



FY2023 ANNUAL REPORT



If you live along the Missouri-Kansas border, how you tell the story of freedom often depends on where you call home.

Along this border, a new nation set out in a long trek across the ancestral lands of Native Americans to settle the frontier and, in the process, hoped to find economic and religious freedom.

Along this border, the nation violently collided in skirmishes that helped instigate the Civil War.

Along this border, millions of Americans fought—over school segregation, over Native-American rights, over suffrage, over the right to choose how to live and love—in the enduring struggle for freedom.

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area brings together the histories that started here but grew to change the course of history for the entire country, whether it is the history of the settlement of the frontier, the Kansas-Missouri Border War and Civil War, or the enduring struggle for freedom.



Freedom's Frontier knits together the histories of the settlement of the frontier, the Border War and Civil War, and the enduring struggle for freedom into one American fabric. Its threads contain the remarkable histories from its partners: historical sites, museums, convention and visitor bureaus, educators, and support societies. Each is deeply invested in telling these stories.

More than three million people call Freedom's Frontier home. More than 30,000 square miles fall in the 41 counties that define Freedom's Frontier in both Missouri and Kansas. As we end our seventeenth year of operation, over 250 organizations have partnered with us.

KANSAS: Allen · Anderson · Atchison · Bourbon · Chautauqua · Cherokee · Clay · Coffey · Crawford · Douglas · Franklin · Geary · Jackson · Jefferson · Johnson · Labette · Leavenworth · Linn · Miami Montgomery · Neosho · Osage · Pottawatomie · Riley · Shawnee · Wabaunsee · Wilson · Woodson · Wyandotte

MISSOURI: Barton \cdot Bates \cdot Buchanan \cdot Cass \cdot Clay \cdot Jackson \cdot Johnson \cdot Lafayette \cdot Platte \cdot Ray \cdot St. Clair \cdot Vernon

On the cover: a Haskell Indian Nations University student performs a fancy dance at the annual Haskell Indian Art Market in Lawrence, Kansas.



A Message from Kevin Wood Trustee Chair, 2023

Dear readers,

As we close another fiscal year, I am pleased Freedom's Frontier has flourished so successfully with our new Executive Director, Lucinda Adams, now in place. Her work to engage the board in steps to realize our strategic plan has been outstanding.

Throughout the year, Freedom's Frontier has remained steadfast in its mission to promote heritage tourism across our 41 counties in order to develop the local economy and preserve our history. We are proud to report significant accomplishments or improvements in the areas of partner meetings, newsletters, and partner outreach.

Our various programs and initiatives have continued to support our 250+ partners up and down the Missouri and Kansas border as they seek to tell the history of the western frontier, the Kansas-Missouri Border War, and the enduring struggle for freedom.

I am pleased to report that our financial position remains strong. Through the diligent efforts of our team, we have overhauled our grant process so that more of our partners can access the types of funds they need – be it reworking a museum display or communicating it through an updated web page.

I am proud to share that our team of board members, staff, partners and volunteers has responded to new leadership, and that so much progress has been gained across all areas of our organization. My sincerest gratitude to you! The unwavering support for Freedom's Frontier has been instrumental in the realization of our goals during the fiscal year.

Warm regards,

Kevin Wood

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Forging the Path

Throughout 2023, FFNHA has continued to make significant strides towards our mission of telling the stories of the struggles for freedom in our region and their lasting impact on our nation. We faced unprecedented challenges this year: navigating through the post pandemic era, economic uncertainties, and ever-evolving societal issues. Despite these obstacles, our dedicated team—in collaboration with our valued partners and supporters—has demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and a relentless commitment to making a positive impact in our community.

Some of our key achievements included:

- Obtaining a 15-year federal reauthorization
- Expanding our Bus on Us grant program
- Resuming regular partner meetings
- Helping obtain bi-state support in Congress for a bill establishing the Quindaro area in Kansas City, KS as a National Historic Landmark
- Joining partners to bring back the Disorder on the Border symposium
- Revamping the FFNHA project grant program

None of our accomplishments would be possible without the unwavering support of our donors, partners, volunteers, and dedicated team members. Your belief in our mission fuels our determination to create positive change and empowers us to reach new heights.

We look forward to meeting the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. FFNHA remains committed to innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement as we promote tourism and economic growth in each of our 41 counties.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for being an essential part of Freedom's Frontier. Your belief in our mandate and our mission propels us forward as we continue to preserve the stories of our past.

