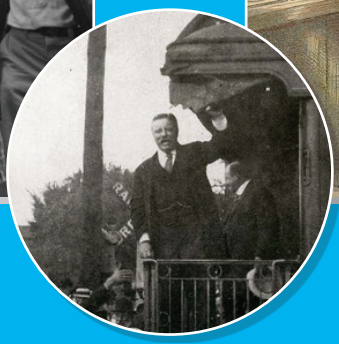


For the People, By the People

HUMANITIES KANSAS

A companion to the **Humanities Kansas** statewide tour of the Smithsonian traveling exhibition, **Voices and Votes: Democracy in America**.

Smithsonian

Escanee el código para la versión en español.

VOICES AND VOTES
DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

AN EXCLUSIVE STATEWIDE TOUR PRESENTED BY HUMANITIES KANSAS

The *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* Smithsonian traveling exhibition traces the bold American experiment of a government run by and for the people. The exhibition explores the dynamic history of American democracy.

- ✓ "The Great Leap" explores the complexities behind America's democratic system.
- ✓ "One Vote, One Voice" traces the history of who gets to vote and when.
- ✓ "The Machinery of Democracy" examines larger political systems.
- ✓ "Beyond the Ballot" explores the First Amendment.
- ✓ "Creating Citizens" highlights the rights and responsibilities of American citizens.

At *Voices and Votes*, you'll learn how everyone in every community is part of this ever-evolving story – the story of democracy in America. This exhibition is based on a major exhibition currently on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History called *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith*.

Humanities Kansas sponsors *Voices and Votes* in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street program, a one-of-a-kind cultural outreach initiative. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.

For exhibition and event details, contact the local organizations directly. Visit humanitieskansas.org for an overview of the Kansas tour.

DODGE CITY
Boot Hill Museum
Respectfully, W.B. Masterson
March 25 – May 7, 2023
www.boothill.org

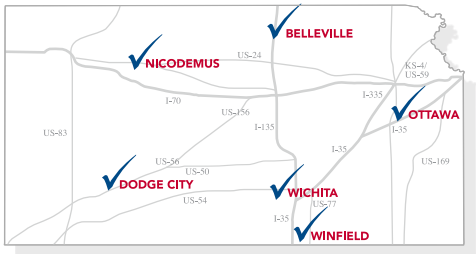
WICHITA
Mid-America All-Indian Museum
The American Indian Vote
May 13 – June 25, 2023
www.theindianmuseum.org

NICODEMUS
Nicodemus National Historic Site
Nicodemus Politicians
July 1 – August 13, 2023
www.nps.gov/nico

OTTAWA
Franklin County Historical Society/Old Depot Museum
Barely Made It: The Naked Voters and Other Franklin County Stories of Democracy
August 19 – October 1, 2023
www.olddepotmuseum.org

WINFIELD
Winfield Public Library
Chautauqua: "The Most American Thing in America"
October 7 – November 19, 2023
winfield.scklslibrary.info

BELLEVILLE
Republic County Historical Society
A. Q. Miller: Lobbying for Early Roads in Kansas
November 25, 2023 – January 7, 2024
www.republiccountyhistoricalmuseum.org



Foreword by José Enrique Navarro

Voices, votes, and democracy have been compatible ideas for centuries. Over two thousand years ago, citizens in Athens, Greece, gathered in a plaza to discuss public matters and approve laws. This is how democracy was born. It was a precarious system that was more exclusive than inclusive. For example, only adult males were allowed to participate. Although popular assemblies were considered the best possible form of government at the time, they cannot be considered very popular from a historical point of view.

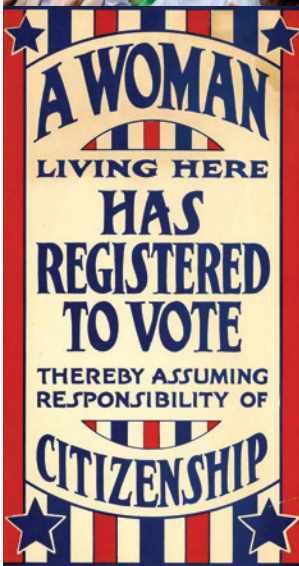
Over time, the clergy, feudal lords, and monarchy increasingly took the place of citizens when it came to making decisions. In this regard, the French Revolution and the American Revolutionary War signaled a breaking point with the past. In France, kings were beheaded by the guillotine. On this side of the shore, the territory later known as the United States of America gained its independence from the Crown and the English Parliament, creating a government for the people, by the people.

The United States was born with the idea of forming a perfect union and being ruled by democratic means. But as German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz stated, "Nature does not make any jumps." Nor, it may be argued, does history. The democracy of our young nation resembled that of the ancient Greeks in that only the privileged few could fully participate. For that reason, democracy two centuries ago replicated some of the deficiencies that it originally featured two thousand years ago. Therefore, it could be said that the United States was born as a perfect union but with a democratic system yet to be perfected.

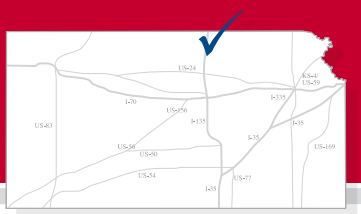
The six stories you are about to read talk precisely about how democracy in the United States has evolved since then. On one hand, these stories exemplify how American democracy has become more inclusive by recognizing the right to be heard and vote for those populations who were previously excluded. On the other hand, they demonstrate how national and local history are related: What happens in the nation sooner or later impacts Kansas; what happens in Kansas reflects what people somewhere else may think or feel. Or, if you're *Emporia Gazette* editor William Allen White, you make the claim in 1922 that, "When anything is going to happen in this country, it happens first in Kansas."

The history of American democracy is an important topic for an exhibition and one that will spark ideas and conversations among Kansans. We hope this publication and the *Voices and Votes* exhibition will inspire you to be more civically engaged in your community. Ad Astra!

José Enrique Navarro is Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Professor of Spanish at Wichita State University and a member of the Humanities Kansas board of directors.



