

## **Written Testimony Opposing House Bill 2384**

*February 19, 2025*

Dear Chairman Kessler, Vice Chair Schmoee, Ranking Member Miller and Members of the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 2384, which pertains to the conveyance of the Shawnee Indian Mission Historical Site.

As a neighbor, volunteer, and long-standing member of the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation Board, I am deeply familiar with the site's current stewardship, its rich history, and the ongoing effort surrounding its potential conveyance.

Simply put, the Shawnee Indian Mission is in responsible and capable hands. I have closely followed this issue for years, attended hearings last year, and engaged with legislators. Yet, I have not encountered a single compelling argument in favor of transferring ownership. In fact, the only real threat to the site is the possibility that the legislature might consider the short-sighted and irreversible decision to relinquish one of the state's most historically significant properties.

Three key points highlight why continued state stewardship is essential:

1. **Strong and Sustainable Support:**

The Shawnee Indian Mission benefits from multiple sources of enduring public and private support. Its operations are bolstered by a nonprofit foundation that supplements state funding. This dedicated group ensured the Mission's doors remained open when other state historic sites were forced to close due to budget constraints. The State Historical Society, City of Fairway, and Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation have met numerous times over the past year alone to develop a collaborative framework that ensures the site's continued vitality.

2. **Commitment to History of All Peoples:**

Volunteers and staff have worked tirelessly to ensure the site reflects the history of all peoples connected to the Mission. An extensive research project identified over 80 Native tribes historically associated with the site. These tribes have been invited to participate in discussions, with many responding and engaging in meaningful dialogue. The stakeholders of the Shawnee Indian Mission regularly work with members of connected tribes to participate in the offer historical and tribal perspective and participate in the Foundation Board.

3. **Preserving a Cornerstone of Kansas History:**

The Kansas State Legislature should prioritize the continued public stewardship of this historic site. The Shawnee Indian Mission served as a territorial capital of Kansas and hosted one of the pivotal votes leading to the state's creation, including the infamous

"bogus legislature." It was among the region's first schools, attended by both Native American and white students, and later served as a Union Army camp during the Battle of Westport. This site encapsulates our region's most complex and compelling early history while remaining an active community hub for historical, educational, and cultural events.

As a cornerstone of our shared legacy, the Shawnee Indian Mission belongs in the public trust. A century ago, its significance was recognized and defended before the U.S. Supreme Court—surely, we can appreciate its enduring value today.

I urge you to preserve this invaluable site for future generations by ensuring it remains under state stewardship.

Sincerely,  
Dan Kerr  
Kansan

I am writing to oppose conveying the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway, Kansas to one of three present-day Shawnee Tribes located in Oklahoma. Such an action would be a travesty.

The mission brings the history of pre- civil war Kansas to visitors and citizens of Kansas. It is an important monument to the development of Kansas and the city of Fairway.

It has become an important part of the city and neighborhood - supported and cared for by multiple groups such as the Kansas Master Gardeners to name just one.

I hope you will vote against HB 2384. This conveyance must never happen.

Carolyn and George Kroh

James C. Lee  
Shawnee Tribal Member  
Past Vice-Chair of the Shawnee Tribe Cultural and Historical Preservation Committee  
26505 W 15 St S  
Sand Springs, OK 74063  
918-226-9170

February 19, 2025

House Federal and State Affairs Committee Members  
Regarding HB 2384 Conveying Ownership of the Shawnee Indian Mission Site to the Shawnee Tribe.

Dear Committee Members.

I am providing comments to the committee regarding House Bill 2384 which has been introduced and would convey the Shawnee Mission site to the Shawnee Tribe.

I served as the Vice Chair of the Shawnee Tribe Cultural and Historical Preservation Committee (STCHPC) which was formed in early 2020 to help document and preserve the many Shawnee historical sites that are scattered across the United States. There were several tribal members on the committee, nearly all of them were well-versed in either historic or cultural aspects of our tribe. I have extensive knowledge about Kansas City where the Shawnee lived in the early and mid-1800's. I have been researching my family and our tribal history in Kansas City since the late 70's. I have been to the Mission and the local historical societies many times. I worked with several local historians in the 80's who were experts on Shawnee history. Many of them have passed away, but they left a significant amount of information on our tribe's history in the area. Numerous members of my family attended the Shawnee Mission School while other family members served as trustees of sorts.

I am currently a sitting board member on the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation which provides funding for the operation of the mission. The Foundation works with the City of Fairway and the KSHS to teach and preserve the history of the mission. I have been on the board for over a year and travel to KC regularly from Tulsa to give presentations, attend board meetings and events. The Foundation and our partners have enhanced the educational offerings to the community during this past year.

Over the past eight or nine years, I have come to know Chief Barnes, on a personal level, as well as in my Vice-Chair capacity. I was the one who introduced the mission to Chief Barnes in 2020 telling him that we needed to develop a relationship with the mission administration to help them tell the story of our Shawnee people. Chief Barnes was unaware of the existence of the mission. I explained that it is the only location left of the Shawnee that our

people can see and touch. I explained that it would be a great benefit to both our tribe and the Fairway community to help preserve the history of the mission.

Instead of reaching out to the mission administration, Chief Barnes decided to hire a lobbyist in an all-out effort to wrestle the mission away from the State of Kansas. Chief Barnes said that if he could own the mission, it would then be Trust Land. In his thinking, he thought he could then build casinos anywhere in Kansas. Since then, he has come to realize that since the Shawnee had a reservation in Kansas that he was eligible to build casinos now.

Since I have known Chief Barnes, he has shown no interest in Shawnee history, and very little interest in our culture other than our annual dances and his interest in the Shawnee language. The language program has received millions of dollars in grants to help teach our language to tribal citizens. I believe he would not spend any of his precious casino money to save our language though. Chief Barnes has spent his entire working career operating gambling casinos and seems to know little else.

Everything we tried to do on our committee was sabotaged by Chief Barnes. He was not interested at all in what we were doing and eventually alienated the most knowledgeable historical and cultural members of our tribe. I was the first to resign from the committee after I had been asked by our cultural center director to do a Zoom presentation on the history of the Shawnee for a historical society in Johnson County. Chief Barnes told our chairman that I didn't have any business doing that, and since I was a "representative of the tribe", he didn't want me to do it. He told our chairman that his main concern was that I might use the word "disestablished" in my talk. He was worried that I would open a can of worms by using this word, which he had himself used the week before on TV. He realized that by using that word, it brings up the fact that the Federal Government had never officially "disestablished" the Shawnee reservation. If the reservation were to be "disestablished", it would disallow any claims by the Shawnee to land in Kansas. He is terrified by that possibility. I resigned and have been giving talks ever since.

After I resigned, Chief Barnes fired the rest of the committee members after he hired a highly paid Director for our Cultural Center. He also gave her the duty of managing the cultural committee and the members were all let go. The Cultural Center had been closed since 2019 due to COVID and was converted into offices. It has recently reopened. A few years earlier Chief Barnes fired the original Director who had been working hard at promoting the new Cultural Center and creating exhibits through grants she received. That director told me that Chief Barnes and his administration had mismanaged the grant monies so badly that she turned them in to Federal agencies. The tribe was required to repay the grant money.

Chief Barnes has intimidated our Business Council to the point that there is only one BC member who has the will to vote no on items which are not in the best interest of the tribe. This council member had been brought up on false ethics violations by Chief Barnes and was excluded from running for the Chief position last year. Chief Barnes revised the

election requirements which effectively eliminated this person from running for position of Chief. This BC member sued the tribe over these new restrictions but was defeated in Shawnee Court. The court is bought and paid for by Chief Barnes and rulings tend to favor him. This member brought Chief Barnes up on election violations, of which there were many, but the ethics committee, made up of friends of Chief Barnes denied the claims.

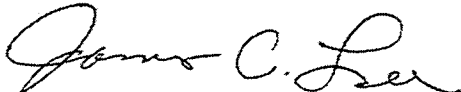
Chief Barnes has implemented a policy that no Shawnee citizens are allowed to review the accounting of funds of the tribe. He and his lawyers have said that no one needs to see the accounting of tribal funds and he has claimed tribal sovereignty. One of our citizens took this to Shawnee court and it was thrown out due to "Tribal Sovereignty". His stance is that his tribal sovereignty is all powerful and he can do anything he wants without any repercussions. My fear is that he will use tribal sovereignty with the State of Kansas, and they would not be able to do anything about it.

From my working with the cultural committee, I am certain that Chief Barnes has no interest in the history of the Mission. He has tried to infer that this mission was the same as the later government-run boarding schools. In the 1830's our tribal leaders requested this mission to be built to educate our children and teach them skills which would provide them with a livelihood. His ongoing hype about the possibility of children being buried at the mission is nothing but hype. It is quite well documented how many children died during those years the Mission was open. I doubt that they will find graves on that site if they were to do ground penetrating radar.

