

# DRIVING ACROSS KANSAS

**\*\*\*A GUIDE TO I-70\*\*\***

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*In his introduction to Dan Dancer's The Four Seasons of Kansas, bestselling author William Least Heat-Moon reflects upon the Great Kansas Passage of those who race their cars westward across Interstate 70 without trying to understand the truth of the place. Ted Cable and Wayne Maley come to the rescue of those bored and blinkered speed-driven travelers with a new guide that will expand and enrich their understanding of a state whose history, in Heat-Moon's words, is "a tumbling of guns, torches, hatchets, and knives." Guided by Cable and Maley, the historical landscapes of I-70 come back to life, recalling landmarks and legacies relating to pioneer movements and Indian dispossession, army outposts and great bison hunts, cowboys and cattle trails, the struggles over slavery and women's rights, and the emergence of major wheat, beef, oil, and water industries. Their guide parcels out information, mile-marker by mile-marker (in boldface), in a way that's equally accessible to westbound and eastbound users alike. For example: 85 Grinnell " In 1872, Grinnell had two large sod buildings for drying buffalo meat. The air was so dry here that meat could be stripped off in layers and hung to dry. The dried meat would be preserved and not spoil. This was critical in the days before coolers and refrigerators. People called this meat "jerked" meat because of the way it was torn from the buffalo's carcass. Today at gas stations or convenience stores along I-70 you have the opportunity to buy similar jerked meat in the form of beef "jerky." 117 Capturing an Iron Horse " In this area, along the railroad track paralleling I-70 to the north, Indians tried in 1868 to capture a locomotive "alive" by taking telegraph wire, doubling it back and forth several times, and stretching it across the track with an Indian or two holding each end. Needless to say, the "iron horse" running at full steam, tore through the snare like a rampaging buffalo through a spider web. 126 WaKeeney " WaKeeney was named by combining the names of Albert Warren and James Keeney, owners of the Chicago real estate company that surveyed and plotted the townsite in 1878. These men chose this spot along the proposed route of the Kansas Pacific railroad exactly halfway between Kansas City and Denver. They had big plans for their "Queen City of the Great Plains," including 80-foot-wide brick streets. 298 Fort Riley " Ft. Riley's cavalry school became the only one in the United States and largest in the world. Horse soldiers were trained until 1950 when all the units became mechanized. Because of the emphasis on horses, the fort produced the U.S. Olympic equestrian team for every Olympics between 1894 and 1947. 194 The Clock House " The house was built from a kit in 1905. The initial owners ordered the kit from Sears Roebuck. All the parts, including window glass and doors, were shipped by rail to Lecompton, then hauled the final six miles by horse and wagon to this site. . . . In 1908 it won the national Farm House of the Year award. Like the ever popular Roadside Kansas, Driving across Kansas will reward the observant traveler with a treasure trove of details sure to increase his or her appreciation for the great Sunflower State.*

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