Belleville



Out of the Mud: A.Q. Miller Advocates for Good Roads

Situated at the intersection of Highways 36 and 81 in north central Kansas, Belleville is known by its slogan "The Crossroads of America." The history behind the crossroads – both the highways and the slogan – can be traced back to A.Q. Miller. Miller was born in Washington County near Palmer and worked for the Clifton newspaper as a boy. In 1904, Miller bought *The Belleville Telescope* and became a prominent newspaper editor. For over a half century, Miller advocated for good roads and highways in Kansas from the pages of the *Telescope* and at the statehouse as a representative of highway associations.

A.Q. Miller

Courtesy of the Republic County Historical Society.

The clamor for good roads began in earnest in the early years of the 20th century. Kansans' ownership of automobiles was on the rise, but paving technology lagged far behind. Rural roads were particularly treacherous with automobiles getting stuck in the mud or bouncing along ungraded roadways. The 1859 Kansas constitution prohibited state financing of any internal improvements (this came from a fear of falling into railroad debt), which meant road maintenance was the responsibility of counties and townships. Roads were created with little to no engineering or planning. Groups including the Kansas Good Roads Association, Kansas Highways Federation, the Meridian Road Association, the Rock Island Highway Association, and others formed to lobby for state road funding and to build improved roads that would withstand the elements and organize connecting highways.

Miller served on three highway associations: The Meridian Road (now U.S. Highway 81), the Rock Island Highway (now U.S. Highway 36), and the Pikes Peak Ocean-Ocean Highway. The Meridian Road followed the sixth principal meridian, connecting Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Miller served as the treasurer of the Meridian Road and his *Telescope* made the case for this north-south route through Kansas on May 27, 1915: "Its roads and highways may make or break a community. Good roads mean ease of intercourse, increased trade, economy in marketing. They are money savers for the farmer, and sources of pleasure and profit to all. Good roads contribute greatly to moral uplift, mental development and financial gain. They are an economic necessity."

The Rock Island Highway was a link in the east-west "Ocean to Ocean" highway, connecting to the Pike's Peak Route of Colorado and the White Cross Trail of Missouri. Miller served as secretary/treasurer of the Rock Island Highway and touted the highway's importance as a transcontinental link in the *Telescope* on March 12, 1914: "The necessity for a CENTRAL Transcontinental Highway through Missouri, Kansas and Colorado is self-evident. The route proposed is the route the motorist would naturally follow on account of its general advantages. It is the most highly improved, has the most interesting historic associations, traverses the most productive regions, opens up the most wonderful scenery and has the shortest mileage."

In 1920, Kansas voters passed a Good Roads Amendment to "Lift Kansans Out of the Mud" by permitting state aid to counties for roads. Road construction continued to be the responsibility of counties and townships in

Kansas until the late 1920s – a policy that was, in fact, a violation of federal law. In 1929, Kansas voters passed another amendment to join the other 47 states to build and maintain a national network of highways.

Miller continued to advocate for highways in the *Telescope*, writing in February 1939 that the state should do more to attract tourist traffic through to the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco and the New York World's Fair. "Kansas is in the direct line of travel between New York and California and should be receiving the lion's share of truck-line traffic, but owing to adverse publicity which the state received a few years ago relative to 'dirt roads' and detours our eastern and western cousins are laboring under the impression that this state is still in the primitive stage of unimportant highways. ...If the legislature would follow the example of many other states and make an appropriation to publicize the true conditions about Kansas roads and allow additional funds to promote the importance of the state resources from an industrial standpoint, the state's economic status would be materially improved."

"A.Q. Miller's story is an example of a citizen advocating for change 'Beyond the Ballot,'" shared Ed Glenn, director of the Republic County Historical Society. "Miller's ability to lobby for highways and good roads is a strong example of the use of the non-elected wheels of democracy. We look forward to telling his story alongside the *Voices and Votes* Smithsonian exhibition."

"Miller's ability to lobby for highways and good roads is a strong example of the use of the non-elected wheels of democracy"

In the 1950s, Miller joined a group of dignitaries to drive from Belleville to the tip of South America. In September 1955, Miller, acting as president emeritus of the U.S. 81 Pan American highway, officially dedicated a new 20-mile paved stretch of U.S. Highway 81 south of Belleville. A.Q. Miller wrote his last editorial for *The Belleville Telescope* on the day of his death, December 29, 1959. Miller's legacy lives on as the namesake of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications at Kansas State University and as the champion for the good roads and linked highways that Kansas travelers enjoy today.

Image from a pamphlet encouraging Kansans to vote yes on the Good Roads Amendment, c.1920.

Courtesy of kansasmemory.org, Kansas Historical Society, Copy and Reuse Restrictions Apply.

Get the scoop on Miller and Kansas roads at the *A.Q. Miller: Lobbying for Early Roads in Kansas* exhibition at the Republic County Historical Society. The museum will draw on its archive of Miller's news stories, photographs, and artifacts, including coins from his South American driving trip, to tell the full story of Miller's impact on Kansas roads. The exhibition will be on display along the *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* Smithsonian traveling exhibition November 25, 2023 – January 7, 2024. Visit www.republiccountyhistoricalmuseum.org for events and hours of operation.

Dodge City

Respectfully, W.B. Masterson

In November 1877, William Barclay "Bat" Masterson was elected Sheriff of Ford County by three votes. While Masterson, a well-known gunfighter and lawman, was known to be quick with his pistols when he felt he was wronged, most of his altercations never involved a shot being fired. The political unrest of early Dodge City is the stuff legends are made of, and Masterson's election by his constituents is no exception. Turns out, most of what is often thought of as frontier law was decided by the ballot, not the bullet.

Bartholomew William Barclay "Bat" Masterson was born November 26, 1853, in Henryville, Quebec, Canada. His family lived in New York and Illinois before settling near Wichita. In 1872, Masterson, with brothers Ed and James, came to southwest Kansas to help build the railroad.

By the mid-1870s, Masterson was in Dodge City supporting himself by gambling and investing in local saloons, even though many of Dodge City's founders disapproved of both. Nonetheless, in early 1876 Masterson and his friend Wyatt Earp became law officers in Dodge City. Both served as special policemen under Ford County Sheriff Charles Bassett. Masterson saw the importance of protecting right over wrong, but sometimes his vision was blurry.

