



Historical Highlights

v. 3, n. 1



Mar. 2014

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President's Message

by *David J. Heinemann*, SCHS President

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as president of the Shawnee County Historical Society. It is indeed an honor. As we start our new year I hope to have many exciting opportunities to work with you as we continue to spread our story of the great history that reposes here in Shawnee County. The good news is that others still help us tell our story.

On Kansas Day this year, as we celebrated the 153rd anniversary of Kansas' entry into the union, a special event took place at the State Capitol. Dignitaries and ordinary Kansans gathered to dedicate, with speeches, re-enactments, song and even cannon blasts, our renovated Statehouse to the people of our great state and future generations of Kansans. The extended 14 year refurbishing process cost over \$327 million. But, the crane is now down and we relish the sight of a new copper dome (it will turn green again in 35 years) that shines as the crown jewel of our community. The project is more than a renovation: it is a rebuild and expansion to make the facility not only functional for those who work there, but, more important, to make it truly accessible to the public who come either to attend legislative hearings or just view the historic Senate and House chambers. Perhaps the best part is the new spacious visitor center that was designed with our school children in mind. Buses can now unload



students in a protected area right at the front doors to a visitor center that is equipped with classrooms filled with audio-visual equipment to help aid the students in their Statehouse visit. The Kansas State Historical Society provided numerous exhibits along the halls including John Brown's sword and a copper portal from the former dome, to name a few of the items of historic significance. Another exhibit contains

—continued on p. 2

President's Message, cont.

the sledge hammer that Republican House Speaker Douglas used during the legislative war of 1893 to break down the entrance to the House chamber that was held by the Populist representatives. Paul Davis, the House Minority Leader, mentioned in his remarks at the dedication, that the state militia was also at the capital until the Kansas Supreme Court ultimately ruled that the Republicans were the legally constituted majority of the body, thus ending the legislative war. He jokingly alluded to the fact that we all hope things can end as peacefully this year when the Kansas Supreme Court issues its decision in the Gannon school finance case.

The Shawnee County Historical Society had the opportunity to assist the **Kansas State Historical Society's Kansas Day Celebration** at their museum where over 1,800 students from all over Kansas gathered to participate in heritage education. **Melinda Abitz, Jon Boursaw** and **"Mr. John Ritchie" (George Bernheimer)** provided a table display that highlighted the Historic Ritchie House with additional activities for the students. "Mr. Ritchie" guided the students through an educational game that led to stories involving the Underground Railroad and how he and Mrs. Ritchie risked their lives to help fugitive slaves escape



capture on their journey to freedom by feeding and concealing them from U.S. soldiers.

The work of Melinda, George and several other key individuals needs to be recognized for the great success of the Society's education initiative that takes place at the Historic Ritchie House. The month of January previously held the record for the fewest student visits. No longer. January 2014 set a new monthly record for most student visits as 742 Topeka students made field trips to the Ritchie House in collaboration with the Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site. The program's success grew exponentially last year as more school districts outside of Shawnee County became aware of what we offered. Consequently, by partnering with the Statehouse visitor center, the Brown site, the Combat Air Museum, to name a few, we now have the opportunity to entice even more students to come to the Historic Ritchie House to learn about the early history of Topeka and the struggle for freedom and equality in Territorial Kansas.

As always, your support has made the difference to help provide the resources we need to maintain our education initiatives, whether through your membership dues or by your extra donations. With the recent uptick in the Ritchie House school field trips, the need to provide additional teaching resources to Melinda and our volunteers grows even greater. Please consider an extra contribution this year. Also, make it a point to invite at least one of your friends to become a fellow member of the Shawnee County Historical Society. I know you will be thanked for it as they too become a key partner in the promotion of our great cultural heritage to future generations. ☺

Combat Air Museum commemorates WWI at 100

The Combat Air Museum of Topeka, KS, will commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the beginning of WWI with a series of exhibits and educational programs. The War challenged every aspect of western civilization that ushered in the modern day world.

In partnership with the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, the University of Kansas Center for Global and International Studies, as well as Historic Topeka Cemetery, the Combat Air Museum will produce educational programs that highlight the social impact of the War and the rapid war-driven changes in aviation technology.

