Douglas County Historical Society
Watkins Museum of History
2022 Annual Report
In March 2022, the Watkins Museum celebrated St. Patrick’s Day in style with a float entry in the 35th Annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade. The museum was one of three beneficiaries during the 2022 Parade season and received $23,000 to expand its educational programs for children of all abilities.

DCHS 2022 Board of Directors

Officers/Executive Committee
Abby Ehling, President
Rosalea Postma-Carttar, Vice-president
Michael Delaney, Past President & Treasurer
Diana Carlin Pierron, Secretary

Members
Shawn Alexander  Sandy Praeger
Eric Anderson  Deanell Tacha
Freddy Gipp  Lauren Taylor
Tom Harper  Verdell Taylor
Stephen Hill  Kathryn Tuttle
Evan Holt  Lorie Vanchena
John Nalbandian  Jeff Weinberg
Jim Peters  Sean Williams

Museum Staff 2023

Steve Nowak, Executive Director
Riley Chambers, Education Assistant
Kate Grasse, Collections Manager
Will Haynes, Director of Engagement and Learning
John Jewell, Business Manager
Brittany Keegan, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections
Jane Nuessen, Curriculum Specialist
Geoff Pate, Humanities Kansas Intern
Cherrie Preut, Education Coordinator
Natalie Vondrak, Communications and Outreach Manager
Brittney Wilson, Education Assistant

Cover photo: Visitors engaging with the Made in Lawrence interactive located in one of the museum’s recently completed third-floor core exhibits. The exhibit features 15 artifacts that were manufactured in Lawrence over the last 160 years. Made in Lawrence is one of nine new interactive experiences featured in the ten 3rd floor core exhibits which opened to the public in September 2022.
A look back at 2022 reveals a year of unique highlights (unique even for the ever-inventive Watkins Museum). Here are just some of those highlights:

**FROM BEYOND OUR WALLS, RECOGNITION:**
We are proud of the staff’s accomplishments and awards in 2022. In March, the Watkins Museum was a beneficiary of the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. In September, the grassroots non-profit Friends of Oak Hill dissolved and entrusted the Watkins with their significant assets. We, therefore, took on the new responsibility of fostering preservation and creating programs about Oak Hill Cemetery. Lastly, at the Kansas Museums Association Conference in November, Executive Director Steve Nowak received the Distinguished Service Award, and *The Museum Minute* series won the Technology Award.

**WITHIN OUR WALLS, EXHIBITS**
Considering side by side the first and the last exhibits to open in 2022, we see evidence of the museum’s ongoing efforts to include a broad range of history in this county. The first exhibit was *Confronting the Past: The Douglas County Community Remembrance Project*, which memorialized the 1882 lynching of George Robertson, Isaac King, and Pete Vinegar. The final exhibit is a pop-up traveling exhibit created with University of Kansas Museum Studies students: *Living Sovereignty: Sustaining Indigenous Autonomy in ‘Indian Territory’* (on display through April 2023). Exhibits like these clearly manifest the explicit mission of the DCHS and the Watkins Museum of History “to inspire civic engagement and commitment to shaping a better future.”

**WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR INTEREST IN DOUGLAS COUNTY HISTORY:**
We hope that you will visit the Watkins Museum soon and often, in-person—to enjoy this magnificent building with its revealing interpretive exhibits and artifacts, and virtually—to see online exhibits via our newly-updated website, to view programs live or recorded, and to check out our fun and informative social media accounts.

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**From the DCHS President, Rosalea Postma-Carttar**

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**From the Director, Steve Nowak**

The accomplishments of 2022 provide a foundation on which we will continue to build. In 2022, with support from a National Endowment for the Humanities grant, museum education staff developed new field trip lesson plans for four historic sites in Douglas County, including the Watkins Museum. One of the new lesson plans for the Watkins uses the new third floor exhibits to examine the role women have played in the growth and development of our community. Field trips based on this lesson plan will debut this spring, and the new lesson plans will guide the development of online learning resources in 2023 for teachers who cannot bring their classes to visit Douglas County historic sites in-person.

