

CITY OF  
LEAWOOD, KANSAS

*A Guide to  
Exploring  
Leawood's Past*

BY THE  
LEAWOOD HISTORIC COMMISSION



# HISTORIC POINTS OF INTERESTS

## *Alexander Majors Home* 83rd & State Line Road

Although the 1856 Majors home is on the Missouri side of State Line Road, the front yard is actually in Leawood. Alexander Majors used the two-story home as the headquarters of his famed freighting business that transported goods along the Santa Fe Trail from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Majors made his first overland trip in 1848 in a record time setting up his successful company, Russell, Majors and Waddell, which operated for many years and which brought about the short-lived but highly romanticized Pony Express. The Majors home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## *Leaky Roof Railroad Bridge* Located on private property near Ironhorse Golf Course

The railroad line was called the St. Louis, Lawrence and Denver Railroad (StL&D) and regular service began between Lawrence and Pleasant Hill, Missouri in December 1871. The line was bought and merged several times and was abandoned some time between 1894 and 1922. The rails were salvaged in the late 1930's and the scrap steel sold to Japan. The Leaky Roof name came from the clay sewer tiles and other clay products that were shipped from the Dickey Clay Company plants of Deepwater, Missouri. Because the clay tiles were not affected by rain, older cars with leaky roofs were used. At one point the line was also known as "The High, Dry, and Dusty" because it was used whenever the Missouri and other rivers in Central Missouri flooded. The vestiges of the small railroad bridge are unusual because they are large limestone slabs, well-dressed and laid with a thin mortar line.



Stone Bridge

## GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

### *Leawood Drive-In*

The classic drive-in operated for 25 years at 123rd & State Line Road. Its colonial facade was a landmark in the southern part of the city.



Coulter Home c. 1900

### *Coulter House*

The 1880's era home, known for its last owners, H. Franklin and Betty Coulter, was located at 4203 W. 151st Street.

### *Saddle and Sirloin Club*

Built in 1940 near 103rd and Mission Road, the Saddle and Sirloin Club was formed to support the American Royal. It had outdoor and indoor show arenas, corrals, a jumper course and exercise areas.

### *State Line Airpark*

Located near 133rd and State Line Road, the airport operated from 1946 until 1980. Fifty-five aircraft, including two helicopters were based at the airport. An estimated 52 landings and takeoffs occurred each week.

### *Leawood Country Club*

The Kroh Brothers were responsible for building the club in 1954. The club sat on an 11-acre site near 89th & Lee Boulevard, and was a center for social and athletic activities in the Leawood community.

### *Learado (Sutherland Ranch)*

In the 1950's Bob and Barbara Sutherland built a replica of a frontier village on their acreage at 103rd and Mission Road and called it "Learado". The village was inspired by Knotts Berry Farm in California and included a saloon, general store, jail and fort, and even featured mannequins dressed in western clothes. The property is now the Saddlewood subdivision.

# HISTORIC TRAILS IN LEAWOOD

## Military Trail

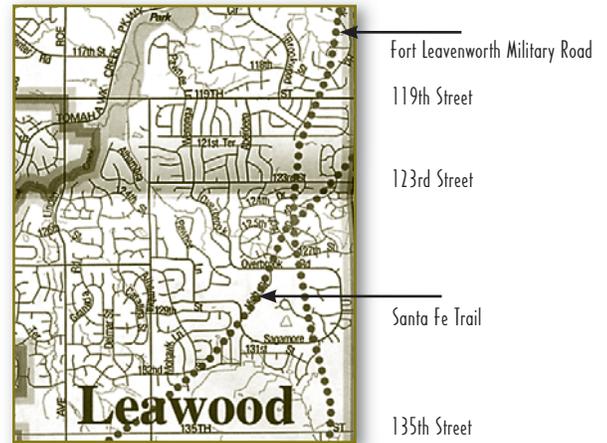
Military personnel traveling between Fort Leavenworth to the north and Fort Scott to the south trekked along much of the eastern edge of Leawood on what was known as the Fort Leavenworth - Fort Scott military road.