- Lucinda Adams, Executive Director



Preserving History & Protecting Rights

Each region's history is unique. When President George W. Bush signed into law the act creating Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area in 2006, it capped a years-long, grassroots effort from Kansas and Missouri volunteers to nationally memorialize this region's history. In the years since, similar efforts have gained traction across the country. In 2019, President Donald Trump created six new national heritage areas that now sit alongside FFNHA as part of the National Heritage Area program.

Established under President Ronald Reagan, the program was envisioned as an alternative to the National Park Service, one that would preserve history and private property rights at the same time. There are now 62 heritage areas from coast to coast, and just as each region's history is unique, the laws that establish and govern each heritage area are distinct.

The law that created Freedom's Frontier is black and white. It states that *no land or organization is automatically "opted in" as a part of Freedom's Frontier*. By law, *no private property owner is required to participate* in or be associated with Freedom's Frontier, nor can Freedom's Frontier own real estate or property. We have *no influence over zoning or land-use regulations and no authority over mineral or water rights*. Any entity or organization who partners with Freedom's Frontier must be within our congressionally designated borders; even then, *we cannot require any entity or organization to partner with us*.

Over the last 17 years, more than 250 museums, historic sites, and organizations across eastern Kansas and western Missouri have voluntarily partnered with us. Together, they help fulfill *our mandate to spur tourism and economic development* by raising awareness of the exceptional, foundational stories that define this region and everyone who calls it home: the settlement of the frontier, the Border and Civil War, and the enduring struggle for freedom.

Those core themes of triumph and struggle reveal the 41 counties that form Freedom's Frontier to be singular, vital components of the American saga. Our mission is to help tell their stories, simultaneously preserving our past and fostering our future.

2023 Grants Report

In fiscal year 2023, Freedom's Frontier awarded 16 Project Grants to our partners from a total of 26 applications. The funds shared nearly \$38,000 with communities throughout our 41 counties in Kansas and Missouri.

The Bates County (MO) Historical Society received \$1300 to bring back a community favorite that had lagged during shutdowns. They held a "Spirit Stroll" in which local people dressed up as foundational citizens and shared stories of the community's past with visitors.

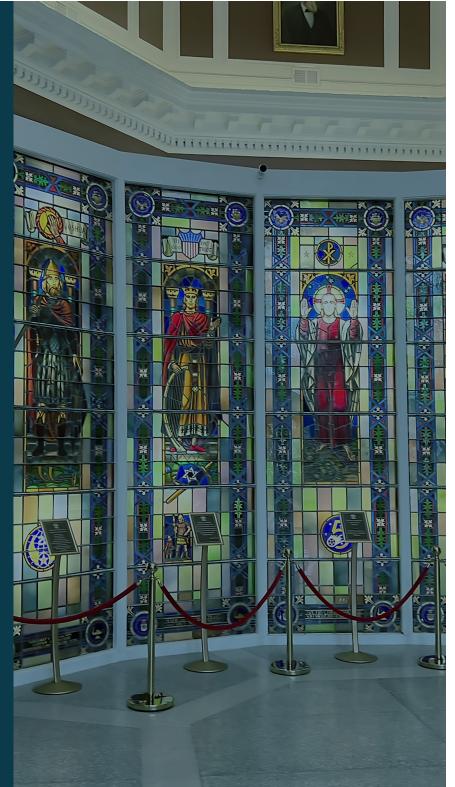
In Liberty, MO, the Clay County Archives and Historical Library upgraded their capacity to digitize records. With \$2500, they were able to purchase several pieces of equipment to support current and future projects. They especially hope researchers will be able to search for genealogical records much more efficiently as a result.

In Lafeyette County (MO), initial steps were taken to save a (Fredrick) Douglass School, so named for educating Black students during segregation. Volunteers used \$2100 and spent hours cleaning out the structure to see what future steps may require.

The Independence (KS) Museum and Art Center is in the process of a large renovation. We contributed \$2500 toward refinishing the original floor in a large open gallery of what was formerly the Post Office downtown.

Several structures at Old Jefferson Town (Jefferson Co, KS) were in desperate need of repair. They held fundraisers but were not able to cover all the costs, so FFNHA was able to offer \$1650 toward painting and window repairs. This meant the historical society did not have to delay a few other projects they had been planning.