For 2014, there will be three displays in the museum. The first will present year-by-year developments in aircraft design, developments necessitated by aeronautical advances on the other side. A diorama of *No Man's Land* will depict the Christmas Truce of 1914 and the use of aircraft during that time. Visitors will be able to experience a WWI aerodrome and utilize our flight simulators to try out flying period aircraft.

The displays are scheduled for dedication in the Summer of 2014.



SOHS Educational Initiatives

by *Melinda Abitz*, Education Program Developer

January School Field Trips

With cold winds blowing and freezing temperatures recently, staff and volunteers at the Historic Ritchie house were pleased to welcome an estimated twenty bus-loads of students from the Topeka Public Schools during a five day period earlier this month. They came in observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, having studied the life and times of Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement in their respective classrooms with the theme "Living the Dream."

The Ritchie House and the Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site each greeted 742 students during five days beginning January 7 and ending January 21. The Brown vs. Board National Historic Site partnered with the Ritchie House for these field trips to make students aware of the enduring struggle for freedom in the Topeka area from the days of slavery in the 1850s to the days of the civil rights movement in the 1950s.

In the historic house, elementary through high school students were greeted by John Ritchie (George Bernheimer) and listened as Mr. Ritchie reminisced about the work he and Mrs. Ritchie carried out as they assisted freedom seekers in the territorial days of early Kansas. In the Cox Communications Heritage Education Center, Bill Wagon had many hands-on objects for students to examine as he discussed the meaning of freedom in the 1850s as well as today.

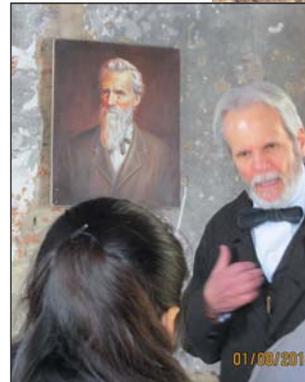
The Ritchie House would like to thank the Topeka Public Schools and the Brown vs. Board National Historic Site for coordinating these field trips. We would also like to thank Ritchie House volunteers Diane Bernheimer and Paul Metzenthin for their good work as greeters and time-keepers, George Bernheimer for his role as Mr. Ritchie, and Bill Wagon as a presenter. We all had a great time and look forward to these students returning next year!

Kansas Day at the Museum

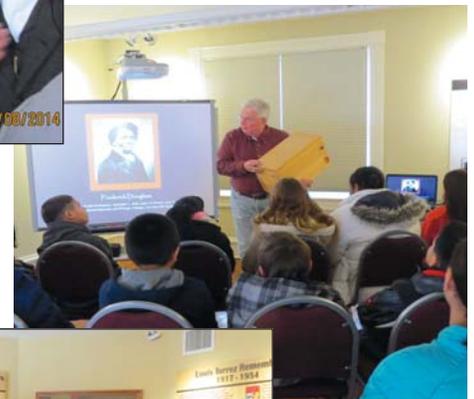
In celebration of Kansas Day, Wednesday, January 29, the Kansas State Historical Society again hosted an event at the museum for over 1800 students this year from various cities across Kansas to provide heritage education for our young people. Demonstrations, hands-on activities, and reenactors as well as free entrance through the museum were all available for curious minds.

The Historic Ritchie House took part in the event with a table display and activity for students. Melinda Abitz, "Mr. Ritchie" (George Bernheimer), and Jon Boursaw

—continued, p. 4



George Bernheimer
as John Ritchie



Field Trip photos by
Melinda Abitz



Educational Opportunities, cont.

were present to provide answers for those interested in the historic house. Mr. Ritchie guided students through an educational game which led to stories involving his and Mrs. Ritchie's participation in the Underground Railroad. It was a great day to celebrate Kansas Day. Kansas history and kids were a great combination!

Ritchie Resources

For those who would like to learn more about the Ritchies and early Kansas, please visit our website: (shawneecountyhistory.org). Online primary sources and books are available for research and enjoyment. From the home page, go to Education Initiative/Education Resources to choose any document that interests you. It's exciting to read about the life and times of Kansas forefathers who paved the way for us.

Educational Objects

For the Ritchie House school field trips, our new format for students is to have more hands-on objects for the students to touch. It's part of our field trip experience that enables students to get a closer look and to experience the Underground Railroad and also our theme, which is the "Enduring Struggle for Freedom." We are in the process of acquiring certain historically correct objects as well as designated antiques to furnish the Ritchie House for interpretation.

