

EXPLORERS AND INNOVATORS

The title 'EXPLORERS AND INNOVATORS' is rendered in a bold, stylized font. The letters are filled with various colors like orange, teal, and black, and have white outlines. The word 'AND' is smaller and positioned between 'EXPLORERS' and 'INNOVATORS'. The background features a large, textured yellow sun at the top, light blue clouds, and a silhouette of a building with a dome and a tower.

Having created new paths and new approaches in their lives, these Kansans represent values and a spirit we hope to take with us into the future

The lower half of the image shows a stylized cityscape. In the center is a large silhouette of a domed building, likely the Kansas State Capitol. To the left and right are other buildings with various window patterns. Large gears are visible on the far left and right sides, symbolizing industry and innovation. The background consists of light blue clouds and a teal sky.



For more than 25 years I had the honor to host *Sunflower Journeys*, a series of programs about Kansans that reached viewers across the state. It was a role that allowed me to meet and spend hours talking with many fascinating individuals.

One of them, biofeedback pioneer Elmer Green, shared many stories and became a close friend. He once told me about a vision-dream that helped convince him to move to Kansas and establish his psychophysiology laboratory at the world-renowned Menninger Clinic in Topeka. After sharing anecdotes such as that, Elmer would typically follow up with a laugh and a grin, asking, “Isn’t that entertaining?!”

Elmer, along with his wife and research partner, Alyce, is one of the Kansans included in this special anniversary edition feature about our state’s “explorers and innovators.” Think about the role that explorers and innovators have played in our history. What comes to mind? Does the act of exploration involve particular skills or character traits? And what prompts an individual to engage in activities that may be considered innovative? Now, think about how those individuals and those traits relate specifically to Kansas history. Who comes to mind? Those familiar with our state might think of early European explorers such as Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, who led a Spanish expedition into the heart of this territory in 1541. There is also Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike, who explored the region for the U.S. Army in 1806, after the Louisiana Purchase. Those two men were, indeed, explorers in the traditional sense. But they weren’t necessarily Kansans.

What about Martin and Osa Johnson? Perhaps you have visited the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum in Chanute or have read about the self-described “motion picture explorers” and their early documentary travels in the first half of the twentieth century to locations in Africa and the South Seas. They were not only explorers in the traditional sense but also Kansans.

I’m equally fascinated by more modern Kansans committed to exploring the counties and landscapes closer to home. Some are professionals, such as guidebook authors Marci Penner and WenDee Rowe, who spearhead the Kansas

Explorers Club. Others are residents who enjoy traveling through the back roads and byways of the state and covering ground that is nearby, but not entirely familiar.

Of course, discovering something new is worthless if we cannot appreciate the differences we encounter. And that is why innovation—the ability to bring a new perspective to the landscapes and realities we already know—is equally valuable.

Kansas has a rich history of innovators who have developed new technologies or created novel approaches in their chosen fields. Examples include aviation entrepreneurs such as Walter Beech and Clyde Cessna, automobile manufacturer Walter Chrysler and integrated circuit pioneer Jack Kilby. I would even say that President Dwight D. Eisenhower should be considered a great innovator for envisioning and establishing the interstate highway system. And there is a case for Lynette Woodard, a University of Kansas basketball standout player and coach who merged the worlds of entertainment, collegiate and professional sports by becoming the first female member of the Harlem Globetrotters.

I think the best innovators and explorers are often motivated by a vision, either of an unknown location or an untapped possibility. When I worked on my television program, our team sought to create a journey through our state’s history and geography. To map this expedition through time and space, we often envisioned the nature of the Kansas character, or at least our aspirations for what it should be, as embodied by exceptional individuals.

The Kansans included in the following pages are innovators and explorers who have succeeded at various creative and rigorous endeavors. Some of them may already be familiar to you; others you might be encountering for the first time. Of course, there are many others we could have included as well. But as important as our featured explorers and innovators are as individuals, we also ask you to think about the spirit they represent and the values we want to carry into our state’s future. I trust you will find that doing so will be informative, revelatory and, as Elmer Green would anticipate, “entertaining!”

—Dave Kendall



ERIN BROKOVICH

In a 2013 speech to the San Gabriel Water Valley Forum, Erin Brockovich said that while growing up in the Sunflower State, her mother and father taught her “the greatest gifts we have are our family, our health and the right to clean water and good land,” a prescient sentiment that has shaped this Kansas native’s high-profile career.

Like many explorers, Brockovich was driven by a curious, restless nature. She briefly attended Kansas State University before earning a fashion degree from Wade College in Dallas, Texas, and relocating to Southern California. There, she was a Kmart management trainee, an electrical engineering student and a beauty pageant winner.

Her watershed moment as an activist arrived when she was working as a file clerk and learned that a gas and electric company had contaminated the public

water supply of Hinkley, California, with a carcinogen. Her fight to protect families led to a \$333 million public settlement and inspired the 2000 film *Erin Brockovich*, which received five Oscar nominations, including a Best Actress win for the actor who portrayed Brockovich, Julia Roberts.

Rather than retire on the \$2.5 million she was rewarded for the case, Brockovich used the money to launch years of environmental activism. She fielded requests for assistance in ground water contamination complaints in every state and several foreign countries, sought to hold corporations responsible for fracking-induced earthquakes in Oklahoma, and represented women whose health may have been compromised by a birth control device.

The *New York Times* best-selling author and former talk show host can currently be seen on Netflix in *The Devil We Know: The Chemistry of a Cover-up*, a 2019 documentary focused on a West Virginia community affected by the production of a chemical used to create Teflon. In August 2020, she published *Superman’s Not Coming: Our National Water Crisis and What WE THE PEOPLE Can Do About It* with grassroots success stories and practical advice for community action.

Explorers are often thought of as people who go into uncharted territory—and that is exactly what Brockovich has done and continues to do. Not only as a file clerk who was unafraid to cast herself into the legal sphere, but as a savvy and meticulous researcher who plumbs the depths of documents. In a 2002 *New York Times Magazine* article, Brockovich discussed her approach. “Imagine getting hundreds of these boxes. You come to the 40th box, what does your attitude become? ‘Forget it. There’s nothing here,’” Brockovich says. “Well, I go through it paper by paper. You will see me in my office, on the floor, all the files around me, and I won’t talk to you, I won’t take phone calls.”

Committed to discovering hidden truths and dangers in order to protect communities, Brockovich’s work embodies the state motto, “to the stars through difficulty” and has inspired others to believe that perhaps they, too, are well-equipped to weather challenges in unfamiliar and sometimes hostile terrain.

—Kim Gronniger

George Washington Carver is one of Kansas' favorite sons.

And for good reason; he was a man of many talents. Most of us know him as a scientist, but he was many other things: a businessman, a farmer, an inventor, an amateur accordionist, an educator and—during his youth—an artist. In fact, Carver's first foray into college was to become a painter. Much later in his career, when he first accepted the job to head Tuskegee University's agricultural department, one of his caveats was to have one room in the dormitory to live and another for his art supplies and projects. All through his life, he combined the creativity of an artist with the rationality of a scientist.