Why am I doing this? I do not believe that Chief Barnes has good intentions for the mission and would tarnish our tribe for years. I believe that he only wants to take it from the state ownership because he doesn't want the state to own it. He truly knows nothing about the history of the Mission and has no interest in preserving that history. He is all about casinos and making money. Unfortunately, very little of the money is reaching our citizens.

I hope you will review what I've said, as well as comments of others who are against this conveyance. If it is conveyed, I believe it will be a sad day for the state of Kansas and the Shawnee Tribe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James C. Lee". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

James C. Lee  
Shawnee Tribal Citizen  
Cherokee Nation Tribal Citizen

February 20, 2025

To the Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee

From Anne Leiter, 5330 N Winnifred St, Tacoma, WA 98407

I am writing this letter to oppose HB 2384.

I grew up in Fairway, Kansas and still take an active interest in local issues.

Local groups care more about local land issues, and local history than outsiders. The group of organizations that currently share responsibility for the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway have demonstrated their commitment and ability to care for the site. The Kansas State Historical Society has a long history of faithfully maintaining historic sites in Kansas. The Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation is made up of local people whose families have lived in the area for generations and have personal connections to the site. I fall into that category. Having grown up less than a mile from the mission, it's presence and history influenced my development and sense of personal history.. I care deeply about its future and worry that a group of outsiders without a deep connection to the land or local history will not faithfully steward the property or maintain it for the best interest of the local, regional and national community.

The Shawnee are one of many Native American tribes involved in the tragic history mission schools. I believe that the present Shawnee tribes located in Oklahoma feel they have some claim to the site simply because of its name. The Shawnee are not indigenous to that area nor have they demonstrated any commitment to the conservation of Kansas State historic sites.

The history of the Shawnee Indian Mission is important to a variety of groups, not only several Native American tribes but also Kansas Citians, Kansans and all Americans.

I urge Kansas legislators to oppose HB 2384

Sincerely,

Anne Leiter.

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Re: HB 2384 Bill

To: Kansas House State and Federal Affairs Committee

It has been brought to our attention that tomorrow the committee has a hearing regarding this bill. We strongly oppose any changes to the current management/ownership of the Shawnee Mission Indian Site. My family and I have been frequent visitors to the site and believe that the historical significance is not only 1 tribe but multiple Native American tribes and to the citizens of the state of Kansas (first territorial site). We do live in Fairway and we value it in our community. In fact, I think most citizens of Fairway are in full agreement to continue the management of the site. The exhibits at the current site do a good job of representing the various phases of the mission site. We hope the committee will listen to these concerns. Let's not set a precedence that state historical sites like this one (since 1927) should be privatized.

Clint and Tracy Meredith

6011 Mission Rd

Fairway, KS 66205



KS Legislature Re HB 2384

Subject: Preservation of the Shawnee Indian Mission under State Historical Society  
Management HB2384

I am writing to express my strong support for keeping the Shawnee Indian Mission under the management of the Kansas State Historical Society. As the only National Historic Landmark in Johnson County, the Shawnee Indian Mission holds immense historical and cultural significance, serving as a vital educational resource that provides insight into the region's past and the history of the Shawnee people.

There has been recent discussion about conveying this site to the Shawnee Tribe in Oklahoma, raising concerns about its potential repurposing for commercial ventures such as a casino. While I fully respect the historical and cultural ties that various tribes have to the land, I firmly believe that the mission's primary role should remain that of education and historical preservation. Under the stewardship of the Kansas State Historical Society, the site has been maintained for public benefit, ensuring that future generations can learn about its significance and the broader history of Native American heritage in Kansas.

Additionally, ownership disputes involving multiple tribes further complicate the matter. The land has been under state care for many years, and countless groups have laid claim to it in the past. Transferring ownership now could lead to uncertainty about its future and risk the loss of its intended educational mission. By remaining under the management of the Kansas State Historical Society, the Shawnee Indian Mission can continue to serve as a place of learning, reflection, and historical appreciation.

I urge the Kansas State Legislature and relevant authorities to preserve this landmark as a publicly accessible site dedicated to history and education. Thank you for your time and commitment to protecting Kansas' historical treasures. I appreciate your consideration of my concerns.

John Miller MD

5757 Windsor Circle

Fairway, KS 66205 8165506644

To: Committee Chairman, Representative Tom Kessler and committee members of the Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee

Regarding HB 2384

My name is Bob Myers, a resident of Fairway, Kansas and my family lives 5 houses from the Shawnee Indian Mission. I respectfully request your committee deny the request to change the conveyance of the Shawnee Indian Mission to the Shawnee tribe of Oklahoma away from the current stewards of the Kansas Historical Society, the City of Fairway, the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation and the Kaw Nation.

The Shawnee Indian Mission is currently woven into the historical fabric of the State of Kansas, Johnson County and the City of Fairway. The total depth of the history of the Mission's story must be protected for generations. The current stakeholder's mission is to tell the entire history of the Mission and not a selective narrow vision.

As a Real Estate Broker and historic preservationist, the strength of a community is based on the knowledge of the forebearers from the past to establish the stability of today and to protect the history for the future. This can only be done through the wide lense of facts presented in an educational manner with stories, festivals, outreach, tours and the benefit of bringing all interested stakeholders to the same table to honor all opinions. That is truly the Amercian process through democracy. That is the strength of the Mission to listen to all voices and to not be controlled by only the loudest and only a few of the voices.

Please vote to protect the Mission for the future telling the history of all who have passed through this hallowed ground. It would be a grave error to silence our ancestor's voices by narrowing the dialogue, their voices would be lost forever. Please vote to protect the current stakeholder by rejecting HB 2384.

Respectfully,

Bob Myers

ReeceNichols Broker

Fairway Resident

Grandfather to enlighten my grandchildren and all children of the future

To: Chairman Kessler, Vice Chairman Schmoe and all Committee Members

Re: HB 2384

My name is David O'Connell and I am writing in opposition to the proposed bill that would convey to the Shawnee Tribe all of the rights, title and interest to the land currently occupied and maintained as the Shawnee Indian Mission. I was born in 1956 and spent nearly a quarter century living directly across the intersection from the Mission. Except for a few years away for educational purposes I have always lived within a 5 minute drive. I still attend events and fairs at the Mission.

As a student at the adjacent St. Agnes Grade School I spent the vast majority of my early childhood playing in "the woods"- our designation for the green wooded expanse between the north building of the Mission and Meigs High School. My best friend's back yard on Reinhardt abutted the Mission property. Even as youngsters we somehow knew it was a special place and always treated it with reverence.

There is the grand history of the westward trails and the early days of our great State of Kansas, and certainly an earlier history of the indigenous peoples that the Missions curators are nourishing and hoping to advance, but also the history of the Fairway, Roeland Park and Westwood communities that surround and cherish the tradition and tranquil aesthetic of the Mission grounds.

I feel that this is the premier historical site in the State of Kansas and, along with the Mid-America All-Indian Museum in Wichita, should be carefully preserved as a valuable resource for generations to come. It does not belong to any one group, jurisdiction or tribe but to all Kansans. For a single, or even a very few, tribe(s) out of the many people with a connection to this place to be granted sole ownership with the possibility of future sovereignty risks the demise of one of The most important cultural assets in our State.

In conclusion the question comes down to the future stewardship of the Mission. On one hand is the current structure with ownership by the Kansas State Historical Society with management by the City of Fairway in partnership with the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation, an arrangement that I feel has and continues to uphold the calling of the Mission very well. On the other hand is ceding control to a single entity, a tribal leader from one of a multitude of tribes who has no more of a legitimate claim than anyone else and whose past activities and current intentions should be in question. I believe that due diligence would persuade everyone that to maintain this public historical cultural gem for future generations to visit, learn from and enjoy, a NO vote on this bill is the only proper course.

Thank you,

David M. O'Connell

William P. Parker  
5318 Falmouth Rd  
Fairway, Kansas 66205  
January 19, 2024

House Federal and State Affairs Committee  
Kansas State Legislature  
300 SW 10<sup>th</sup> St  
Topeka, Kansas 66612

REF: House Bill 2384

Pursuant to the bylaws of the Kansas House Committee on Federal and State Affairs, the following represents my written testimony regarding House Bill 2384. This is being submitted as written testimony instead of verbal testimony as the circumstances surrounding the hearing of this bill prevent my in-person and oral testimony (again). One year ago, similar legislation was introduced for hearing. At that time, I was forced to submit a written position at the last minute due to assurances from the Chairperson of the committee which assured me that the bill was not going to be heard that year. As a result, one year ago, my voice was diminished and my ability to exercise my rights as a taxpaying constituent of this state was limited. The bill never proceeded to a vote and is consequently reintroduced with certain modifications to the bill – again with little notice and with limited opportunity to provide a voice to this matter.