Another partnership among historic sites in Baldwin City, Clinton Lake, Eudora, Lecompton, and Lawrence, secured over $700,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funding from Douglas County for capital improvement projects that improve preservation and increase public access at those sites. This grant will fund the upgrade of the aging passenger elevator at the Watkins Museum in 2023. This major investment, along with many donations and contributions of time and effort, will help us prepare to celebrate the most significant milestone on the horizon in 2023—the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Douglas County Historical Society.
2022 was another great year for partnerships and innovation. Inspired by important issues, excellent museum exhibits, and technological possibilities, Watkins staff held a range of in-person and online events. We started 2022 off strong with the widely attended and live streamed dedication of new informational kiosks at the Grover Barn Underground Railroad site. This was followed in February by a screening of the acclaimed film *Just Mercy*, which involved a partnership between the Watkins, Lawrence Arts Center, Lawrence Branch NAACP, and the Equal Justice Initiative. Our main event in March was a dream come true as we hosted a live streamed interview with Oscar-winning filmmaker Kevin Willmott titled Film and Community. The summer saw further opportunities for collaborations on key topics. We helped host the premiere of *Then Three Were Taken*, a locally produced documentary about the 1882 Lawrence lynching, on our YouTube channel. For the 27th annual Civil War on the Border series in August, we embarked on a new effort to brand every year’s series with a new theme; this year’s events explored intersections between natural and human history during the Civil War era. We ended the year strong with a dynamic events calendar. To provide just one example, we hosted the first History Harvest for the Potter’s Field Community Remembrance Project, introducing this major, ongoing scientific and cultural effort to the public for the first time.

**2022 Engagements**

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A large audience participated in the online interview with filmmaker Kevin Willmott. Here, Professor Willmott holds up the 1969 comic book that first taught him about African American history.

The 27th Civil War on the Border series generated 1,053 participants thanks to several new events including a tour of the historic Robert H. Miller House. Here, Dennis Dailey presents to 40 people outside the home. Dennis was a dear friend of the Watkins and passed away in early 2023. He had a long connection to Lawrence history and made a significant impact to the community through his stewardship of the Miller house. He will be greatly missed.

Guest Curator Dr. Alyssa Cole gave a presentation on her and Curator Brittany Keegan’s selection process of turning Gary Davis’s 300 photo collection into an exhibition of 40 photos. *The Familiar Faces: The Gary Davis Photo Collection* exhibit celebrated the history and community fellowship of Black citizens in North Lawrence.

The annual family event Tails and Traditions, offered free crafts for more than 300 children and their families. This event is one of staff’s favorite ways to kick off the holiday season!
Education and Program Partners

Education staff offered a mixture of both digital and in-person activities throughout 2022. In winter and spring, classes focused on the life of early Lawrence citizen Maggie Herrington, while Tiny Tours and Homeschool lessons explored topics such as quilts, architecture, and inventions. Tours for Girl Scout troops and other area schools completed the season’s programming. Later in the summer, the Summer Games program returned, and the museum hosted a three-week camp for Douglas County students. In the fall, homeschool lessons were rebranded as Homeschool History. Due to increased enrollment, these lessons expanded into two classes offered once a month!

2022 Education Numbers
Digital Field Trips: 94 students
Onsite Field Trips: 822 students
School Visits: 501 students
Education Conferences and Presentations: 33 participants
Total: 1,450 participants

Above: Education Coordinator Cherrie Preut and Education Assistant Riley Chambers lead a Homeschool History lesson on the evolution of communication and technology.

Left: Summer Games attendees learn about the chemistry of why blood color differs in specimens with a museum partner from the KU Natural History Museum.

2022 Programming Partners and Sponsors

American Red Cross
Ballard Center
Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park
Cans for the Community
City of Lawrence
Clinton Lake Historical Society
Coneflower Consulting
Douglas County Heritage Conservation Council
Downtown Lawrence Inc.
Equal Justice Initiative
Eudora Area Historical Society
Explore Lawrence
Free State Brewing Co.
Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area
Greenbush Virtual Academy
Guardians of Grover Barn
Hall Center for the Humanities
Haskell Cultural Center
Haskell Indian Nations University
Heritage League of Greater Kansas City
Humanities Kansas
Johnson County Museum
Kansas Authors Club
Kansas Museums Association
Kansas State Department of Education
KantArt Gallery
KU Mini College
KU Natural History Museum
KU School of Architecture
Latchkey Deli
Lawrence Arts Center
Lawrence Central Rotary Club
Lawrence Farmers Market
Lawrence Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade
Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department
Lawrence Preservation Alliance
Lawrence Public Library
Lawrence St. Patrick’s Day Parade
Lawrence, Kansas Branch, NAACP
Lawrence, Kansas Juneteenth
Lawrence/Douglas County Community Remembrance Project
Lied Center of Kansas
Lecompton Historical Society
Max Kade Center for German-American Studies
Native Lands, LLC
Oak Hill Cemetery Potter’s Field
Remembrance Project
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Tonganoxie Historical Society
University Women’s Club
USD 497
Willow Domestic Violence Center
While staff placed a moratorium on accepting material donations during the renovation of the Kramer Family Research Room in 2022, several exciting additions aided us in preserving Lawrence’s history. The museum’s staff and Board of Directors made sure that two historic events last year, the KU Men’s Basketball team winning the NCAA championship and a referendum vote in August that gained national attention, were represented in the collections. Museum staff collected sports memorabilia documenting the NCAA championship and the day after the Jayhawks’ big win. After putting out a call for election materials, DCHS board members Kathryn Tuttle and Tom Harper donated yard signs and a poster created by artist Lisa Grossman documenting the strong feelings around the August referendum.