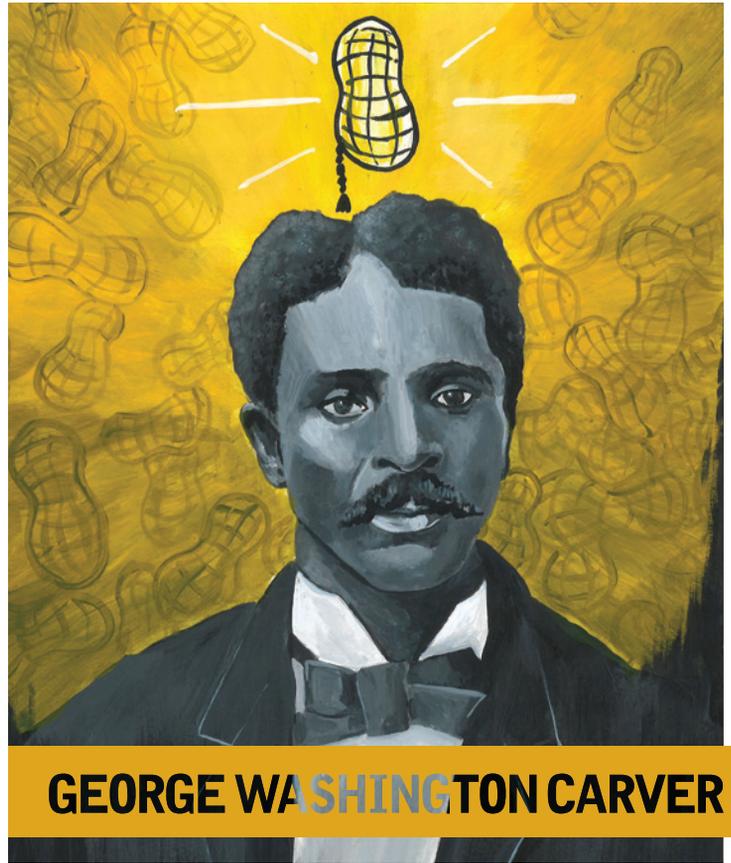
To this day, Carver remains one of the most important botanists and chemists in American history. He developed crop rotation techniques to improve soils depleted by repeated plantings of Southern crops like cotton. He came up with hundreds of uses for a variety of plants, most famously sweet potatoes and peanuts. And that is just the short list of his innovations.

Carver was born in Diamond, Missouri, sometime before the end of the Civil War. Born on a slaveholding farm in Missouri, kidnapped and rescued at an early age, Carver would learn to read and write after the abolition of slavery and longed for a formal education. He later said that he had heard the schools for African American children in Kansas were better than schools in Missouri, so he headed a few miles west into Fort Scott and the thriving black community there.

In all, Carver would spend only eight years in Kansas before going on to attend two different colleges in Iowa, most famously Iowa State University. After finishing studies in Iowa, he became the "Wizard of Tuskegee" when he accepted Booker T. Washington's invitation to become a professor at the famous Tuskegee University in Alabama, which is also the place he lived the longest and where he is buried. So, since he was born in Missouri, lived in Iowa and did his most famous work in Alabama ... can he be considered as a Kansan? Well, that depends on what exactly constitutes a hometown or home state. Many of us have two or three and some people—say, military kids—have a dozen of them. Perhaps what makes a hometown or state are community, bonds, friendships, and memories. And on those grounds, Kansas has a strong case.

Carver lived in several areas of Kansas from about the ages of 11 to 19. He lived for short stints in Olathe, Paola and Kansas City. But most of his time in the Sunflower State was spent in Fort Scott, Minneapolis and areas of Ness County. In Fort Scott, he attended Fort Scott Colored Public School, which was created by the Northwestern Freedmen's Aid Commission from Chicago. From Fort Scott, Carver moved up to Ottawa County where he attended Minneapolis Public School. According to reports in the *Minneapolis Messenger*, the young Carver was a mainstay on the honor roll and was "perfect in deportment."

Another local newspaper, the *Minneapolis Journal*, reported on October 5, 1881, that Carver was respected beyond the schoolyard as well. "Geo Carver, lately employed in Seymour's Laundry, is going to set up for himself two



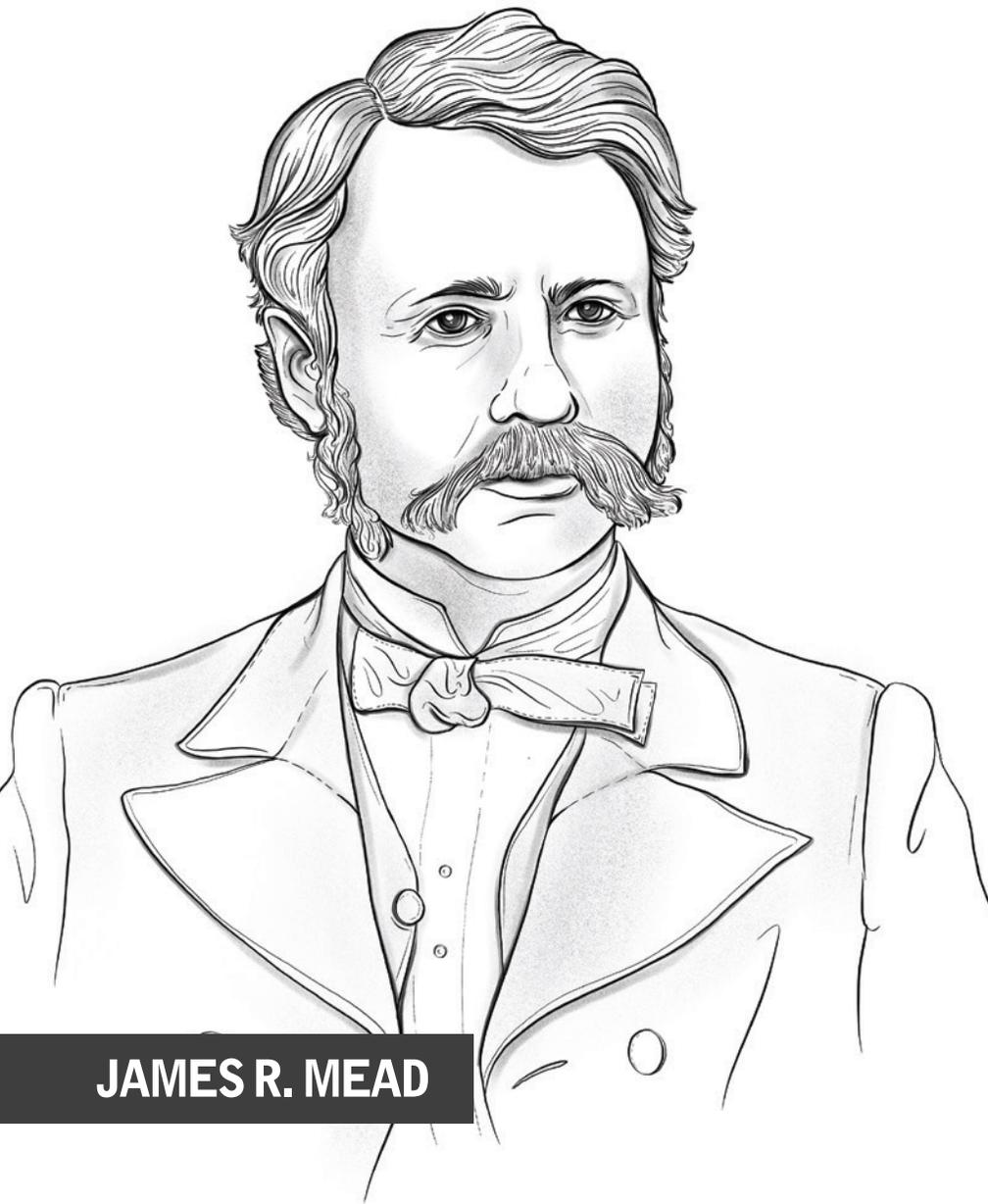
doors east of Midgley's Livery Stable, and will be prepared to do gent's washing in his former excellent manner."