Be that as it may, my position, name, address, and contact were on the record concerning this issue and has been so as public record for the past year. At no time in the past year have any of the parties engaged with me – and to my knowledge the other concerned citizens – regarding the specific concerns with the exception of the current management of the Shawnee Indian Mission and its Foundation. No politician representing me and my interests or the tribe requesting the conveyance have contacted me personally to discuss this matter. This is not to state that I consider myself “important” in this matter – rather to point out that in a rather divisive issue and one in which taxpaying constituents have self-identified as having an opinion either for or against conveyance, only one party has considered it important to engage with those individuals most interested in the process. To wit, the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation has engaged with the community and has performed improvements to the site.

For the reasons that follow, I continue to oppose House Bill 2384 (previously 2208) regarding the status of the Shawnee Indian Mission. I am certain that the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation has prepared material regarding their opposition to this bill; however, as a private citizen I feel compelled to express my own opposition and rationale for this opposition. As a constituent of the state, taxpayer of the city in which this site is managed, and voter in the city of Fairway, KS, I implore you to consider my position in this matter.

First and foremost, this bill has been introduced without any consultation with the citizenry most impacted by this legislation – the neighbors of the site. Again – my name and contact are on record and I emailed personally every member of the committee last year. I have not made myself unavailable. As a direct neighbor to the site, I can attest firsthand that at no time have we been approached by either the sponsors of this new bill or the people most likely to benefit from said transfer of ownership – the Shawnee Tribe (or their representative Chief Barnes). Meanwhile the City of Fairway and the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation continue to actively engage the citizenry and apprise us of any anticipated

changes to the site. As a tax paying member of the city and state that supports this site, I find it appalling and frankly disrespectful that legislation directly benefitting a non-tax paying and non-voting member of this community would move to a hearing without consultation – specifically when members of this committee were informed last year (and the year before) of my engagement on this issue.

Second, while there is legal language which may protect the city (and thereby the voting citizenry) from development of the site – if the Shawnee Tribe were to claim sovereignty on the site, state and municipal law may no longer govern or restrict potential development. If the state of Kansas is going to introduce legislation which benefits a third party and protects that third party, then this legislation needs to include provisions and protections for the neighbors of the site who could experience real and tangible damages if the site is developed beyond what is proscribed in the bill. As currently managed, my property is protected from these potential damages by the public nature of the current management of the site. The current language for the bill only limits development of the site for gaming purposes, but little else and the language does not provide recourse for the neighbors of the site if it is developed beyond the proscribed purpose. To be very specific – while the state may pursue legal remedy if the tribe violates the terms of conveyance, there is nothing in this bill to provide me a similar remedy available to the state and nothing that holds the state or tribe accountable for violation of the legislation to my real property.

With respect to the description of the property, there is no language to protect from inaccuracies in measurements. Property lines are not perfect and the bounded area may not perfectly align with the described conveyance. Language also needs to protect neighbors of the site from liens placed against property due to inaccurate measurement / description.

Perhaps most importantly, this bill is premature. As far as I have been able to ascertain, there have been no arguments made by parties not directly benefiting from this bill (the Shawnee Tribe nor the Shawnee Mission Historical Society and associates) that clearly show the site is in need of conveyance. Additionally, there have been no ascertainties that the Shawnee Tribe is able to administer the site. Currently – as a direct observation daily – the site has periodic cosmetic needs but has never been a source of concern or urban blight. There are a number of avenues that could be considered prior to the more absolute action of conveyance. For example, benchmarks could be established that the mission need meet – failure of which would support conveyance. The Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation, the Kansas Historical Foundation, and the City of Fairway who have partnered with the voting populace, cared for the site, and manage it daily and have preserved this historical treasure, deserve an opportunity to meet reasonable – and publicly available defined – expectations of the state prior to any conveyance. Alternatively, collaboration could be mandated, and any bad faith efforts by either party would suggest the appropriate party to manage the property.

However, if conveyance is considered, to the best of my knowledge, the ability to manage the site by the tribe has only been described by verbal assertions of the ability to fund the site. I do not know of any real assessment of available funds by the tribe to administer the site and provide the restoration claimed needed. Without appropriate ascertainment of available funds – real and not contingent (e.g. grants, etc which are not guaranteed) the site runs the risk of falling into further disrepair and the current language provides no legal method to reclaim the site if it is mis-managed.

Regardless, due diligence still does not appear to have been completed, and in light of the real damages that could ensue from development of the site on conveyance, failure to complete due diligence by the state to protect their tax paying constituents is inappropriate and frustrating.

As I said one year ago, I would be more than happy to discuss this further at any time by phone, email, or in-person. I fear my offer will once again go unheard and unheeded.

To close and to be perfectly clear, I am opposed to this bill and I still find how this was handled to represent bad faith politics and has contributed to my disenfranchisement as a tax paying and voting citizen of this state.

Sincerely,

William P. Parker



Dear Committee members,

Northeast Johnson County Kansas is under attack by developers. The suggestion that the Shawnee Mission Indian Mission should be conveyed to an Indian Tribe is a land grab.

The State of Kansas is not in the business to give away land. The site is the property of all the citizens of Kansas and tells a very important part of the original 2000 acres of the Shawnee Indian Mission. My former residential house (which I still own) sits on the original land grant property at 5348 Chadwick in Fairway, Kansas. It is directly across the street from the Shawnee Methodist Mission Cemetery. Would you ask me to convey my property to an Indian Tribe?

The curators of the site have maintained and preserved the history and significance of the site. Public access is available for everyone. The Indian Tribes asking for the land are not the only ones with history attached to this site. There were over 20 tribes that educated their children at the Mission. The site also served briefly as the second capital of the Kansas Territory.

The goals and motives of those requesting this action are questionable. Certainly the State, Local Governments, and historical societies have a wider range of resources to preserve and teach history. The Mission has reached out to all the tribes and have welcomed them to participate.

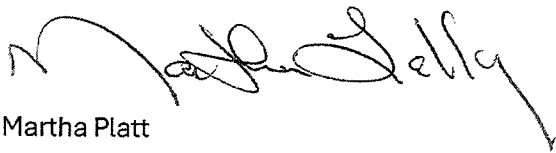
The site is 12 acres with 3 buildings remaining of the original Mission. It provides not only a historical setting but serves as open green space for the community.

This bill HR2384 would only lead to less public use of valuable public assets and degrades the value of the community. The only beneficiaries are the developers.

Sincerely,



Stephen Platt



Martha Platt

4910 Glendale Rd.

Westwood Hills, KS 66205

Kenneth W. Shoemaker, PhD  
8116 W 96<sup>th</sup> Terrace  
Overland Park, KS 66212  
Email: [kshoemaker99@gmail.com](mailto:kshoemaker99@gmail.com)  
February 20, 2025

RE: HR-2384 (Shawnee Indian Mission)

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to register my opposition to the recently proposed HR-2384, which has been introduced recently into the Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee concerning the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway, Kansas.

For the last several years I have studied the rich history of the Shawnee Indian Mission, and I am struck by its historical importance in early Kansas State History and especially in the religious history of the United States in the early nineteenth century. Motivated by a compassionate heart of Christian love, the Methodist mission was established with a desire to treat indigenous people with dignity and respect and to help them adjust to the difficult realities of American western migration. Even a cursory study of this mission's history reveals a spiritually-driven desire to treat Native Americans fairly and in good faith, within the context of the love of Jesus Christ.

I believe that HR-2384 poses two significant issues that, if passed, would create irreversible consequences to the preservation of this rich historic legacy:

1. It would endanger the future of this National Historic Landmark. Currently, there is public access to the grounds, the library, and the historic artifacts on display. It appears that there are no guarantees that such public access would continue. In addition, turning over control to the Shawnee tribe would eliminate any legal jurisdictional oversight by the State of the maintenance of the grounds and buildings. What guarantees are in place to ensure that the buildings are not just destroyed and replaced by something else?
2. It would endanger the visual telling of the historic importance of the Shawnee Indian Mission. On these grounds the missionary arm of the Methodist church sought to minister to the needs of the Shawnees and other indigenous people. They were interested in soul and body; individual, family and tribal units; economic skills and education. They operated at the request, and with the blessing of the Tribe. It would be a shame if this story would lose its place in American History. The public can come to this location and hear what actually happened on these grounds.

It is for these main reasons that I urge all voting members to vote "no" on this bill.

Sincerely,



Kenneth W. Shoemaker PhD

February 20, 2025

House Committee Hearing on HB 2384

I would like to request the state of Kansas NOT convey the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway to one of three present day Shawnee Tribes located in Oklahoma.

I agree with the Kansas Historical Society, the City of Fairway, the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation, Kaw Nation and many other stakeholders in opposing the conveyance of this National Historic Landmark for many reasons.

