

THE POWER OF STORY

OUR COMPELLING MESSAGE OF FREEDOM

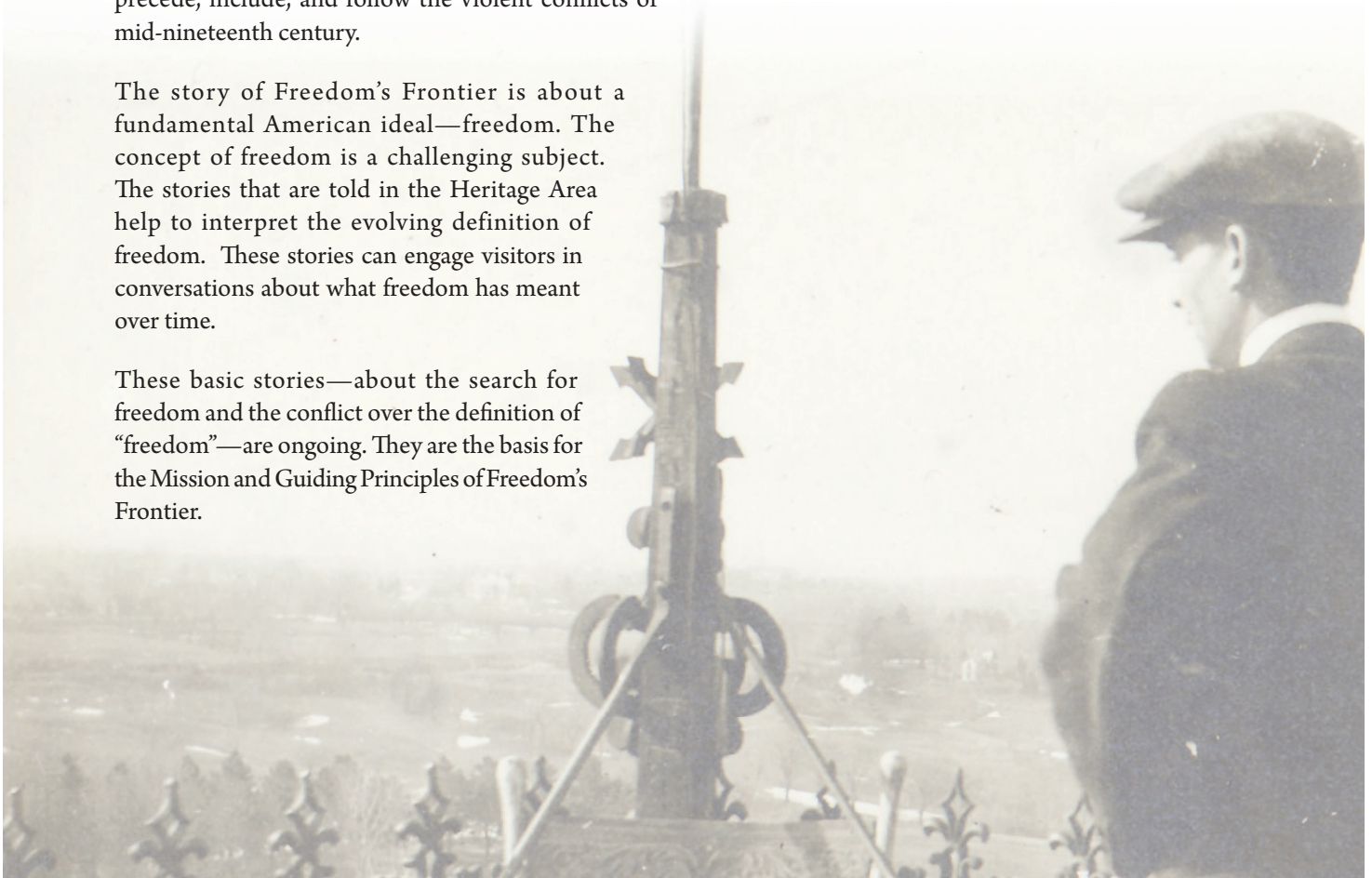


Some of the most important events within Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area took place because individuals took action to forge a society that expressed their definition of freedom. This management plan honors those individuals by involving residents and stakeholders in a grassroots effort to craft a plan that stewards their stories and the landscape on which those events occurred.

Throughout the preparation of this plan, residents explored the qualities and stories that make Freedom's Frontier significant. During the process, they came to agree that the story of freedom cannot be defined in one specific story, place, or point in time. Rather, they determined that what makes Freedom's Frontier unique is a story ecosystem, a web of stories that precede, include, and follow the violent conflicts of mid-nineteenth century.

The story of Freedom's Frontier is about a fundamental American ideal—freedom. The concept of freedom is a challenging subject. The stories that are told in the Heritage Area help to interpret the evolving definition of freedom. These stories can engage visitors in conversations about what freedom has meant over time.

These basic stories—about the search for freedom and the conflict over the definition of “freedom”—are ongoing. They are the basis for the Mission and Guiding Principles of Freedom's Frontier.



Source: University Archives, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

FROM REGION TO STORIES

The Power of Story is framed by the Mission and Guiding Principles of Freedom's Frontier. For reference, these are included below, with the pieces that tie directly to the Power of Story **highlighted in bold text**. The principles shape how we tell our stories and respect the environment and property owners now, and in the generations to come.

Mission

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) is **dedicated to building awareness of the struggles for freedom in western Missouri and eastern Kansas. These diverse, interwoven, and nationally important stories grew from a unique physical and cultural landscape. FFNHA inspires respect for multiple perspectives and empowers residents to preserve and share these stories.** We achieve our goals through **interpretation**, preservation, conservation, and **education** for all residents and visitors.

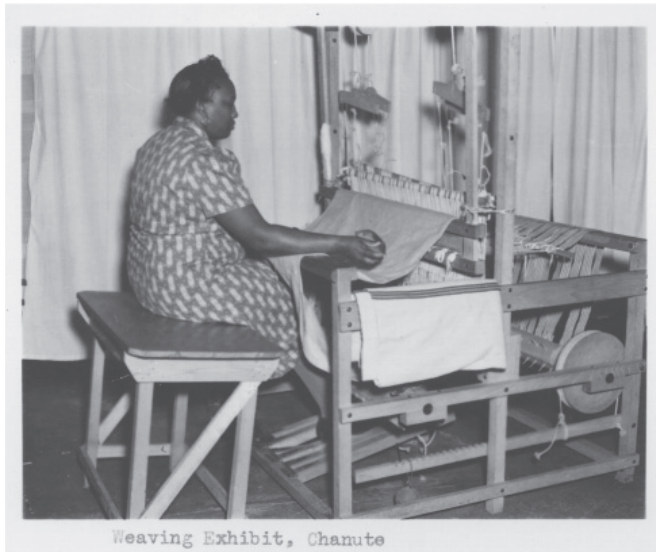
Guiding Principles

- 1. We will be tolerant and respectful of diverse stories from multiple perspectives.**
2. We will respect property rights.
- 3. We will focus on authentic and engaging experiences.**
- 4. We will honor the region's peoples, past and present.**
- 5. We will appreciate the unique cultural & historic assets within the nationally important landscape.**
6. We will invest in community engagement, education and empowerment.
- 7. We will sustain and grow sense of place.**
8. We will value and protect the natural environment.
- 9. We will consider future generations in everything we do.**

Connecting Power of Place and Power of Story

From the broad geographic scale of the region, we move in this chapter to more personal stories, places, and cultural settings. Stories and memories transform spaces into places—giving social meaning to the natural landscape. The Power of Story explores the meaning behind local stories and why they are nationally relevant.

Freedom's Frontier is a "story ecosystem." The power of our stories do not arise from a specific place or point in time, but are formed by an understanding of how the area's landscapes, individual stories, and perspectives were connected.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

ABOVE: A woman seated at a loom demonstrating weaving in Chanute, Neosho County, Kansas, as part of the Works Progress Administration's domestic science and foods project in the 1930s.