(Continued on next page.)



The Wornall/Majors House in Kansas City is working hard to attract a wider range of visitors. A Project Grant of \$3000 helped them update their exhibits for both vision-impaired and non-English speaking tourists.

The Mt. Mora Cemetery Preservation and Restoration Association in St. Joseph, MO, received \$2758 toward equipment to record the stories of past community leaders interred there. They hope to put these recordings online so they can engage the public more prominently.

Tying in with the national Alliance of National Heritage Area's 2023 theme of Environmental Justice, the Douglas County (KS) Historical Society applied for and received \$1615 to expand "Maggie's Garden" outside the Watkins Museum of History. This area attracts both visitors and pollinating insects by providing native plants and informational signage at the park-like setting in downtown Lawrence, KS.

Coming up on a year of closure at the 1855 Harris-Kearney House, the Westport Historical Society used \$1250 toward board development meetings to help prepare members of the Board of Directors for re-opening later in spring 2024.

In August 2023, another round of grants was officially funded, beginning with the Monticello Community Historical Society's desperate need for repairs to the museum building. Simply being able to lock the door securely was one outcome of their \$3000 award.

An ambitious project by multiple partners was awarded \$3000 to create a promotional video for museums throughout all southeast Kansas. With one grant, Freedom's Frontier was able to impact the entire southwest quadrant of the heritage area.

Lee's Summit (MO) Historical Society, in its efforts to preserve original buckskin clothing from a city founder, applied for and received \$3000. They purchased an exhibit case to more safely and securely preserve this unique item for future generations.

In Tonganoxie, KS, the Community Historical Society was awarded \$3000 toward upgrading their website. They plan to add a payment feature which will make it much easier for members to pay dues online or for visitors to submit donations from anywhere.

Topeka, KS, has multiple events planned by various groups to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the landmark Brown v. Board decision of 1954. The Black American Blueprint Collective was created for students to research the case, and then \$3000 in funds will aid them in producing exhibits and lesson plans to share with schools in the area.

Active at many local festivals, the Wyandot Nation of Kansas received a \$3000 grant to update and upgrade their traveling exhibit pieces and signage for visitors to learn from. They'll be better able to share their culture and heritage at school assemblies or field trips as well.

Finally, the Cass County (MO) Historical Society holds a yearly Log Cabin Festival in Harrisonville. A \$3000 grant from Freedom's Frontier allowed them to expand their Civil War reenactment events and attract more visitors to this well-loved annual event.

Partner Meetings

Reconnecting our network

2023 marked the long-anticipated return of face-to-face partner meetings in Freedom's Frontier NHA. Held every other month on alternating sides of the Kansas-Missouri border, these essential gatherings are a vital component of FFNHA's mission to facilitate tourism and ensure economic development in Kansas and Missouri.

At each meeting, attendees from partner sites meet at partner sites throughout FFNHA's 41 counties to discuss best practices, participate in planning sessions, announce new initiatives and events, and tour exhibits at each host location – all while learning directly from their peers. Meetings are held at new sites each period, ensuring equal access and knowledge flow from the area's largest, most well-funded organizations to the region's most rural one-room museums and historical sites.

Virtual meetings were a necessary but imperfect substitute during the pandemic, and ongoing safety concerns forced the November 2022 and January 2023 meetings online.

However, FFNHA held its first in-person meeting in two years on March 23, 2023, at the Wyeth-Tootle Mansion in St. Joseph, Missouri. In May, attendees gathered at the Bushwhacker Museum in Nevada, Missouri. At each meeting, attendees reintroduced themselves and discussed operating in a post-pandemic world.

The Baxter Springs Heritage Center & Museum in Baxter Springs, Kansas, which was slated to host the March 2020 partner meeting before shelter-in-place orders were instituted, was finally able to hold an onsite meeting on July 10, 2023.

The September 2023 partner meeting was held at Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Park in Topeka, Kansas. There, Steve Nowak of the Watkins Museum of History in Lawrence, Kansas, and Sara Wilson of St. Joseph Museums in St. Joseph, Missouri, presented tips and techniques for acquiring grants and funding through collaboration with local partners.



Education

BUS ON US

Field Trip Grants

In FY 2023, FFNHA awarded \$3,444.48 to teachers and educators through its Bus on Us transportation grant program. These grants ensure K-12 students in the region absorb Kansas and Missouri history in hands-on, face-to-face settings.