I oppose because of the following:

- 1) Loss of history – Should the site be conveyed, the Shawnee Tribe, now or later, could extinguish the public's ability to visit the site and learn about its long and significant history not just for the 22 tribes who sent children to the school, but also for those who inhabited the land before the Shawnee arrived.
- 2) Future use of the land – Chief Barnes and the Shawnee Tribe today cannot commit or guarantee what tribal leaders, now or in the future, will decide what to do with the land if it is conveyed to them.
- 3) Loss of comprehensive, fact-based educational opportunities for future generations.
- 4) The mission is an integral part of this community and a much treasured, honored, and beloved part of the area. When it is not clear as to future plans for this land, it could jeopardize the entire area.

I strongly oppose the conveyance of this land to the Shawnee Tribe.

Kathy Tarbe  
4001 W. 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
Fairway, KS 66205

2/19/25

Re: HOUSE BILL No. 2384

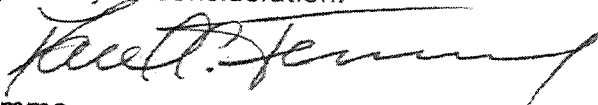
Members of the Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

Please do not approve House Bill # 2384. The site is in good repair despite some reports otherwise and it is a vital historical property that is a rich source of history for our community, including our schoolchildren.

Specific concerns follow:

1. Loss of history – Should the site be conveyed, the Shawnee Tribe, now or later, could extinguish the public's ability to visit the site and learn about its long and significant history not just for the 22 tribes who sent children to the school, but also for those who inhabited the land before the Shawnee arrived, for the beginning of Kansas Statehood, Bleeding Kansas, the Trails West and the Civil War. These are just a few examples of the countless pieces of history that come together to create the Shawnee Indian Mission.
2. Future use of the land – Chief Barnes and the Shawnee Tribe today cannot commit or guarantee what tribal leaders, now or in the future, will decide what to do with the land if it is conveyed to them. Case law is clear. There are pathways for the Shawnee Tribe to attempt to immediately or in the future claim the land as sovereign. In doing so, both the State of Kansas and the City of Fairway could lose jurisdictional authority over how the land is used.
3. Loss of comprehensive, fact-based educational opportunities for future generations – In addition to the loss of physical history, the Mission would no longer serve as a fact-based educational institution. Generations of Kansans and beyond have visited the site to learn of its historical significance not just to First Americans, but also its significance in westward expansion, the Civil War and the early stages of Kansas history. If the Kansas Legislature gives the site away, they are giving away educational opportunities for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.



Paul Temme  
5640 Cherokee Cir  
Fairway, KS 66205

Hearing on HB 2384

Oppose

Vickie Tillery

## Testimony Regarding the Shawnee Indian Mission

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my perspective as both a resident of the Fairway community and an employee of the City of Fairway. For the past 7 years, I have had the privilege of working closely with the Shawnee Indian Mission site and witnessing its significance firsthand.

Growing up in the Shawnee Mission school district, I was not taught about the Mission's history, despite living only 5 miles away. However, through my work with the City of Fairway, I have gained a deeper understanding of this important place. I've also seen the positive impact it has had on my own children, who attend school in Olathe, through field trips and participation in City-organized programs.

While the concept of returning land to a Native American tribe resonates with me, I have some concerns that I believe need to be addressed.

- **Continued Education:** It is crucial that the site continues to serve as an educational resource for future generations. Will a transfer of ownership impact the availability of field trips, daily visits, and educational programming that currently exist? How will the site's history, both positive and negative, be presented to ensure a complete and accurate understanding of its past?
- **Preservation and Maintenance:** The Shawnee Indian Mission is a beautiful and peaceful space in the heart of our community. How will the long-term maintenance and preservation of the site be ensured under new ownership?
- **Respect for All Tribes:** The history of the Shawnee Indian Mission involves multiple tribes. If the land is transferred to a single tribe, how will the interests and perspectives of other involved tribes be recognized and respected?

The City of Fairway, the State of Kansas Historical Society, and the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation have worked diligently to enhance the site and create valuable learning opportunities. It is important to consider how any changes in ownership will affect these existing partnerships and the progress that has been made.

I urge you to prioritize the preservation of the Shawnee Indian Mission's educational value and its role as a place for reflection and understanding.

Sincerely,

Vickie Tillery

Attached are pictures of my own child participating in a field trip at the Shawnee Indian Mission. Where else can they have the opportunity to learn about a time so long ago?



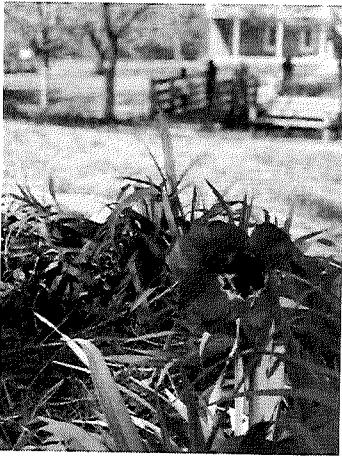
Children are learning about the pioneer experience, including the hardships of wagon travel, thanks to a volunteer's educational efforts.



A volunteer helps the children build a tipi.



Kids dressing in clothing of the era. My kiddo with his thumb up!



Beautiful wildflowers planted throughout the site and maintained by master gardeners.



During field trips, children actively engage with pioneer history by preparing their own wagons. These preparations are based on research they complete in advance at school, resulting in a variety of wagon setups.



Nancy Viets  
5401 Windsor Lane  
Fairway, KS 66205

February 19, 2025

Kansas House of Representatives  
Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to KS House Bill 2384 which proposes to sell the Shawnee Indian Mission (the Mission) located in Johnson County to the Shawnee Indian Tribe.

It's been said that *preservation is not about the past, but about the future*. While the proposed bill includes language protecting the site from being operated in the future as a casino, it does nothing to ensure its on-going operation as a publicly accessible historic site for the future. If this generation and those to come are to learn about the trials faced by Native Americans, the complex impacts of western expansion by European settlers, the significance of its location on the Santa Fe Trail and the early settlement of the most populous part of the entire state, it should continue to be operated as a public site for *all* by the State Historical Society.

Furthermore, as noted in the bill the Mission's designation as a National Historic Landmark (which is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places) reflects its *national* significance, not just local or regional. Originally, the Mission was one of a number of Indian boarding schools, but now stands as the only remaining example in our region. The federal National Historic Landmark designation, however, does nothing to protect it from development, change or even demolition by a private owner, to say nothing of a sovereign tribal nation. Please be sure that this committee fully understands that the language included in the proposed bill will not protect the historic structures, landscape or archeological resources of the site under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which again, private owners and sovereign nations are not beholden to follow.

I have lived adjacent to the Mission for over 50 years. My children gained a deeper appreciation for Kansas history, and their place in it, through visits and exploration of the historic buildings and grounds. My late husband, Mark A. Viets, and I volunteered many hours and supported the Mission philanthropically for many years. Mark was a member and one-time president of the Friends of the Shawnee Indian Mission. He also served on the Kansas State Historical Society Board. I am deeply committed to the preservation of this iconic Kansas site not just for its historic value, but as a public park.

Numerous Native American tribes, not only the Shawnee, have a shared history at the Mission, and many are represented and involved in the public programs and activities that take place. The tremendous work of current State staff and the Friends of the Shawnee Indian Mission to continue to honor the stories of all tribes, to provide learning opportunities for youth, and to educate and support the community through public events and activities is so important. Please ensure that this valuable public service can continue and do not support KS House Bill 2384.

Sincerely,

Nancy J. Viets

To: Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee

From: Lyn Wagner, resident of Fairway, KS

LCW

Testimony for House Committee Hearing Scheduled for HB 2384

As a new resident of Fairway, KS, the issue raised in HB 2384 is unfamiliar to me – that said, I have attempted to familiarize myself with the matter as time allowed. Arguably, the Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee has a difficult task in trying to appease a tribal leader [Chief Barnes of the Shawnee Tribe] while not turning its back on history.

The bill, if passed, would require the state of Kansas to convey the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway to one of three present day Shawnee Tribes located in Oklahoma. As with similar previous bills, the Kansas Historical Society, the City of Fairway, the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation, Kaw Nation among others sit in opposition. As do I.

The proponents of keeping the Shawnee Indian Mission as a Kansas State Historic Site and National Historic Landmark have no doubt presented their arguments to you, and I echo those points in terms of loss of history and educational opportunities, as well as the unknown future for the land itself.

The potential loss of public access to what might be the most historically significant site in the state of Kansas and all the history tied to it is indefensible. Kansas has such a rich, relevant history, and the stories should continue to be told and shared for future generations. As I have driven by the Mission prior to knowledge of the potential conveyance, I have had thoughts of getting involved in preserving this history and supporting the historical society's events, etc. I look forward to taking my future grandchildren to some of the activities – nearby, but worlds away! I ask you not to take that opportunity away, for me and so many others.

