

Kansas History

A Journal of the Central Plains

Volume 47, Number 4 | Winter 2024-25



A Collaboration of the Kansas Historical Foundation
and the Department of History at Kansas State University



This is the final installment in our series of pictures from community events, depicting an auto race at the North Central Kansas Free Fair, held in Belleville in 1958. The first car made in the United States came in 1893, and the first sale of an American-made car would come a few years later in 1896. One of the companies to rise over the next decade was Chrysler, founded by Kansas native Walter Chrysler. It seems many initially regarded cars negatively, which fueled the growing urban-rural divide. According to an interview with Marion Jennings in 1939, a common sentiment in the early days of automobiles considered them the latest trend that would eventually pass. Kansas was slow to adopt hard-surfaced roadways, making travel by car difficult over long distances. In fact, in 1924 Kansas still had fewer than one thousand miles of hard-surfaced road.

Racing was common both in official capacities, taking place on designated tracks, and unofficial ones, usually on roads. The magazine *Motor Age* reported in 1907 that several men drove from New York to Chicago in just thirty-nine hours and fifty-three minutes. This competition seems to have been a precursor to the Cannonball Run challenge of today, which extends across the entire United States. That challenge would not have been feasible in the early twentieth century, since a cross-country highway system had yet to be built.

Rey Payne-Malave
Editorial Assistant

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Front cover: *The Manhattan house in which Isaac and Ellen Goodnow lived beginning in 1861, pictured here in 2014. They came in a party of NEEAC settlers. It operates today as a museum. Courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society & Museum.*

Back cover: *A man and two women stand in a sugar beet field in Finney County. The man has a very large beet in his hand. Picture taken in the early 1930s.*

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Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains is published quarterly through a partnership between the Kansas Historical Foundation and the Department of History at Kansas State University. The Kansas Historical Foundation serves as a fundraising, fund management, membership, and retail organization to support and promote the Kansas Historical Society, a state agency that safeguards and shares the state's history through the collection, preservation, and interpretation of its past. The Society's collections and programs are diverse and are made available through its library and museum in Topeka, historic sites and classrooms across

the state, and publications and web-based resources accessible everywhere. The Department of History at Kansas State University is especially well-suited to the study of Kansas, agricultural, and environmental history. As a Land Grant school whose culture and economy have historically been shaped by the economy in the state, the history of Kansas holds a venerable place in the academic offerings of the University. Environmental history, with a particular focus on agricultural, water, and grassland issues in Kansas, has become increasingly more important to university research and curricula worldwide.

The journal is available as one of many benefits of membership with the Kansas Historical Foundation. Find more information online at ksks.org/11413.

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The journal publishes scholarly articles, edited documents, and other materials that contribute to an understanding of the history and cultural heritage of Kansas and the Central Plains. Political, social, intellectual, cultural, economic, and institutional histories are welcome, as are biographical and historiographical interpretations and studies of archaeology, the built environment, and material culture. Articles emphasizing visual documentation, exceptional reminiscences, and autobiographical writings are also considered for publication. Genealogical studies are generally not accepted.

Kansas History follows the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017). A detailed explanation of the journal's editorial policy is available at ksks.org/12447. Articles appearing in *Kansas History* are available online at the Kansas Historical Society's website (ksks.org/12445) and from EBSCO Publishing. They are available on microfilm from ProQuest Microfilms.

Manuscripts are evaluated anonymously by scholars who determine their suitability for publication based on originality, quality of research, significance, and presentation, among other factors. Previously published articles or manuscripts that are being considered for publication elsewhere will not be considered. The editors reserve the right to make changes in accepted articles and will consult with the authors regarding such. The publishers assume no responsibility for statements of fact or opinion made by contributors.

The Edgar Langsdorf Award for Excellence in Writing, which includes a plaque and an honorarium of two hundred dollars, is awarded each year for the best article published in *Kansas History*.

The editors welcome letters responding to any of the articles published in the journal. With the correspondent's permission, those that contribute substantively to the scholarly dialogue by offering new insights or historical information may be published. All comments or editorial queries should be addressed to the editors, *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*, Department of History, 201C Calvin Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506-1002; 785-532-0375; email: khjournal@ksu.edu.

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Kansas

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