Most recently, we have purchased a reproduction of a set of manacles that represent those that were used in times of slavery. Students are amazed at the weight and feel of the manacles which suddenly opens the window to more discussion of the subject of slavery. Other items include a handmade wooden box used to symbolize a slave's carpentry skills needed to make that box, but wages for its creation went to the slave owner. We have obtained several other items and are looking forward to expanding our collection of objects which we will purchase using our own suppliers. We feel these teaching tools and interpretive objects will be used for decades. 🍷



Kansas Day photos by Melinda Abitz

If you would like to be a part of our program by making a monetary donation towards our education program, we have listed a few things we feel are important in the near future. Our thanks go to you, in advance, for your generosity.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Tin candle lantern, (period) | House & Ed programs | \$ 35 |
| 2. Tin dipper, (period) | House & Ed programs | \$ 30 |
| 3. Wood Tables, period appropriate | Front & rear room display | \$ 40 -60 |
| 4. Rope bed, (period or antique) | Rear room display | \$ 100 |
| 5. Cast iron parlor stove (period or antique) | House display | \$ 500 - 600 |

Hickok and Topeka Jayhawkers

edited by *Debra Goodrich Bisel*, SCHS Board Member

Topeka History Geeks has garnered nearly 5,000 fans of history on its Facebook Page. If you have missed the conversations and photos being shared there, you are in for a real treat. Photographs from the founding of Topeka to drive-ins are mingled with reminiscences and inquiries. The pieces of the puzzle come together in new and surprising ways daily.

One ongoing chat surrounds this 1868 photo made in the offices of Constitution Hall in the 400 block of Kansas Ave., Topeka, while the building was still serving as the state capitol. The subjects are left to right, back row: **James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickok**, **James Hickey**, **Henry C. Lindsey**; seated, **Fry Giles** and **Cyrus K. Holliday**. Hickok is known throughout the world, of course, having had a colorful career as a lawman in Kansas. Holliday is known for founding the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. Giles wrote *Thirty Years in Topeka*, an invaluable history of our area. Readers might be less familiar with Hickey and Lindsey, though their lives were every bit as eventful.

Local historian Doug Mauck commented, “Lindsey later served as (Topeka) Chief of Police. Hickey served as Deputy Sheriff under various (Shawnee County) Sheriffs for a total of about 20 years. He ran for Sheriff one time and lost.”

Connelly’s *History of Kansas* (1918) contains **Lindsey’s biography**:

With the breaking out of the Civil war Colonel Lindsey, though a very young man at the time, joined Captain Ross’ Company in the Eleventh Kansas Infantry as a drummer boy. He was gone altogether three years four months. After the war in 1867 he became a member of the Eighteenth Kansas in Col. Horace L. Moore’s Regiment and took an active part in the Indian campaign.

During this service of little less than a year Mr. Lindsey was made captain of Company A.

In the meantime, in 1865, after the Civil war was over, he engaged in the livery business. He is today still in active business and at the same location where he started fifty-one years ago. In 1898, when the Spanish-American war broke out Colonel Lindsey was appointed to command the Twenty-second Kansas Regulars, and he went into camp with this regiment at Camp Alger in West Virginia, close to the birthplace of his father.

Colonel Lindsey is a member of Lincoln Post of the Grand Army of the Republic at Topeka. In earlier years he gave much of his time and ability to public positions of trust and responsibility. He was chief of police of Topeka four terms, having been first elected in 1871, and he also served four years as deputy chief. For six years he was a county commissioner of Shawnee County and three years of that time he was chairman of the board. The handsome county jail at Topeka was built during

his term of office. [The jail was located at 5th and Van Buren and would have been the location of the incarceration of accused murderer Nat Oliphant in June, 1889. A mob of thousands descended on the “impregnable” facility and dug into the foundation to snatch Oliphant from custody. He was lynched at 6th and Kansas.]

