

# Happy Birthday Kansas!

Welcome to our celebration at the Gold Standard Fruit and Stock Farm, settled by the William C and Jane Shaft family in 1857. Today we celebrate the fruits of their endeavors, 150 years of statehood. We welcome the students of Chase County High's art class, who painted the logo on the front of the barn. We also welcome the Heartland Ringers who will provide music .

In true Kansas tradition, the Sesquicentennial Celebration of Kansas Statehood is being celebrated in small grass roots events. The Kansas Barn Alliance and Kansas Sampler Foundation put out the call for barn owners to paint their barns in commemoration. Across the state, Kansas Sesquicentennial logos have been painted on barns by a variety of artists. Our logo of sunflowers was designed and painted by the art class at Chase County High School. Peggy Lyons is the teacher, and the students are: Alexa Bond, Jordon Crofoot, Daniel Granado, Kandace Griffin, Jen Pietrowski, Shelby Wagoner, and Ty Zimmerman. We thank Warren Harshman, Blair Tharp and Nancy Tharp for assistance in transportation.

Our next logo is on the south side of the barn. This logo was designed and painted by Eric Dyck. The logo is an updated rendering of the stamp issued by the US Postal Service in 1961 for the Kansas Centennial.

Let me tell you a story:

"In 1850's Michigan, William C. and Jane Shaft raised livestock on their 160 acre farm, owned a hotel in Howell, Michigan, and ran a stage line from Howell to Lansing. But they were enthralled with the prospect of heading west to settle the frontier, and in 1857 they set out on the adventure of their lives. Selling their property and businesses, they loaded two wagons, one with food and the other with supplies and headed west. The youngest of their ten children, Jessie, was born April 11, 1857. They left Michigan two weeks later with their nine children. One child had died as an infant.

At Fort Leavenworth, they were advised they were entering Kansas Territory, where the Indians they would meet might be friendly or hostile. The family settled in Chase County by December, 1857.

The Shafts were among the first white settlers in the area. In April, 1858, William C. set out for supplies in Council Grove. Upon his return, spring rains had flooded the creeks, and he drowned at Harris Crossing. His horse returned home without him and his body was found later by Will Harris.

Faced with this cruel tragedy that fate had brought, Jane wanted to return to Michigan. However, the children wanted to stay and finish their work. Thus, this noble pioneer woman bowed to the wishes of her children and amidst trials and hardships of the frontier helped carve a life for her family rich in the heritage of Kansas history. This left the widow in Kansas Territory with nine children, the eldest only nineteen years old. Son Daniel would drown in 1860. In 1868, they finished a

fine stone house with limestone from their land and walnut from their timber. This house is on the National Register of Historic Places. They named the farm the Gold Standard Fruit and Stock Farm.

Some of the difficulties they had to combat were the drought of '60, grasshopper years, floods and prairie fires. The nearest post office was at Council Grove, twenty five miles away. The only neighbors were the Kaw Indians and an occasional white man. But all through this Mrs. Shaft kept her family together.

Jane Shaft's home was often the scene of county socials. July 4, 1860, all of Chase County gathered at the Shaft home to celebrate. New Year's Day, 1872, was celebrated by all the Old Settler's gathering at Jane Shaft's for a social and dance. The men went on a deer hunt.

The Shaft home was used as a church meeting place and daughter Mary started a school in her mother's home. Not only was the Shaft home a place of worship, school and social gatherings, but a refuge in times of Indian raids. The homestead was a stopping place for many covered wagons on their journey westward. Jane ran a post office from her bureau drawer.

Ironically, the Shafts were hosts to the Indians as well as the white settlers. The Indians would bring their squaws and children and make camp in the timber belonging to the Shafts. Then the chiefs and bucks would go on hunts or the war path. Jane Shaft and her children were never molested by the Indians. The children often played together, racing ponies and teaching each other. When the bucks would return to camp, they would help themselves to the Shaft's corn and wheat, but leave buffalo meat and hides in return. These the Shafts traded in Council grove for clothing and supplies."

Now the Heartland Ringers will play some musical numbers under the direction of Marilyn Lake.