



## Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000

By Craig Miner

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### Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000 By Craig Miner

Kansas is not only the Sunflower State, it's the very heart of America's heartland. It is a place of extremes in politics as well as climate, where ambitious and energetic people have attempted to put ideals into practice-a state that has come a long way since being identified primarily with John Brown and his exploits.

Craig Miner has written a complete and balanced history of Kansas, capturing the state's colorful past and dynamic present as he depicts the persistence of contrasting images of and attitudes toward the state throughout its 150 years. A work combining serious scholarship with great readability, it encompasses everything from the Kansas-Nebraska Act to the evolution-creationism controversy, emphasizing the historical moments that were pivotal in forming the culture of the state and the diverse group of people who have contributed to its history.

*Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State* is the first new state history to appear in over twenty-five years and the most thoroughly researched ever published. Written to enlighten general readers within and well beyond the state's borders, it offers coverage not found in previous histories: greater attention to its cities-notably Wichita-and to its south central and western regions, accounts of business history, contributions of women and minorities, and environmental concerns. It presents the dark as well as the bright side of Kansas progressivism and is the first Kansas history to deal with the post-World War II era in any significant detail.

Craig Miner has spent almost forty years researching, teaching, and writing Kansas history and has dug deeply into primary sources-especially gubernatorial papers-that shed new light on the state. That research has enabled him to assemble a wider cast of characters and more entertaining collection of quotations than found in earlier histories and to better show how individual initiative and entrepreneurial aspirations have profoundly influenced the creation of present-day Kansas.

Ranging from the days of cattle and railroads to the era of oil and agribusiness, this history situates the state in its own terms rather than as a sidebar to a larger

American epic. Miner brings to its pages an identifiable Kansas character to preserve what is distinctive about the state's identity for future generations, echoing what one Kansan said over half a century ago: "Kansas is simply Kansas. May she never be tempted to become anything else."

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#### Review

"This is the best history of Kansas we have ever had. It is not only well-researched and comprehensive but also enlivened by many wry anecdotes and telling quotations, and by a great deal of personal affection. Highly readable and engaging."—**Donald Worster**, author of *A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell* "Deeply rooted in Kansans' ways of thinking, alternately iconoclastic and conservative, Miner's treatment is up-to-date, accessible, and distinctly original."—**Walter T. Nugent**, author of *Into the West: The Story of Its People* "With his wide-ranging experience in the researching and writing of state and regional history, Miner is uniquely qualified to tackle what some might consider an impossibly difficult task, and he has succeeded in impressive style."—**Virgil W. Dean**, editor of *Kansas History, Kansas State Historical Society*

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#### About the Author

Craig Miner is Willard W. Garvey Distinguished Professor of Business History at Wichita State University and the first recipient of the Public Humanities Award from the Kansas Committee for the Humanities. Among his numerous books are *West of Wichita: Settling the High Plains of Kansas, 1865-1890*; *Harvesting the High Plains: John Kriss and the Business of Wheat Farming, 1920-1950*; and (with William E. Unrau) *The End of Indian Kansas: A Study of Cultural Revolution, 1854-1874*.

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