While it's not entirely clear what Chief Barnes and the Shawnee Tribe intend for the Mission, I am afraid it would not be preserved in its present condition and use. There are no guarantees that the Shawnee Tribe will continue to make the Mission publicly accessible nor consider its location in a quiet residential community adjacent to a Catholic high school. There are no guarantees state and local authorities will have any governance on how the tribe chooses to use the land, both now and in the future. The state and city would generally have no jurisdiction and no ability to intervene or offer input in how the Shawnee Tribe uses the Mission land, whether it be for historic preservation, housing, economic development, or gaming.

If the Mission is conveyed to the Shawnee Tribe, the State of Kansas most likely would be giving away a significant public asset and an important piece of its history – and I, for one, but certainly not the only one, think that would be a shame for the people of Kansas. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my opinion to the Committee and trust that you will each consider importantly the legacy of the Shawnee Indian Mission and its importance to all Kansans.

2/20/2025

Dear members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee of the Kansas House of Representatives,

I write to you as a concerned resident of Kansas who cares deeply about our state's rich history. I am writing to express my strong opposition to **HR 2384** and articulate why this bill represents profoundly flawed policy that could impact our state for generations to come.

The Shawnee Indian Mission holds immense historical significance to Kansas as a National Historic Landmark and State Historic Site. It is widely viewed as our state's most foundational historic site. The Kansas Territorial Governor, Andrew Reeder, had his offices in the Mission's North Building. The first Kansas Statehood vote took place in the chapel in the Mission's East Building. It housed events that were central to the Bleeding Kansas period and the Civil War. It was a stopping point on all 3 Trails West. Given its unparalleled and irreplicable historical significance, the question arises: Is it appropriate to transfer ownership of our most historic site to out of state hands?

Regrettably, HR 2384, rather than fostering cohesion and cooperation, invites a storm of controversy and potential claims of land conveyance by various stakeholders. Here are some critical perspectives on this matter.

- The Mission's significance transcends any one group. Diverse communities, including the Hopewell tribe and later the Kansa (Kaw Tribe), who lend our state its name, have historical connections to this land. If the state begins conveying land upon request, it opens the door to other tribes asserting their claims. It is crucial to note that the Kaw nation opposes HR 2384.
- The Shawnee Indian Mission's history is intricate and multifaceted, involving many tribes during its existence as a school. The school period predates the State of Kansas and was about 23 years of the site's more than 180-year history. It was originally established at the request of the newly arrived Shawnee tribe, but it included students from 22 other tribes. The State later paid the Shawnee for the land. To fully respect, study, and understand the site's cultural diversity, it should not be exclusively owned by a single tribe or other group. Opposing this bill is the best way to support our tribes and First Nations peoples.
- Today the Mission is an integral part of the community and historical education for all Kansans and peoples with a connection to the site. It sits in the heart of a residential neighborhood in the middle of the Kansas City metro area and abuts two schools and a church. More than 10,000 people visit each year. Preserving it as a public space for education, history and community use is essential.
- Conveying the Mission to a sovereign nation such as the Shawnee raises concerns about whether all the stories will be told authentically and whether the historic site will be adequately preserved. Such a transfer would result in loss of the Mission's National Historic Landmark designation and would place its future in jeopardy.

As a Kansan who cares about our history, I do not want the most historic site in Kansas given away. We believe that continued public ownership gives voice to all people from the past and future. No one entity, not a tribe or any other organization, should be given the responsibility for the Mission's current and future benefit to

the citizens of Kansas and our nation. It should remain publicly held. Please oppose the advancement of this bill out of your committee.

Respectfully,

Jenny Waldeck

3604 W. 53rd St  
Roeland Park, KS 66205  
816-853-4444

February 18, 2025

To members of the Kansas House, Federal and State Affairs Committee:

Regarding the conveying of the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway- Hearing HB 2384

Please consider that the property has long time held a place of historical reference for Fairway and the surrounding area in Johnson and surrounding counties in Kansas and nearby Missouri. The grounds have been maintained through the efforts of the community and the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation. Over the years there have been countless fund-raisers to benefit and aid the Foundation in keeping up with the costs of maintaining the property. The events that are held there throughout the year bring much anticipated community unity and fellowship.

This site is beloved in our city and surrounding area. Please consider the requests from The majority of our Shawnee Mission area to maintain the jurisdiction of the Shawnee Indian Mission to the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation. It would be truly a great loss to lose the public access to this property and the deep history that is held within those walls. Much education to all the schools, both public and parochial goes on there.

Again, I ask for you to consider strongly the benefit that the Shawnee Indian Mission is to our area here in Fairway and Westwood and Shawnee Mission communities.

Thank-you for your time and consideration to Oppose conveyance of this National Historic Landmark, the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway Kansas.

Sincerely, A concerned citizen,

Jane C Wetzel  
janewetzel@gmail.com

## Educational Testimony for HB 2384

My name is Martha Wofford, I reside at 7606 Oakview Lane, Lenexa, KS 66216. I am a retired Kansas school teacher, and I have been volunteering at the Shawnee Indian Mission since 2000.

Until 2000, I had never been to the Mission, nor did I know anything about the history of this very integral part of our community. Since that time, I have had the great fortune of spending quite a bit of time volunteering at this Mission.

Over a decade ago, the site director at the time, Anita Faddis, and I worked diligently developing a curriculum that aligned with the state social studies' objectives for fourth graders. Westward Expansion is a focus, and the Mission had all three major trails run through this land. The Santa Fe, the Oregon and California Trails were all great national importance in the westward expansion movement. The crossing of all three trails does not occur outside of the Kansas City area, but it does on the Mission land.

As part of the curriculum, I personally visit all 4<sup>th</sup> grade schools that come on the Trails Through the Mission field trip. On these school visits, I talk about why we have a Mission and that it was due to the Indian Removal Act. The government gave the Shawnee tribe 1.6 million acres in the Great American Desert (Kansas), and \$26,000 to move the tribe from Ohio to Kansas. As ironic as it may be, the land already was part of the Kanza or Kaw tribe. Chief Blackfish chose the Methodist to run a Mission and gave them 2,000 acres.

I could tell you all the things I do to educate the children about the Shawnee tribe and activities that occurred at the Mission school. This was not a mandatory government school but was a Mission school. Children did not attend 12 months a year, but only 3 months at a time, and returned home in between sessions. The things I teach is not material at this juncture but knowing that the Mission works with hundreds and thousands of citizens each year is important.

Not many places in our state are National Historic Landmarks and a Kansas State Historical Site. The state of Kansas owns this site, and as a resident I think it is important to keep the Shawnee Indian Mission as a state asset. If we convey this land to the Shawnee Tribe, we will potentially lose all or a part of Kansas history and public ownership that allows all peoples to learn, visit and enjoy this gem from our past...arguably the most historic site in our state.

Martha Wofford  
913-219-0181

Walferman, Kristie  
Written Opponent

The State of Kansas should not convey the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway, Kansas, to any one of the three present-day Shawnee Tribes located in Oklahoma. HB2384 should not be passed.

The Shawnee ceded the right to this land long ago through a series of treaties. Many Shawnee Indians arrived in Kansas Territory in the 1820s and 1830s, having been displaced from their eastern homes. An 1825 treaty allocated 1.6 million acres in what is now eastern Kansas to the Shawnee Tribes. In 1828 the Fish Band group of Shawnees were moved to a reservation, and by 1854, the 1825 treaty had been totally revoked. The Shawnee land holding was reduced to 200,000 acres in what is now Shawnee County, Kansas. In 1858, individual tribe members received allotments of land in Shawnee County, and those displeased with their allotments left for Cherokee Territory in Oklahoma. Therefore, since 1858, the Shawnee have had no claim on the land that is now the Shawnee Indian Mission. In 1862, the mission school closed, and the property fell into private hands. However, in 1927, the State of Kansas acquired the current twelve acres and the old brick buildings of the former Shawnee Mission Methodist Indian Manual Labor School.

The Shawnee Methodist Mission embodies a significant amount of our country's history, which should not be negated. When the Methodist Episcopal Church sent the Reverend Thomas Johnson to Kansas Territory to establish a mission in 1830, Johnson chose a location close to the Chouteau trading post, which had been established in 1821 and close to what would become the Town of Westport where Isaac McCoy, a Baptist missionary, would set up a mission in 1831. (His son would open a store there in 1833.) The purpose of these missions was to not only preach to the Indians but also teach them and provide a conduit for keeping positive relationships with the white men and the Indians. Although the school started off small, at one time over two hundred Indian children were enrolled at the Shawnee Mission Manual Labor School, and many more clamored to enroll, for the school taught children farming and manual skills and educated them so that they could



exist in the white culture that was quickly growing up around them. A classical department opened up in 1848, taught by Nathaniel Scarritt, and his classes attracted not only Indian children but white children who did not have educational opportunities in the State of Missouri or in Kansas Territory. The old school buildings provide today's children with a window into the past.

The site of the Shawnee Indian Mission provides other historical teaching opportunities. For example: the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails pass near the Shawnee Mission. The first territorial legislature of Kansas Territory met at the mission in 1855. Today, the mission and its brick buildings provide learning opportunities for individuals and school groups, and ongoing educational programs allow Kansans and visitors to take a step into the past.

