

Museums can take us out of ourselves, bring us back to a special moment in time, and evoke memories of a shared past. Take your place in history as a supporter of what makes Kearney a vibrant, engaging place with a rich past and a promising future. Become a member of the museum or just volunteer occasionally, either one is greatly appreciated!

- Special Events
- Limited Genealogy Research
- Historic Preservation Information
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Saving the Past...For the Future!



The Kearney Historic Museum collects, catalogs, preserves, and tells the story of Kearney's past through exhibits, displays, and collections. We also do educational programs for the local schools. The museum will rotate a portion of the exhibits and displays every three months. We also hope to have a microfilm reader available soon for the public to come in and do research for genealogy and general interests. We have microfilm of the remaining Kearney Newspapers on site.

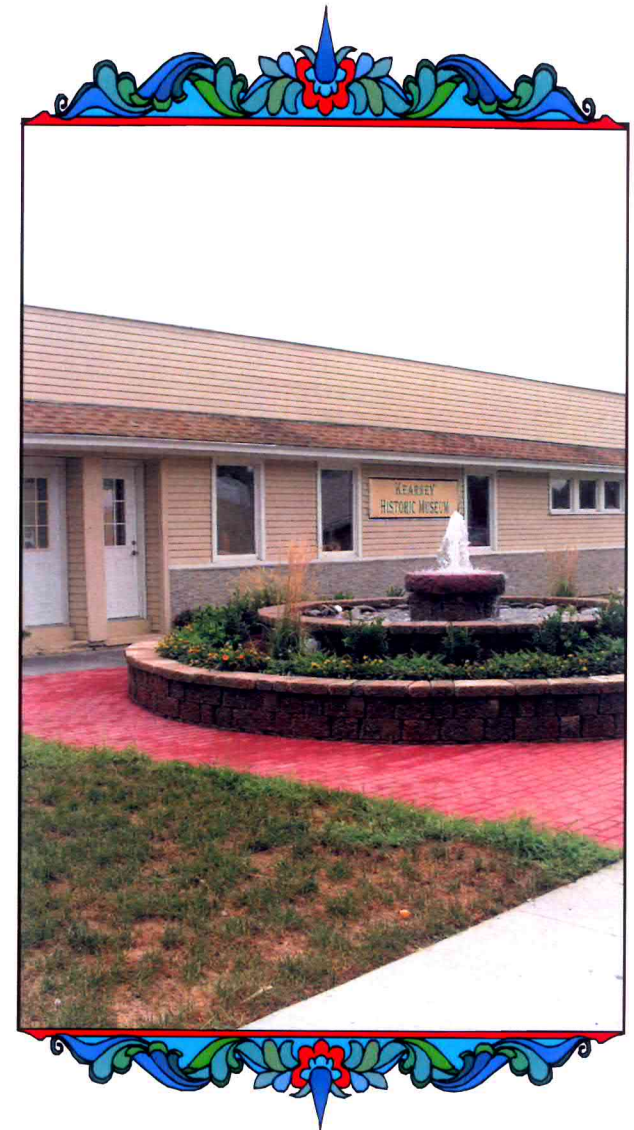


Kearney Historic Museum
101 South Jefferson
Kearney, Missouri 64060

Open on Fridays & Saturdays
From 10:00am to 2:00pm
Groups by reservation only

Admission Fee: Donation

Call 903-1856 for more information



The town began as Centerville, which was laid out by David T. Duncan and W.R Cave in the spring of 1856.

At the beginning of the Civil War, the population of Centerville was approximately 20 families according to *Woodson's History of Missouri*, so less than 100 people.

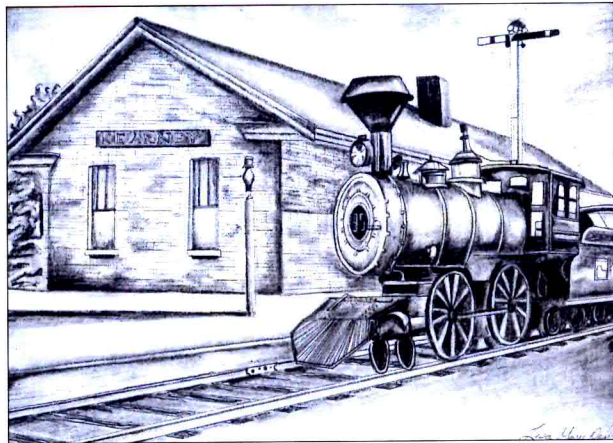
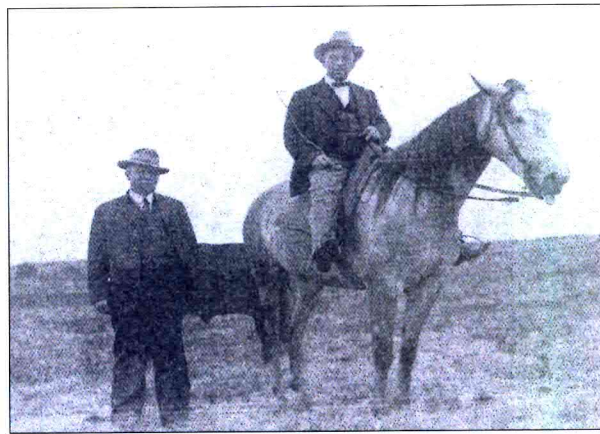


Photo from the Kearney Historic Museum Collection
Drawn by Kearney High School Student Lisa Dennis



When the railroad came to town in 1869, John Lawrence laid out the town of Kearney on land purchased from Joel Estes. Before long the new town of Kearney encompassed the old town of Centerville. At one point, up to sixty trains came through Kearney each day.

According to the 1877 *History of Clay County, Missouri*, "Kearney, on the H & St. J. R. R., nine miles north of Liberty, incorporated in 1869, contains three churches, eight stores. A flouring mill and a hotel. Population about five hundred."



Above is a picture of local cattlemen, Bowman & Gilbert Barr, taken in 1929.

Excerpt from July 21, 1883 *Kearney Clipper Newspaper*, "For miles in every direction from Kearney can be found the finest lands for agricultural purpose that the State affords. The soil is of the richest variety, well-watered and possessing every other necessary attribute. The markets are convenient, a great city reaches out its arms to us, and all necessary railway facilities are within our reach. No better society can be found — no more hospitable community breathes the air of freedom."



The three hats pictured above were handmade locally from native bird feathers by Rose Mann.

Three things with the biggest impact on Kearney were the coming of the railroad, our Black Angus and Hereford cattle, and our crops. At one time, Kearney, renowned for its cattle, sold the most cattle per square mile of population than anywhere else in the United States.



And last but not least, Kearney is the home town of the James brothers, notorious bank and train robbers, Frank and Jesse. Pictured below is the bank safe from Kearney Trust where Frank James ashes were kept from 1915 to 1944 when they were finally laid to rest with his wife Anna James.