Artifacts highlighting key moments from the community’s history also entered the collection. Before shutting its doors, Reuter Organ Company made sure pieces from their company’s history, including an employee time clock used at their facility from 1917 until the 1980s and a wooden ammunition box made by the company to aid the war effort in the 1940s, made it into the DCHS collection. Joe Ramirez, a Lawrencian whose family lived for a time in the Santa Fe railroad workers’ community, commonly known as La Yarda, took the time to draw a layout of what the railroad apartment complex looked like from his memory. Mr. Ramirez donated his drawing to Watkins Museum to further preserve the memory of La Yarda. In August 2022, filmmaker and KU Film and Media professor Kevin Willmott donated the tuxedo he wore to the 2019 Academy Awards ceremony, where he and co-writers Charlie Wachtel, David Rabinowitz, and Spike Lee won the Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay. Thanks to generous donations, some of these artifacts will have custom-made display cases built in 2023 to join the Watkins Museum’s third-floor permanent exhibits.

Research Highlights:
Most research requests include queries for all types of collection materials, but the three most popular included:

- Topic or People: 33%
- Property-related: 34%
- Photograph/Image: 33%

Popular Topics of 2022
- Early Lawrence Businesses
- South Park
- Undertakers in Lawrence
- Douglas County Courthouse
- The first house in Lawrence

The KU Men’s Basketball Program earned its 6th National Championship in 2022. To mark this special occasion, museum staff sought out memorabilia for the collection to honor this historic event.
Exhibitions

In 2022, the Watkins partnered with several individuals and organizations to round out its exhibits. The spring exhibit, *Mothers of Invention: Women Entrepreneurs and Innovators in Lawrence History*, allowed the museum to build on connections with business owners past and present. Susan Bateman, the owner of the Yarn Barn, lent a wide range of advertising and photographs from the business’ 50+ years of operation. Susan Millstein, who owned several businesses, including what is now Sunflower Bike Shop, also shared photographs and newspaper articles about their stores, as well as a range of catalogs and business materials.

Watkins Museum borrowed photographs and materials from the Haskell Indian Nations University’s Cultural Center for an exhibit created in association with Humanities Kansas. That exhibit, *From Then to Now: A Student History of Haskell University*, opened in December and will be on display until mid-May, 2023.

In late August, Watkins Museum got the opportunity to showcase the *See Lawrence: Parks and Green Spaces* poster exhibit. These posters, designed by artists in the community, were part of a larger project spearheaded by Lawrence Magazine to use the style of classic travel posters to showcase unique features in Douglas County. Watkins Museum borrowed twelve posters that served as the featured display in the second-floor gallery.

For the fifth year in a row, Watkins Museum borrowed and displayed the exhibit *Freedom Day: The History of Juneteenth*, created by Tamara Cash in partnership with Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area and Humanities Kansas to commemorate Juneteenth.

### Changing Exhibitions

- **Not A Straight Path: The Fight for Queer Rights in Lawrence** (October 2021 - March 2022)
- **Armed with Knowledge: The Scientific Testing of Old Sacramento** (August 2021 - February 2022)
- **A Century of Care: The History of Lawrence Memorial Hospital** (August 2021 - January 2022)
- **Dear Friends: Lawrence’s Literary Societies** (November 2021 - May 2022)
- **Confronting the Past: The Douglas County Community Remembrance Project** (February 2022 - August 2022)
- **Mothers of Invention: The Women Innovators of Lawrence** (April 2022 - October 2022)
- **Glenn Kappelman: A Life of Service** (May 2022 - November 2022)
- **Sister Cities: Bringing Lawrence to the World** (September 2022 - October 2022)

- **45 Years: The Willow Domestic Violence Center** (August 2022 - October 2022)
- **Familiar Faces: The Gary Davis Photo Collection** (May 2022 - November 2022)
- **Freedom Day: The History of Juneteenth** (June 2022 - July 2022)
- **See Lawrence: Parks and Green Spaces** (September 2022 - February 2023)
- **Genius in a Jar: Einstein’s Brain in Lawrence** (November 2022 - April 2023)
- **Supplies in Demand: Shortages in Lawrence History** (November 2022 - March 2023)
- **From Then to Now: A Student History of Haskell Indian Nations University** (December 2022 - April 2023)
Facilities and Volunteers

After eight years, the series of ten exhibits comprising the Watkins Museum’s third floor core exhibition was completed in fall 2022. These exhibits highlight stories of the people and events that built our communities and shaped our unique character. In addition, they offer an array of interactive opportunities that encourage a hands-on approach to exploring history.

