

# THE JOSEPH J. PENNELL PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION



Miller and Shoemaker soda fountain, 1899

*Kansas Collection*

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## HOW TO USE THE COLLECTION

The Joseph J. Pennell Photograph Collection is part of the Kansas Collection, the regional history branch of the University of Kansas Libraries, open to the public from 8 am to 5 pm on Monday to Friday (and 9 am to 1 pm on Saturday when the University is in session). A microfilm showing over 6,000 photographs from the Pennell Collection can be borrowed through interlibrary loan for research purposes. Portions of the subject catalog are available for the price of photocopying, and prints or slides of photographs can be supplied for the cost of processing. Publication or further reproduction of photographs is allowed only with permission from the Kansas Collection; a use fee may be charged. For further information contact:

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The Harper boy, 1898

Hammond Laundry, 1903





Rudy Sohn's barber shop, 1903



Dixon's Laundry, 1899

THE JOSEPH J. PENNELL PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION represents the life work of a Junction City, Kansas, photographer. It consists of 30,000 glass plate negatives made between 1891 and 1923, a period of great change in American life. Pennell's photographs portray a small town at the turn of the century and its transition into the modern era.

Joseph J. Pennell was born in North Carolina in 1866, the son of a Confederate soldier. His family moved to Kansas in the 1880s to take advantage of the public school system. As a young man Pennell went to work for a carpenter in Abilene, Kansas, but later became fascinated by the work of a travelling photographer. He worked with several different Junction City photographers while learning his craft, and eventually opened his own studio in the town in 1893. A new studio was built in 1907, and the building is still in use in Junction City. Along with his business success, Pennell achieved wider recognition and awards for his photography. His work was shown at the World's Fair in 1893 and the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, and was published in photographic journals and in such popular magazines of the time as *Munsey's* and *Ladies Home Journal*. Pennell operated his studio until his death in 1922, and his wife continued it for a further year.

Junction City was a small town located near the geographical center of the continental United States. Most of the town's income came from supplying the area farmers and the nearby army post of Fort Riley. Studio portraits of soldiers and townspeople made up the bulk of Pennell's work, but he was also hired to record activities and events throughout Junction City and Fort Riley. He photographed school, church, and social functions, construction and town growth, the routines of the business and military worlds, disasters and celebrations—the triumphs and tribulations of a small town.

Edith Mackey and friends, 1907





Fort Riley telephone exchange, 1905

## SMALL TOWN LIFE IN TRANSITION

In the years before the turn of the century most Americans lived in small towns. The boundaries of their daily lives were determined by the hours of sunlight and the range of a day's buggy ride. The introduction of electric lighting, the telephone, the automobile and other inventions during this era were about to transform the American lifestyle. At the same time, European immigration into the United States and the movement of the population from small towns and farms into the cities was beginning to change the population from rural to predominantly urban. Pennell's photographs depict this period of transition in one small American town, Junction City, Kansas, by showing the changes in styles of fashion and consumer goods, the development of the town and the surrounding area, and the introduction of modern technology into everyday life.

## THE COMING OF THE AUTOMOBILE

Within the collection are many glimpses of the slow entry of the automobile into everyday American life. The automobile first appears in the Pennell photographs (in 1905) as a plaything of the wealthy, displayed as a prized possession rather than a means of transportation. As time passes, the automobile begins to appear along with the horse in the streets of Junction City. Work on improving the roads is illustrated in the "Good Roads" (a nationwide program of community work for better roads) photographs of 1911 and 1912, and pictures of the paving of the city streets eventually appeared in 1919. Community-wide concern with the automobile is reflected by the appearance of related services—repair shops, gas stations, and car dealerships. A 1921 view of Washington Street (the main street) shows that the horse has been completely replaced by the automobile in downtown Junction City.

Jim Miller's house, 1899.



Wetzig Auto Shop, 1908





Troop A, Ninth Cavalry band, 1906

### MILITARY LIFE AT FORT RILEY

Fort Riley has been a major Army post since its establishment in the 1850s. During the years Pennell was taking photographs at the fort there were both artillery and cavalry units stationed there. The cavalry included the 7th (made famous by Custer) as well as the 9th and 10th, which were regiments composed of Black American soldiers. The fort was the site of one of the best cavalry training schools in the world. When the United States entered World War I, the Army's largest induction center, Camp Funston, was constructed at Fort Riley.

Much of Pennell's business came from photographing soldiers stationed at the fort; among the more famous of his subjects were Lt. George Patton and General Funston. Pennell recorded the soldiers at work and at leisure, the grounds of the fort, and the operation of such units as the Cooks and Bakers School, the Cavalry School, and the Medical Officers Training Corps.



Trooper Gibbs in Riding Hall, Fort Riley, 1897



Bicycle Corps, Fort Riley, 1897



Vera and Alma Jolley, ca 1900

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