In June 1877, Masterson was arrested for interfering with the arrest of local character Bobby Gill. The incident was described in the *Dodge City Times* on June 18, 1877: "Robert Gilmore [aka Bobby Gill] was making a talk for himself in a rather emphatic manner, to which Marshal [Larry] Deger took exceptions, and started for the dog house [jail] with him. Bobby walked very leisurely – so much so that Larry felt it necessary to administer a few paternal kicks in the rear. This act was soon interrupted by Bat Masterson who wound his arms affectionately around the Marshal's neck and let the prisoner escape." Although the charges against Masterson were dropped in July, he did not forget the incident and it led to his decision to run for sheriff against Larry Deger.

"Bat Masterson is known for being a legend of the Old West, but he also shaped the early politics of Dodge City."

Bat Masterson, c. 1880.

Courtesy of kansasmemory.org, Kansas Historical Society, Copy and Reuse Restrictions Apply.

"Mr. W.B. Masterson is on the track for Sheriff and so announces himself in this paper," reported the *Dodge City Times* on October 7, 1877. "'Bat' is so well known as a young man of nerve and coolness in case of danger. He has served on the police force of this city, and also as under-sheriff, and knows just how to gather in the sinners. He is qualified to fill the office, and if elected will never shrink from danger."

Masterson won the election by three votes. The *Hays Sentinel* wrote "Larry Deger only lacked three votes of being elected Sheriff of Ford County. His successful opponent, Bat Masterson, is said to be cool, decisive, and a 'bad man with a pistol.'"

Within two weeks of Masterson taking office in January 1878, he made news when he and his posse captured robbers on a Kinsley train. The *Newton Kansan* described the capture – and Masterson – in glowing terms. "The nerve, skill, and energy of Sheriff Masterson and gallant posse is recorded as a brilliant achievement and

Dodge City Peace Commission, 1883. Bat Masterson is in the back row, second from right.

Courtesy of kansasmemory.org, Kansas Historical Society, Copy and Reuse Restrictions Apply.

Larry Deger, c. 1870.

Courtesy of kansasmemory.org, Kansas Historical Society, Copy and Reuse Restrictions Apply.

is receiving just tribute for so daring a venture accomplished so adroitly and maneuvered with the skill of a warrior."

Tragedy struck on April 9, 1878, when Jack Wagner killed Masterson's older brother, Ed, who was a marshal. Ed thought he had disarmed the drunken cowboy, but Wagner had a second pistol and shot Ed at close range in the abdomen. A gun battle followed, which involved Masterson and other lawmen. Wagner was mortally wounded, and one of his compatriots, Alf Walker, was seriously hurt. Ed died surrounded by Masterson and friends.

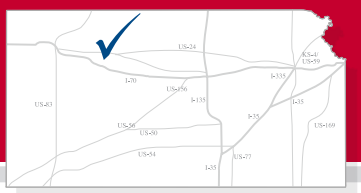
During the spring and summer of 1878, Masterson spent his time capturing horse thieves and returning stolen horses, among other duties expected of a frontier lawman. At the start of the new year, Masterson replaced the slain H.T. McCarty as deputy United States Marshal. The political tides turned in November 1879 when George T. Hinkle defeated Masterson for sheriff of Ford County in a bitter election. "Our politics are as everything else in Dodge City, 'red, hot, and still heating,'" observed the *Dodge City Daily Globe* prior to the election on November 4, 1879. "Our old Sheriff, 'Bat' Masterson, has a foeman worth of his steel in Mr. Geo. T. Hinkle." As his last act, Sheriff Masterson escorted two horse thieves to prison at Leavenworth in December 1879.

Masterson was in and out of Dodge City during the early 1880s. In 1883, he came back as a member of the Dodge City Peace Commission defending friend Luke Short during the Saloon Wars. Around 1885 Masterson left Dodge City never to return. He died October 25, 1921, while working for the *New York Morning Telegraph* as a sports editor.

"Bat Masterson is known for being a legend of the Old West, but he also shaped the early politics of Dodge City," said Lyne Johnson, director of the Boot Hill Museum. "Our *Voices and Votes* companion exhibition offers an opportunity to explore Dodge City politics through Masterson's election to Sheriff and to take a closer look at democracy on the Kansas frontier."

The Boot Hill Museum in Dodge City traces Bat Masterson's rise to "respected" Dodge City lawman in *Respectfully, W.B. Masterson*, their companion exhibition to the *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* Smithsonian traveling exhibition. Both exhibitions will be on display March 25 – May 7, 2023. Visit www.boothill.org for more information, including events and hours of operation.

Nicodemus



Edward P. McCabe: A Political Pioneer

Edward P. McCabe, c. 1883.

Courtesy of kansasmemory.org, Kansas Historical Society, Copy and Reuse Restrictions Apply.

When Edward P. McCabe stepped off the train in Ellis, Kansas, hefted his bag, and set out on a 35-mile walk to the fledgling new town of Nicodemus with his friend, he was a man filled with aspirations and ideas. He was also taking the first steps to a political career that would shape the young state of Kansas.

Born in New York in 1850, McCabe and his family moved frequently throughout the Northeast – Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maine – during the pre-Civil War and Civil War years and when his father died, McCabe set his sights on New York City and began working as a clerk for the Shreve, Kendrick & Co. law firm on Wall Street. A few years later he headed west to Chicago and secured a job clerking for business tycoon and hotel magnate, Potter Palmer. By 1872, educated and connected, McCabe was appointed to the Cook County office of the federal treasury in Chicago as a clerk. His political career was in motion.

Six years later, at the age of 28, McCabe was stirred by stories of Black migration and decided to take advantage of the free land made available through the Homestead Act and move west. In 1878 McCabe and his friend and political ally Abram T. Hall, Jr., who was the city editor of the *Chicago Conservator* newspaper, moved to the brand-new, all-Black town of Nicodemus. The two men set up a law office, specializing in real estate and land location. McCabe and his family had not been enslaved, and he had an interest in helping those who were building a free life on the high, arid plains of western Kansas. The business had the potential to be lucrative and further his political aspirations.

Nicodemus, located in Graham County, was a town with purpose and promise. Founded by formerly enslaved people in 1877, Nicodemus was seen as a refuge – a safe place for African Americans to build new lives. It was the very first Black community west of the Mississippi River and is the only predominantly Black community west of the Mississippi that remains a living community today. With the forced removal of thousands of Indigenous people living in the area between the 1850s and 1870s, Kansas became a destination for Black farmers, families, entrepreneurs, activists, and businessmen wanting a fresh start and a fair shake.