February 19, 2025



**Holly R. Zane**

*Wakqresatáhta? (She Who Extends Her Paw)*

*Wyandot Nation of Kansas, Hatinyqnye?runq (Bear Clan)*

*2724 SE Aquarius Drive, Topeka, KS 66605*

*[kswygal@gmail.com](mailto:kswygal@gmail.com)*

*785-554-8269*

Dear members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee of the Kansas House of Representatives:

I write to you as a concerned Kansan and Wyandot tribal member who cares deeply about our state's rich history. **I am writing to express my (and my tribe's, the Wyandot Nation of Kansas') strong opposition to HR 2384** and articulate why this bill represents profoundly flawed policy that could impact our state for generations to come.

I am an enrolled member of the Wyandot Nation of Kansas (Bear Clan), a member of the Shawnee Mission Indian Historical Society, and a life-long reenactor at the Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site. I am also a former Legislative Staffer (as a Performance Auditor for Legislative Post Audit), a retired State of Kansas employee, and a licensed Kansas Attorney who has represented by tribe pro bono as their Attorney General to protect gravesites, including that of the Wyandott National Burial Ground in KCK where my paternal ancestors have been buried since my tribe's forcible removal from Ohio to Kansas in 1843.

Regrettably, HR 2384, rather than fostering cohesion and cooperation, invites a storm of controversy and potential claims of land conveyance by various stakeholders. Here are some critical perspectives on this matter.

**1. The Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site is a historic treasure of Kansas**, whose imprint on Kansas is not limited to indigenous history nor the history of one indigenous tribe.

The Shawnee Indian Mission holds immense historical significance to Kansas as a National Historic Landmark and State Historic Site. It is widely viewed as our state's most foundational historic site. The Kansas Territorial Governor, Andrew Reeder, situated his offices in the Mission's North Building. The first Kansas Statehood vote took place in the chapel in the Mission's East Building. It housed events that were central to the Bleeding Kansas period and the Civil War. For example, the Mission served as the Union Army's staging grounds for the Battle of Westport (where Generals directed the actions of White, Native American and African American union troops). In addition, the Mission was a stopping point on all 3 Trails West. Given its unparalleled and irreplicable historical significance, it is inappropriate to transfer ownership of our most historic site to an out of state entity.

The Shawnee Indian Mission's history is intricate and multifaceted, involving many tribes during its existence as a school. The school period predates the State of Kansas and was about 23 years of the site's more than 180-year history. It was originally established at the request of the newly arrived **Fish Band** of the Shawnee tribe, but it included students from 22 other tribes, including my own, the Wyandot. The State later paid the Shawnee for the land. To fully respect, study, and understand the site's cultural diversity, it should not be exclusively owned by a single tribe or other group. **Giving the land to one tribe over the interest of other tribes is erasing and devaluing the history and culture of the other tribes, including mine (Wyandot).** Opposing this bill is the best way to support all Kansas tribes and First Nations peoples.

Tribal Affiliation of Students at the Mission:

- Delaware (229)
- Munsee Delaware (16)
- Kaw / Kansa (30)
- Odawa / Ottawa (115)
- Peoria (41)
- Pottawatomie (53)
- Shawnee (431)
- Wyandot / Wyandott (84)
- Arapahoe (1)
- Cherokee (13)
- Cheyenne (1)
- Chippewa (5)
- Choctaw (2)
- Creek (7)
- Gros Ventres (3)
- Kickapoo (9)
- Miami (1)
- Mohawk (9)
- Omaha (22)
- Pequot (1)
- Sac (1)
- Sioux (2)
- Tuscarora (6)
- Wea (15)
- Unknown (1)

Today the Mission is an integral part of the community and historical education for all Kansans and peoples with a connection to the site. It sits in the heart of a residential neighborhood in the middle of the Kansas City metro area and abuts two schools and a church. More than 10,000 people visit each year. Preserving it as a public space for education, history and community use is essential.

**2. Chief Barnes continually relates in inaccurate history of the Shawnee Methodist Mission.** He cannot be trusted to relate nor preserve an accurate history of the mission.

The history of the Mission is **COMPLETELY** dissimilar to that of Haskell Institute and other federally mandated Indian Boarding Schools, which were not established by the federal government until many years after the closure of the Mission. Two of the children in Haskell's baby cemetery are members of my tribe, Wyandot; I know the history of Haskell very well. BUT unlike Haskell and other boarding schools, **Parents (both indigenous and white) VOLUNTARILY sent their children to the Mission to learn reading, writing, math, and a vocation that would earn the child a decent wage as an adult. Children upon graduation were gifted the tools of their trade, e.g., carpenter tools, blacksmith tools, etc.** Children were not kept from parents and parents were not kept from children, many children lived off site (i.e., at home) due to traveling distances and from 1854 to 1862, immediately prior to the Mission's closure, the Mission was only a day school (i.e., students did not live onsite at all during those years).

Conveying the Mission to a sovereign nation such as the Shawnee raises concerns about whether all the stories will be told authentically and whether the historic site will be adequately preserved. Such a transfer also may result in loss of the Mission's National Historic Landmark designation and would place its future in jeopardy.

### 3. Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma is NOT the Shawnee Band that established the Shawnee Methodist Indian Mission.

The screenshot shows the Oklahoma Historical Society website. The main heading is "The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture". Below it, the entry for "SHAWNEE TRIBE (LOYAL SHAWNEE)" is displayed. The text describes the tribe's history, including their migration from Missouri to Kansas and Oklahoma, and their recognition as the Shawnee Tribe in 2000. A small image of a Shawnee person in traditional dress is visible on the left side of the entry.

**SHAWNEE TRIBE (LOYAL SHAWNEE).**

With the Absentee Shawnee and the Eastern Shawnee, the Shawnee Tribe (formerly the Loyal Shawnee or Cherokee Shawnee) comprise Oklahoma's three federally recognized Shawnee Indian groups. Headquartered in Miami, the Shawnee Tribe counted 1,290 members in the year 2003. Their ancestors were the last of the Shawnee to relinquish their territory in Ohio.

During the late eighteenth century one Shawnee band (the origins of the Absentee Shawnee) migrated to present Missouri. In July 1831 another (today's Eastern Shawnee) agreed to relocate with Seneca to the Indian Territory (present Oklahoma) in July 1831. The remaining Shawnee ceded their Ohio lands to the U.S. government in August 1831. They removed to Kansas and lived on a 1.6 million-acre reservation established for the Missouri Shawnee (then known as the Black Bob band) in 1825. That reserve was reduced to two hundred thousand acres in 1854 and was allotted to tribe members by 1858.

The Shawnee prospered in Kansas because they were skilled cultivators. During the mid-1840s many joined the Absentee Shawnee along the Canadian River in the Indian Territory. During the Civil War some Kansas Shawnee served in the Union army, earning the tribe's "Loyal" designation. Expecting compensation for their wartime service, they returned to destroyed homesteads. White settlers, hungry for land, had acquired 130,000 acres of the land granted to the Shawnee in 1854. Of the tribe's remaining seventy thousand acres, twenty thousand had been reserved for the Absentee Shawnee.

After Kansas statehood in 1861, Kansans demanded that all Indian tribes be removed from their state. In 1869 the Loyal Shawnee and the Cherokee Nation entered into an agreement by which 722 Loyal Shawnee were granted Cherokee citizenship in the Indian Territory. By 1871 most had settled in present Craig and Rogers counties in Oklahoma. Having no political organization, they lost their tribal identity and became known as the Cherokee Shawnee.

The Loyal or Cherokee Shawnees received federal recognition as the Shawnee Tribe in 2000. They are governed by an eleven-member business committee. Tribal operations during the early twenty-first century were limited, but in 2011 a language retention program was developed. In 2018 in Miami the tribe opened the Shawnee Tribe Culture Center, which offers exhibits and special programming.

Pamela A. Smith

The Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, as noted above, are made up of member of the Black Bob Band of Shawnee that were removed from Kansas to Oklahoma and became part of the Cherokee Nation (called "Cherokee Shawnee"). The Fish Band of Shawnee, headed by Pascal Fish Sr., established the Shawnee Indian Mission. When Pascal Fish Sr. died in the Mission when it was located in Turner, the tribe was headed by Pascal Fish Jr.. Pascal Fish Jr., who was married to my great-great aunt, Hester "Hettie" Zane Fish, became Chief of the Fish Band of Shawnee. The Fish Band later moved to land in Douglas County and that land, which was sold to German settlers by the tribe, is the location of the town of "Eudora, Kansas", named after Pascal Fish Jr.'s and Hettie Zane Fish's first child, Eudora Fish, who is my *doppelganger*:



Eudora Fish, daughter of Pascal Fish, member of the Fish Band of Shawnee, 1840-1870. Eudora is buried in the Miami Indian Cemetery in Miami, Kansas City, Kansas.



