

KANSAS STATEHOUSE "HALL OF FAME"

"Inscribed on the walls of Representative Hall, in the Kansas Capitol are the names of ten men," each "a legend of Kansas history," wrote Samuel T. Howe of Topeka in September 1897. A decade later, however, the *Topeka Daily Capital* reported that "the history that some of them made has been forgotten and no one seems to know why their names were placed there." Today, we can still only speculate as to the reason why these individuals were so honored. We do know, with some degree of certainty, that these "inscriptions" - the so-called "Hall of Fame" - were finished with the ceiling frescos in 1882-1883 and remained to adorn the chamber walls at least until the late spring or summer of 1908. Each of the men was in some way identified with the free-state movement that sought to keep slavery out of Kansas and gained a considerable degree of prominence during his lifetime.

T.W. Barber (---December 6, 1955) Originally from Pennsylvania, Thomas W. Barber came to Kansas Territory in 1855 and took a claim some eight miles southwest of Lawrence. He became involved in the free-state cause and was shot and killed by a proslave party during the so-called "Wakarusa War." While his assailant was reportedly bragging that he had "sent another of those d—d abolitionists to his winter quarters," Barber's body was being taken to Lawrence where he became an instant martyr.

Charles Robinson (July 21, 1818 - August 17, 1894) Kansas's first state governor, Charles Robinson was "an active and decisive participant" in the turbulent territorial period preceding statehood on January 29, 1861. He came to the newly opened Kansas Territory at the head of the first colony sent there by the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company and established the company's headquarters at Lawrence, which became the focal point of free-state activity and the Robinsons' home for the remainder of their lives. Among other things, Robinson was elected governor under free-state Topeka Constitution in 1856 and the Wyandotte Constitution in 1859.

John Brown (May 9, 1800 - December 2, 1859) Without question the most famous name in the "hall of fame" is that of controversial abolitionist John Brown, whose hatred for the institution of slavery was unsurpassed. Brown who arrived in Kansas Territory in the fall of 1855, quickly made his presence felt during the Kansas struggle and was involved in or responsible for the "Wakarusa war" at Lawrence, the Pottawatomie Massacre, the battles of Black Jack and Osawatomie, and the liberation of dozens of slaves from nearby Missouri. Ultimately, Brown was executed for conspiracy, treason, and murder stemming from his Harpers Ferry raid.

Andrew Horatio Reeder (July 12, 1807 - July 5, 1864) Commissioned the first governor of Kansas Territory on June 29, 1854, Andrew H. Reeder, who supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act and was "soft" on the issue of slavery, took the oath on July 7 and arrived in Kansas on October 7, 1854. Reeder was more interested in investment opportunities than sectional politics and was certainly no abolitionist, but soon after assuming his duties in the troubled territory, he began exhibiting a streak of independence, antagonized proslavery Kansas and their Missouri allies, was removed from office by the pro-Southern administration, and subsequently supported the free-state or Topeka movement.

Henry J. Adams (February 10, 1816 - June 2, 1870) In March 1855 Henry Adams moved from Ohio to Kansas Territory and took up residence in Leavenworth, where he became deeply involved in the political struggles of his new home. He was elected under the Topeka constitution to the first free-state legislature and was among the members of the Leavenworth party taken prisoner by the proslave Kickapoo rangers. Adams, who was considered a good orator, became the first free-state mayor of Leavenworth in spring 1857 and was a delegate to the Leavenworth Constitutional Convention, remained politically active until his death.

Alfred Gray (December 5, 1830 - January 23, 1880) In March 1857 Alfred Gray decided to leave his native New York and move to Quindaro, Kansas Territory; ultimately he made "one of the best farms in Wyandotte county." Gray was chief clerk of the territorial house of representatives and a member of the first state legislature before serving as a regimental quartermaster during the Civil War, but his notoriety comes from his postwar service to the state as secretary of the State Board of Agriculture. He championed the state through published reports, which were promotional by design and by a successful Kansas display at the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876.

Martin Franklin Conway (November 19, 1827 - February 15, 1882) Kansas's first U.S. congressman (1861-1863), Martin Conway moved to Kansas in October 1854 as a Douglas Democrat and special correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun*. Conway became disillusioned with the popular or squatter sovereignty solution to the slavery issue as a result of the territory's first, fraudulent election and was transformed, according to a friend, into "a convicted free-state man of the more radical Kansas stripe." Conway held numerous positions while a member of the Free State and later the Republican Party, including delegate to the Big Springs Convention and president of the Leavenworth Constitutional Convention.

James Henry Lane (June 22, 1814 - July 11, 1866) James H. "The Grim Chieftain" Lane, who finished out his Kansas political career as one of the state's two U.S. senators, was a prominent Indiana Democrat before moving to Kansas Territory in April 1855. After assessing the situation, Jim Lane quickly cast his lot with the free-state forces and soon became one of the Free State Party's most significant and controversial leaders, but unlike Charles Robinson, Lane was never an abolitionist. His detractors, then and now, paint him more the "unbalanced," pugnacious jayhawker, whose "men committed depredations fully as atrocious as those of the "border ruffians,"" than the free-state crusader who helped wrest Kansas from the infamous slave power.

James Montgomery (December 22, 1814 - December 6, 1871) One of Kansas's most famous (or infamous) "jayhawkers," James Montgomery settled near Mound City and quickly became a recognized leader of the free-state movement. In 1857 he organized a company of men to protect the free-state minority of southeast Kansas and to harass proslave settlements in Kansas and Missouri. When the Civil War began, Montgomery was elected colonel of the Third Kansas Volunteer Infantry, a part of "Lane's Brigade," and eventually commanded the Second Regiment, South Carolina Colored Volunteers.

Benjamin Franklin Mudge (August 11, 1817 - November 21, 1879) During the summer of 1861, in order to demonstrate his antislavery convictions, B.F. Mudge moved his family to Quindaro, Wyandotte County, Kansas, a bustling river town with a reputation as an important point on the Underground Railroad and as a stronghold of the free-state movement during the preceding years. But he made a name for himself in postwar Kansas as a student of natural history and geology. The legislature made Mudge the first state geologist in 1864, and the following year he came professor of geology and associated sciences at the Kansas State Agricultural College.

MURALS

As you enter the House from the rotunda, the mural overhead (east) is "**Justice**"; the mural to the south is "**History**"; the mural to the north is "**The First Dawn of Liberty**"; the mural over the Speakers Dais is "**Law**".