Earlier in the decade, the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed and Kansas was the 25th state to ratify it. The amendment made it illegal to deny U.S. citizens the right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." But African Americans knew that although amendments may allow for rights, they do not ensure them. Voices and votes – advocacy and civic engagement – were critical to the success of this town and others like it, and McCabe and Hall immediately got involved.

Given his experience in such matters and his interest in politics, McCabe was elected secretary of the Nicodemus Town Company, while Hall petitioned to make Graham County an official county in Kansas. The growing number of white

"The illustrious career of Edward P. McCabe is indicative of a political dream realized."

settlers in the area had other ideas. Kansas Governor John Pierce St. John acknowledged the validity of Hall's petition for county status and appointed him to complete the requisite census. In doing so, Hall became the first African American census taker in the United States.

Between 1878 and 1880, Hall continued his work as a journalist and established himself as the official correspondent from Graham County. He sent letters and wrote persuasive columns to newspapers throughout Kansas. His skillful writing is credited with helping to shape Kansans' favorable perception of the Nicodemus colony. Meanwhile, their land office became prosperous and, with frequent trips to Topeka, the two men became acquainted with African American politicians in eastern Kansas, and they soon became influential in state politics.

In 1880, Hall departed Nicodemus for St. Louis while McCabe had a banner year in Kansas. He was elected to be the county clerk in Graham County, selected by the Kansas Republican Party to be a delegate-at-large from Kansas to the Chicago convention of the Republican Party, and he married Sarah Bryant, a friend from his days in Chicago. McCabe had linked his future and his fortunes on the success of Black settlements. The African American population in Kansas had grown from 17,700 in 1870 to 43,000 a decade later but it remained less than five percent of the state's total population. McCabe wanted it larger.

By his 32nd birthday, McCabe was elected to the post of state auditor, making him the first African American in Kansas to hold state office. The position was important and a key function of state government. State auditors were authorized to inspect all records of all departments and institutions of state government and to investigate any misuse in the disbursement of public funds. His election to this high-ranking position was impressive. He had only been in Kansas for five years. McCabe held this position for two terms between 1883 and 1887 before losing for re-election the third time.

After the loss, McCabe became the federal

Nicodemus, Kansas.

Courtesy of Kansas Tourism.

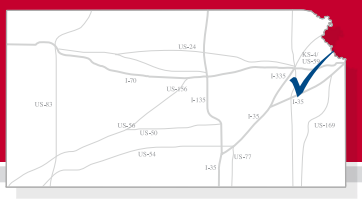
representative of the Oklahoma Immigration Society, a group of African Americans from Kansas who organized a real estate venture and moved to the new territory. McCabe ultimately went on to help establish approximately 20 towns in both Kansas and Oklahoma populated with Exodusters.

Edward P. McCabe died in Chicago in 1920, survived by his wife, Sarah, and daughter, Lenore. McCabe and his wife are buried in the Topeka Cemetery.

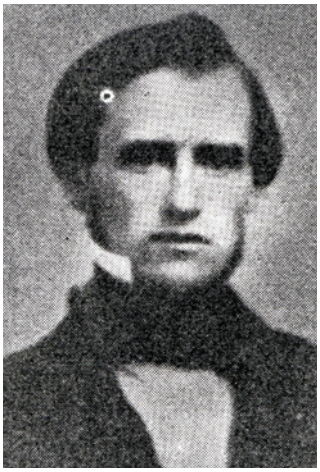
"The illustrious career of Edward P. McCabe is indicative of a political dream realized. A pivotal time in American history fostered his goals in a place and state that incubated opportunities for African Americans who dare reach for the stars," shared Angela Bates, executive director of the Nicodemus Historical Society. "2023 marks another pivotal time in history as the country is divided along racial and political lines, and with the threat of losing our democracy front and center. To host the *Voices and Votes* exhibit is most timely, as we can participate in providing perspective and history to these issues."

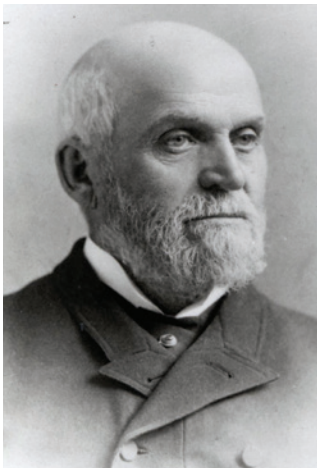
Learn more about McCabe's remarkable story and those of others in *Nicodemus Politicians*, the companion exhibition to the *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* Smithsonian traveling exhibition presented by the Nicodemus Historical Society, in partnership with the Nicodemus National Historic Site. The exhibitions will be on display July 1 – August 13, 2023. Visit www.nps.gov/nico/index.htm for more information.

Ottawa



The 43 Naked Voters of 1858





"Naked Voters" G.W.E. Griffith and W.W.H. Lawrence. Lawrence documented the story of the Naked Voters.

Courtesy of Franklin County Historical Society.

How far would you go to exercise your right to vote? In 1858, a group of Franklin County Free Staters were so determined to cast their ballots against the pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution in the August 2, 1858, election that they let nothing – not even a high creek or lack of clothing – get in their way.

Voting was crucial and contentious in the Kansas Territory. In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened the Kansas Territory to white settlement and left the decision over whether or not Kansas would be a free or slave state to the voters. As a result, pro-slavery advocates and free state supporters who opposed slavery in Kansas poured into the territory, displacing Indigenous populations and fighting with words and bloodshed for the fate of the new state.

The Lecompton Constitution was a proposed state constitution drafted by pro-slavery supporters. The proposed constitution permitted slavery, did not allow free Black people to live in Kansas, and allowed only male citizens to vote. Fearing that pro-slavery Missourians might attempt to interfere with the election, the Franklin County men decided to march together to the polling station, which was set in a cabin as far west (and thus as far away from Missouri) as possible in the voting district.