Two years later, on December 22, a short-lived newspaper called *The Progressive Current* wrote, "George Carver, one of the most intelligent colored men of this part of the state is engaged in writing a book entitled *Step by Step or the Golden Ladder*. The book is written in the interest of Mr. Carver's race of people ... we can only wish George success in his undertaking to better the condition of a race of people so long held in subjection."

Though Carver would go on to contribute to many scientific journals and his other writings would be anthologized, it is unclear what happened to that youthful book project. And soon Carver had other plans. After graduating from high school in Minneapolis, he traveled by wagon to Ness County to try his hand at homesteading. Near the unincorporated town of Beeler he owned land, built himself a sod house, plowed his 17 acres manually and had a small conservatory of plants and flowers. He also was reported to play a lively accordion for town dances and belonged to the local literary club.

Not everything that happened to Carver while he lived in Kansas was pleasant. He left Fort Scott because he witnessed the lynching of a black man. And when he applied to Highland College, he was turned away because they would not admit a black student. However, according to biographer Gary R. Kremer, Carver often said that his memories of time spent in Kansas, especially Ness County, were precious and remained dear to him throughout his life. And for that, Kansas should be honored that this gentle, determined and brilliant man recognized the area as one of his chosen homes.

—Melinda Briscoe



JAMES R. MEAD

Hailed by history books as one of the founding fathers of our state's largest city, James R. Mead came to the Kansas territory in 1859, a 23-year-old Iowan lacking money and experience as he set off to explore a largely uncharted landscape. By the time he died in 1910, he'd left a huge mark on Kansas as an explorer, buffalo hunter, advocate for the Native people with whom he traded, visionary businessman and historian.

In 1864, Mead opened a trading post that was the first business in Wichita, and in 1871 he helped start a railroad that turned Wichita into a prominent shipping town for cattle drives coming northward from Texas. His friendship and business partnership with Jesse Chisolm, arguably America's best-known cattle driver of that era, also helped grow the region. Both a prominent street and a middle school in Wichita bear his name today.

Mead also served as a Kansas senator and representative. He was active in the Kansas State Historical Society, drawing on his eyewitness experiences of Kansas' earliest days.

Mead's memoir, *Hunting and Trading on the Great Plains, 1859-1875*, provides a fascinating account of the Kansas he described where "civilization stopped at Council Grove." Describing a valley off the Saline River, Mead wrote, "There are no signs of ax or

white man's presence in any of it. I had found a stream unknown" that led to "a paradise of game: buffalo, elk, black-tailed [mule] deer, ... turkeys in abundance, beaver, otter and hungry wolves in gangs."

Mead's book describes encountering animal herds in the Smoky Hills whose numbers rivaled the wildlife on the plains of Africa. He writes of seeing a distant hill covered with dark timber—and then realizing when the "timber" moved that it was a herd of thousands of bison.

Mead's description of this paradisiac landscape can be difficult for modern readers who know the speed and the reasons for which it was lost. Without any compunction, Mead joins in great buffalo slaughters and describes how his party scattered chunks of buffalo meat laced with strychnine and found they had successfully poisoned some 50 gray wolves by the next morning.

He also documents wildlife no longer found on the Kansas plains. Along Stranger Creek, south of Leavenworth, he wrote of "flocks of gaily-colored Carolina Parakeets," a species extinct for over 100 years. Mead also wrote of scissortailed fly-catchers he saw while bear hunting in the "country of the wild horses" we now call the Gypsum Hills.

Unlike many of his time, Mead wrote with great respect for the Native people he encountered. His book mentions armed confrontations with Cheyenne, Sioux, Kiowa and Comanche during turbulent times, but his descriptions of legendary warriors, like Kiowa chief Satanta, focused on who they were as fathers, friends and tribal leaders. He represented, in relatively good faith, the Wichita tribe at the Treaty of the Little Arkansas in 1864, and he chronicled the horrors of an 1867 cholera epidemic that claimed so many lives of the Wichita that a stream whose banks were covered with unburied victims was named Skeleton Creek.

Bitterly aware of the impact of the "civilization" that he advanced through western Kansas, Mead documented his disappointment with the landscape he found on his final return tour through the areas he had once explored. He ended his book with a quote he attributed to a tribal leader he encountered: "The sun does not shine as bright, the grass is not as green, the air is not as pure and the water not as sweet as it was before the white men came."

—Michael Pearce

When Kansas basketball lost two straight games in 1951 and was trying to find its identity, head coach Phog Allen called his brilliant assistant Dick Harp into his office and told him to change the defense. Harp's response was to institute an innovative pressure defense, propelling KU to 13 straight victories, culminating in the 1952 national championship (28-3 record) and revolutionizing college basketball.

Soon, Harp's defense was being adopted on other courts. San Francisco coach Phil Woolpert visited Lawrence in the summer of 1953 to study Harp's defense and then applied it in winning two NCAA titles with Bill Russell in 1955 and '56. Legendary coach John Wooden used Harp's defense and won a record 10 NCAA titles, including seven straight (1967-73). Wooden once said the "arrival of the Kansas pressure defense was one of the turning points in college basketball."

