



CUMULATIVE REPORT: 2025

CHAPMAN CENTER FOR RURAL STUDIES

WHAT'S NEW?

Our 2025 Interdisciplinary Research Grant project has touched both our hearts and the community's with its meaningful mission. Taking place at the Logan Intergenerational Family Education Center (LIFE Center), the project titled "It Takes a Village: A Multidisciplinary Project to Assess Impacts and Outcomes of an Intergenerational Program in a Rural Kansas Community," aims to explore meaningful community connections. The LIFE Center combines a nursing home, a preschool through fourth-grade school, and a community gym and wellness center all in one place. Students and residents are encouraged to connect and engage to enrich one another's quality of life.

Natalie Barlett and Heather Bailey, psychology faculty in K-State's College of Arts and Sciences, are leading the study in this small town of Logan (pop. 436). The project supports the Logan community by promoting well-being, addressing economic challenges, and gathering insights to benefit other rural Kansas communities. Researchers will assess students' social and academic growth, residents' health outcomes, and staff satisfaction to help the center meet state standards and ensure long-term success and funding.

The Chapman Center has awarded the research team a \$15,000

Interdisciplinary Research Grant to carry out the study. This funding will cover expenses such as travel, materials, and software needed to develop intergenerational programming. The team will receive administrative and communications support from the Chapman Center.



The research group also includes Justine Irving, associate teaching professor of gerontology, and Laci Cornelison, director of K-State's

Center on Aging (both from the College of Health and Human Science), as well as Migette Kaup, professor of interior design in the College of Architecture, Planning & Design.

CENTER ACTIVITIES



Dakota Boyles, a dual major in history and political science, has been hard at work on the **Carnahan-Garrison Cemetery project**. The initiative will assist the Carnahan-Garrison Cemetery caretaker, Tami Howland, in organizing and digitizing cemetery records. Dakota will work with primary documents, conduct oral history interviews, develop skills in scanning and data management, and create a public exhibit on the cemetery's history, incorporating input from Tami and members of the

cemetery board. Carnahan Creek and Garrison were integral to the westward expansion of Manhattan and the Kansas Territory, a focus of Dakota's research. She will also interview descendants of Carnahan Creek and Garrison pioneer settlers.

Steven Walsh, a history major, explores the rich history of the **Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley Military Road**. His project explores the historical significance of the Military Road that connect the two forts. This 130-mile route played a critical role in the westward expansion of Kansas and the United States. Steven's research examines the road's use before statehood, its impact on Native American tribes, specifically the Kaw Nation, and its role in the political and military conflicts of the Kansas Territory. The study also traces the road's decline with the rise of railroads, highlighting its legacy in shaping regional development and national history.



Steven and Mikey Schneider (history major with a minor in the classics) are both involved in one of our larger projects, **"Creating Spearville's Community History,"** sponsored by the Feist Foundation. This grant, awarded to the Center, will support a collaborative effort to gather and preserve Spearville's history by collecting oral histories and historical materials (documents, images, artifacts, etc.). These valuable cultural assets will be archived by the Ford County Historical Society.

KSU students and Spearville high schoolers will use these resources to create public exhibits. This project will culminate in a scholarly article on public history collaboration for the *Kansas History Journal*.

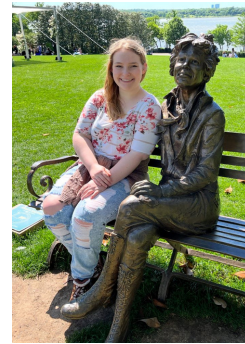


The images above are from our wonderful visits to Spearville. The image on the left is the community gathering in town for the unearthing of a time capsule from 1975. The image on the right is a safe that was donated to the Ford County Historical Society from Spearville.