## Santa Fe Trail

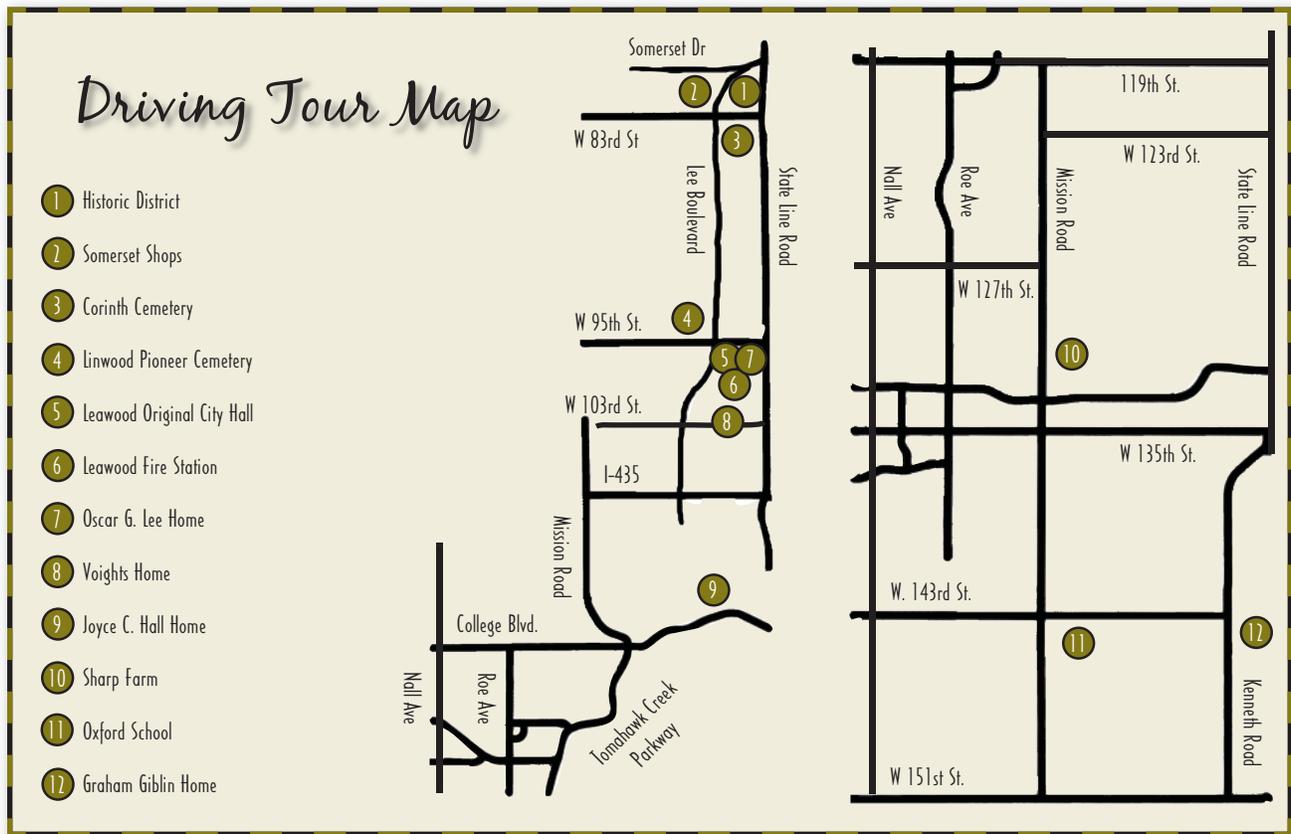
Santa Fe Trail travelers passed through what is now the heart of Leawood, entering the area near present day 123rd and State Line Road. Just across the state line in Missouri, the historic town of New Santa Fe at 122nd and State Line Road was an important stopping point on the trail.

## California/Oregon Trail

Travelers on the trail to California and Oregon generally followed the path of the Santa Fe Trail through Leawood, before splitting off at Gardner, Kansas for their western destinations.



Map of Trails. Map courtesy of the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association.



# DRIVING TOUR OF HISTORIC LEAWOOD PLACES

## Overview of Leawood's History

The City of Leawood was incorporated in 1948, with approximately 300 homes and a southern boundary of 103rd Street. Platted by Kroh Brothers Realty in 1937, the original housing development (today Leawood's first local Historic District) of stone, brick and clapboard homes, was designed to offer the residents a quiet suburban refuge with large yards and a country setting. Streets were designed without sidewalks to resemble a country lane. Before the enterprising Kroh Brothers, the area was dotted with farms and one-room schoolhouses. Oscar G. Lee, the city's namesake, purchased several hundred acres in 1922. Remnants of these early days are found scattered throughout Leawood.

## 1 *Historic District*

Leawood's local Historic District is bounded by Somerset on the north, 83rd Street on the South and includes the streets of Meadow, Manor, Lee and High Drive. The 129 homes in the district were constructed by the Kroh Brothers, who are credited with building much of early Leawood starting in 1937.

## 2 *Somerset Shops* *Somerset & Lee Boulevard*

The Somerset Shops were Leawood's first commercial development and were built by Cliff Brisbois. The first stores included Martin's grocery, Marvin Hobby Shop, Bickley Drug Store, Joe Stovel Barber Shop, Leawood Cleaners, a beauty shop and liquor store.

## 3 *Corinth Cemetery* *83rd & Mission Road*

This small cemetery on 83rd Street east of Mission Road includes the gravesites of many notable Leawood residents including members of the Voights and Kroh families and John Dyché, an early settler and namesake of the Dyché Branch School that eventually became Corinth Elementary.