Getting to the polling place proved to be a challenge due to weeks of heavy rains that had swollen area creeks past flood stage. The men, many of whom could not swim, crossed three smaller swollen streams before reaching the much larger Ottawa Creek. Their 17 horses were tied up by their bridles, and their tethering ropes were used to create one long rope. The group's captain worked the rope across the fast-moving water, tying it to fallen trees and stumps so the others could get across to the other side. The men stripped off their clothes, tucking their

"They understood that one single vote could change the fate of the state of Kansas."

A modern illustration of the voters crossing Ottawa Creek with only their hats visible by Shirley Swayne (1944 – 2004).

Courtesy of Franklin County Historical Society.

shirts in their hats and leaving everything else on the bank before crossing the flooded Ottawa Creek.

Once on the other side, they pulled on their shirts and hats. The mostly naked voters reached the polling station and cast their votes.

As they returned from performing their civic duty, a kind German woman who did not require guests to dress for dinner fed them before they returned home. The pro-slavery issue was defeated.

"Missourians Going to Kansas to Vote" by Felix Octavius Carr Darley. Fearing that pro-slavery Missourians would try to interfere with the vote, the "Naked Voters" marched together to the polling station.

Courtesy of kansasmemory.org, Kansas Historical Society, Copy and Reuse Restrictions Apply.

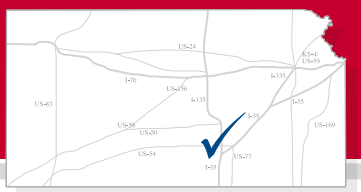
"The men who became known as the Naked Voters embraced the importance of every single one of their votes," said Diana Staresinic-Deane, executive director of the Franklin County Historical Society. "They understood one single vote could change the fate of the state of Kansas. We hope the Naked Voters inspire us to appreciate that our votes count and our participation in the democratic process matters."

The Franklin County Historical Society's Old Depot Museum in Ottawa features the story of the "43 Naked Voters of 1858" in *Barely Made It: The Naked Voters and Other Franklin County Stories of Democracy*, the museum's companion exhibition to the *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* traveling exhibition. The museum hopes that sharing the story will spark conversations about how to participate in democracy and why it's important. The exhibition will be on display August 19 – October 1, 2023. For events and times, visit www.olddepotmuseum.org.

The following is a list of all of the people known to have voted in Ottawa Township on August 2, 1858. There are 46 names. It's unclear which of the 43 out of 46 were the Naked Voters. Spelling may or may not be accurate. Names include:

Louis Allison
John Russel
Damon Higbie
William Carson
William Winston
Ehpraim Hackett
S.H. Moore
Joshua Carney
Ruben Hackett
GWE Griffeth
John W Higby
W.W.H. Lawrence
Henry Hall
Wm. M. Enman
T.N. Jennings
Albert Hanson
F. Bell
J.C. Boblet
John Forman
J.G. Bridol
Nathan Ames
Jacob Rynerson
Frances Armstrong
Joseph Black
A.D. Reed
Lewis Reed
Manuel Mowrey
James Pile
Isaiah Pile
John S. Mallory
George Boone
A.L. Thornbrugh
Anson Phillips
John Fulton
William Moore
James T. Moore
Jacob C. Switzer
Nathan M. Selby
John B. Elliott
William Thornbrugh
Henry Fisher
Jacob Fisher
Robert Gardner
Christopher Heck
J.J. Holbrook
Rudolphius Miller

Wichita



The Fight for Indigenous Voting Rights

Elizabeth Bender Roe Cloud with Marion and Anne Woesha, c. 1920.

Roe Family Papers (MS 774), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

The history of American democracy is complicated and includes instances of unjust treatment of its citizens and of those who rightfully should be citizens. Over the last century, Indigenous leaders have continued to fight for rights and recognition across the nation and in Kansas. The story of Henry and Elizabeth Roe Cloud and the founding of the American Indian Institute in Wichita is an example of triumph in the face of adversity.

Elizabeth Bender (Ojibwe) met Dr. Henry Roe Cloud (Winnebago) in 1914 at the Fourth Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians (SAI) held in Madison, Wisconsin. An early member of the organization, Bender worked alongside Indigenous voting rights activists including Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Yankton Sioux), later re-naming herself Zitkála-Šá, and Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin (Metis/Turtle Mountain Chippewa). In 1916, Bender and Roe Cloud married, and she left her own teaching career to join Roe Cloud in Wichita to help run the American Indian Institute (A.I.I.) that he had established a year earlier.

The SAI was an organization founded by and for Native people in 1911 to improve conditions in education, health, and civil rights. Many members took on the right-to-vote fight, since Indigenous people remained unable to vote and many were unable to gain citizenship. And suffrage was a topic already on the minds of many Americans, as the women's suffrage movement – almost exclusively the *white* women's suffrage movement – was gaining momentum. Zitkála-Šá, a popular composer, poet, and artist, joined the women's suffrage movement to draw attention to the denial of voting rights and citizenship rights for Indigenous Americans. These omissions kept them from being able to manage their land, their money, and their children's education. Similarly, Bottineau Baldwin attended the first women's suffrage march in Washington, D.C., in 1913 and went on to use subsequent speaking engagements to promote the idea that Native people should be members of their own self-governing nations, as well as United States citizens.

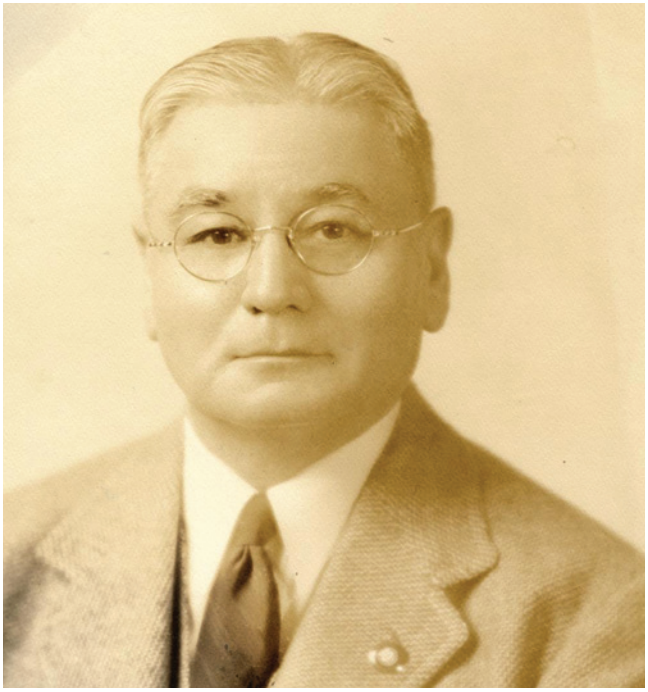
As young and enthusiastic advocates for education and civil rights for Indigenous people, it makes sense that Bender and Roe Cloud would find much in common with one another at SAI and begin a yearlong courtship, especially when considering that she was a well-respected teacher and he had just opened the first college preparatory school for Indigenous males in Wichita, the American Indian Institute. The A.I.I. was the first Indigenous high school established by an Indigenous person and staffed with Indigenous teachers. Students were encouraged to speak their tribal languages and decorate their living quarters with Indigenous art and reminders of their cultural heritage. The school was in sharp contrast to the schools run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which denied educational opportunities for students beyond the eighth grade. Most education for the younger grades centered on skill making, like cooking for girls and carpentry for boys, rather than college prep.

