A GUIDE TO THE
Kansas Collection

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS LIBRARIES
The Kansas Collection is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. during the Fall and Spring Semesters. All library materials are non-circulating. Reference inquiries by telephone and mail are welcome. There are always exhibits on show in the Collection, changing several times a year. Tours and informal talks on the work and resources of the collection can be arranged for interested groups by contacting the Curator. We are located on the ground level of the Kenneth Spencer Research Library (see map of the KU Campus). For further information please call us at (913) 864-4274.
A letter penned by the infamous William Clarke Quantrill to his mother in 1860 . . . photographs of turn-of-the-century threshing in Sheridan County . . . personal reminiscences of the dust bowl in Kansas and Oklahoma. . . .

These are just a few of the items available for research and consultation at the Kansas Collection, which preserves and makes available materials which document the economic, social, cultural, and political history of Kansas and the Great Plains region.

The Kenneth Spencer Research Library, in which the Kansas Collection is located, is one of the few facilities in the region specially designed to give historical materials the safe environment necessary for their preservation. Controlled temperature and humidity levels are vital to the continued availability and use of the irreplaceable materials in the collection. Private studies and a reading room, lined with reference books and state documents, provide comfortable settings where researchers can work.

Professional staff members, trained in the care and preservation of historical materials, are always available
to assist researchers. In addition, the staff answers phone and mail requests for historical information, gives tours of the collection, and prepares educational exhibits.

The resources of the Kansas Collection are used by a variety of researchers. University of Kansas faculty and graduate students use the materials for books, articles, theses, and dissertations, while undergraduates find sources for class papers. Scholars from across the United States come to carry out research in the Collection, and history buffs and genealogists trace the stories of their communities and families. The Kansas Collection is open without charge to anyone interested in the history of the state and the region.

The variety of users of the Kansas Collection is matched by the variety of resources housed in the Collection. Diaries, letters, and records constitute 5,000 feet of manuscript materials. Supplementing these are 120,000 books, periodicals, and newspapers, which provide researchers with original source materials and the latest in contemporary scholarship. Graphic materials include over 700,000 photographs, as well as historical maps and original art for published cartoons.

All these materials help to preserve and document the history of Kansas from the coming of the earliest explorers and missionaries to the present. They describe both the Native American peoples already in the area and also those who migrated here during the nineteenth century. They trace the conflicts and struggles which shaped Kansas during the territorial period and the Civil War. They portray the waves of settlers who came to Kansas in the late nineteenth century from nearby states, from the eastern part of the country, and from Europe. They document political conflicts and the growth of towns, businesses, and industries, as well as the more essentially domestic concerns of women and children. They provide data on the recent history of the state and region, its art, its politics, and its social patterns. And they give information needed in considering such contemporary problems as those caused by the farm crisis, water shortage, and urbanization.
Manuscript Materials

Manuscripts comprise an important part of the holdings of the Kansas Collection. They include papers of individuals and families as well as the records of businesses, organizations, and local governments. Individual collections may consist of a few items or several thousand and may contain a wide variety of material, such as correspondence, diaries, speeches, class notes, ledgers, account books, scrapbooks, certificates, and legal documents.

Personal Papers

Personal papers document the activities of individuals, both the famous and the less well-known. By using these papers researchers can trace the experiences of such nineteenth-century Kansans as James Denver, who was territorial governor and Commissioner of Indian Affairs, or Hugh Skinner, who made an overland trip from Minnesota to California in 1849 and 1850. More contemporary collections of personal papers record the lives of such individuals as businessmen Henry Bubb and Kenneth Spencer, politicians U.S. Senator James Pearson and Governor Robert Docking, journalists Ben Hibbs and Peggy Hull Deuell, community leader Elmer Jackson, Kansas City, Kansas lawyer, and the distinguished writer Langston Hughes, who lived in Lawrence as a child.

Families

In addition to the papers of individuals, the Kansas Collection contains family papers which allow us to study daily life in Kansas towns and rural areas. These consist of correspondence, scrapbooks, diaries, household records, clippings, and genealogical data. Examples include the Hansen-Bales family of Logan, Kansas, whose papers describe the period from the 1860s to the 1970s, the papers of the Cooper-Shepherd family, which deal with Black life in twentieth-century Topeka, and the Stewart-Lockwood family papers which illustrate life in Leavenworth and Baldwin.
SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

The impact of schools and education on students, families, and communities can be studied in materials from throughout the state. Records generated by school districts and individual schools provide student rosters as well as information on attendance, finances, and regulations. The reminiscences of teachers and pupils, programs of student activities, and scrapbooks and minutes kept by parents' organizations give details about life in the schools. Register books, such as those from a one-room school in Trego County, give information on courses taught, pupil attendance, and such financial data as the proceeds of a box-supper. The collection of Sumner High School, for many years the only Black high school in Kansas, contains yearbooks, student newspapers, and information and clippings about school events and graduates.