Holly Zane (1978)  
Shawnee Mission South High

Eudora's mother died when she was young, so she and her brother were raised by my great-great grandparents, Ebenezer O. Zane and Rebecca Barnes Zane, who were stationmasters on the Underground Railroad in Quindaro (Kansas City, KS).

4. As noted by the examples below, the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma does not appear to demonstrate proper stewardship of historic or cultural resources.

The Shawnee Cultural Center, located in Miami, OK, opened in 2018, but closed in September 2021.



SHARE

The new multi-million dollar Shawnee Tribe Cultural Center is now finished and almost ready for visitors.

Construction on the two million dollar facility was completed over the last year, bringing the culture of the Shawnee people to life. Opening day will be held Sunday, November 11th at 10 am and will feature a ribbon cutting at 19 North Eight Tribes Trail.

Shawnee leaders say this project would not be possible without the support of the entire community. The exhibits in the center will feature items from tribal members as well as showcasing the science of tribal pottery.

"We actually were involved or partnered with people to do a lot of scientific studies so a lot of this exhibit is actually stem science, technology, engineering, and math surprisingly...which you may not think about in an ancient pottery exhibit," says Marnie Leist, Cultural Center director.

Leist adds a grant helped them build the cultural center, but to help them sustain it, they will soon be launching a capital endowment campaign.

In October 2024 the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma announces that they are reopening the Shawnee Cultural Center, yet the last social media posting of the center was in 2022. Their press release indicates that the closure of the center in 2021 was due to the pandemic, yet most, if not all, museums that had closed due to the pandemic, were up and running by 2022.

https://shawnee-nsn.gov/news/reopening-stcc-2024/

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**THE SHAWNEE TRIBE**

GOVERNMENT CITIZEN SERVICES RESOURCES & PRESERVATION

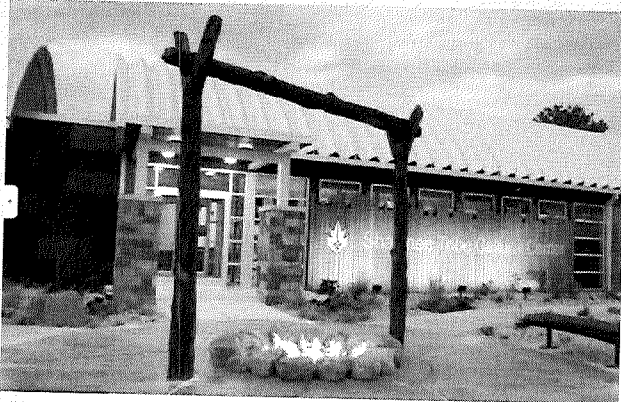
Oct 2, 2024

## REOPENING OF THE SHAWNEE CULTURAL CENTER


On Monday, September 23, 2024, following the 2024 General Council Weekend, the Shawnee Tribe Cultural Center in Miami, OK, reopened to the public after an extended closure due to COVID-19 precautions and the need to use the center for office space. With the Emma "Mock" Donaldson Saawamwaatoweewika now open as the permanent home of the Shawnee Language Immersion Program, the Cultural Center will be open during Shawnee Tribe office hours and plans for new programming & exhibits will be underway.

Shawnee Tribe Cultural Center, 19 S Eight Tribes Trail, Miami, OK 74354.

Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, M-F



Facebook Page of Shawnee Cultural Center – last posting was 4/29/2022:



**Shawnee Tribe Cultural Center**  
2.7K likes • 2.9K followers

Message Liked Search

Posts About Followers Photos Videos Live More

**Intro**  
The Center is dedicated to sharing Shawnee culture. At our center, you can listen to stories of the p

Page · Museum



19 N. Eight Tribes Trail, Miami, OK, United States, Oklahoma

(918) 544-6722

director@shawneeculture.org

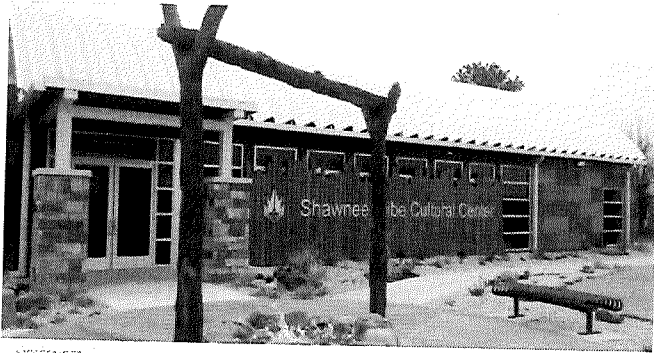
Closing Soon

**Photos** See all photos



**Posts** Filters

Shawnee Tribe Cultural Center  
April 29, 2022



Shawnee Tribe Cultural Center updated their business hours.

Send message



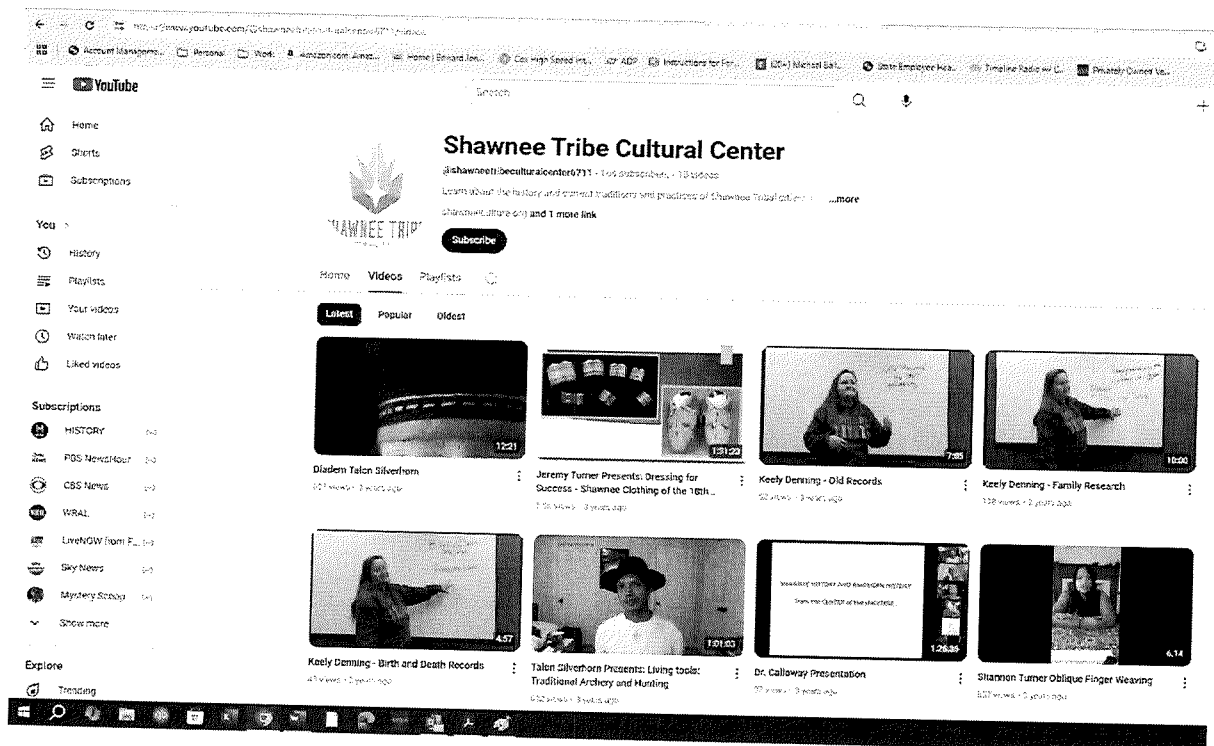
1<sup>st</sup> Instagram Account of Shawnee Cultural Center – last posting was 10/20/2022:



2nd Instagram Account of Shawnee Cultural Center – last posting was 12/28/2021:



**YouTube Account of Shawnee Cultural Center – last posting was three years ago (i.e., in 2022):**



In 2022, the Kansas Legislature passed a bill requiring the Kansas Historical Society to gift the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma the Bluejacket "Shawnee" Cemetery in Johnson County. Chief Barnes claimed that the cemetery was not properly maintained and if acquired by the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the tribe would ensure proper maintenance.

**Members of Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma assert that under Chief Barnes' administration, no maintenance or preservation efforts have been directed toward the cemetery.**

KMBC News Article: Complications Surface in Search for Gravesites at Shawnee Indian Mission (updated 01/30/2024):

As that debate played out, another conflict grew inside the Shawnee Tribe.

"I was a Ben Barnes fan," Lee Bluejacket said at the First Americans Museum in August 2023. "It's very-- I may get emotional on it because I believed in the man."

Bluejacket and Chief Barnes started disagreeing after working together.

KMBC 9 Chronicle was there as both men lobbied lawmakers in 2022 to return a tribal cemetery in Shawnee to the Shawnee tribe.