Overview

This chapter explores the unique and connected narratives in Freedom's Frontier. We explore the ways we share our history and the power it has to unite and resonate with all people. This section includes:

THE POWER OF OUR STORY

- Our Mission and Principles
- Why Freedom's Frontier Is Nationally Significant
- Why Here and Nowhere Else: Individual Contributions to the Nation's Story
- Milestones in the Enduring Struggles for Freedom

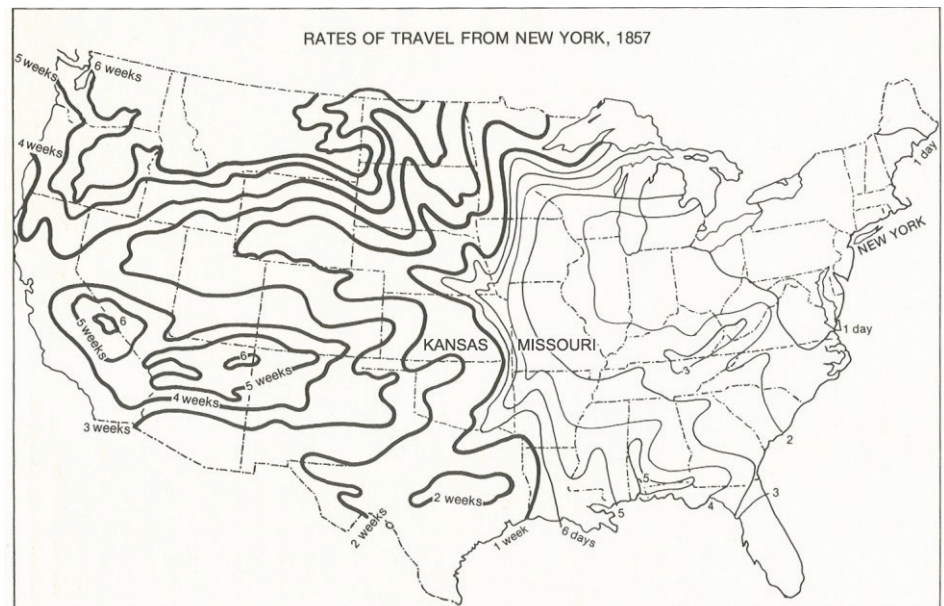
THE POWER OF TELLING OUR STORIES

- How We Tell Our Stories
- Different Lenses for Sharing Our Stories: Merging Viewpoints and Disciplines
- Everyone's Story: Enchancing Our Story Ecosystem

Quick Reference Definitions

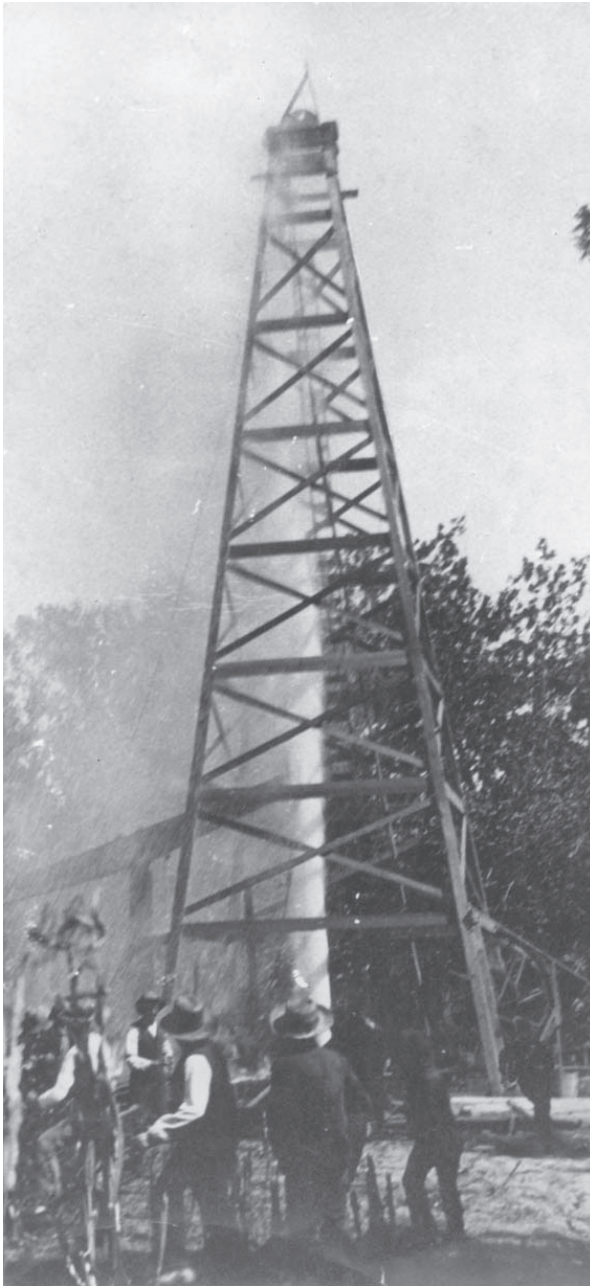
story ecosystem: a web of individual stories that function as a whole network of interrelated themes and events.

A full glossary of terms can be found in the appendix.



ABOVE: Map showing the shortest amount of time it took an individual to travel from New York in 1857 via any combination of rail, steamboat, or road. People travelling to the region from the east coast could take as little as three days. Travel across the width of Freedom's Frontier Heritage Area could take as little as four days. Simultaneously, telegraph lines were beginning to provide near instantaneous news coverage across many parts of the East. Nowhere else in the Midwest was communication as convenient as this region. This led to an incredible growth of interwoven stories.

WHY FREEDOM'S FRONTIER IS NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

Norman #1 Oil Well, Wilson County, Kansas. 1893. This well began the continuous development of the largest oil field in the United States. The oil and mineral wealth of the Neosho River Valley fostered many different stories concerning economic freedom, entrepreneurship, and worker rights.

Statement of National Significance: The Grounding for Our Stories

When visitors and residents understand how our stories were shaped by natural history and shape the nation today—they are more likely to ask deeper questions. We hope to answer them. As we tell stories about individual events that occurred in Freedom's Frontier, we need to be sure to explain the *context* or the "story behind the story." We will explain not just how things occurred but also *why* they occurred.

The sub-themes identified in the Statement of National Significance (shown at right) allow for partners in Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area to place stories and sites into historic context, or within the major trends that surrounded specific events. It is the first step in answering why events occurred here and nowhere else.

Our Statement of National Significance clearly states why, within a national context, the resources and values of Freedom's Frontier merit its designation as a National Heritage Area.

Defining the Border War

The Border War includes the period of politically motivated killings and retributions from 1854 to 1861, as well as the battles and associated activities during American Civil War from 1861 to 1865 in the region encompassing Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area.

Statement of National Significance

Struggles for Freedom on the Missouri-Kansas Border

Extraordinary events in the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) forever changed America. In the nineteenth century, the nation turned its eyes to the Missouri/Kansas border, where peoples with diverse definitions of freedom collided, inciting and fueling the Civil War. The impact of these events is forever woven into the nation's fabric.

Freedom's Frontier provides new opportunities for visitors and residents to explore the evolving ideal and fundamental American value of FREEDOM.

Shaping the Frontier:

For the half million pioneers who traveled on the Santa Fe, California, Mormon, and Oregon Trails, the Missouri/Kansas border was the jumping off point. In this place where river travel ended, traders, miners, and emigrants purchased provisions and prepared for long overland treks. As they traveled west, many began to see the "permanent" Indian frontier beyond Missouri's western border as an obstacle to Manifest Destiny.

Missouri-Kansas Border War:

When Kansas was opened for settlement in 1854, a border war ensued, capturing the nation's attention. The Kansas-Nebraska Act nullified the uneasy balance established by the Missouri Compromise and left the territory's future slave status in the hands of settlers. The stakes were high for both sides. The violence of the Missouri-Kansas Border War ushered in the Civil War, consumed the region in bloody conflict through war's end, and devastated communities on both sides of the border.

Enduring Struggles for Freedom:

The nation's struggle for freedom did not end with the Civil War. Though the war eliminated clashes over geography, efforts to break down society's barriers continue. Since the Civil War, this place has inspired national policies and ongoing efforts to secure equal freedoms for all Americans.



PHOTOS FROM TOP: Frontier Trails Museum, Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. John Brown/Adair Cabin, Osawat-
omie, Miami County, Kansas. Aaron Douglas Mural, Topeka,
Shawnee County, Kansas.

WHY HERE AND NOWHERE ELSE?

“The Civil War was for the American imagination, the great single event of our history because it defined Americans as a nation while revealing so many of the issues and tragic ironies which we yet live... We can yet see in the Civil War the powerful, painful, grinding process by which an ideal emerges out of history.”

Robert Penn Warren, *“The Legacy of the Civil War”*

Individual Contributions to the Nation’s Story

Building on the Statement of National Significance, we ask:

Why is Freedom’s Frontier uniquely positioned within the United States to foster discussion about freedom with contemporary relevance?

How can we tie a specific site or event into the larger nationally significant story of Freedom’s Frontier?