16 Schools

Representing districts as far north as Leavenworth, KS (Anthony Elementary); as far south as Parsons, KS (Garfield Elementary); as far west as Lawrence, KS (Ballard Center); and as far east as Harrisonville, MO (McEowen Elementary) and Liberty, MO (Liberty Middle School).

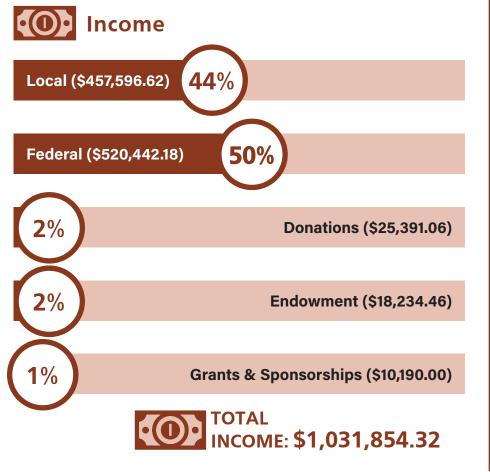
15381 Students

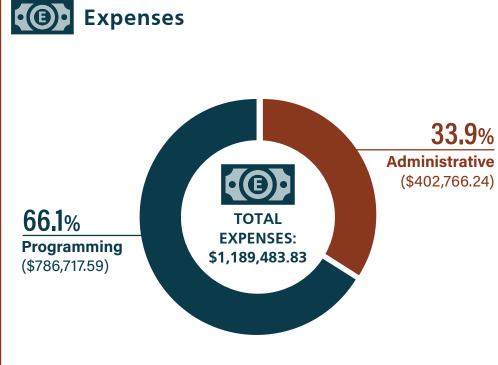
Ranging from second grade students to high school seniors, students from all age groups participated in one-of-a-kind experiences that took them from the classroom to real-life historic locations across Kansas and Missouri, including National History Day nationals.

2826 Miles

Traveled to partner sites across FFNHA, from rural getaways like Fort Scott NHS and Mahaffie Stagecoach & Farm to bustling urban destinations like the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, and the National WWI Museum in Kansas City.

Financials





Platinum Transparency **2023 Candid.**

Candid is the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations. Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area was awarded the 2023 Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency, achieved by less than one tenth of 1% of nonprofits.

Board of Trustees

Honorary Co-Chairs

Mike Parson, Missouri Governor Laura Kelly, Kansas Governor

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Kevin Wood, Chair — Lee's Summit, Missouri Gary Nevius, Vice Chair — Overland Park, Kansas John McGee, Treasurer — Prairie Village, Kansas The Hon. Karen Arnold-Burger, Secretary — Topeka, Kansas

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Partner Team

Mary Billington — Baxter Springs, Kansas

Ex-Officio Members

Gary Kremer, Missouri State Historical Society Matt Chappell, Kansas State Historical Society

Grant Glenn, Immediate Past Chair — Shawnee Mission, Kansas

Mary Ice — Manhattan, Kansas

Martin Owens — Lee's Summit, Missouri Larry Pfautsch — Harrisonville, Missouri

Steve Hitchcock — Baldwin City, Kansas Caronda Moore — Manhattan, Kansas Luther Smith — Kansas City, Kansas Bill Tempel — Leawood, Kansas Bob Totten — Topeka, Kansas Kristen Zane — Overland Park, Kansas

Jennifer Reed — Harrisonville, Missouri

Partners

1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum & Westport Historial Cass County Historic Sites Society

1859 Jail, Marshal's Home and Museum

1st Kansas Colored Infantry Civil War Monument

Afircan-American Quilt Museum and Textile Academy

Alexander Majors House and Barn

Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum

American Flight Museum American Jazz Museum

Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center

Appleton City Landmark Restorations, Inc.

