



Chapman Center for Rural Studies student helps to sort Maple City school house artifacts for Going Home: Hidden Histories of the Flint Hills museum exhibit.

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CHAPMAN CENTER FOR RURAL STUDIES

When we think of Kansas' future and what K-State students need as emerging leaders, respect for the past, connection to community and practical professional experience come to mind. The Chapman Center for Rural Studies provides an undergraduate research experience that connects students' curiosity with the inspiration of history to advance understanding, cultural memory and the skills required of a new generation.

In class, students are given hands-on research tools needed to uncover "lost towns" across the state. They learn of natural disasters, shifts in economy and the resilience of family. This narrative of Kansas history is largely unknown until students begin to dig into the data.

The Chapman Center for Rural Studies was funded through the generosity and vision of the late Mark Chapman and his wife, Cheryl Mellenthin, as a way to research a single Kansas community, Broughton, Mark's hometown.

That research led to new connections and the discovery of thousands of similarly nearly-forgotten places with evocative names like Speed and Magic.

In the decade-plus since its launch, the Chapman Center has created an online archive of small towns and established a competitive internship program to research Flint Hills ranching communities, Kansas FFA and the diverse histories of Kansans. Last fall, the Chapman Center debuted a multi-media museum exhibit focusing on Flint Hills communities with special interest in Broughton.

"My internship experience with the Chapman Center for Rural Studies helped prepare me for my career in history and archaeology," said Patrick Moran, 2017 graduate in military history. "My work with the Bureau of Land Management as an archaeologist is to protect, preserve and manage cultural resources of the American West and public lands; the Chapman Center gave me my professional foundation."