Geography and politics, shaped by natural history, offer answers to the above questions. Natural history, as we have seen, strongly shaped the location of towns, trails, and forms of agriculture. They do not explain why the region was wracked with violent conflict. It was largely political events and decisions at the national level that ultimately led to the Border War.



ABOVE: The unique political circumstances of the heritage area affected the national discussion of freedom sometimes with extreme consequences. Here, Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner is attacked by South Carolina Congressman Preston Brooks on the floor of the Senate after Sumner’s “Crime Against Kansas” speech.

MILESTONES IN FREEDOM

Significant laws, Supreme Court decisions, treaties, and other documents shaped the region that became Freedom's Frontier. In turn, this area also inspired and influenced other documents that stemmed from debates over the definition of freedom, both at home and abroad. **Seven of the one hundred documents chosen by the National Archives and Records Administration as the 100 Milestone Documents have direct associations to the Freedom's Frontier story.** These milestone documents can be found at:

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov>

The following pages include a brief summary of each of these milestones in freedom.

Quick Reference Definitions

milestone documents: “documents that have influenced the course of U.S. history. They have helped shape the national character, and they reflect our diversity, our unity, and our commitment as a nation to continue our work toward forming ‘a more perfect union.’” – National Archives and Records Administration

A full glossary of terms can be found in the appendix.

Louisiana Purchase (1803)

In 1803, the United States purchased a vast region west of the Mississippi River from France. In what came to be known as the Louisiana Purchase, the U. S. acquired 828,000 square miles of land for a mere \$15 million, doubling the young nation's size. The boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase included the lands that fell in the watersheds of the west-reaching tributaries of the Mississippi River. Kansas and Missouri were among the thirteen states later carved out of the vast territory. **The purchase ushered in nearly two centuries of westward expansion and, by extension, portended future tensions over slavery.**

“I know that the acquisition of Louisiana has been disapproved by some, from a candid apprehension that the enlargement of our territory would endanger its Union. But who The larger our association the less will it be shaken by local passions; and in any view is it not better that the opposite bank of the Mississippi should be settled by our own brethren and children than by strangers of another family? With which should we be most likely to live in harmony and friendly intercourse?” Thomas Jefferson, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1805.



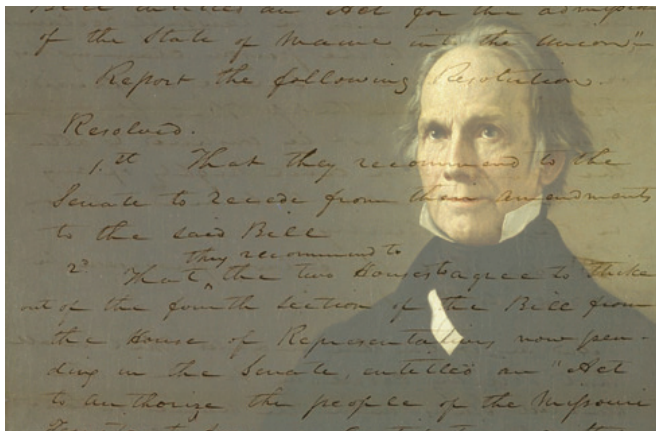
Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

ABOVE: Map of the Louisiana Purchase. c. 1804.

Missouri Compromise (1820)

The Missouri Compromise provided for the admission of Missouri to the Union as a slave state and the establishment of the state's southern boundary, 36 degrees 30 minutes (an extension of the Mason-Dixon Line), as the dividing line between future slave and free territories within the boundaries of the Louisiana Territory. The Missouri Compromise was one of a number of political contrivances aimed at preserving a Union torn over the issue of slavery. To equalize the number of free and slave states in the Union, Missouri's admission to the Union was balanced by the simultaneous admission of Maine as a free state. **Although the compromise protected the culturally southern Missourians' right to own slaves, it created a slave state on the defensive—one that was surrounded by free states on its north and east. This set the stage for the Missouri-Kansas Border War.**

"A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated, and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper."
Thomas Jefferson, April 22, 1820.



Portrait courtesy Senate Commission on Art. Document courtesy National Archives.

ABOVE: The Missouri Compromise and Speaker of the House Henry Clay.

Indian Removal Act (1830)

The Indian Removal Act of 1830, promoted by President Andrew Jackson, endorsed and accelerated a decades-old practice of Indian removal from lands eyed for white settlement. Following the Revolutionary War, the United States government set out to relocate Indian peoples from east of the Mississippi River to areas not already divided into territories or states. Soon after the Louisiana Purchase, Euro-American settlement began to encroach on tribal lands in frontier regions like Alabama, Mississippi, and Missouri. In 1825, the Osages ceded the remainder of their Missouri lands and relocated to Kansas.

These early "emigrant" Indians in Kansas were later joined by tribes removed from the southeast, including the Cherokees and Creeks. Indians were further displaced by the Platte Purchase in 1836, which resulted in the removal of the Sac and Fox Tribe from northwest Missouri to northeast Kansas. By 1846, the native Kansas tribes were joined by nearly 30 emigrant tribes, who were placed on reservations established by various treaties. When the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened the territory to white settlement before the federal government negotiated treaties with the tribes, Euro-American settlers squatted on tribal lands with impunity, resulting in further removal to what is now Oklahoma.

"It is pleasing to reflect that results so beneficial, not only to the States immediately concerned, but to the harmony of the Union, will have been accomplished by measures equally advantageous to the Indians. What the native savages become when surrounded by a dense population and by mixing with the whites may be seen in the miserable remnants of a few Eastern tribes, deprived of political and civil rights, forbidden to make contracts, and subjected to guardians, dragging out a wretched existence, without excitement, without hope, and almost without thought." Andrew Jackson.

Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)

The Kansas-Nebraska Act created two territories, Kansas and Nebraska, west of Missouri. Since the Missouri Compromise, the nation had only become more divided on the issue of slavery. The institution had become increasingly prevalent in the southern states where a planter society prevailed, and decreasingly tolerated by the industrialized northern states, all of which had abolished slavery by 1804. Under the Missouri Compromise, the Nebraska and Kansas territories would have become free states. **The Kansas-Nebraska Act, however, repealed the Missouri Compromise by allowing voters in the new territories to decide their slavery status. This further aggravated tensions between the North and South, ushering in the Missouri-Kansas Border War and the Civil War.**

"I plainly see you and I would differ about the Nebraska-law. I look upon that enactment not as a law, but as violence from the very beginning. It was conceived in violence, passed in violence, is maintained in violence, and is being executed in violence ... In my humble sphere, I shall advocate the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, so long as Kansas remains a territory; and when, by all these foul means, it seeks to come into the Union as a Slave state, I shall oppose it." Abraham Lincoln, August 24, 1855.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

ABOVE: Destruction of the Free State Hotel. Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas. 1856.

Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857)

While Scott never lived in or traveled through the area that would become Freedom's Frontier, the ruling in his case was essential to the story of the region. In 1846, Dred Scott, a black slave, sued for his emancipation, arguing that his extended stays in northern territories rendered him free. The case was appealed to Missouri's Supreme Court, then the U.S. Supreme Court. In its decision, the high court ruled that slaves were not citizens of the United States and, therefore, had no legal rights. In addition, it proposed that the federal government could not prohibit slavery in territories. The ruling was welcomed by southern holders who now had some assurances that crossing state or territorial borders would not change a slave's legal status. **In essence, the ruling ensured that the expansion of slavery would not be hindered. It was essential to slaveholders in Missouri, which was surrounded on three sides by free states, to which their slaves could escape. Abolitionists, who supported the case, were outraged.**

"A free negro of the African race, whose ancestors were brought to this country and sold as slaves, is not a 'citizen' within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States." Chief Justice Roger B. Taney.



Courtesy Missouri Historical Society.

ABOVE: Portrait of Dred Scott. Painted c. 1887 from daguerreotype taken in 1857.

Truman Doctrine (1947)

In an address to a joint session of Congress on March 12, 1947, President Harry S. Truman requested \$400 million in funding to prevent Greece and Turkey from falling into Soviet control. Truman's declaration, that "It must be the policy of the United States **to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures,**" initiated a new foreign policy that would prevail for the following four decades. The United States would provide the necessary financial, political, and military support to promote American-style democracy and freedom.

"At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Harry S. Truman before a joint session of Congress, 1947.



Courtesy The Harry S. Truman Library and Museum.