We are lucky to be partnering with K-State's History Department and the **Koester House Museum** Foundation to offer a Ph.D.-level Graduate Research Assistantship for the 2025–2026 academic year. Kenzie Jansonius, PhD student in the Department of History, and Gabriella Randall, senior at Kansas State studying art history, classics, and museum studies, have been chosen to join the Center for this collaboration. The project will involve strategic planning, programming expansion, and archival support for the Koester House Museum in Marysville. We will assist the museum by digitizing documents and researching funding sources for exhibit development. The Koester House Museum is a beautifully preserved Victorian mansion that once belonged to Charles and Sylvia Koester, a prominent Marysville couple known for their remarkable love story. Their honeymoon coincided with the U.S. Centennial celebration, and Charles, chosen as a Kansas representative, traveled with Sylvia to Washington, D.C. for the 1876 Centennial Exposition. We look forward to honoring their legacy during the 150th anniversary celebration next July.

Jansonius, left, and Randall, right, are eager to begin work on the Koester House. We value their passion for projects like these, as we share a deep commitment to preserving and celebrating the enduring heritage of museums and the important stories they keep alive within our communities.



ALUMNI & STAFF SPOTLIGHT

It is with full but heavy hearts that we said “see you soon” to our right-hand woman, Kim Westcott. For over five years, Kim served as our office manager and a core member of the Chapman Center team. Her steady leadership, attention to detail, and calm, thoughtful presence shaped the Center's daily rhythm and culture. Whether managing complex projects or offering a supportive ear, Kim was always at the heart of what we do.

She now steps into an exciting new role as Director of the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum in Chanute, KS. We cannot wait to see her in action and continue to support her work at the museum's upcoming gala.

“Take Off to Adventure!” is kicking off on Friday, October 3, at 6:30 PM at the Chanute Martin Johnson Airport. We’re incredibly proud of Kim and know she’ll bring the same passion and brilliance to her new position. While we’ll deeply miss her, this isn’t goodbye, as we already have plans for visits and future collaborations underway! We’re so grateful for all she’s contributed and can’t wait to see what she’ll do next. Go, Kim!



THE CENTER SUPPORTS COMMUNITY COLLABORATION



The Chapman Center, Riley County Genealogical Society, and the Manhattan Public Library continue to come together to collaborate on our "**Walking Through History on the Linear Trail**" project. This project is supported in part by Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) and Mary Ice, K-State alumna and FFNHA trustee. Presentations about this work are hosted at the library and filmed for the RCGS. The recorded sessions are housed on the Chapman Center's [YouTube channel](#). We are pleased to share this important work on our digital projects website. (<https://ccrsdigitalprojects.com/projects/walking-through-history-on-the-linear-trail>).

So far, there are five markers put in place, with five more on the way to finish out the project. This series of 10 historical markers highlights Manhattan's past, with markers placed along the 9.4-mile path of the Linear Trail.

"WALKING THROUGH HISTORY" & AMERICA 250

As the United States prepares to celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2026, the "Walking Through History on the Linear Trail" project reflects the spirit and goals of **America 250** by encouraging communities to explore the stories that have shaped the nation.

By highlighting local histories along Manhattan's Linear Trail, this project brings national themes to life at the community level, transforming everyday spaces into places of learning, connection, and commemoration, fully embodying **America 250**.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

SEPTEMBER

- **9/19 - 9/21:** Spearville History Workshop

OCTOBER

- **10/3:** "[Take Off to Adventure!](#)" gala at the Chanute Martin Johnson Airport hosted by Kim Westcott, director at the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum
- **10/9 - 10/11:** LASSO conference
- **10/20:** Engagement week

NOVEMBER

- **11/7:** [Flint Hills Military History Symposium 2025](#) - CCRS students Steven and Dakota will be presenting on the [Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley Military Road](#) project
- **11/16:** RCGS talk on Lost Towns
- **11/19 - 11/25:** [KMA Conference](#) - Mary, Kim, Steven, and Dakota will represent the CCRS during the "Making Internships Work: Collaborating with Students and Universities" panel

If you are interested in a visit from the Chapman Center, please contact at chapmancenter@ksu.edu for digitization days, information on internship partnerships with K-State, talks on the ghost towns of Kansas, the language of Kansans, archiving techniques, and much more.



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k-state.edu/chapman

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Digital Projects



Lost Communities



Kansas Treaties