This undertaking would not have been possible without major grants from the Sunderland Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Capitol Federal Foundation, and the support of dozens of individual donors. These supporters are recognized in the stair hall on panels that all visitors will pass as they ascend the staircase.

Another major renovation included the transformation of the museum’s former archives into a dedicated public research room. A donation by Carol J. Koenig, in loving memory of her mother, Daisy Viola Kramer Koenig, made this remarkable update possible. This project included the removal of a 1970s dropped ceiling and the restoration of the room’s original finishes. The work returned the room to its grand 1888 appearance. New storage systems house research and collections materials. A grant from the Sunderland Foundation allowed the adjoining room to be restored and outfitted as an archival collections processing and storage area and curatorial workspace.

Volunteers

In 2022, our nine volunteers provided an impressive 1,187 hours of volunteer service. The national value rate for a volunteer is $29.95 per hour, meaning that our volunteers contributed $35,550.65 of their time to the Watkins and our visitors.

Grace Awbrey
Ken Karr
Paula Monroe
Susie Nightingale
Carola Ratzlaff
Mary Tallmon
Ralph Tallmon
Charlie Thomas
Doug Tyler

At the DCHS Annual Meeting, Carola Ratzlaff won Volunteer of the Year for her outstanding dedication and time to the Watkins Museum.

2022 Volunteer Numbers

Front door volunteers: 7
Hours worked: 853
Facilities volunteer: 1
Hours worked: 334
Total volunteers: 8
Total hours worked: 1,175

Above: Carol Koenig and other Kramer family descendants held a family reunion in Lawrence and attended the public opening of the KRAMER Family Research Room in October.

Left: The KRAMER Family Research Room is officially open to the public. The newly renovated space can now accommodate researchers interested in a range of topics including businesses, schools, churches, personal correspondence, and changing Lawrence city governance.
Grants and Financials

- City of Lawrence, $13,000 to support marketing and social media outreach
- Douglas County Community Foundation Giving for Good Campaign matching grant, $2,500 for collections processing and storage materials
- Douglas County Heritage Conservation Council Natural and Cultural Heritage Preservation Grant, $13,000 for Oak Hill Cemetery Potter’s Field Community Remembrance project
- Hall Center for the Humanities Stories for All grant, $7,000 to support website redesign and digital storytelling projects
- Humanities Kansas, $10,000 for Oak Hill Cemetery Potter’s Field Community Remembrance Project
- Institute of Museum and Library Services INSPIRE! Grant, $49,980 for online educational resources at the Eudora Community Museum, Territorial Capital Museum, Wakarusa River Valley Heritage Museum, and Watkins Museum of History
- Lawrence St. Patrick’s Day Parade, $23,000 for DEIA educational programming
- Ethel and Raymond F. Rice Foundation, $24,500 to support research services and KU and Haskell internship programs
- Sunderland Foundation grant, $100,000 for the renovation of archives storage and collections processing and work areas

FY 2022 Income: $585,555

FY 2022 Expenses: $611,382
The Douglas County Historical Society closed out 2022 with 348 members. Membership dues totaled $47,953 for the year. Members also donated an additional $26,081 that went toward the museum’s general operating budget. In total, members contributed an impressive $74,034 to the museum in 2022. We are so grateful to each of you for supporting the museum and enabling us to share and preserve the stories of local history. Thank you!

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Membership

Associate continued
Nancy K Nielsen
Susie Nightingale
Andrea Norris & Tom Beisecker
Steve Nowak
Jerry & Joan Nowak
Gregory Ohlmacher
Mark & Susan Osborn
Gerald & Jeanne Pees
Sandy & Mark Praeger
Mick Ranney & Amber Harden
Evie & Michael Rapport
Pam & Steve Reiz
Harold & Donna Riehm
Peter Rinn & Barbara Wiley
Barbara Rosewicz
Stan & Janet Roth
John & Virginia Sayler
Susan Schmidt
Carol Schmitt & Wayne Propst
Barbara & Dick Schowen
Bob & Sandra Schumm
Elizabeth Sheehan
Jan Sheldon & Jim Sherman
Jean Shepherd
Fred & Lilian Six
Dale Slusser & Sherry Fowler
John & Patricia Solbach
Gary & Connie Sollars
Byron & Marion Springer
Ruth D Stoebener
Eric Struckhoff & Paige Nichols
Julie Taylor
Toni Taylor
Charles & Cheryl Thomas
Marcia Epstein & Kyle Thompson
Doug & Karen Tyler
Lorie A. Vanchena
Kurt & Pennie von Achen
Dustin & Kathy Walker
Chuck & Karen Warner
Barbara Watkins
Peter & Elizabeth Welsh
Glenn Willey
Seun Williams
Virginia Wulfkuhle