ABOVE: Truman delivering Truman Doctrine address before Congress. 1947.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)

Denied enrollment in nearby white schools, many black students in Topeka were forced to attend all-black schools far from their homes due to the policies of segregation. With the help of the Topeka NAACP, a suit was filed challenging school segregation on the basis of equal protection. In the Brown case, the Federal District Court found that black and white schools were equal with respect to buildings, salaries, teachers and other tangible factors "as could be expected," but also held that it was time for the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse itself with respect to segregation. By the time the Brown case reached the Supreme Court, it was one of five cases coming from four states and the District of Columbia. In 1954, under the leadership of Chief Justice Earl Warren, the court concluded that "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." **The historic desegregation case struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine established by the Supreme Court's ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896—and ushered in the broader Civil Rights Movement.**

"To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." Chief Justice Earl Warren.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

ABOVE: Sumner Grade School. Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. c. 1954.

HOW WE TELL OUR STORIES

The following are qualities that we seek in our storytelling. They grow out of our Mission and are based on our Guiding Principles. Putting these qualities into practice can help Freedom's Frontier offer a visitor experience found nowhere else. We will work to become known nationwide for these qualities.

1. Our stories have meaning and relevance for today

In order to have meaning, our stories must resonate with today's audiences. Our themes proclaim a clear relevance to today's world and to the issues and concerns of modern audiences. They create a connection between the past and the present, and they help us think about the future in new ways.

Terrorism, human rights, property rights. Many of our stories, although they come from another time, seem to be taken directly from today's newspaper headlines. They have the ability to create a strong connection between the past and the present and to help us think about the future in new ways.



Source: published in *The History of the Indian tribes of North America*, by Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall (author) (Philadelphia, 1836-1844), based (probably) on a painting by Charles Bird King.

Lithograph of Opothleyahola. He led Native Americans and African Americans into Kansas during the Civil War. How does their story connect to those of refugees in war-torn regions today?

2. Our stories gain power because they embrace shared human experience

Many of the most powerful interpretive themes and stories touch on the life experiences that all humans share whether they live in Missouri or Kansas, in Europe, Africa, or Asia. These are the experiences that resonate with us in a deeply personal way. They include joy, death, renewal, family, service to country, work, creativity, and many others. We believe that the most successful interpretative themes embody such universal concepts. In Freedom's Frontier, our stories touch on universal emotions and experiences: freedom, hope, struggle, fear, and disagreement. Our stories represent the best of human aspirations and the worst of human actions expressed in fear, violence, greed, and intolerance.

We emphasize the universal concepts that are so strongly expressed in the Freedom's Frontier story: the complexity of national events, the danger in failing to look beneath the surface and at other points of view, the complex and imperfect nature of the human character, and the ways we seek to reconcile conflict. *The three sub-themes offer a window through which to consider how Americans debated American ideals of "freedom," "justice," "local control," and "property rights" from the opening of settlement to the present day. The power behind our stories and themes is that they illustrate the debates over these ideals.*



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

Exodusters in Floral Hall, Shawnee County, Kansas. How many different ways can we tell the unique stories that make up our shared human experience?

3. We seek out new stories and perspectives

Our stories encourage dialogue and start conversations. The story of Freedom's Frontier is not a two-sided, "good-versus bad" story. It cannot be told in terms of Northerner versus Southerner, abolitionist versus slave-owner, free state versus slave state, Missouri versus Kansas, integration versus segregation.

Partners in Freedom's Frontier help to challenge and invite residents and visitors to explore broader perspectives. One of the ways that we seek out new stories is by developing many different disciplinary approaches and "lenses" through which to explore and interpret the region. We describe some possible lenses for new perspectives in the section to follow.

Furthermore, many of our stories are just now coming to light, thanks to the research and dedication of our partners. They are stories about farmers, laborers, shop owners, women, children, Native Americans, and African Americans, whose stories and perspectives were previously ignored but are being rediscovered through oral traditions, written records, buildings, and artifacts. Freedom's Frontier encourages continued exploration into our past in order to better inform our present and future.

"The story of Freedom's Frontier is not a two-sided, "good-versus bad" story. Rather, it is diverse and multi-faceted. Partners in Freedom's Frontier help to broaden residents' and visitors' established points of view and invite them to explore new perspectives."

4. We embrace varying perspectives on our themes

We accept diverse interpretations of the meaning of freedom and the struggles to achieve it.

For example, the theme of "Shaping the Frontier" can refer to the freedom to travel west to seek one's fortune, or to the struggle over land rights between whites and Indians.

In the context of the Missouri-Kansas Border War, "liberty" can mean freedom from slavery. From another viewpoint, it can mean the freedom to have slaves and retain control of property rights. Today, for some, freedom can mean the right to develop one's property as one chooses. For others, the right to build on a rare ecological site or within a beautiful view, may seem like a confiscation of everyone's right to a healthy environment.

The themes of Freedom's Frontier are not just about freedom, but also the struggles for freedom. They can be seen embracing clashing points of view and the ways



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

ABOVE: Brewery in Winthrop, Buchanan County, Missouri opposite Atchison, Kansas. c. 1906-1910. The story of prohibition at the turn of the twentieth century was viewed very differently by different groups of society on both sides of the state line.

people seek reconciliation—through violence, war, legislation, compromise, and the healing solace of time, among others.

Indeed, the historical truth is very complex. On the facing page, the Population and Origins Map was compiled using information from the 1860 Census. A census, historical or current-day, can only give us a snapshot in time. It cannot always reflect what happened in the ten years in between. Furthermore, the origins of populations taken from the census do not necessarily reflect a specific point of view. For instance, people from southern Ohio, Indiana, or Illinois can be considered “North,” but they may have been closer to the “Upper South” in spirit and family connections.

James Lane is an example of a southern Indianan who, according to many historians, had not made up his mind about slavery before arriving in Kansas. Similarly a number of “Upper South” Missourians were active in the Kansas free-state movement. Origins did not necessarily reflect attitudes toward slavery. The viewpoints of Missourians who did not move to Kansas were not by any means uniform. For example, the 137 Weston, Missouri signers of the September, 1854 resolution in opposition to the pro-slavery “Platte County Self-Defensive Association,” declared their opposition to the “violence and menace” of the Self-Defensive group.

While many points of view existed in the past, just as many exist today about the past. Our stories mean many things to many people. By telling the same stories from different perspectives, Freedom’s Frontier partners have found common ground. They believe in the power of these stories and they respect differing points of view.

5. We examine our stories and weave them together

No matter what metaphor one uses to describe our land and stories—an ecosystem, fabric, or quilt—the individual stories and places are connected by themes. In all of our interpretation, visitors can discover how each location, event, and story is part of the history that changed the nation and has enduring relevance today.

We also connect specific places with other location inside and outside of the borders of Freedom’s Frontier. No event in this region happened in isolation, so no story can properly be told in isolation. Visiting just one location or hearing just one story allows for an incomplete view of the past. In order to understand the bigger picture of the struggles over freedom, sites and stories must be connected to one another.