Blackmar’s *Kansas: a Cyclopedia of State History* (1912) reported on **Hickey**:

James A. Hickey is a pioneer who was present at the meeting on Jan. 2, 1855, when the town site was named Topeka. He is a native of Ireland, and came to America when a small boy. He found employment in New York state



and in Vermont until 1854, when he came to the present site of Topeka and has resided there continuously since that time. He served three terms as undersheriff of Shawnee county and as deputy sheriff for over twenty years. He was a member of Captain Horn's company, which did effective service during the Price raid. On Sept. 20, 1870, he was united in marriage with Mrs. Ophelia Deming, a Kentucky lady of culture and refinement. She was the widow of Dr. Augustus E. Deming, late surgeon of the Fifteenth Kansas cavalry during the Civil war. Her parents were James and Maud Caroline (Muir) Allen, old and respected residents of Kentucky. Dr. and Mrs. Deming reared two daughters, Caroline, now residing with Mr. and Mrs. Hickey, and Anna Augusta, the wife of Allen D. Gray, a prominent official of the Santa Fe railway system, at Topeka. Mr. and Mrs. Hickey are residing on their ten-acre fruit farm in South Topeka, where they expect to end their days. They are both members of the Presbyterian church, while he is a charter member of Topeka Lodge, No. 40, Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

Local historian, Dee Puff, commented, "Hickey was such a colorful character. He died from falling and hitting his head...Strange way to go after such a dangerous life."

Four of these men are buried in Historic Topeka Cemetery. Hickok, of course, died in Deadwood, now South Dakota, in 1876. He is buried there in Mount Moriah. ♪

"Capitol Tour"

Roy Marks of Topeka shares this news:

Our local **Capitol Area group of the Kansas Explorers** has a **special guided tour of the capitol scheduled for Saturday morning, March 8, at 10:30 AM.** Since guides regularly don't work Saturdays, there is a fee, but it will be only \$2 per person. History Geeks and Shawnee County Historical Society members are all welcome to join us. Just show up with two bucks in the Visitors Center, north entrance of the Capitol, by 10:30 AM on 3/8/2014.



"Topeka Genealogical Society Annual Conference"

Registration is now open for the 42nd Annual Conference on April 26th. Curt Witcher from the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, IN, will be the featured speaker. His lecture topics will be:

- Roll Call: New Sites & Sources for Military Records
- Using Church Records in Your Genealogical Research
- Mining the Mother Lode: Using Periodical Literature in Genealogical Research
- The Road Not Taken: Mega Internet Sites for Genealogist Off the Beaten Path

Check the TGS website (<http://www.tgstopeka.org/>) for more information on upcoming programs, classes and other activities.

"Created Equal"

The **Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library** and the **Brown v. Board National Historic** site are co-sponsoring a film series, "**Created Equal**," honoring the 60th anniversary of the Brown v. Board decision and the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights amendment. The next film, *Freedom Riders*, about a courageous band of civil rights activists who in 1961 creatively challenged segregation, will be shown on **Thursday, May 8, 2014, 5:00 PM**, at the **Brown v. Board site**, 1515 SE Monroe St., Topeka. *Admission is free and the public is invited.*

"Civil War Roundtable"

The **Civil War Roundtable of Eastern Kansas** meets the **last Thursday of each month** at the **Cox Communication Heritage Education Center**, Hale Ritchie House, 1118 SE Madison, Topeka, **September through May**, at **6:30 PM.**

Barbara M. Ritchie, wife of the late Dean Ritchie, great-grandson of John Ritchie, passed away Jan. 28, 2014. Both Ritchies were actively interested in the restoration/renovations of the John and Hale Ritchie properties.



Upcoming Events, cont.

Forging Freedom's Pathway: Living History Walks from Historic Ritchie House to Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site — April 26, 2014

From conflicts leading to the Civil War to the birth of the Civil Rights Movement, Topeka has played a central role. As part of an initiative to interpret the unique history of Topeka and Kansas, all are invited to attend a free living history walk on **Saturday, April 26**, from the Historic Ritchie House to Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site. The walks will feature living history reenactors portraying personalities from territorial Kansas in the 1850s through the historic Brown decisions in the 1950s. They will portray evolving views of race and freedom that developed in Kansas over the years.

The walks will begin at Brown v. Board of Education National Historic site from 10:00 am-2:00 pm.

Participants will ride a free shuttle to the Ritchie House and walk the half mile back, stopping with a park ranger along the way to meet characters representing a century of history. Shuttles and tour groups will depart approximately every 30 minutes. Space is limited and tours are first-come, first-served.

