes excerpts from a book review, "Hidden in History," by **Jerri Imgarten**, *Kansas Country Living*, November, 2009, p. 6, and referencing comments found on the internet.



Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, is known as "Father of the Negro Exodus." Between 1877 and 1879 nearly 300 African Americans followed him to Kansas. Some lived in "Singleton's Colony" in Cherokee County. Others settled in Wyandotte, in Topeka's Tennessee Town, and in Dunlap Colony near present Emporia. Singleton advocated the organized colonization of blacks in communities like Nicodemus, first settled in 1877.

Jim Sharp, author of *Black Settlers on the Kaw Indian Reservation*, became impressed with the man and his accomplishments while researching his book.

"Thousands of former slaves migrated to Kansas via wagon, walking, steamboat and railroad," Sharp wrote. "Most of all those who came to Kansas were from the southern states below the Mason-Dixon Line."

In the area around the town of Dunlap, over 10,000 acres were purchased by black settlers.

Although there were rough years and times, the settlers who had some resources to sustain themselves were somewhat successful and remained in the area for many years.

"I studied history at the university, but before I started my research I had never heard of Benjamin 'Pap' Singleton, and now I believe he is the most significant black man in Kansas history."

A trained carpenter and coffin maker, Singleton traveled to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Later, after the Civil War, he became a great source of encouragement to many people by assisting them in their move to Kansas. He later relocated to Dunlap where he had a reputation of being an honest and upstanding citizen. "Singleton traveled about the country seeking land for his people to buy in order to escape the south," Sharp wrote.



← Epitaph at Dunlap, KS

"Considerable sums of money were raised to assist in the cause... Ben Singleton did not profit from his work and seemed to have the respect of all those who knew him; both black and white."

Much to Sharp's dismay, Singleton is buried on an unmarked grave somewhere in Topeka. "It should be found and properly marked," Sharp said.

Today, neither the town of Dunlap nor the Kaw Reservation has any blacks left in their community.

"There is little evidence that over 125 years ago, more than 500 black families came to the area, and at one time owned several thousand acres of farmland," Sharp wrote. "The only evidence that they were here is that their cemeteries remain."

Through his research and in his book, Sharp has uncovered and pieced together an integral part of Kansas history.

"For nearly 100 years much of the history of the black settlement on the Kaw Reservation had remained hidden," Sharp said. "Few realized that this was such an important part of the history in Morris, Lyon, Wa-baunsee and Chase counties, as well as Kansas and the Nation."...

Black Settlers on the Kaw Indian Reservation is available for sale by emailing Jim Sharp, [hjsharp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hjimsharp@sbcglobal.net)

The book is also available on *Amazon.com*

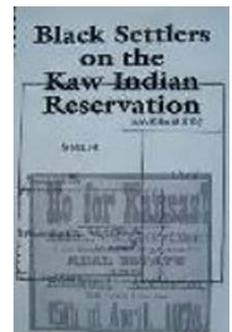
A variety of materials about Pap Singleton are posted on the internet. Interestingly, various sources give his death date at 1892 and others indicate he died in 1900. Some sources say he died in St. Louis; others say he died in Kansas City, MO. One detail seems to be universally accepted: that his gravesite is unmarked, whether it is in St. Louis, Kansas City, Topeka, or elsewhere.

See also:

Kansapedia, Kansas State Historical Society, Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, <http://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/benjamin-pap-singleton/12205>

[portrait photo, upper left column, is from this site]

"New Perspectives on the West," KTWU-TV web site, http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s_z/singleton.htm



Mark Your Calendar!

Annual Meeting 2012

Sunday, December 2, 2012

2-4 p.m.

at the Historic Ritchie Houses

1116 - 1118 SE Madison

Historic entertainment and tours, great door prizes, and refreshments! *How else would we celebrate Topeka's 158th birthday?!?!*

Civil War Muster Rolls

Scans of muster in and muster out rolls for Kansas Civil War regiments are now on Kansas Memory at the KSHS web site.

Visit: <http://www.kansasmemory.org/locate.php?query=civil+war+muster+rolls>

→
Tidbit

Historical
Highlights

Nov. 2012



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