Arabia Steamboat Museum

Arts And Recreation Foundation of Overland Park

Atchison County Historical Society Museum

Atkins-Johnson Farm & Museum

Banner Creek Science Center and Observatory

Basehor Historical Museum Society

Bates County Museum

Battle of Carthage State Historic Site

Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site

Battle of Lexington State Historic Site

Battle of Westport Museum

Battle of Westport Visitor Center and Museum

Battles of Newtonia

Baxter Springs Heritage Center and Museum

Beecher Bible and Rifle Church Bingham-Waggoner Estate

Black Archives of Mid America Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park

Blackpast.org

Bridging the Gap

Brown V. Board of Education

Burlingame Historical Preservation Society

Burning of Osceola Monument

Burnt District Museum and Sharp-Hopper Log Cabin and

Monument

Burr Oak Woods Nature Center

Carnegie Building Carroll Mansion Museum

Carthage Civil War Museum

Cass County Historical Society

Center for Midwestern Studies

City of Lee's Summit

City of Lowry City, Missouri

City of Osceola, Missouri

Civil War Roundtable of Western Missouri

Clay County Historic Sites Clay County Museum

Clearfield County Historical Society Coffey County Economic Development

Coffey County Historical Society Museum

Concordia Area Museum and Historical Society

Confederate Memorial State Historic Site

Connecting For Good

Constitution Hall State Historic Site

Constitution Hall Topeka Corps of Discovery Statue

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

Curtis House Museum Day Log Cabin at the Green Deaf Cultural Center

Democratic Headquarters of Kansas Territory in

Lecompton Dietrich Cabin

Dole Institute of Politics

Douglas County Heritage Are Conservation Council

Douglas County Santa Fe Trail Assc. Edgerton Community Museum Ernie Miller Nature Center Eudora Area Historical Society **Eudora Community Museum**

Excelsior Springs Museum and Archives

Far West

First Territorial Capitol State Historic Site

Fishburn Archives, Park University McAfee Library

Flint Hills Discovery Center

Forest Hill and Calvary Cemeteries Fort Larned National Historic Site

Fort Leavenworth

Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery

Fort Osage National Historic Landmark

Fort Riley Museums

Fort Scott National Historic Site

Fort Scott, KS Convention and Visitors Bureau

Fractured Atlas

Frank James Bank Museum

Franklin County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Franklin County Historical Society

Franklin County Records and Research Center

Fredonia Area Chamber of Commerce

Freedom Fountain

Front Porch Alliance Frontier Army Museum

Frontier Military Historic Byway

Gardner Historical Museum

Gardner Junction Park

Garrison School Cultural Center

Gay and Lesbian Archive of Mid-America

Geary County Historical Society General Jo Shelby Park and Statue

George Historic Cemetery Association, Inc.

George Washington Carver National Monument

Glacial Hills Scenic Byway Glore Psychiatric Museum

Goodnow House State Historic Site

Gordon Parks Museum

Greenbush Education Resource Center

Grinter Place State Historic Site

Guardians of Grover Barn

Harry S. Truman Birthplace State Historic Site

Harry S. Truman Library and Museum

Harry S. Truman National Historic Site

Harry S. Truman National Historic Site Farm Home in Grandview

Harry S. Truman National Historic Site Visitor Center and Home

Haskell Cultural Center and Museum Haskell Indian Nations University

Heartland Conservation Alliance

12 13

Hicklin Hearthstone Historic Mt. Gilead Church Historic Mt. Gilead School Historic Topeka Cemetery Historical Society of New Santa Fe and the Trailside Center Lawrence Public Library Humboldt Civil War Tour Humboldt Historical Museum Humboldt's Orcutt Living Hisotry Backvard Museum. Humboldt Historical Preservation Alliance Huron Indian Cemetery Jackson County Historical Society Jackson County Parks and Recreation Historic Sites Jasper County Courthouse Jefferson County Genealogical Society Jefferson County Historical Society Jesse James Bank Museum **Jesse James Farm and Museum** Jesse James Home Museum/Patee House Museum John and Mary Ritchie House John Brown Museum John Brown Speaks Johnson County Historic Courthouse Museum Johnson County Library Johnson County Museum Johnson County, KS Arts and Heritage Center Johnson County, MO Historical Society Iuneteenth, KC Kansas Byways/KS Dept of Transportation Kansas City Museum Kansas City, KS Public Library Kansas City Public Library and Missouri Valley Room Kansas State Capital Kansas State Historical Society Katy Trail State Park Kaw Point Park Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art Konza Prairie Research Natural Area KU Natural History Museum LaBudde Special Collections, Miller Nichols Library, UMKC 14