The Lecompton Reenactors, a park ranger, and other living history presenters will portray characters includ-

ing abolitionist **John Ritchie**; a pro-slavery citizen; free-stater **James H. Lane**; women's rights supporter **Clarina Nichols**; Exoduster **Nathan Holder**; school board member **Chester Woodward**; and African American teacher **Julia Roundtree**. Their stories about the conflict over the extension of slavery into Kansas and the later debates over issues of integration and segregation illustrate the central role Kansas played in the emergence of both the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement.

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site tells the story of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that ended legal segregation in public schools. The site is located at **1515 SE Monroe Street in Topeka, Kansas**, and is **open free of charge from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily**. *Closed federal holidays except for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.*

For more information call 785-354-4273 or visit <http://www.nps.gov/brvb> and <http://www.facebook.com/brownvboardnps>



"SCHS Annual Auction & Sale"

Mark your calendars for the **3rd Annual SCHS Auction and Sale on Friday, October 5, 2014**, at **Trails Market and Gallery**, 109 N. Kansas Ave, southwest side of the Kansas River Bridge. Donations of antiques and collectibles, household and decorative items, etc. (no clothing please), can be made any time, at the Trails Market, Thurs.-Sat. 10 AM-5 PM, or call SCHS at 785-234-6097 to arrange for pickup.

We also have an ongoing sales booth at Trails Market —in the northwest corner of the building. So be sure to come by during business hours.



Photos by Jeanne Mithen

Capitol Photos:

“Capitol Restoration Complete”



Photos by Carol Yoho

“Capitol Dedication Ceremony”



Photos by Dave Heinemann

2013 Annual Meeting:

The 2013 Annual Meeting was held on Sun., Dec. 8, 2013, from 2-4 PM at the Hale Ritchie House, 1118 S. Madison St.

Business included:

- Outgoing SCHS President **Debra Goodrich Bisel** recapped the year's events. Our very special program this year was a presentation by **Sherrita (Sherri) Camp**, author of the newly published, richly illustrated work of historical non-fiction, *African American Topeka*, part of the "Images of America" series from Acadia Publications.
Sherri, a longtime Topeka resident and descendent of Exodusters, and a Washburn graduate, focused on her genealogical and historical research for this book, using the resources of many of our local institutions and libraries, as well as interviews with local residents. Signed copies of her book were available for purchase.
- Outgoing trustees **Douglass Wallace** and **Jeanne Mithen** were honored for their service. Jeanne attended and was presented with her plaque in thanks for her service to SCHS by outgoing president **Debra Bisel**.
- New trustees were elected for the 2013-16 period.
- The afternoon meeting included holiday refreshments, door prizes and an opportunity to tour the Ritchie houses.

Former SCHS President **Deb Goodrich Bisel** has written an article about Quantrell's Raid on Lawrence (8-21-1863) that will be published in the April 2014 issue of *Armchair General*.



Above: Event photos by David Heinemann

"...more Capitol Ceremony..."



Photos by Dave Heinemann

From Friends of Historic Topeka Cemetery

Abraham Lincoln had a profound impact on the early days of Kansas. His first term of office began just weeks after Kansas was admitted to the Union and other states opted to leave. There were many government jobs to be filled in the new state and Senator Jim Lane was the conduit to the president who could secure those positions. Many who benefited from that patronage rest in Historic Topeka Cemetery.

Historian in Residence **Deb Goodrich Bisel** discussed many of those people on the president's birthday when the FHTC held a reception in Dr. Franklin Crane's home, the cemetery's office.

One of those notables is **Julia Delahay Osborn**, Kansas first lady and cousin to Lincoln. Her husband, **Thomas**, was appointed to the position of US marshal in Topeka in 1864, by President Lincoln.

In December, the FHTC hosted carriage rides and a reception in the Crane Mausoleum. Actor **Don Lambert** portrayed **Dr. Franklin Crane**, the cemetery's founder.

The FHTC has a standing meeting **every Wednesday morning at 11 a.m.** in the **Crane home, 1601 SE 10th St., Topeka.** We research, discuss, and generally revel in the incredible history represented on this sacred ground. Many events are planned during the year for Memorial Day, the anniversary of the beginning of World War I, and for the 150th anniversary of the Battle of the Blue in October.