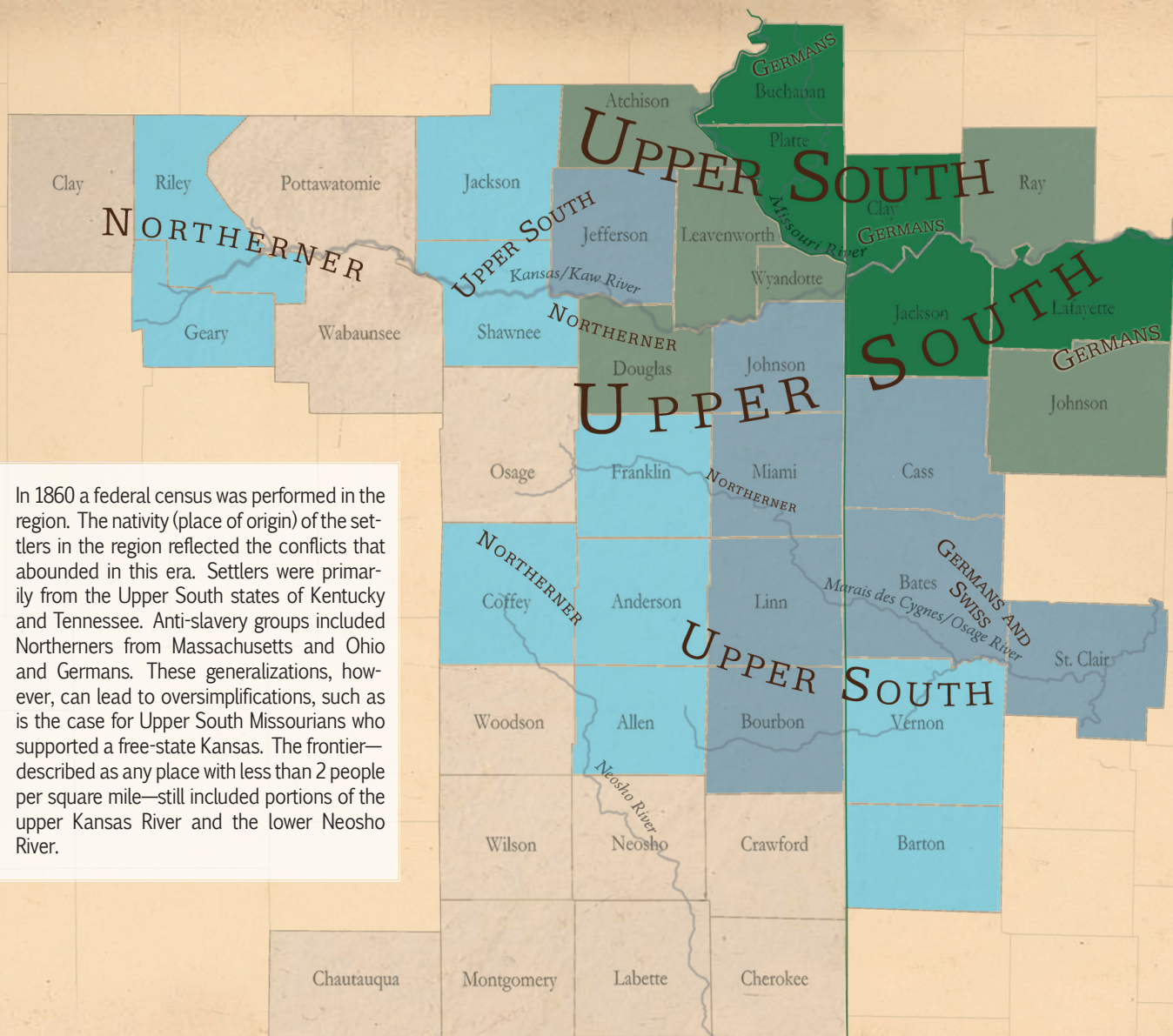
In so doing, we help people to discover how history is shaped by ecology and why nationally transformative events happened in Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area and nowhere else.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

ABOVE: Native American weavers. Jackson County, Kansas.

POPULATION AND ORIGINS



In 1860 a federal census was performed in the region. The nativity (place of origin) of the settlers in the region reflected the conflicts that abounded in this era. Settlers were primarily from the Upper South states of Kentucky and Tennessee. Anti-slavery groups included Northerners from Massachusetts and Ohio and Germans. These generalizations, however, can lead to oversimplifications, such as is the case for Upper South Missourians who supported a free-state Kansas. The frontier—described as any place with less than 2 people per square mile—still included portions of the upper Kansas River and the lower Neosho River.

LEGEND

Population Density - 1860

- 30+ people per square mile
- 15-30 people per square mile
- 8-15 people per square mile
- 2-8 people per square mile
- Counties with less than 2 people per square mile not highlighted.

GERMANS Nativity - 1865
(Euro-American Figures only)

Sources: 1860 United States Census; David Rumsey Collection, *Kansas & the Gold Mines*, 1862.; David Rumsey Collection *Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas*, 1860.; Shortridge, J., *Peopling the Plains*, 1995.

Note: The boundaries for several counties have shifted or have been renamed since 1860. Data for counties has been adapted to 2009 county boundaries. See Appendix X.

SCALE 1" = 25 miles

Freedom's
Frontier
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



6. We connect our stories with the land

Stretching over four river valleys and parts of two states, the region was the epicenter of conflicts, partly stemming from the Missouri Compromise and westward expansion, that define American values and the struggles to achieve them. The repeated, forced movement of Native American nations and the inspiring resilience of those nations in the face of oppression, the voluntary immigration of settlers along the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails, the abolition of slavery, the arduous treks and tenuous settlements of African American “Exodusters,” and the final resolution of racial segregation in our public schools a century later—all of stories belong in the larger context of Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area.

Over two centuries and thousands of square miles, the landscape of rivers, plains, and forests had a critical effect on the location of trails, settlements, towns, and points where people with differing definitions of freedom would come into contact. By connecting our stories with the land, we help visitors understand the importance of natural history and ecology in shaping human events. In making this discovery, we can also begin to think about how to steward the land for future generations.



ABOVE: Truteau’s propaganda to attract settlers to Missouri is one known reason people may have settled there. However, many stories of settlement have been forgotten or are not being told. What could these stories add to our understanding of our heritage?

7. We help our audience experience an “authentic” story

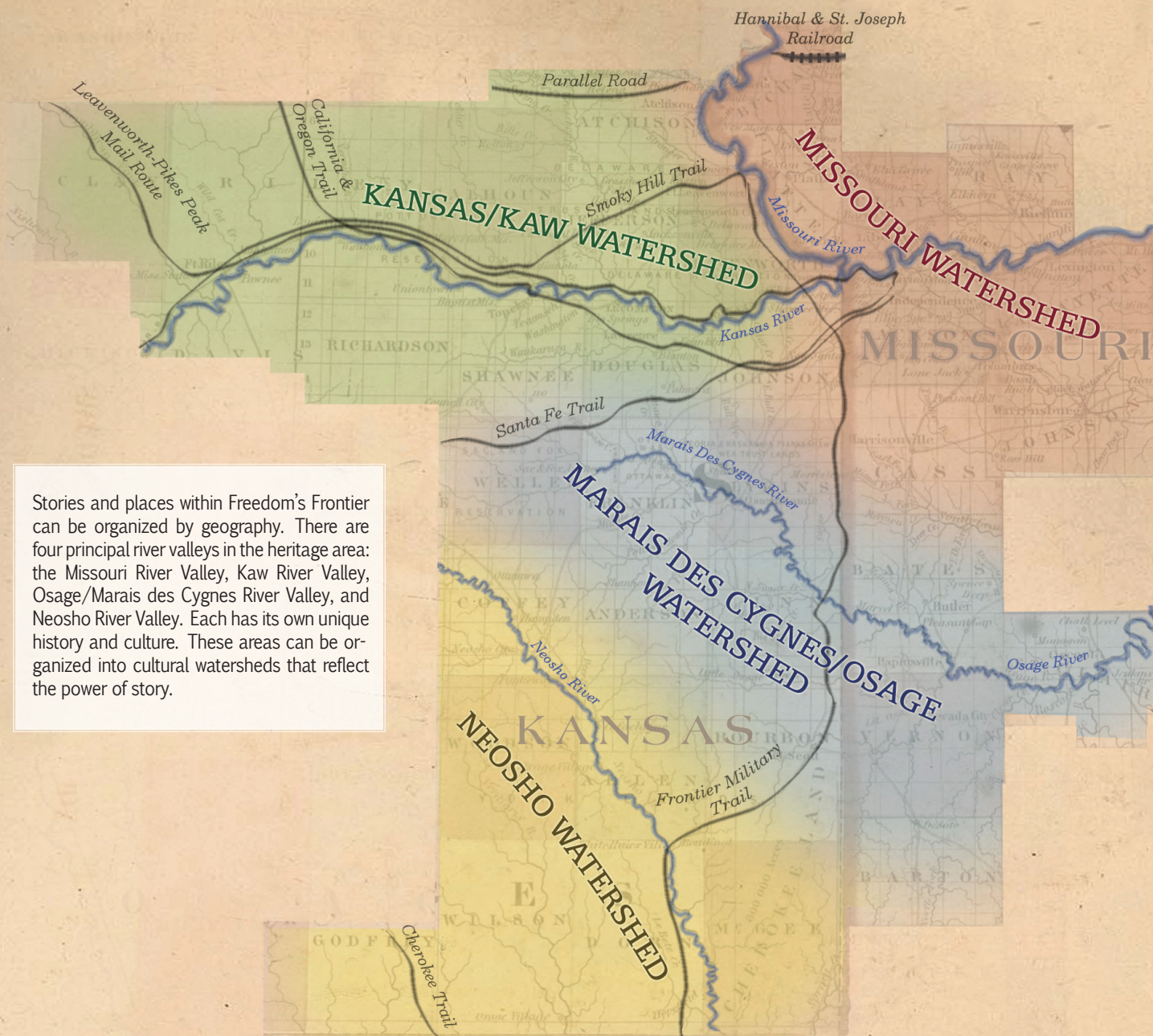
We define “authenticity” as more than simple validation of facts. Rather, it has to do with a genuine experience of being there psychologically as well as physically—of emotion, touch, sight, and smell. Telling an authentic story means more than telling a correct story. An authentic story must be truthful, not just to the facts, but also to the place in which it is told, the people whose lives it recounts, and the people who are telling it. Likewise, its link to Freedom’s Frontier must be authentic and organic, rather than stretched or constructed in order to participate in the heritage area.