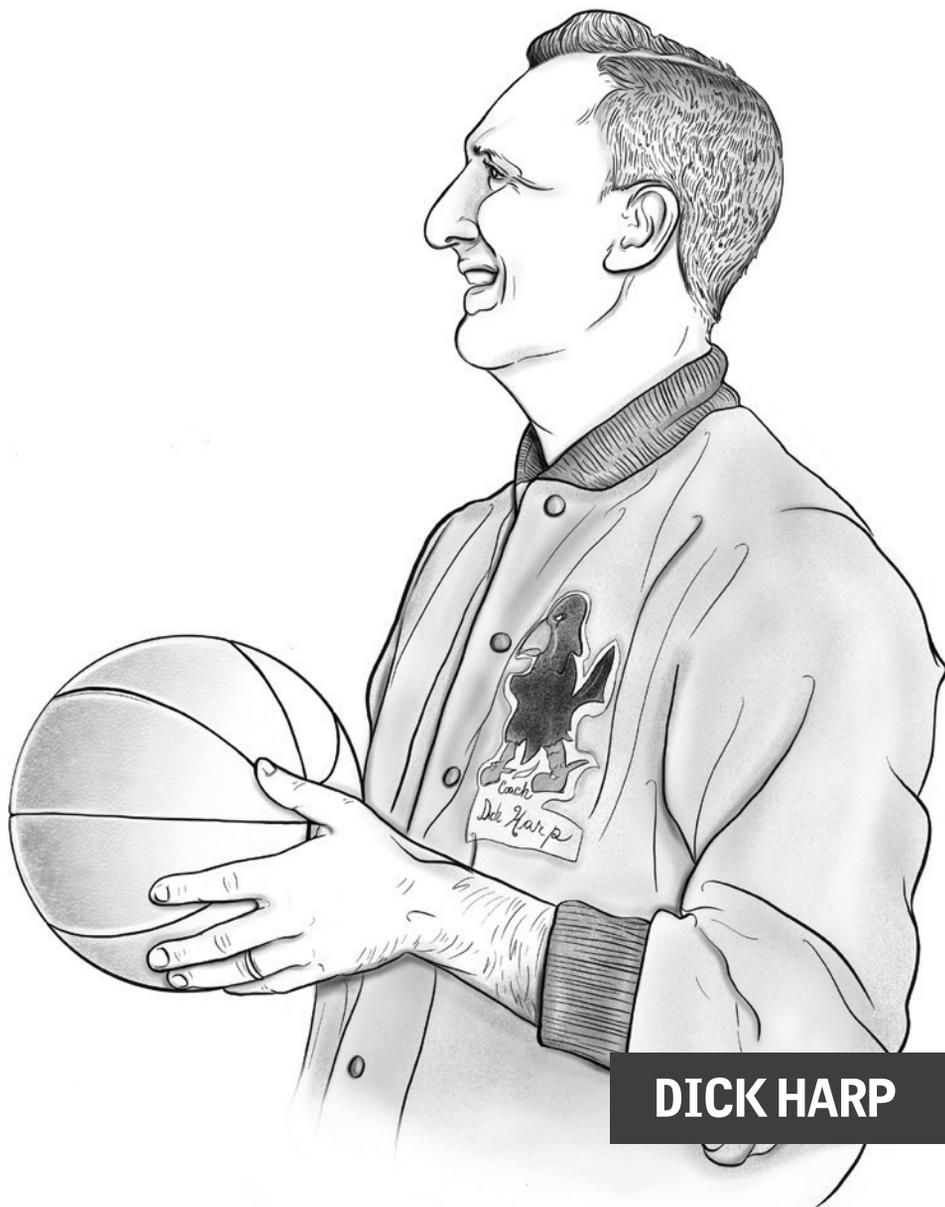
Harp, who practically did all the coaching in Allen's latter years and saw what the game was becoming, had already established a legacy as a true innovator and basketball genius before being tapped to replace Allen as head coach from 1956-64.

"Dick was one of the most underrated coaches the college game has ever seen," Bill Lienhard, a member of the 1952 Jayhawks, said in 2000 after Harp died.

Dean Smith, the late North Carolina Hall of Fame coach, once stated Harp "had the brightest basketball mind of anyone I've ever known." Smith, who also played on Harp's '52 KU team, wrote about that experience in his 1999 autobiography, *A Coach's Life*. "That team employed a great innovation: a pressure man-to-man defense that absolutely smothered opponents by overplaying. ... The idea was to cut off the passing lanes and make it hard to complete even the simplest pass. ... This was unheard of at the time, really the first instance of man pressure as we know it." And, Smith added, "The Kansas defense had a lasting influence on the game."

Now, more than 68 years later, many college basketball teams play some version of Harp's defense.

Harp was also a great innovator in recruiting African American players in the early 1960s, when the majority of



DICK HARP

black athletes weren't given an equal opportunity. His former assistant coach, Jerry Waugh, respected how Harp's integration began with recruitment.

"How adamant Dick was when he took over [for Allen that] the black athlete would not be denied," Waugh says.

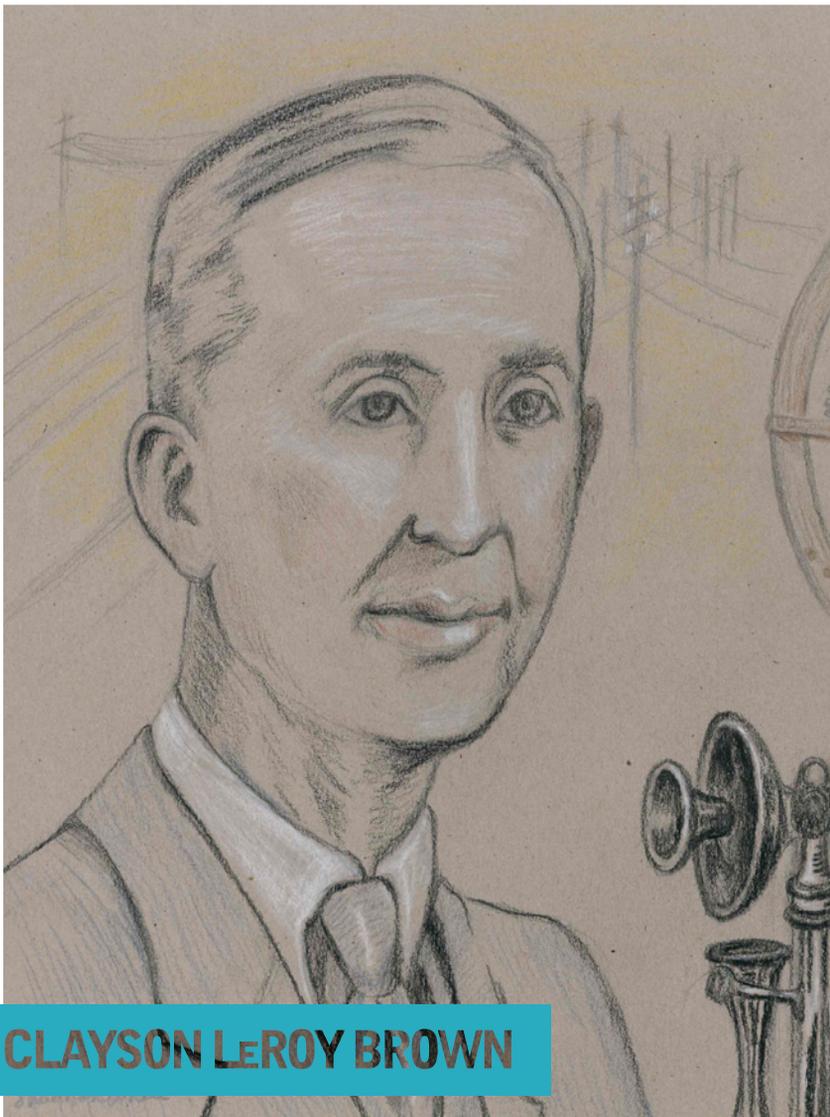
In 1962, only 45 percent of the country's collegiate teams had black players on their roster, and those teams averaged only 2.2 Black players each. Harp's 1959-60 team had four, and his revolutionary 1960-61 team had seven, with four starters (a decision that defied unwritten codes to never play more than three Black athletes at any one time). This was five years before Texas Western made history with its all-Black starters beating all-white Kentucky for the 1966 NCAA championship.