LaCygne Historical Society Lakeside Nature Center Lanesfield School Historic Site Lansing Historical Museum Lawrence Visitor Information Center and Convention and Visitors Bureau Leavenworth Convention and Visitors Bureau Leavenworth Historical Society and Carroll Mansion Museum Lecompton Historical Society And Territorial Capital Lee's Summit Historical Society and Historic Cemtery Leila's Hair Museum Leonard H. Axe Library at Pittsburg State University Lexington Historical Association Liberty Jail Historic Site Linn County Historical Society and Museum Little House on the Praire Museum Lone Jack Historical Society Loud Light Louisburg Historical Society Lowell Milken Center Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm Manhattan Convention and Visitors Bureau Marais de Cygnes Society Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art Marla Quilts, and African Quilts Museum, Inc. Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary Mclure Archives and University Museum Merriam Historic Plaza Merriam Visitors Bureau Miami County Historical Museum Mid-America Regional Council Mid-Coast Radio Project (KKFI) Mid-Continent Public Library Midland Railway Depot Mine Creek Battlefield State Historic Site Missouri State Capitol

Missouri Town 1855

Monticello Community Historical Society Mound City Historical Park Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Mount Mora Cemetery Mueseum of the Kansas National Guard Museum at Prairiefire Nathan Boone Homsetead State Historic Site National Agricultural Center and Hall of Fame National Archives at Kansas City National Frontier Trails Museum National World War I Museum and Memorial Native Stone Scenic Byway Negro Leagues Baseball Museum Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art Neosho National Fish Hatchery New Lancaster General Store Nicodemus National Historic Site Olathe Historical Society Olathe Memorial Cemetery Olathe Public Library Old Castle Museum at Baker University Old Depot Museum Old Jefferson Town Old Prarie Town and Warde-Meade Historic Site Old Stone House Along the Oregon Trail Conservancy Old Trails Regional Tourism Opothleyahola Memorial Building Oregon-California Trails Association Osage Mission-Neosho County Historical Society Museum Osage Village State Historic Site Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau Overland Park Historical Society Partners of the First Territorial Capitol Patee House Museum Pea Ridge National Military Park Pharis Farm Planting Peace (Equality House) Pony Express National Museum Poplar Heights Living History Museum

Praire Park Nature Center Praire State Park Prairie Center Prairie Trail Scenic Byway Ouindaro Overlook and Ruins Ouindaro Press LLC Quindaro Underground Railroad Museum Rader Farm Ray County Historical Society Museum and Genealogical Raytown Historical Society And Museum Remington Nature Center Richard Allen Cultural Center Riley County Genealogical Society Riley County Historical Society and Museum & Goodnow House State Historic Site Robert J. Dole Federal Courthouse Robidoux Row Museum Santa Fe Trail Association Sauk River Camp Shawnee County Historical Society Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site Shawnee Kansas Convention and Visitors Bureau Shawnee Mission East High School Shawnee Town 1929 Museum Shoal Creek Living History Museum Silver Heart Inn Southeast Kansas Nature Center, Schermerhorn Park and Cave Spirit of Freedom Fountain Springfield National Cemetery St. Clair County Historical Society and Museum St. Clair County, MO St. Joseph Convention and Visitors Bureau St. Joseph Museum And Black Archives Museum St. Joseph Visitors Center St. Philippine Duchesne Shrine and Potawatomi Trail of Death Memorial Park Sternberg Museum of Natural History Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

The Abduction of Jacob Roxe: A Civil War Tragedy

The Big Divide The Castle Tea Room The Great Overland Station The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art The Rice-Tremonti Home Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio State Historic Site Thrive Allen County Tonganoxie Community Historical Society Topeka Center for Peace and Justice Topeka Genealogical Society Topeka Rotary Club Town of Kansas Bridge Trading Post Museum Union Cemetery Union Prison Collapse Union Station Vaile Victorian Mansion Vernon County Historical Society and Bushwacker Museum Virginia School Visit Topeka Wabaunsee County Museum Wakarusa River Valley Heritage Museum Wakefield Museum Warrensburg Convention and Visitors Bureau Watkins Community Museum of History Watkins Foundation Historical Society Watkins Woolen Mill State Historic Site Weaving the River Wells P. Bailey House Wide Awake Films, LLC Wildcat Glades Conservation and Audubon Center William Klein Park, home of Barnes Enclosure and Cave Spring and 3 Trails Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Wonder Workshop Children's Museum Wornall Majors House Museums Wyandot Nation of Kansas Wyandotte County Historical Museum Wyandotte High School

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