Authenticity is not a simple word to define and its application to story is not simple to explain. For a story to be authentic, it must be connected to more than just the physical evidence or landscape that remains. In doing so, we don’t just show a video or recite a narrative; we engage all of the senses. We invite our visitors and residents to walk in the footsteps of those who came before them, to experience the emotions, and to consider the struggles, dilemmas, and trials of those who helped to define freedom as we understand it today.



ABOVE: Ernestine Cheney as Neosho River Valley resident “Aunt Polly.” Accurate portrayals of historic figures can add to the experience of being at an authentic place.

CULTURAL WATERSHEDS



Stories and places within Freedom's Frontier can be organized by geography. There are four principal river valleys in the heritage area: the Missouri River Valley, Kaw River Valley, Osage/Marais des Cygnes River Valley, and Neosho River Valley. Each has its own unique history and culture. These areas can be organized into cultural watersheds that reflect the power of story.

LEGEND



Major Rivers and Tributaries
1860 River Coursings Shown (approximate)



Significant Land
Transportation Routes

SCALE 1" = 25 miles

Sources: Kansas Department of Transportation; David Rumsey Collection, Missouri and Kansas, 1860.

Freedom's
Frontier
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



DIFFERENT LENSES FOR SHARING STORIES

MERGING VIEWPOINTS AND DISCIPLINES

"Of course, I will be compelled to sign these papers, but I sign them under protest, knowing in my own heart that there is no good in it for the Indians."

Shaw-Paw-Kaw-Kah, Sac and Fox, October, 1859

"I propose to march east ... clearing out the valley of the Osage. I will from there turn north, clearing out the valley of the Marais-des-Cygnés."

James H. Lane, September 10, 1861

"Give the Kansas people a taste of what the Missourian has suffered at the hands of the Kansas Jayhawkers."

William C. Quantrill, August 21, 1863

"I remember the bitter feeling existing between the Irish and the Colored laborers in Leavenworth, Kansas, which had its beginning about the close of the war. They had several little conflicts, and on one occasion the civil authorities interfered to prevent bloodshed."

Henry C. Bruce, former Missouri slave, 1895

There are no limits to the number of viewpoints or "lenses" on our past and present that can be employed to enrich the interpretation, tours, and conversations in Freedom's Frontier.

We value and respect varying perspectives on the past. We seek interpretation through multiple disciplines and viewpoints. The stories that a site has to tell may seem constant, no matter who the audience is. But, we can ask new questions and find new and untold stories.

The following are some examples:

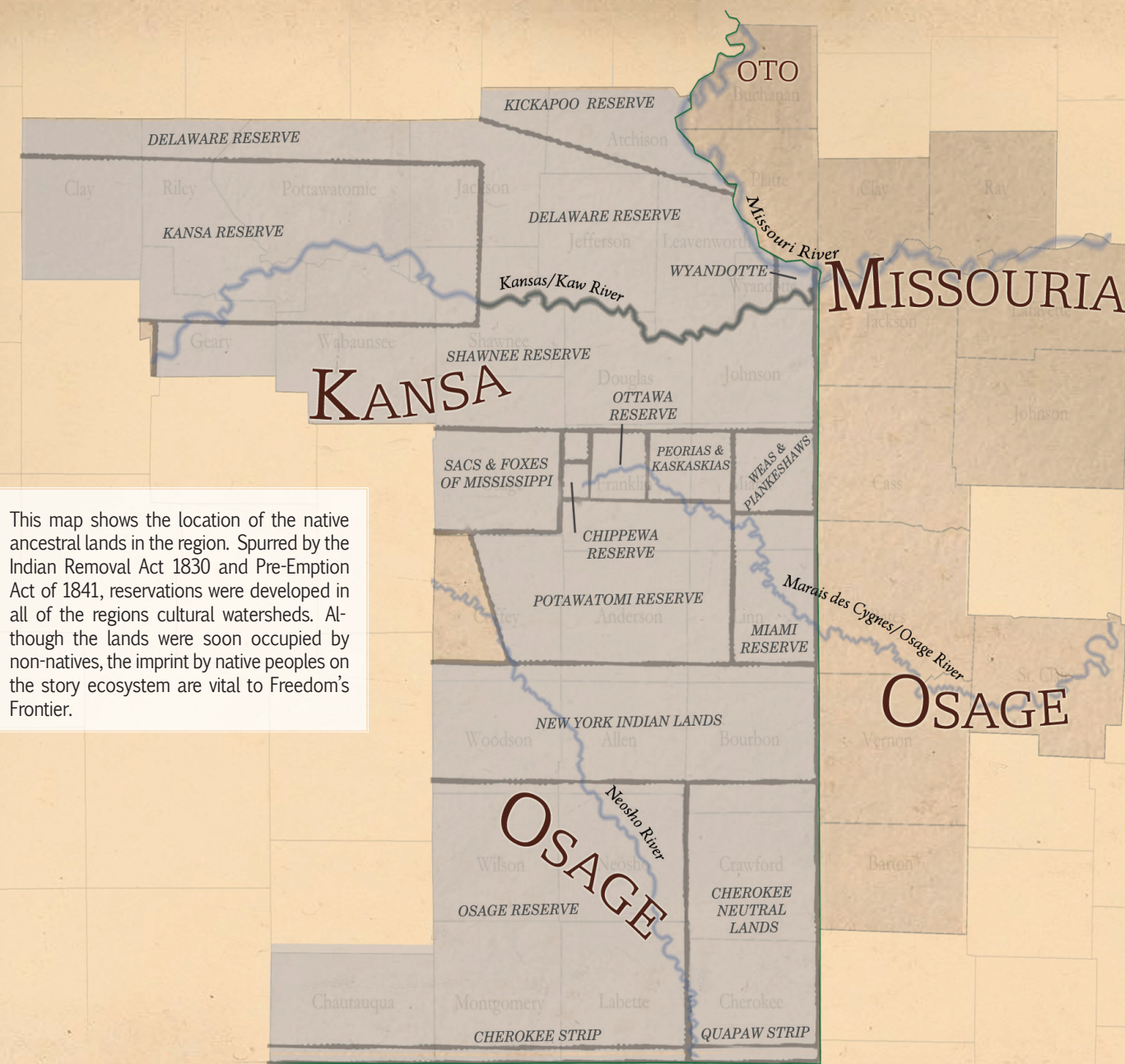
Interpreting through the lens: Native American people

For thousands of years, Native Americans have moved through the region, settled in the area, and shaped its ecology through controlled burning of the prairie and cutting trees for firewood along the river valleys. These are stories not often told when focusing on the Border War. The removal of native tribes and their contact with settlers throughout the mid-nineteenth century says much about enduring struggles for freedom. Yet, these are stories not often told when focusing exclusively on the Border War. With regard to stewardship and the connection of stories with the land, exploring Freedom's Frontier through the lens of Native American history can foster new discussion about how we treat the land and value it in our daily lives.

Interpreting through the lens: Cultural watersheds

Each of these watersheds tells a story when seen through this lens. The Missouri River Valley, for example, can be interpreted to tell a story of westward expansion; the Kaw River Valley can be seen as an area caught in the midst of brutal border conflict and as routes of escape for enslaved people; the Osage/Marais des Cygnés River Valley can be studied as a breeding ground for violence; and the Neosho River Valley can touch on Native American history as the one-time home of the Osage Indians. There is no single story from each watershed, but rather opportunities for questions, new connections, and new ways to tell our stories by seeing them through the lens of rivers.

NATIVE PEOPLES



This map shows the location of the native ancestral lands in the region. Spurred by the Indian Removal Act 1830 and Pre-Emption Act of 1841, reservations were developed in all of the regions cultural watersheds. Although the lands were soon occupied by non-natives, the imprint by native peoples on the story ecosystem are vital to Freedom's Frontier.

LEGEND

OSAGE

Native Ancestral Lands

KANSA
RESERVE

Indian Reservations in Kansas
(1846)



Major Rivers

SCALE 1" = 25 miles

Source: Kansas State
Historical Society

Freedom's
Frontier
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA





Courtesy Library of Congress Geography and Map Division.

ABOVE: Detail from “Route of the Mormon Pioneers.” As the physical environment affected the movement of pioneer groups, the cultural, political, and social interactions between individuals and groups provide a wealth of stories from different groups and cultures.



ABOVE: Fairfax bomber plant, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas. 1942. The contribution of the region to the “Arsenal of Democracy” and post-war anti-communist foreign policy can be viewed and interpreted through the established interpretive theme of the enduring struggle for freedom.