The A.I.I. campus was located at 3500 E. 21st Street in Wichita, and the *Wichita Eagle* newspaper reported on May 16, 1915, that The Wichita Club (forerunner to today's Wichita Chamber of Commerce) met on May 18, 1915, and "guaranteed $5,000 to be used in purchasing a campus for an Indian academy in the Fairmount district." According to the article "The Other School on the Hill" on May 30, the *Eagle* reported that "the probable first president of the new Indian school, to be located on the McGinnis 40-acre tract on 21st Street and Ellis [Bluff] Avenue, will be Henry Roe Cloud, born on the Winnebago Indian reservation in Nebraska. ... A beginning of the school will be made at the McGinnis farmhouse this fall. Later the school will be built." The property was officially handed over in July for $15,000.

Most students enrolled at A.I.I. were from Oklahoma. The school's enrollment reached its peak in 1921 with 46 students. Once established, funding came from Indigenous patrons, Wichita donors, the Kansas Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and various churches. The Roe Clouds were popular with students, promoted Indigenous voices and points of view, and often volunteered or were recruited to participate in national Native American educational and civil and voting rights movements. Finding themselves increasingly busy on the national stage, the Roe Clouds decided to hand control of A.I.I. to the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in 1927 and in 1933 couple moved to Lawrence, where he became the first Indigenous President of Haskell Institute, now known as Haskell Indian Nations University. With the onset of the Great Depression and the loss of the charismatic Cloud family, enrollment declined, and A.I.I.'s doors closed in 1939.

"Indigenous Americans experienced decades of setbacks and injustice before they gained the right to vote."

Despite the best efforts of the Roe Clouds, Zitkála-Šá, Bottineau Baldwin, and many Indigenous activists, it wasn't until the 1960s and the passage of the 24th Amendment when the United States finally protected the rights of *all* Indigenous people to vote as citizens of the United States. There were acts and amendments before then that should have guaranteed Native Americans the right to vote without intimidation but did not.



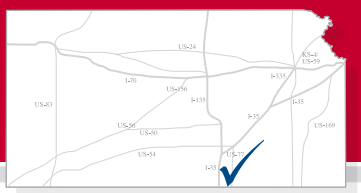
Henry Roe Cloud

Roe Family Papers (MS 774), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

"Indigenous Americans experienced decades of setbacks and injustice before they gained the right to vote," says Erin Raux of the Mid-American All-Indian Museum. "Hosting the *Voices and Votes* Smithsonian exhibition is an opportunity to introduce a wider audience to Indigenous Americans' fight for voting rights, citizenship, and full access to democracy. We'll also use the exhibition to look to the future, honoring trailblazing Indigenous Kansas lawmakers and partnering with social service agencies for conversations about Indigenous civic engagement in the 21st century."

The Mid-America All-Indian Museum presents *The American Indian Vote*, their companion exhibition to the *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* Smithsonian exhibition. The exhibitions will be on display May 13 – June 25, 2023. Visit www.theindianmuseum.org for more information.

Winfield



"The Most American Thing in America"

Chautauqua assembly attendees at the Island Park Tabernacle, c. 1910.

Courtesy of the Cowley County Historical Society.

Theodore Roosevelt called it "the most American thing in America." During World War I, Woodrow Wilson referred to it as "a patriotic institution that may be said to be an integral part of the national defense." What could possibly inspire this level of praise from two American presidents? The answer is Chautauqua, a cultural movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that brought people together to reflect on and discuss the issues of the day. Like many Kansas communities, Winfield played a vital role in this turn-of-the-20th century movement of ideas.

Chautauqua was founded in Lake Chautauqua, New York, in 1874, as adult educational lectures by the Rev. John Heyl Vincent, a Methodist minister, and Lewis Miller, a successful businessman. "WE ARE ALL ONE on these Grounds," said Miller. "No matter to what denomination you belong, no matter what creed, no matter to what political party of the country. You are welcome here, whether high or low." The Chautauqua movement caught on and caught fire across the nation, notably in Kansas, where Winfield, Ottawa, Cawker City, and other communities hosted long-running summer Chautauqua assemblies. According to Chautauqua historian Dr. Rolland Mueller, "For millions of individual Americans it was an important source of education, culture, recreation, and social contacts."

Winfield's Island Park was home to summer Chautauqua from 1887 to 1924. "There is no spot more beautiful than Island Park," effused *The Daily Courier* in 1892. "Its winding water course, stately trees, handsome carpet of green with winds making music in the boughs and branches overhead and blue canopy of heaven covering it all." The park had space for visitors to stay, explained Dr. Mueller: "The western third of the island was reserved for tents… Visiting Chautauquans were urged to camp as the best means of getting the fullest benefit from courses and programs." Winfield's local Chautauqua association partnered with the city to build a Hall of Philanthropy and a tabernacle that could seat 3,500. Crowds of up to 10,000 swelled the park to see popular orator and three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan on one of his four visits.

Families would travel by rail and wagon to attend Chautauqua, taking advantage of the educational opportunities for the "common man." "Chautauqua is a great university whose students are scattered in homes, on farms, in shops and factories, in towns and mining camps, in cars and ships, wherever a human soul carries the love of learning," proclaimed the program for the 1896 Ottawa Chautauqua Assembly. "Then once a year they flock to the great assembly to study under competent professors to round up the year's work, to receive diplomas, to form new classes, and to go back to life's duties refreshed and inspired."