CLUBS, SOCIETIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The records kept by clubs, societies, and other voluntary organizations contain the stories of individuals coming together for a wide variety of purposes. Minutebooks, scrapbooks, and yearbooks of women's clubs, like the Roundtable Club and Friends in Council, both of Lawrence, reveal how women gathered to study literature or to serve their communities. Correspondence, camp records, and ledgers document the activities of the Lawrence Area Girl Scouts. Citizens representing differing sides of social and environmental issues recorded their activities in collections like those of the Greater Kansas City Council on Race and Religion, the Lawrence League for the Practice of Democracy, and the Save the Tall Grass Prairie organization. The account book of the Associated Union of Steam Shovelmen shows the dues and expenditures of a group of men working in the strip mines of southeast Kansas.
Churches

Kansas churches have played a vital role in the lives of the people of the state, and their records are an important part of our history. The history of immigrant groups who came to Kansas can be traced in church records, such as St. Paul’s United Church of Christ in Eudora with records in German, and the Zion Lutheran Church of Clyde, which kept minutes in Swedish. Records of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas include confirmation records, material from women’s auxiliaries, and rosters of parishes. Activities of the Plymouth Congregational Church, founded in Lawrence in 1854, are reflected in such documents as nineteenth-century Young People’s Society records, church minutes from around 1900, and more recent materials from the Women’s Missionary Society.

County and Local Government

Information on the transfer of land, the history of property, and the overall structure of communities can be gleaned from the records of local governments. For Douglas County, the Kansas Collection has registers of deeds, mortgage records, assessment and tax rolls, commissioners’ records, and court journals and dockets. City records from Eudora include minutes of council meetings, tax rolls, court dockets, and cemetery records. City planning reports describe the physical growth of Kansas communities.

Businesses

Business records in the Kansas Collection document the economic and social history of the people of the region. One major collection is that of J. B. Watkins, a Lawrence banker and investor. The Watkins papers include his personal correspondence as well as that of his offices in Lawrence, Lake Charles in Louisiana, Dallas, London, and New York. Records of a canning company, a sugar company, a railroad, a bank, and a publisher are
all to be found in these papers. Watkins’ land investments reveal extensive information about agriculture in the region.

Smaller collections include ledgers, receipts, payroll information, and account books of banks, lumberyards, mills, and drug stores. The financial and legal records of the Kansas City Monarchs, a Black baseball team, are to be found in the Thomas Y. Baird Collection.

**Books, Periodicals, and Pamphlets**

Also in the Kansas Collection are extensive holdings of published books and pamphlets, ranging from nineteenth-century items to recent scholarly monographs. In addition, the Collection receives historical magazines and journals from throughout the Great Plains.

From the state’s beginnings, Kansas has published abundant information about its residents, resources, and government. While early state documents are valuable for historical researchers, items being currently received address contemporary economic and social issues.

**Drawings, Plans and Other Graphic Materials**

Architectural drawings and plans, often supplemented by manuscript materials, supply visual images for structures built throughout the state. Posters and handbills record events and proclaim political positions. Cartoons express opinions on a variety of issues.

**Audio and Video Tapes**

Oral tape recordings, providing eyewitness recollections of events, are also present in the Collection. For example, oral history tapes of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters describe local working conditions and the efforts of workers to organize to better those conditions. The experiences of Mexican-Americans can be studied through tape-recorded interviews with a number of Garden City residents.
Black History Collection

A rapidly growing section of the Collection is that devoted to the region’s African-American inhabitants. The first Blacks entered the state as slaves. Others came seeking freedom during the tumultuous years of the territorial period and Civil War. Following Reconstruction, migration increased as “Exodusters” fled the South to establish towns in Kansas or to settle in Topeka and Kansas City, Kansas. Despite the discrimination Blacks faced in the allegedly “free” state of Kansas, many of them became successful and important citizens of the state: men and women occupying all walks of life. The legacy of the early Black settlers is reflected in the records of schools, businesses, churches, and clubs, and in the papers of families and individuals.

Photographs

The Kansas Collection includes numerous historical photographs depicting the growth of midwestern towns, the development of architectural styles, the life and work of early Kansans, and community social events and activities. Some of the images were produced by such early photographic processes as daguerreotype, tintype, and glass negative and others by modern processes.

Among the larger collections is that of Joseph J. Pennell who recorded fine, turn-of-the-century views of small-town life in Junction City and military life at nearby Fort Riley. The Jules Bourquin Collection pictures railroad work, local celebrations, and family life in Horton. The photographs of Hannah Scott of Independence depict the town and the surrounding oil fields. The Schultz Collection includes numerous images of Native Americans. The photographic archives of the Lawrence Journal World newspaper preserve mid-twentieth century pictures from the region. Highlights of other collections range from workers constructing Union Station in Kansas City, Missouri, through players of the Kansas City Monarchs baseball team to cowboys and sodhouses on the ranches of western Kansas.
MAPS AND ATLASES

A large collection of historic maps traces important changes throughout the region. The location of reservations given to Native Americans and of early Kansas roads and settlements appear in maps dating from the nineteenth century. Other maps document the coming of railroads and the growth of towns. Plat atlases identify the owners of property within counties. Maps created for insurance companies by the Sanborn Company record the types of buildings constructed in Kansas and how these changed over time.

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