An idealist, Harp was far ahead of his time. By comparison, the SEC didn't integrate until Perry Wallace became the first black hoops player at Vanderbilt in 1968.

Harp, a very religious man, also always brought equality to the pews by bringing his black players into white church services. "(He) integrated more churches than the Pope," Butch Ellison, a member of the 1959-60 and 1960-61 teams, said in 2007.

Kansas sports has many champions and legends. But Dick Harp should never be forgotten because of his revolutionary defense and unwavering commitment to racial equality.

—David Garfield



CLAYSON LEROY BROWN

In 1881, while helping his father, nine-year-old Clayson LeRoy Brown caught and crushed his arm in a corn sheller. The arm had to be amputated, and the young Abilene resident would wear a gloved artificial arm and long-sleeved shirt for the remainder of his life. It was an accident that greatly determined, but did not limit, Brown's course in life.

After graduating from Abilene High School with the class of 1890, C.L. (as he became known) attended college, then worked briefly in Wichita and Iowa as a laborer, a teacher, and a businessman. He and his wife, Maude Elizabeth Irwin, moved their family back to Abilene to assist his father with refitting the family's gristmill as a source of electricity for the growing city of Abilene.

By 1898, the first electrical transmission line connected Brown's mill to Abilene. From this single line, the family business grew to become the United Power & Light Company, serving 12 power plants in 135 towns and over 150,000 customers.

Brown's entrepreneurial spirit led him to develop a local telephone business, which rapidly expanded through Dickinson County and into Topeka, Newton, Hutchinson, and Wichita. By 1925, this United Telephone Company served as many as 50,000 subscribers across Kansas.

Brown continued to diversify his business interests, acquiring small independent telephone companies across Kansas and holding interest in

utility companies from eleven different states. His business ventures expanded to include the Piggly Wiggly grocery store chain, United Life Insurance Company, hotels, a news service, and an oil company. Many of Brown's business ventures fell into bankruptcy during the Great Depression, but some of the larger ones, including the telephone company, survived. In 1986, the United Telecommunications company that Brown formed would emerge as the Sprint Corporation, relocating their headquarters from Abilene to Kansas City.

Kansas has been home to many successful and innovative businesspeople, but what sets Brown apart is his early commitment to philanthropy, civic support, and concern for the welfare of his workers.

Because Brown's core values revolved around hard work and financial conservation, he required his employees to save 10 percent of their earned income. In a 1918 company newsletter, Brown wrote, "Eat less, drink less, and smoke less, and wear your clothes a little longer. Make it a principle. Make it a religion. Make it a habit. There is not a human being in the United States who cannot exist on nine-tenths of what he does exist on. Save the other tenth."

But Brown did more than preach to his employees. He also established the United Employees Benefit Association, chaired by his fellow River Brethren church member, David J. Eisenhower (father of Dwight D. Eisenhower). The company-based welfare department provided struggling employees and their families with loans, scholarships, clothing, and electric services.

Brown also supported a hospital, a shelter for indigent citizens, and a home for young female telephone operators. His family foundation endowed more than one million dollars to charity between 1926 and 1930.

After becoming a self-made millionaire, Brown reportedly told friends that if his childhood accident had not cost him his arm, he "probably would have been a farmer, and a good one."

But, instead, he remained an entrepreneur and philanthropist his entire life, and when Brown passed away in 1935, at the age of 63, his legacy continued to serve area communities through the Brown Memorial Foundation, Brown Memorial Park, and Brown Memorial Home for the aged while the story of his early business success and technological innovations is preserved at Abilene's Museum of Independent Telephony. His life provided a model for innovative business leaders with a commitment to their community and the people in it.

—Patricia E. Ackerman

Jessie E. Woods was born in 1909 on her family's Stafford County farm near Seward and, upon her death in 2001, buried only a short drive away, in Stafford County's Fairview Cemetery, near the graves of her parents, William and Clara Schulz.

That might seem to indicate that Woods spent most of her life on the same patch of land, but she was one of our state's most adventurous and high-flying personalities, beginning with her teenage elopement.

Woods was 19 when her family attended an aerial barnstorming show in Ulysses and she fell for one of the featured pilots, Jimmie Woods. He also worked as a salesman for Wichita's Swallow Aircraft Company, the company formed by E.M. Laird, who recruited aviation notables Clyde Cessna and Lloyd Stearman to join him.

In terms of star power, however, Woods was the big recruit. She soon learned to repair and fly planes and perform as a wingwalker. During the infancy of the aviation era, wingwalkers were acrobats who would walk onto the wings of a plane mid-flight and perform death-defying feats, sometimes jumping from the wings of one plane to another.