Interpreting through the lens: Strategic settlement and attracting settlers

Kansas and Missouri lay at the forefront of national debate in the 1850s. As discussed in the Power of Place, written descriptions, published travelers’ accounts, and settler narratives all touted, and perhaps exaggerated, the resources and mild climate of the region to draw newcomers. The landscape existed not just as a physical resource, but as an ideal that could be packaged and sold to non-native settlers who would, in turn, determine the fate of Kansas and Missouri. The lens of strategic settlement helps us to understand how even period-based descriptions can be biased. Students of all ages can be asked how the language and images we use today convey Freedom’s Frontier to people who have never visited.

Interpreting through the lens: Established interpretive themes

Developed with much citizen input, the Statement of National Significance for Freedom’s Frontier includes three themes that can act as lenses for interpretation:

- The theme of political conflict along the Border opens questions about the period 1845-1870
- The theme of shaping the frontier can extend throughout much of the nineteenth century with connections to the national trails, town building, and the advance of the railroads.
- The theme of enduring struggles for freedom continues into the twentieth century and today with discussions of Native American rights, women’s suffrage, the Civil Rights Movement and debates over contemporary property rights and environmental justice.

Educational Ideas and Tours

Each of these lenses and others yet to be developed can become units for teaching and travel. The appendix offers sample thematic booklets wherein Freedom's Frontier is explored through various lenses. These booklets are:

- The Natural History of the Region is an adaptation of a section in the Power of Place. It reviews the area through interpretation of the area's environment, conservation, and natural process in relation to the stories of the National Heritage Area. Similar booklets can be crafted from other sections of the management plan.
- The Cultural Watersheds of Four Rivers reviews the stories of the region by organizing the area into four subregions defined by both the natural watersheds and common cultural experiences within the watersheds.
- Strategic Settlement: Promoting Kansas and Missouri to a National Audience places the settlement of the region within the national themes of Westward Expansion and Settlement.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

"... to-day, this State stands redeemed, disenthralled from slavery and oppression, and we trust the day is not distant when Missouri will hear the last rebel's cry of defeat and submission—the loyal, universal shout of victory: then her streams, her hills and waving woodlands will join in one vast choral hymn, when banners shall be furled and arms lain to rust, and Peace snatch the scepter from the wearied God of War. God hasten the day!"

—The Missouri Hand-book, embracing a full description of the state of Missouri; her agricultural, mineralogical and geological character; her water courses [timberlands, soil and climate; the various railroad lines ... description of each county in the state; the emancipation ordinance.]

By, Nathan H. Parker. St. Louis: P.M. Pinckard, 1865

FROM TOP: Anti-war demonstration in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. 1970. Anti-rebellion and anti-slavery comments concerning Missouri. 1865. How do perspectives lead to conflict? How do we protect perspectives that aren't shared by the mainstream? How do we prevent conflict from manifesting into a cycle of revenge and retribution? Why do groups clash over First Amendment freedoms such as the freedom of speech and assembly? These ideas can be further explored through an educational lens can be developed into a thematic booklet for teachers and tourists.

SHARING STORIES & SENSE OF PLACE

ENHANCING OUR STORY ECOSYSTEM

The Value of Stories for a Sense of Place

One effect of knowing part of the ecosystem of stories is that residents find a stronger sense of place and sense of region.

What is a “sense of place” and a sense of region and why are they so important?

Following the writings of many geographers and historians, we define sense of place as something more than scenic beauty, or historic events, or landmark architecture.

Sense of place is achieved in Freedom’s Frontier through the region’s natural history, social activism and debate, open sky, and a long-term tradition of community involvement. As stated in the Power of Place, historic sites and landscapes are valued for their natural history, how they shaped human history, their scenic beauty today, and vitality of their social life.

Claiming a sense of place in this region and a sense of its values can give us insights and higher standards for the future. We can appreciate what is best in the places we call home. Knowing the history and local stories of our own community can help the next generations know what makes life in each of our communities worth improving.

The Story Ecosystem

Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area is a story ecosystem—a complex community of sites and stories that work in concert to tell a larger story about the struggles over freedom that occurred in this place. Each story and site adds another layer to the story, providing a richer understanding of how we understand freedom in the present day.

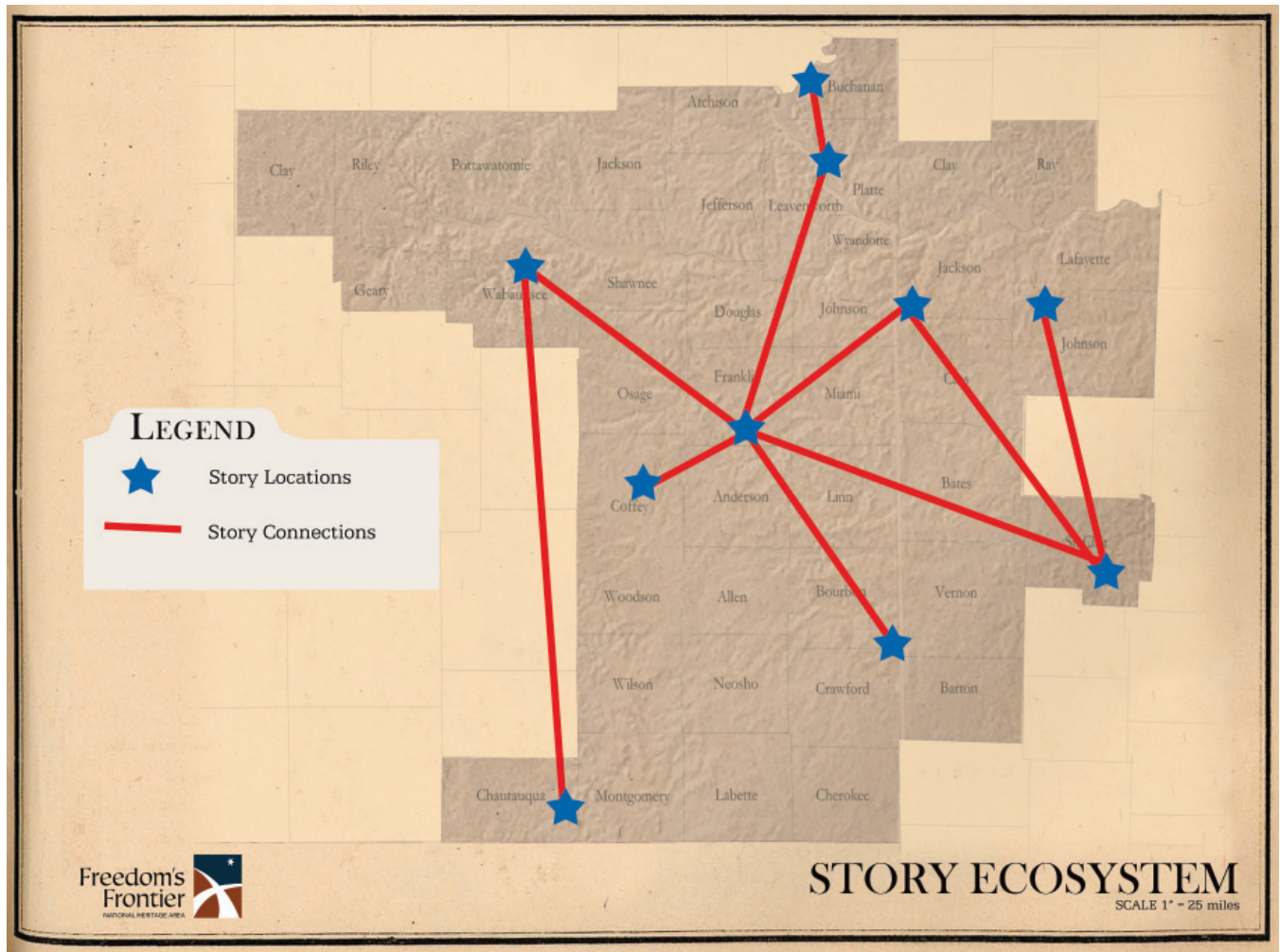
This story ecosystem cannot exist without the stories from a wide range of perspectives. While it is important to understand “both sides” of the stories, it is even more important to understand that there are more than just two perspectives. Every historical actor in the events that occurred in Freedom’s Frontier encountered and remembered things in a unique way. Likewise, we all tell our stories in different ways. Freedom’s Frontier partners are committed to seeking out and sharing a multi-dimensional story of how people experienced struggles over freedom in the past.

Why Does a “Sense of Place” Matter for Freedom’s Frontier?