This democratic approach to education had an enormous impact on women. One of the lasting legacies of Chautauqua is the way that it engaged women – primarily white, middle-class women

"While Chautauquas may no longer exist in their original form, their intent to inform, educate, entertain, and enlighten lives on through public libraries."

– in the pursuit of studies at a time when educational opportunities were limited. The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) offered a four-year correspondence course that could be pursued at home. Winfield had five CLSC groups and graduated hundreds of local residents – both men and women – from the program of independent study in religion, history, science, literature, and the arts.

Island Park, Winfield. Early 1900s.

Women also lectured on the Chautauqua circuit on topics including temperance, religion, literature, and eventually, women's suffrage. The Winfield Chautauqua welcomed the Rev. Dr. Anna Howard Shaw to Island Park in the summer of 1892. Shaw was an ordained Methodist minister and chair of the Franchise Department of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She traveled extensively to support women's voting rights believing that women's access to the ballot would result in the election of more temperance candidates. "The subject of this brief sketch may be considered one of the brightest stars on the lecture platform," wrote the *Winfield Monthly Herald*. "She asks this very pertinent question: 'Why is it that so few monuments are built in honor of noble, heroic women?'... Women do not merely ask for pockets and pocket books. They can earn a living. There are no laws preventing them from engaging in any business enterprise they please, but they do ask that when the voice of the people is to speak, that women shall be counted with the people."

National speakers like Shaw made an important impact on communities like Winfield, observed Dr. Mueller. "By bringing many of the vital social and political issues of the day to the attention of millions of Americans, Chautauqua was an important vehicle for creating public opinion, especially in the Central states...It brought education, culture, social opportunities and entertainment to thousands of Winfielders between 1887 – 1924."

"While Chautauquas may no longer exist in their original form today, their intent to inform, educate, entertain, and enlighten lives on through public libraries, modern Chautauquas of sorts, that provide such spaces in communities," added Joanna Brazil, Youth Services Librarian at the Winfield Public Library. "We are honored and thrilled for this opportunity to share the history, story, and spirit of the Chautauqua with new generations of citizens. The topics of both *Voices and Votes* as well as the Chautauqua companion are particularly timely for Winfield, as our community celebrates its 150th anniversary this year."

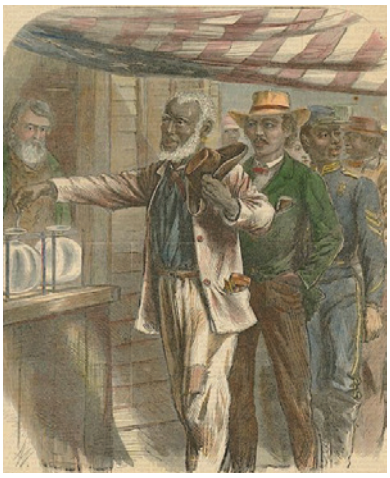
Winfield's Chautauqua, and others across Kansas, provided a platform for thoughtful discussions of democracy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It's this story that the Winfield Public Library will explore in more detail in their exhibition, *Chautauqua: The Most American Thing in America*. The exhibition is a companion to the *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* Smithsonian exhibition coming to the Winfield Public Library October 7 – November 19, 2023. For events and details, visit www.wpl.org.

Know Before You Go

A Brief History of the American Vote

In 1776, Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, "Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The American vote is the tool through which the U.S. citizenry demonstrates its consent, but initially, American's founders left decisions about who could vote up to the states. As a result, the only citizens who were allowed to vote in government elections in the state of Kansas upon its admission to the Union in 1861 were property-holding white men, aged 21 and older.



"The First Vote" by A.R. Waud, 1867.

Library of Congress.

A wooden container, initially designed to store teaspoons, was repurposed as a ballot box for the 1880 national election in Rawlins County, Kansas.

Courtesy of kansasmemory.org, Kansas Historical Society, Copy and Reuse Restrictions Apply.

While the U.S. Constitution did leave the decision about who was eligible to vote up to the states, it also included a caveat: "The Congress may at any time make or alter such regulations." Since 1776, the United States has been the site of struggle over who should have the right to vote and how to ensure that the vote really does represent the voice of **all** the American people. Through activism and amendments, grassroots organization and congressional legislation, the vote has evolved, still an imperfect image of America's many voices, but one that is coming ever more surely into focus.

The 15th Amendment

The 15th Amendment was adopted into the U.S. Constitution in 1870 and made it illegal to deny U.S. citizens the right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

Kansas was the 25th state to ratify the amendment, doing so on January 19, 1870. Some Southern states pushed back against this federal mandate, refusing to give Black men the right to vote by instituting barriers such as literacy tests and poll taxes.

Literacy tests denied voting rights not explicitly on the basis of color but on the basis of literacy, a skill that many African Americans did not possess due to the only recently abolished institution of slavery, which made it illegal for enslaved people to read and write. Poll taxes denied voting rights by requiring citizens to pay a tax before being allowed to register to vote, a tax which many African Americans could not afford, again as a result of having been recently enslaved.

"It is fitting that Kansas, which led the States in the great battle of freedom, shall lead the world in the enfranchisement of all her citizens."

– "Address to the Voters of Kansas," S.C. Pomeroy, 1867

A group of delegates to the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association in Topeka, Shawnee County. Although Kansas women had already won the right to vote, this group decided to affiliate with the National Woman Suffrage Association to fight for a women's suffrage amendment to the US Constitution.

The 15th Amendment did nothing to expand the suffrage of Indigenous Americans, many of whom were still not considered U.S. citizens in 1870.

The 19th Amendment

The 19th Amendment was adopted into the U.S. Constitution in 1920 and made it illegal to deny U.S. citizens the right to vote on the basis of sex. Kansas ratified the amendment on June 16, 1920. But in fact, the state had already given Kansas women the right to vote by approving the Equal Suffrage Amendment to the state constitution on November 5, 1912, thereby making Kansas the eighth U.S. state to extend equal voting rights to women.

While the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote, Black women continued to face the same barriers to voting that Black men had been facing for years, including literacy tests, poll taxes, and various forms of voter intimidation.