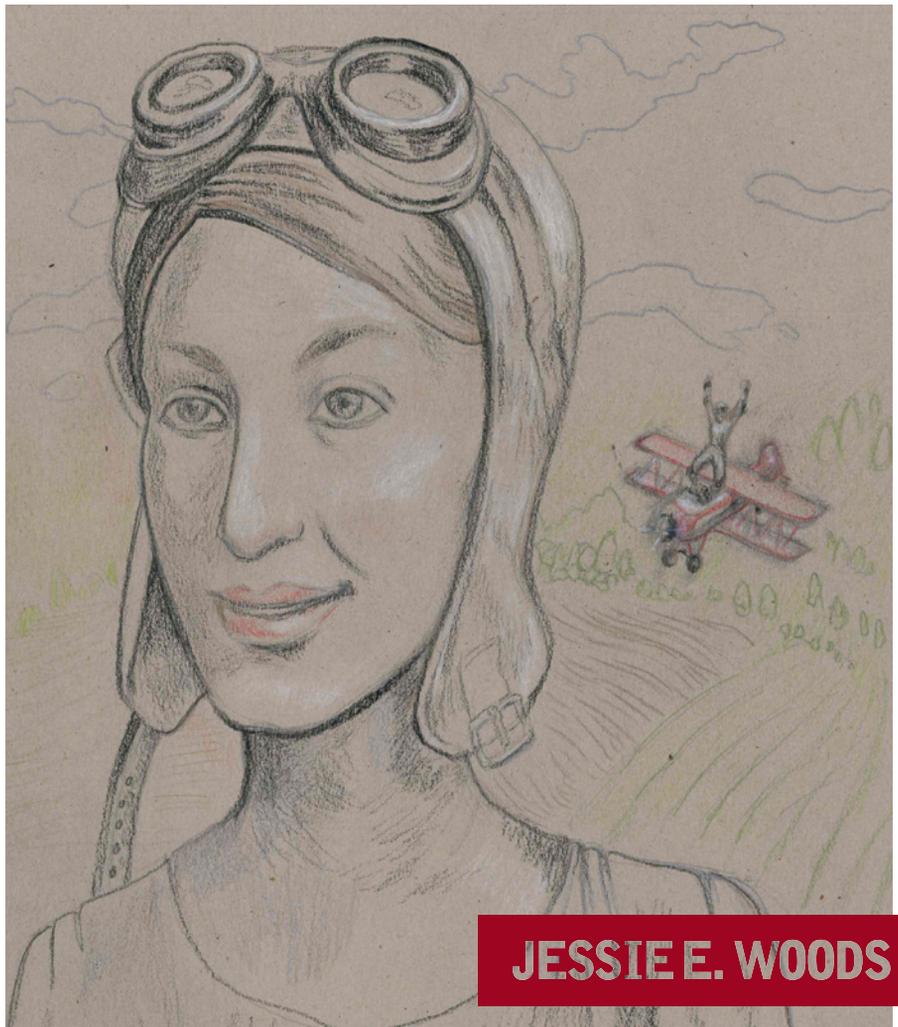
Many would die.

But Woods only got better.

From 1928 to 1938, she was the star attraction of the Flying Aces Air Circus, one of the nation's longest-running aerial circuses. One of her featured skills was descending a rope ladder of a plane in flight and hanging upside down by her knees. She often walked the wings barefoot and with no harness or parachute while her plane flew at 60 mph or more.

In the 1993 book *On the Wing: Jessie Woods and the Flying Aces Air Circus*, Schulz Woods describes what it was like to clamor across one of those early planes. "I was prepared to hang by my knees, swinging my arms wide and arching my body against the wind. Part of the act required me to push away from the ladder with my foot, extending the other. I wasn't wearing a parachute. I couldn't wear a parachute! We were too low for a chute to have opened if I had needed it and the bulky mass would have thrown me off balance for the acrobatics that I was supposed to perform."

By the end of the Great Depression, many of the flying air shows were shutting down. Soon, the nation's aviation industry was focused on military production. During World



JESSIE E. WOODS

War II, Woods trained Army cadets who later became fighter and bomber pilots. In 1967, she was named state of Washington's Pilot of the Year. And, in 1985, she was inducted into the OX-5 Aviation Pioneers Hall of Fame. Years later, Woods would appear on late-night talk shows regaling Johnny Carson and David Letterman with stories. She would be named by Women in Aviation International as one of the top 100 women who most influenced the industry's first 100 years.

History did not always remember Woods as well as it did some of her more famous peers. It wasn't until late 2019, nearly two decades after Woods died, that board members of the Lucille M. Hall Museum for Education and History in St. John became aware that Woods was buried in their town's cemetery.

"That's the first I knew about her," says Anna Minnis, the board's president. Now, Minnis and other board members hope to create an exhibit about their hometown aviation hero to accompany the humble grave marker, a small stone slab holding a plaque with the dates of her birth and death and a depiction of sunlight beaming through a cloud and onto the words "Pioneer aviatrix and wing-walker."

But she was so much more. Her entire life from start to finish, was one of joyful exploration and daring.

In 1991, at the age of 82, Woods wingwalked one last time at the Sun 'N Fun Air Show in Lakeland, Florida. Photos and video from that day show her long, agile body with her unmistakable profile as she smiled and waved from the wing.

As she described that last flight to the *Wichita Eagle*, "It was like I had never stopped doing it."

—Beccy Tanner



ELMER AND ALYCE GREEN

When we think of Kansas explorers, we generally think of individuals who have gone into distant lands, skies or heavens. But Elmer and Alyce Green were explorers of a different type—ones who charted the margins between mind and body.

Elmer Green pioneered the medical practice of biofeedback while researching it at Topeka's Menninger Clinic, and, through years of advocacy, he and his wife, Alyce, helped mainstream biofeedback—the process of a person listening to and partially regulating their own body as an assistance to well-being—through writings, seminars and film. Biofeedback, though, was only the first step on a lifelong journey into a deep understanding of human consciousness. The journey culminated later as Alyce succumbed to Alzheimer's and Elmer focused on facilitating her transition to death with dignity and full spiritual awareness.

The result of this exploration is *The Ozawkie Book of the Dead: Alzheimer's Isn't What You Think It Is*, a three-volume work that is both Elmer's love letter to his wife and a means to honor her memory. Overlapping biography, psychology, spirituality and procedures for care, it is a work whose premises of consciousness, afterlife and the ascension of the soul are probably on the periphery of current American religious thought.

But if the ideas of *The Ozawkie Book of the Dead* are looked upon as a fringe theory, they must also be considered as an authentic outgrowth of Elmer's life. Born in Oregon in 1917, Elmer and his family moved to Minnesota when he was five. There, at the age

of six, he experienced his first dream vision, and its profound emotional impact would leave him open to spiritual exploration throughout this life. Though he would have an otherwise typical midwestern childhood, Elmer encountered the concept of meditation in his teens and, through a spiritual mentor and together with Alyce, would go on to explore past lives, work on astral projections of his soul and delve into obscure aspects of spirituality.

Elmer graduated from college in 1942 with a degree in physics, but the war effort swept him, Alyce and their family into its orbit. They would emerge from the war years with four children and travels to military posts in Idaho, California, Nevada, British Columbia, Kansas and Tinian (an island now part of the U.S. commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

In 1964, the couple's careers led them to Kansas. They bought a home in Ozawkie and Elmer established a psychophysiology laboratory at Topeka's Menninger Clinic. Here, he made his mark as a researcher while devoting his professional and personal life to expanding the concept of biofeedback and its potential for expanding human consciousness. In 1969, Elmer co-founded the Biofeedback Research Society and, in the same year, Alyce and Elmer co-founded the scientifically grounded mind-body-spirit gathering, the Council Grove Conference. For some 30 years, the Greens plunged into biofeedback, spirituality and science of human consciousness.

It was at Menninger that Elmer was given the freedom to push the boundaries of his science and spirituality—he developed his best-known research projects in the late sixties there after studying Indian yogi Swami Rama and Dutch philosopher and naturopath Jack Schwarz.

While much of the Greens' work on astral travel and soul-guidance remains outside of mainstream American thought, their core work of exploring a human's ability to partially stabilize and positively regulate one's own body has had widespread effects in medical communities. Alyce died in 1994 and Elmer followed her in 2017. And while the Menninger Clinic left Topeka for Houston in 2003, the Greens' legacy was not abandoned in the departure. Nancy Trowbridge, the current director of communications for Menninger, worked alongside the Greens and says their spirits live on in an organization that reflects the Greens' values of "holistic and person-centered approach to wellness."