Household ($75-$99)
Fred & Sue Anne Atchison
Nancy Ballard
Rita Beyer
Jane & Rich Bireta

Mary Ann Brenner
Susan Brosseau & William Kalinch
Sharon Brown
Dennis J Brown
Angela Candela & Michael Morley
David & Elizabeth Cateforis
Marjorie Cole
Peter & Virginia Curran
Stephen & April Evans
Suzan Hampton & Kourosh Raeen
Marilee & Dennis Harper
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Thad Holcombe
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Breck & Grace Angel Marion
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Derek & Debbie Rogers
Deb & Ray Rowden
Dr. Charles & Catherine Sanders
Ron Schorr & Georgann Egliniski
Nancy Taylor Shivers
Ivan George Smith, Jr. & Terry L Smith
Kent Stafford & Lisa Simon
Paul Stuewe & Beth Wasson
Linda & Jim Thompson
Robert Thorp & Karen Brock
Jeff Weinberg & Mary Haynes Weinberg
George Wiley & Kathleen Bradt
Frank Ybarra & Janet Buie

Individual (up to $50)
Deena Amont
Michael E. Arp
Paul Bahnmaier
Margaret Bayer
Kevin Boatright
Lorna Brown
Glenn Brunner
Angela Candela & Michael Morley
George Catt
Marilyn Chamberlin
Ginger Chance
Walt & Toni Clogston
Clark H Coan
Fred Sack & Jenna Coker
Judy Culley
Eliza Darmon
Karen DeVictor
Mary Kay Digby
James Dunn
Kristen Epps
Amber Fraley
Frank Goebel
Cap & Kitty Gray
David Hann
Karol Haynes
William Haynes
Janet Horner
Vickie & Bert Hull
Bernard Judge
Audrey Kamb-Studdard
Dan Karasek
Thomas F Keegan, Sr.
Molly Kirk
Penelope Sue Kozeny
Beth Krishtalka
Roy & Kathy Lafferty
Karen Lenzen
Tanya Longabach
Jeff Lough
Carey Maynard-Moody
Carla Mumma
Shelley Page
Denise Pettengill
Don Pierce
Kris Roberts
Gordon Sailors
Margaret Schwartzburg
Harriet Shaffer
Carol Shankel
Allison Sinkler
Shelley Skie
Donna Snead
Jon Standing
Diane & Brian Stoddard
Lauren Taylor
Aiden Toms
Christine Traner
Carol von Tersch
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2023 Membership Renewal
Renew your membership by clicking the donate button below or find out when your membership is due by contacting Natalie Vondrak at nvondrak@watkinsmuseum.org

DONATE
Community Outreach

The museum increased its media and community presence in creative ways in 2022. To access online content follow the museum on social media or visit www.watkinsmuseum.org.

Outreach Committee board members promoted museum events and exhibits at the Lawrence Farmers' Market. The committee tabled a total of six times and tallied up 389 engagements with the public.

The on-going KLWN radio program *Time Capsule with the Watkins Museum*, aired 26 shows in 2022. Episodes explore Douglas County history and the people who helped shape it's communities. Tune in by visiting the Explore Online webpage.

The Watkins expanded its outreach efforts in October by co-hosting *Eerie Evening: Team Trivia Event* with Coneflower Consulting. All proceeds from the fun and light-hearted program supported the Oak Hill Cemetery Program Committee.

The museum launched its new website with the help of Coneflower Consulting. The site offers more opportunities for visitors to engage online with exhibits, blogs, and lesson plans.

*The Museum Minute* aired eight episodes in 2022. The on-going project features staff and board members sharing one-minute stories about artifacts and exhibits on display in the museum. In November, the project won a Technology Award at the Kansas Museums Association conference.

Staff teamed up to build a float and walk in the 2022 St. Patrick’s Day Parade. They passed out coloring sheets to hundreds of children along the 2.5 mile trek to North Lawrence.