## 4 *Linwood Pioneer Cemetery* *95th Street East of Mission Road*

This historic cemetery sits next to the Ranch Mart Shopping Center and the post office. The land where the cemetery sits was originally part of a 640-acre tract of land owned by Shawnee Indians. In the 1850's, Simeon W. Peoples purchased some of the land and donated two acres for a church and cemetery. The first documented burial took place in 1869.

## 5 *Leawood Original City Hall* *96th & Lee Boulevard*

Built in 1953, the city originally rented the small colonial-style building from Kroh Brothers for \$250 a month. The city later purchased the property and operated out of it until 1994 when the new city hall opened on Town Center Drive.

## 6 *Leawood Fire Station* *96th & Lee Boulevard*

In 1951, Leawood purchased a new pumper for its volunteer Leawood Fire Department and built its first fire station on land donated by Kroh Brothers. Kroh Brothers built the station at a cost of \$19,000 and Leawood financed the project with its first bond issue.

## 7 *Oscar G. Lee Home* *96th & Lee Boulevard*

In 1922, Oscar G. Lee, whose namesake became Leawood, moved to the area from Oklahoma and began buying land between 79th and 103rd Streets, from State Line to Belinder.

## 8 *Voights Home* *103rd Street & Lee Boulevard*

Herman and Ella Voights built their prairie-style limestone home in 1923. Voights was an early Leawood resident born in 1875 on a farm near 83rd and Mission Road. The Voights home is on the National Register of Historic Places.



Oldest Home in the Historic District is located at 8005 High Drive



Somerset Shops



City Hall



Oscar Lee Home



Voights Home

9 *Joyce C. Hall Home*  
College & State Line Road

Hallmark Cards founder, Joyce C. Hall, built his Georgian home in 1930 on 41 acres. Hall eventually owned nearly 700 acres of land that today is the Hallbrook residential development.



Sharp Farm

10 *Sharp Farm*  
131st & Mission Road

Once a sprawling farm in the country, the Sharp family home was built in 1877. The once rural landscape of the farm now sits on 12 acres surrounded by a modern subdivision.

11 *Oxford School*  
Ironwoods Park 147th & Mission Road

Built in 1877, at the corner of 135th & Mission Road, Oxford School operated as a one-room schoolhouse until the mid-1950's. The school was relocated to Ironwoods Park in 2003, and now provides living history programs about life and schooling during the 1900 to 1920 era.



Oxford School

12 *Graham Giblin Home*  
143rd and Kenneth Road

Built around 1880 by William Albertus McKinney, the two-story home has undergone many changes through time. Originally built as a relatively simple midwestern interpretation of the I-house, by the turn of the century the home had become grander with Italianate features including decorative brackets at the eaves and a second-story porch that extended across the front of the house. Members of the Giblin family have lived in the home since 1949.



Giblin House

c. 1880

## HISTORIC EVENTS

### *Native American Lands*

In the 1820's and 1830's, the U.S. government moved the Shawnee Indians to 1.6 million acres of land in eastern Kansas, much of which was in present-day Johnson County. The land where Leawood sits was originally Native American land, deeded by President James Buchanan to various members of the Shawnee Indian nation. Six hundred acres of the land became the property of Dr. Greyyeyes, who later sold the land that was developed into much of north Leawood.

### *Oxford Fraud*

In the 1850's, the Border Wars broke out in and around present-day Leawood, then called Oxford Township. In 1857, the "Oxford Fraud" took place, a scandalous, but little-known incident in pre-Civil War history. Pro-slavery forces padded election results in the Johnson County precinct of Oxford, near present day 123rd and State Line Road. Local officials knew something was up after the voting; the 1,628 pro-slavery candidate votes outnumbered the area's voting population. When the votes were invalidated, a rift occurred in the Democratic Party over the issue to gain control of the Kansas territorial legislature and paved the way for Republican Abraham Lincoln to win the 1860 presidential election. This election fraud added fuel to the fire and helped spark the Civil War.



c. 1900



c. 2007



c. 1909

The Henry Klappmeyer family home was east of Mission on 135th Street.

### *About the front cover photo*



c. 1910

The Perry and Mayme McKinney home was located  
in what is now Leawood Falls Subdivision.

### *About the Leawood Historic Commission*

The Leawood Historic Commission is a volunteer commission appointed by the Mayor. The purpose of the LHC is to identify, protect and preserve the historical, architectural and cultural heritage of Leawood, Kansas, and to make that heritage accessible to its citizens for their use and education through appropriate means.

For more information on the history of Leawood, these  
historic places and sites, please visit our website at:

[www.leawood.org](http://www.leawood.org)

Available at City Hall and Oxford School  
is the Leawood History book:

*"Leawood, A Portrait in Time"*  
*by Ann Morris*

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