The Indian Citizenship Act and the Nationality Act

Enacted into law on June 2, 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act, or Snyder Act, granted citizenship to all Indigenous Americans born after its passage, thereby extending the right to vote to these "new" American citizens.

In practice, however, many states continued to bar Indigenous citizens from voting either because these citizens were exempt from paying state taxes or because they resided on Indian reservations under federal trusteeship. Indigenous citizens in Kansas did not secure the right to vote until the late 1930s. Indigenous Americans without citizenship – those born before the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act – had to wait until the Nationality Act of 1940 to become citizens and obtain the right to vote.

The Civil Rights Act

On September 9, 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who grew up in Abilene, Kansas, signed into law the Civil Rights Act. This Act, the first civil rights legislation passed by Congress since 1875, established the Civil Rights Division in the Justice Department and authorized the federal prosecution of individuals who conspired to violate American citizens' right to vote. It also instituted a federal Civil Rights Commission to investigate complaints of voter discrimination.

The 24th Amendment

Passed by Congress on August 27, 1962, and ratified on January 23, 1964, the 24th Amendment made it illegal to deny U.S. citizens the right to vote in federal elections for "failure to pay poll tax or other tax." This amendment was an attempt to stop disenfranchisement based on economic status, which often intersected with both gender and race.

The Voting Rights Act

Signed into law just three years later by President Lyndon Johnson, the Voting Rights Act established nationwide protections for all U.S. citizens on August 6, 1965. The Act prohibited certain state-sanctioned disenfranchisement practices, such as literacy tests, and instituted protections against voter intimidation and gerrymandering, or the process of manipulating voting district boundaries in order to dilute the political power of minority voting blocks. Today, the Voting Rights Act is the piece

of legislation credited with the steady increase in the number of people of color elected to serve political office in the United States since the 1960s.

And yet, gerrymandering continues to be an issue today. In 2013, the Supreme Court struck down key sections of the Voting Rights Act, which required nine states with a history of voting rights injustices to have their redistricting maps approved by the federal government before going into effect. The court's decision makes it possible for gerrymandering, or unethical redistricting, to take place, once again resulting in the dilution of the impact of votes by marginalized groups.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1950.
Library of Congress.

"Maybe all of us would value the right of the vote more if we stopped to look back a moment at what the struggle for the vote has cost."

– *The Ballot and Me*, Langston Hughes, 1956

Voting Now

While the American vote has become increasingly accessible and equitable over the years, there is still much work to be done. Voter ID laws, voter registration restrictions, voter registration list purges, felony disenfranchisement (or the banning of people convicted of felony crimes from practicing the right to vote), and continued gerrymandering remain as obstacles to the equal right to vote for all U.S. citizens.

As a Kansan, you can participate in the ongoing effort to make the American vote accessible to all.

- Make sure you know your voting rights by visiting vote.org.
- Contact the Office of the Secretary of State at 1-800-262-8683 for volunteer opportunities with polling places across our state.

It takes practice and perseverance to ensure that the right to vote is accessible to all, but together we can do it.

Langston Hughes by Carl Van Vechten, 1936.
Library of Congress.

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"I believe that the United States as a government, if it is going to be true to its own founding documents, does have the job of working toward that time when there is no discrimination made on such inconsequential reason as race, color, or religion."

– President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Presidents' News Conference of May 13, 1959

THANK YOU

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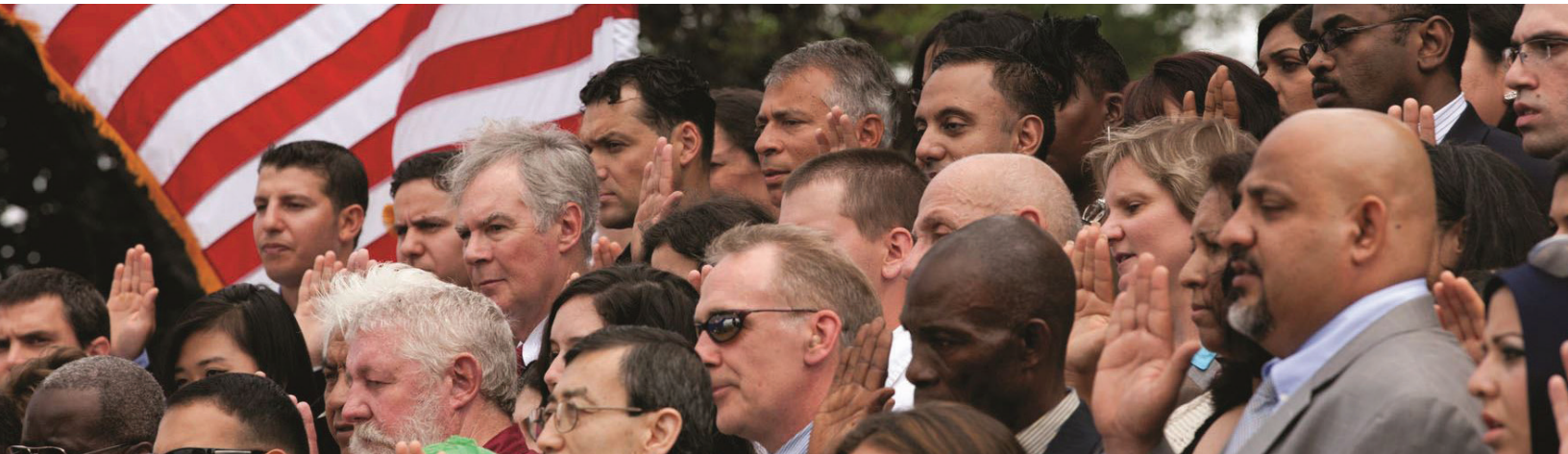

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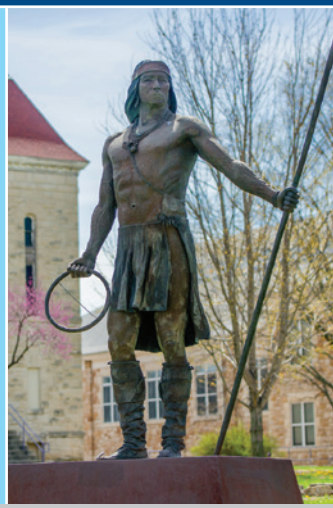

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