—Haines Eason

Many Kansas-born artists, musicians, actors, and other creative types came of age and into their careers in other states and countries: horror hostess Elvira was born Cassandra Peterson in Manhattan but grew up in Colorado Springs; Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle was born in Smith Center but moved to Santa Ana, California, at the age of two. The eponymous Katrina Leskanich of Katrina and the Waves was born in Wichita but moved around with her military family. These are just a few. But some entertainers are born-and-raised Kansans whose connection to the state and their family in it informs their performance. One of these is the singular talent and one of the most innovative contemporary R&B singers and actresses—Janelle Monáe.

The Kansas City, Kansas, native’s debut release, a 2003 collection of demos titled *The Audition*, laid the framework for what would turn into a seven-part suite modeled after the 1927 German expressionist science fiction film, *Metropolis*. Casting herself in the character of an android named Cindi Mayweather, Monáe began exploring concepts related to futurism and identity, as expressed in “Tightrope,” the lead single from her 2010 full-length debut, *The ArchAndroid*, which she kicks off with the line, “Some people talk about ya like they know all about ya.”

For the majority of the 2010s, Monáe’s music was cloaked in the abstraction that was Cindi Mayweather, a tuxedo-sporting, gender-fluid, quiff-sporting character, yet—as NPR’s Sydnee Monday wrote for NPR when Monáe released her third LP, *Dirty Computer*, in 2018—“Even when Monáe sings in character, the sense of something immediately true to her own life bobs into and outside of these voices.” The piece, appropriately enough, was titled “Janelle Monáe Is the 21st Century’s Time Traveler.”

The list of fellow musical innovators who have been attracted to Monáe’s work reads like a who’s-who of creative geniuses in the music world. The aforementioned “Tightrope” features Outkast’s Big Boi, who—along with André Benjamin—would be one of the musician’s earliest mentors. Her Black Lives Matter song, “Hell You Talmbout,” a recitation of the names of African Americans killed by police, was covered by David Byrne during his American Utopia tour as the closing encore. And as was revealed after the release of *Dirty*



JANELLE MONÁE

Computer, that album drew in the talents of Prince, whose influence and work can be heard in the single “Make Me Feel.”

In 2016, the musician made her acting debut in the acclaimed dramas *Moonlight* and *Hidden Figures*. While Monáe had songs featured on the soundtracks for both films, her roles in both allowed her to continue on the path that had led her to attend the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City.

Her success also seemed to allow the performer to become increasingly innovative and open about herself. While Monáe’s work up until *Dirty Computer* was forward thinking, with live shows that featured a massive band and Monáe dancing up a storm in front of it, there was something akin to a distancing going on. By 2018, things had changed. Monáe’s *Dirty Computer* saw the musician able to speak to many facets of her life heretofore unaddressed in such a frank manner. She came out as pansexual, publicly embraced her relationship with actress Tessa Thompson (best known to the public for her starring role of Valkyrie in the Marvel superhero films), and put out an album-length series of videos, all of which looked to these topics and more. It’s such a change from her previous albums, critic Robert Christgau, writing for *Vice*, said, “this one is more personal than the android dared.” Songs like “Pynk” were explicitly queer and woman-centric, while “Django Jane” not only shouts out her adopted hometown of Atlanta, but her actual hometown when she raps, “Straight out of Kansas City, yeah we made it out there.”

While Monáe may now be a citizen of the world, and beloved all over, she still has her connections to Kansas. As she said to Justin Curtoe in a piece for *Kansas City Magazine* in August of 2018, *Dirty Computer* is an album for all the “young women, people of color and queer people” in the region: “This album is for you. I hope you feel seen, I hope you feel heard, I hope you feel celebrated.”

—Nick Spacek



Regeared as the “Queen of the Air” during her lifetime and celebrated to this day as Kansas’ most famous pilot, Amelia Earhart will always be remembered for her career as an aviation pioneer. But the same fearless spirit that propelled her life as a pilot also drove her to become one of the nation’s first 20th-century celebrity brands. Earhart the innovative entrepreneur is as equally fascinating as Earhart the aviation explorer.

In the beginning, however, the girl who grew up at her grandparents’ home in Atchison wanted to be neither. Her first dream was to become a doctor. In 1917, while in Toronto, she received training from the Red Cross and served at the Spadina Military Hospital. This work led her to contract pneumonia and maxillary sinusitis, leaving her with a scar and small drainage tube on her cheek. After working as a nurse, her studies at Columbia University were put aside when she had to help her family in California. It was there, in 1921, that she purchased her first plane, a Kinnear Airster that she named *The Canary*. Both her dreams of studying medicine and her aviation hobby were dealt a blow after she made a bad investment in a friend’s gypsum mine and lost her inheritance from her grandmother. But she was able to continue flying with income from a variety of odd jobs including work as a gravel truck driver, a stenographer, a telephone operator, and a photographer.

Earhart’s celebrity status began in 1928 when she became the first female to complete a transatlantic flight as a passenger aboard the *Friendship* with co-pilots Wilmer “Bill” Stultz and Louis “Slim” Gordon. After this accomplishment, Earhart published her first book and traveled the country, giving lectures and accumulating product endorsements. Most of the brands she represented were aviation-related, such as Mobil Oil, Pratt & Whitney aircraft and Hornet engines. But she was also paid to endorse Longines timepieces, Horlick malted milk tablets, Beech-Nut gum and even Lucky Strike cigarettes, whose ads proclaimed that Earhart smoked to relieve stress through that first flight. The endorsement conflicted with Earhart’s

non-smoking, squeaky-clean image, and she eventually donated the Lucky Strike proceeds to Admiral Richard E. Byrd’s second Antarctic expedition.

After Earhart’s solo flight across the Atlantic in 1932, her celebrity grew. She began to use her status to explore some of her personal interests. Because she had been used to having a limited income and had always been affected by the lack of sensible clothes for female pilots, Earhart had long made her own clothing. Now, she could expand on that talent. Tall and slender, she cut a stylish figure that defied stereotypes, and she would carry that personal flair into the fashion world. She created a “Hat of the Month” program to help fund the “Ninety-Niners,” the women’s piloting organization that she founded, and she also designed jumpsuits and flying suits for other female pilots.

In 1933, encouraged by designer Elsa Schiaparelli, Earhart created a clothing line that was eventually sold nationwide in department stores such as Macy’s. Earhart’s designs featured 25 outfits, dresses, skirts, and pants, which were sold as “separates,” instead of the typical one-piece dresses. Earhart also featured blouses with longer shirttails, loose slacks with pockets and zippers, washable fabrics such as parachute silk, and even textiles from airplane wings decorated with propeller-shaped buttons and tags. Earhart’s creations, priced between \$25 and \$55 per item, were tagged with her signature fashioned as contrail of a tiny plane. Earhart also sold patterns through *Woman’s Home Companion* magazine. Though Earhart’s clothing lines were short-lived, the Fashion Designers of America named Amelia Earhart one of the ten best-dressed women in America.