It is the same cemetery where Bluejacket's ancestors are buried.

Bluejacket eventually stood by Chief Ben Barnes as Gov. Kelly signed over the cemetery to the Shawnee tribe in May of 2022.

"That is a big point of contention because even just a few months after that, we get the land conveyed from the state of Kansas, not only nothing's been done to it, that's our land, Shawnee property now, other than mowing and the landscaping stuff like that," Bluejacket said.

Bluejacket says while the search for graves at the Shawnee Indian Mission is important, "We have a cemetery that has literal dead babies with unmarked headstones that were broken or damaged, and nothing's been done about that. That's a disgrace. And he's the head of the tribe that got that land."

Chief Barnes, in a statement to KMBC 9 Chronicle, said Bluejacket has had dozens of opportunities to express his concerns, but has not been saying, "...expressing the concerns two weeks before an election seems to belie the true motivations here."

<https://www.kmbc.com/article/shawnee-indian-mission-complications-search-for-gravesites-children/46586578>

5. The Kansas State Historical Society, City of Fairway, the Shawnee Mission Indian Historical Society and the SIMSHS Foundation are good stewards of the Mission and Indigenous history at the Mission. Wyandots, Delaware, Shawnee (including Bertha Cameron and Lille and Herb Morrison) and citizens of other tribes have been involved in Mission programming for at least 60 years.

January / February 2025 Issue of the Zephyr Magazine from the Kansas Historical Society, which notes updates to the Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site:

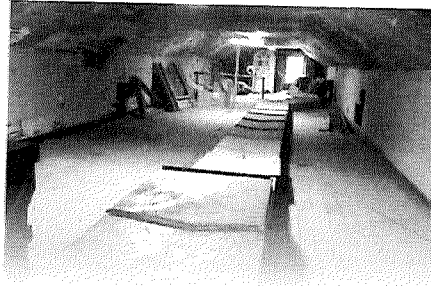
#### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

##### MARKING OUR ANNIVERSARY

Welcome to 2025, the 150th anniversary of the Kansas Historical Society (KSHS)! So much history has been experienced and recorded since a group of newspapermen founded the organization in 1875 – for the purpose of saving the present and past records of our twenty-one years of eventful history. Those who guided the Society over the years greatly expanded that scope, working to collect and preserve materials that told the story of this place through time.

To honor the occasion, we are producing a new history of our institution – building upon past works such as Edgar Langsdorf's "The First Hundred Years of the Kansas State Historical Society," published in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly* in 1975, and special issues of *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* in 1984 and 1985 to commemorate the openings of the Kansas Museum of History and Center for Historical Research facilities, respectively. Our goal is to bring this history to the present, add additional historical context when possible, and augment with historic photographs from our vast collections. We will be highlighting some of these historic photographs and snippets throughout the year in *Zephyr*, beginning with this issue on page four.

This spring, we are also modifying our popular Museum After Hours series to a hybrid format, with both in-person and virtual attendance capabilities. Topics will provide



an in-depth look at the history of the Society and the work of the various divisions and departments, beginning March 12 with a special interview with former executive director, Ramon Powers. I can't wait for this one!

##### REFLECTING ON FISCAL YEAR 2024

Last fall at the annual meeting of the Kansas Historical Foundation, I provided our usual report of statistics for the state fiscal year, FY 2024, which ended on June 30. While we are halfway through the current fiscal year, I want to share some highlights from this summary. Visitation has always been a standard reporting measurement, and although the museum has been closed the past two years, the statistics for the State Historic Sites were enlightening. Fiscal year 2024 was the first full year reflecting our new free admission policy at the sites, all of which are now open on Sunday afternoons as well. Attendance was generally up across the board, and in some cases, exceeded that of pre-Covid visitation in 2019. Fort Hays State Historic Site in Hays led the way with 6,476 registered visitors in FY 2024. This is up from 4,516 in FY 2023, and even more so from 2019 when it had 3,359 paid attendance. For more statistics, view the complete narrative report at [bit.ly/kshsannualreports](http://bit.ly/kshsannualreports).

##### SHAWNEE INDIAN MISSION RESTORATION UPDATES

The last legislative session included \$350,000 in additional funding for new wood shingle roofs and other minor repairs at Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site. At the time of writing, new roofs have been installed on the north building (pictured below) and the historic garage outbuilding. Before we could re-roof the east building, we wanted to do everything possible to protect the remaining plaster walls and ceilings of the attic (pictured above left), where Native American boys were housed during the mission school period of the property. A Kansas City company specializing in ornamental plaster and plaster repair was contracted to support the existing plaster and repair and reattach any plaster dislodged by the roofing project. Before applying the special masonry foam-backed support system (pictured above right), we wanted to properly photo-document the attic, including its historic graffiti.

inscriptions. But what I thought would be a one or two-day job soon developed into a much, much more extensive project. KSHS photographer Benjamin Epps and photography assistant Jennifer Thompson spent 26 days in the east building attic at Shawnee Indian Mission, documenting inscriptions drawn on the plaster of the walls through more than 1,000 photographs. To ensure that even the smallest inscriptions would be legible, Epps shot in clamping stages at 150 dpi at a 1:1 scale. By utilizing the highest of resolutions, we were pleased to discover some highly penciled inscriptions that were otherwise invisible. This project will also allow each wall to be presented as a digital panorama so the inscriptions can be viewed virtually in their original position in the attic. Look for a feature story on this project in the March/April issue of *Zephyr*.

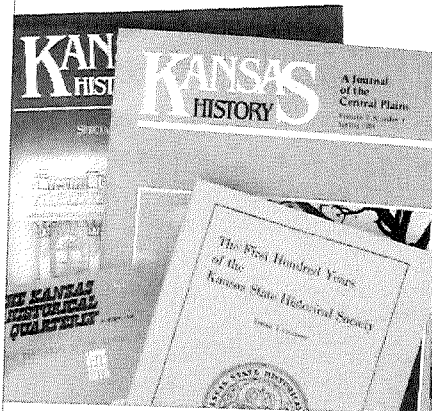
##### HONORING SERVICE ACHIEVEMENTS

I want to recognize Tim Rues who retired in December after spending more than 40 years preserving and interpreting our state historic sites. Tim began his career with KSHS at Fort Hays in 1982, then shifted to First Territorial Capitol in 1984. He became the first site administrator at Constitution Hall in 1995, holding that role for nearly 30 years. I honored Tim with a certificate for his distinguished service during the Christmas Vespers program held at Territorial Capitol Museum in Leocompton in December. Acknowledgments followed from Leocompton Historical Society President Paul Bahnmeier, Senator Marcel Francisco (pictured at right with Tim), Representative Mike Anya, and Douglas County Commissioner Karen Willey. We thank Tim for his remarkable contributions and wish him well in retirement.

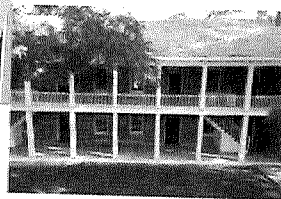


*Patrick*

Patrick Zolmer  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER



Front cover image: Franklin G. Adams (left) was the Historical Society's second secretary, serving from 1876 to his death in 1899. Zu Adams (right), his daughter, began as an unpaid teenage assistant in 1875 and eventually worked as a cataloguer and librarian for a modest salary. Grace Darlow (second from right) was a stenographer, and George A. Root (right) was the curator of archives. The collection filled every corner of their working efforts in the Kansas State Capitol, as illustrated in this photograph, circa 1894.



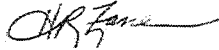
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6. Federal law, including the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), would supersede / nullify any conditions placed by the State on the use of the Mission or land upon which it stands. As my tribe's attorney general in the late 1990s, acting in a pro bono capacity, I spent 4 years in federal court with the Governor of Kansas, the Kansas Attorney General and the Kickapoo in Kansas (and its attorney general Mario Gonzalez, Oglala) to oppose the federal government's approval of class II gaming on my tribes sacred burial grounds in Kansas City, Kansas (the Wyandott National Cemetery). I am familiar with IGRA and the supremacy of federal laws.

As a life-long Kansan, a reinactor / speaker / volunteer at the Mission since the 1960s, and a citizen of the Wyandot Nation of Kansas, who cares about Kansas history and my tribe's history, I do not want the most historic site in Kansas given away. The Kansas State Historical Society and the City of Fairway have been good stewards of the Mission; I have witnessed this firsthand. I believe that continued public ownership gives voice to all people from the past and future. No one entity, not a tribe nor any other organization, should be given the responsibility for the Mission's current and future benefit to the citizens of Kansas and our nation. It should remain publicly held.

Please oppose the advancement of HB 2384 out of your committee.

Respectfully,



**Holly R. Zane, J.D.**

*Wakqresatáhta? (She Who Extends Her Paw)*

*Wyandot Nation of Kansas, Hatinyqnye?runq (Bear Clan)*