Sense of place in our region happens when we care about past and future. Knowing some of our stories and how they fit into a nationally significant whole, can help to instill a sense of pride. Our stories can also help current and future generations who live here have a stronger sense of commitment to our region. We share stories not just because they are interesting or historic—but also because they can help us be more effective and committed citizens today.

Our local ecologies and political traditions represent ideals that, like freedom or equal rights, are something worth fighting to protect.

A commitment to one’s home inspires actions such as running for local political office, volunteering on local boards and taking a stand on a controversial local issue. For example, if residents value a piece of land and stream for its historical, cultural, and economic value, they will work to save it.



ABOVE: Generic map of a story ecosystem. Freedom's Frontier partners will create a connected experience. Visitors and residents alike will not only learn what happened in one story at one site but they will learn about how other stories at other sites touched that story and how that story affected other stories. They won't just learn about the facts of an event, but will understand how that event shaped this region and how the region affected the nation and the world.

"[Freedom's Frontier] is less about stories forgotten and more about stories remembered. It is less about putting people into a place and more about putting people into the historical framework."

Rick Hughes, President and CEO of the Kansas City Convention and Visitors Association

Impacts from other National Heritage Areas

"[The designation of Cane River National Heritage Area inspired] a cultural renaissance, to document our history, to tell our own stories, to give credit to the descendents and the ancestors for the accomplishments of generations of the past. We believe that it's our responsibility to take care of our people. This culture is too rich for other folk not to know about it."

Terrel Delphin, Cane River Creole.

“History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.”

Robert Penn Warren, *“The Legacy of the Civil War”*

Weaving Stories and Sites into a National Context

The Statement of National Significance allows Freedom’s Frontier to place stories and sites into their “historic contexts,” or the major trends that surrounded specific events.

Likewise, specific events or accounts can help illustrate broader themes. For instance, an exhibit on the Oregon Trail should include first-hand accounts of people who followed the trail west. Used in tandem, first-hand accounts from multiple perspectives and historical narratives create the most compelling stories and establish authenticity, without which a site or museum lacks credibility.

Considering Future Generations: Our Mission of Stewardship

Fostering a stronger sense of place and regional pride is one of the most grassroots means of taking care of the environment today. In so doing, we leave a richer legacy for future generations. As stated at the outset of this plan, our vision implies a future with more choices and, potentially, a stronger and more diverse economy and cultural institutions. This challenge will not be easy, but in all that we do, Freedom’s Frontier partners will consider impacts on future generations. We will do nothing that might limit the choices available to our successors. We will consider new ways to leave a stronger region with vibrant and creative social networks that support economic innovation, volunteerism, and investment in public and private enterprise.

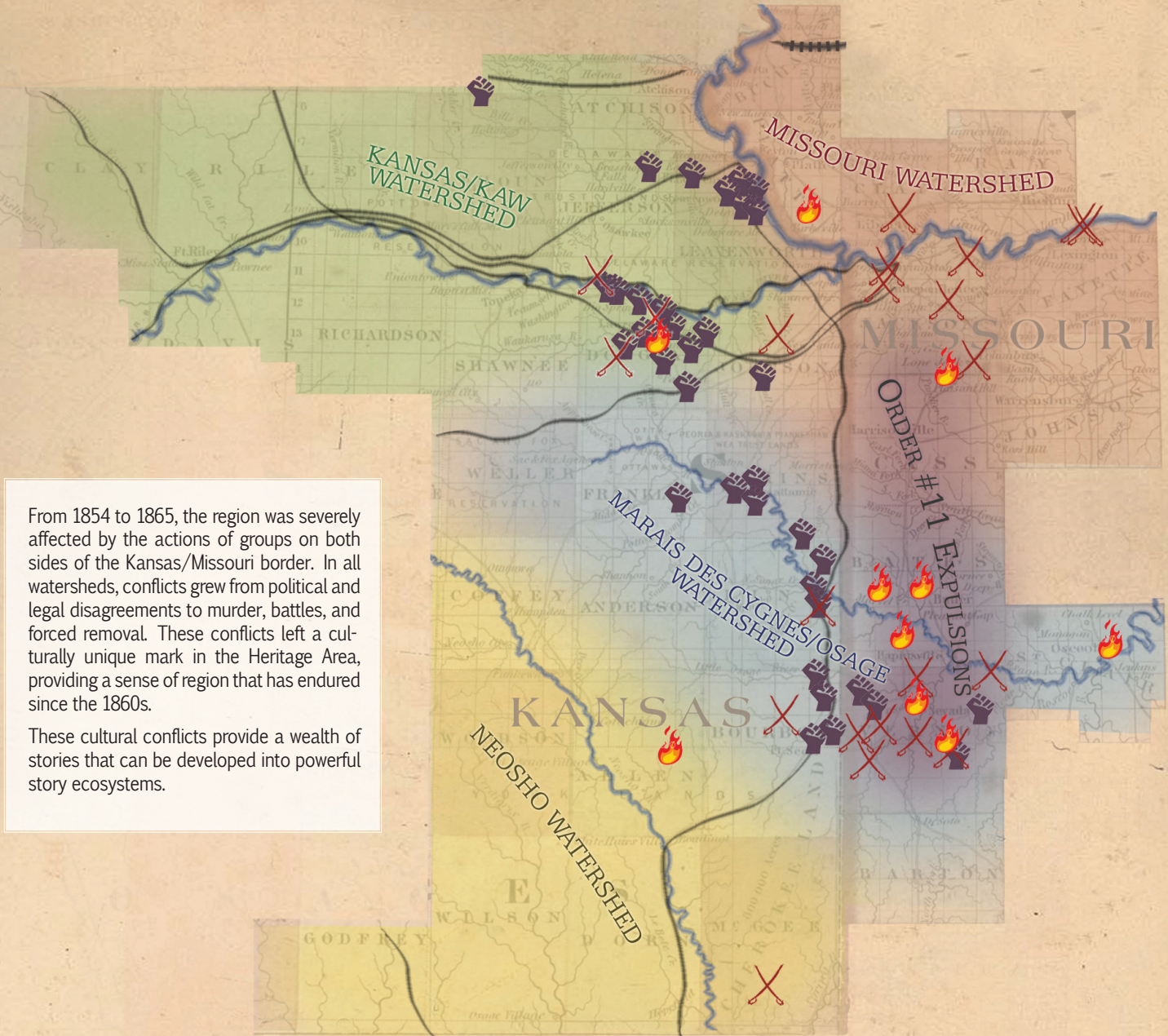
Telling Stories for the Future

Good interpretation is the key to uncovering the story ecosystem. Interpretation isn’t just about getting your facts correct, but making emotional connections with the audience. Although the delivery methods are constantly evolving, good interpretation is timeless.

New methods for providing quality interpretation for residents and visitors open up a world of possibilities for Freedom’s Frontier and make the goal of sharing a connected story attainable. New technologies allow for visitors and residents to get the information they desire anywhere in the world. Through new media like the internet, a visitor can learn about a story on the internet, take a virtual tour, and listen to a podcast. The possibilities for Freedom’s Frontier are limited only by its partners’ ability to adapt. New connections can be made in powerful ways. The cultural conflicts map to the right shows the potential of developing connections between river valleys and skirmish sites.

Using new technologies, the stories of Freedom’s Frontier can evolve. This is not just a story about the past, but an examination of how the past informs the present and what freedom means for the future. The process of redefining freedom means that we will always be at a frontier. Individuals will continue to add to the enduring struggle for freedom and redefine its tenets over time.

CULTURAL CONFLICTS (1854-1865)



From 1854 to 1865, the region was severely affected by the actions of groups on both sides of the Kansas/Missouri border. In all watersheds, conflicts grew from political and legal disagreements to murder, battles, and forced removal. These conflicts left a culturally unique mark in the Heritage Area, providing a sense of region that has endured since the 1860s.

These cultural conflicts provide a wealth of stories that can be developed into powerful story ecosystems.

LEGEND



Burnings
(1861-1865)



Political Killings/Battles
(1854-1860)



Civil War Battle Sites/Raids
(1861-1865)



Order #11 Expulsions
(Affected Counties -1863)



Major Rivers and Tributaries
1860 River Coursings Shown (approximate)



Significant Land
Transportation Routes

Sources: Kansas Department of Transportation; National Park Service Heritage Preservation Services; Watts, Dale E., *A Journal of the Central Plains*. "How Bloody Was Bleeding Kansas?" 1995.; State Historical Society of Missouri; David Rumsey Collection, Missouri and Kansas, 1860; Castel, Albert., *Civil War St. Louis*. "Kansas Jayhawking Raids Into Western Missouri 1861." 1959.

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SCALE 1" = 25 miles