The Historic Topeka Cemetery has received a grant from **Freedom's Frontier NHA** to produce a **cell phone tour** of some of the site's significant burials and memorials. Partners include the **Combat Air Museum**, the **Civil War Roundtable of Eastern Kansas**, **Brown vs. Board NHS**, as well as the **SCHS** to bring the cemetery to the fore as a treasured part of the community.



Don Lambert as Dr. Franklin Crane
Photo by Gary Krohe



Mausoleum Row in the snow
Photo by Noel Coalson

Preservation Clock Ticks...

The *Brown v. Board* case was first heard in Topeka—at the third floor courtroom inside of the U.S. post office in downtown Topeka, 5th and Kansas Avenue.

According to the Kansas Historical Society, while the building is eligible to be an historical site, it was never declared one. The U.S. Postal Service plans to sell the building and move to a smaller location in the downtown Topeka area.

“We’ll be working very closely to be sure that it is used in a manner that will be most effective and appropriate for downtown,” said Vince Frye, President and CEO of downtown Topeka Inc.





MEMBERSHIP FORM

Our membership year is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 annually.

Make check to "Shawnee County Historical Society" and mail form w/ your check to: Shawnee County Historical Society, P.O., Box 2201, Topeka, KS 66601-2201

PLEASE PRINT or TYPE info requested.

Choose type: Regular / \$35 Regular / \$35 Patron / \$50 Renovator / \$100

PERSONAL MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ Email: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ Email: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Tax Deductible 501 (c)(3) DONATION Indicate amount: \$ _____

I wish to join this/these SCHS committee(s): Nominations Membership Publications
 Annual Meeting/Socials Public Relations Historic Preservation Education/Communications

SCHS has gone High Tech AND is saving members money by teaming with PayPal on-line to accept memberships and donations. We also hope to offer sales of our inventory of *Bulletins* with on-line payment via PayPal. Links now appear on-line <http://www.shawneecountyhistory.org> to allow payment transactions via PayPal by secure credit or debit card transaction.

SCHS dues year runs from January 1 to December 31, each year.
Early in this year is the best time to join or renew for 2014!



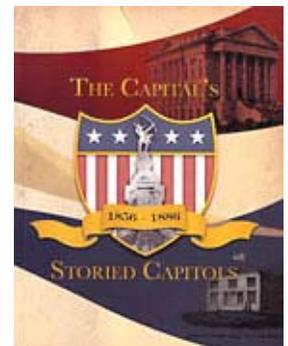
SCHS board member Jackie Bugg is co-founder and chairwoman of **Living the Dream** and for her that means making the dreams a reality.

Our preservation awards recognized her efforts to save the former **Topeka Council of Colored Women's Clubs Building** in 2013. Work continues to preserve the two-story white frame building that will become the **Living the Dream Inc. Robert Bugg Educational Center**. (Bob is Jackie's husband.) The home at 1149 SW Lincoln was the hub of social life in the Tennessee Town neighborhood for decades. Steve Fry interviewed Jackie for an article in the February 9, 2014, issue of the *Topeka Capital Journal*. [<http://cjonline.com/news/2014-02-09/early-cultural-hub-re-emerges-topeka-neighborhood>]

Jackie envisions this site as tying in with the Brown v Board NHS and the Ritchie Houses. The Tennessee Town neighborhood represents the time between the settling of Territorial Kansas and the 1954 court decision striking down segregation in the nation's schools. The community was established by blacks fleeing oppressive Jim Crow laws in the South during the 1880s.

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://skys-ways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/history/bulletins.html> to see a listing of past *Bulletins*.





P.O. Box 2201, TOPEKA KS 66601-2201

Lighting Freedom's Pathway;
Building Heritage Culture

Important Dates in Kansas History:

- July–August 1541**
Coronado explores Kansas
- April 30, 1803**
Louisiana Purchase Treaty signed
- May 30, 1854**
Kansas Territory organized
- July 29, 1859**
Constitution adopted by convention
- January 29, 1861**
Kansas becomes 34th state
- August 21, 1863**
Quantrill's Raid on Lawrence
- Spring 1879**
Exodusters
- February 19, 1881**
First state to Constitutionally prohibit alcohol
- 1890s**
Populist Revolt
- July 1951**
Great Flood of 1951
- May 17, 1954**
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

Historical Highlights

March 2014

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

← Tidbits