When Earhart’s plane disappeared during a global flight attempt in 1937, she became forever associated with her piloting career. And while she certainly deserves her accolades in aviation, Earhart also embodied an innovative spirit that had already accomplished so much beyond one field and would have led to many other equally formidable accomplishments. *Ad astra, Amelia.*

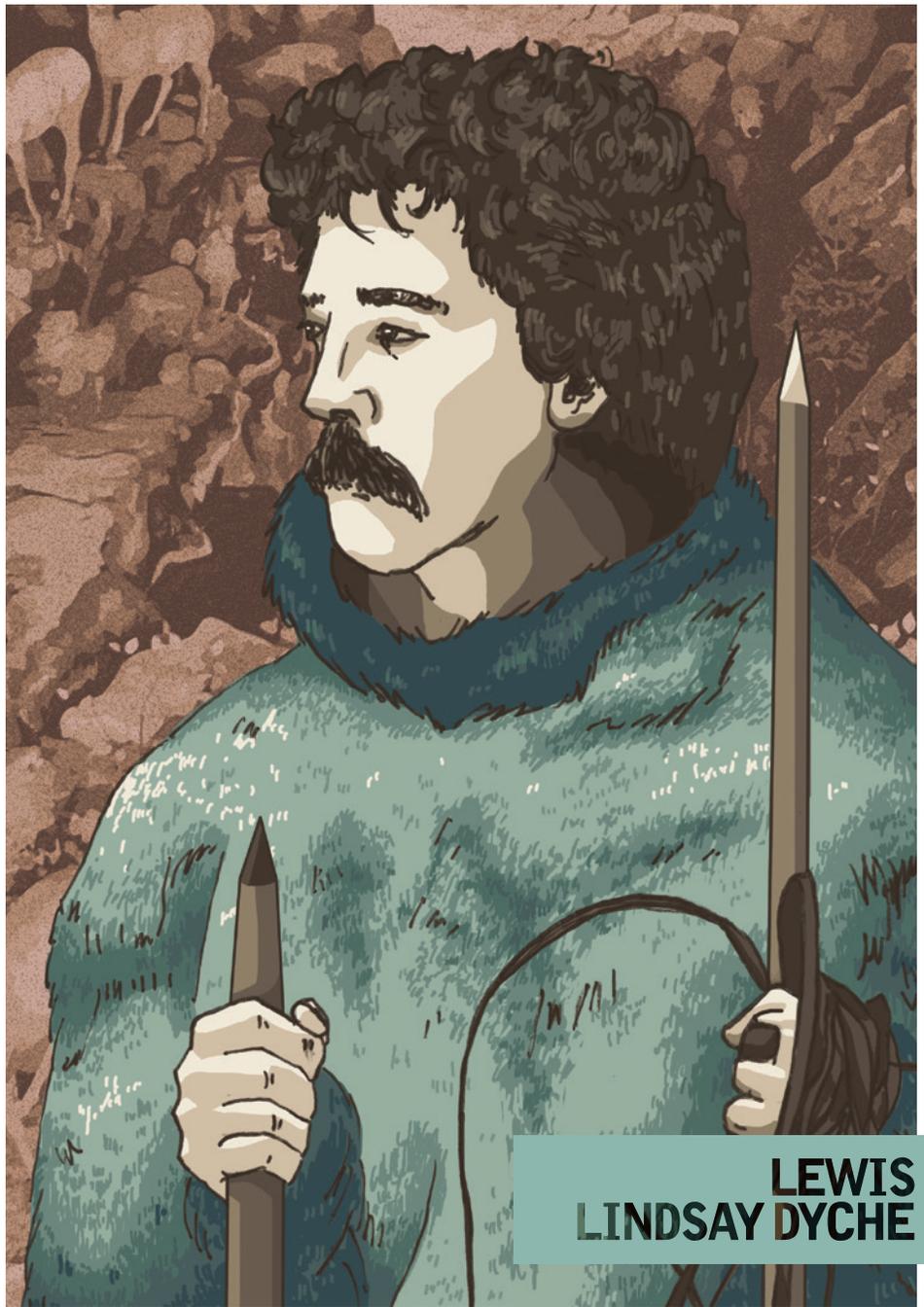
—Christine Steinkuehler

Born in 1857 and brought to the Kansas Territory as a baby by his parents, Lewis Lindsay Dyche grew up hunting, trapping and working on the family farm in what would become Osage County. At the age of 16, he enrolled at the Kansas State Normal School in Emporia, studied hard and graduated in three years, then enrolled at the University of Kansas, where natural history professor—and eventually university chancellor—Francis Huntington Snow mentored him.

The two scholars would regularly travel to Colorado and New Mexico to collect specimens, including large mammals such as elk, bison and moose. Dyche continued this work when he trained in Washington, DC, with William Temple Hornaday, chief taxidermist for the United States National Museum at the Smithsonian Institution. In time, Dyche became a zoology instructor at KU, and his taxidermy and museum exhibit design skills would become a national sensation.

“Lewis Lindsay Dyche achieved one of the greatest deployments of taxidermy with his Panorama of North American Mammals—Kansas’s magnificent showpiece in the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair showing 121 mammals across forest, plains, mountain, and desert environments that attracted 2.4 million visitors,” says Leonard Krishtalka, director of the Biodiversity Institute & Natural History Museum. Going beyond the responsibilities of a scholar, Dyche also built a small room inside the faux rocky outcrop displaying mountain goats and spent nights there through the duration of the fair, in order to protect his exhibit from vandals. “On its return to Kansas, the Panorama’s enormous popularity led the Kansas Legislature to fund the 1903 construction of a new Natural History Museum at KU, aptly named Dyche Hall, in which the centerpiece exhibit is his panorama, now expanded to tropical and arctic animals and plants,” continues Krishtalka.

In 1894 and 1895, Dyche joined separate expeditions to Greenland with legendary explorers Frederick Cook and Robert Peary to hunt polar bears, walrus and other large arctic mammals



**LEWIS
LINDSAY DYCHE**

to add to the collection at Kansas University. Afterward, he wowed Kansas audiences with his “magic lantern” lectures, projecting photos on glass slides of his adventures in the arctic. His gathering of specimens, which contributed to the demise of large mammals in a small way, was in line with Euro-American scientific thinking at the time and the belief that taxidermy displays were possibly the only way to preserve samples of the animals as westward expansion decimated wildlife populations.

After retiring from teaching at the University of Kansas, Dyche became the State Fish and Game Warden in 1909. He died of pneumonia in 1915 and is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Lawrence. Visitors can still see Lewis Lindsay Dyche’s iconic panorama at the Natural History Museum at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, an enduring legacy to one of the state’s greatest explorers and educational innovators who brought the science and wonder of natural history to the public. **KM**

—Amber Fraley