



# The Leavenworth County Historical Society, Inc. Carroll Mansion Museum & Research Center

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March 11, 2024

Senate Transportation Committee:

Speaking as a proponent for HB2498.

Leavenworth, the first city in Kansas settled in 1854, is the most historical city in the state. We were a key player in the border wars and in the forming of the state constitution. We were the jumping off point for pioneers who came up the Missouri River on steamboats, purchased oxen and wagons from the very large freighting firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell and set out to the west on the Oregon or Santa Fe Trails. Lincoln gave his first campaign speech for the presidency here and John Wilkes Booth stood on the same stage, four years later and acted in a Shakespearean tragedy. Buffalo Bill and Will Bill Hickok rode our streets along with many other famous and infamous people of the day. Leavenworth in 1859 was the largest city between St. Louis and San Francisco with over 10,000 people. We had a large manufacturing district and we were the place to be.

The Carroll Mansion Museum, dating to the 1880's and listed on the National Registry of Historic Properties, is the oldest museum in Leavenworth County. It is a big draw for tourism and researchers. We house many one-of-a-kind artifacts, but the most significant is our 30,000 glass plate negatives, taken by pioneer photographers, and considered a national treasure. We are always looking for ways to market who and where we are. A license plate traveling around the area and even out-of-state is a great, easy way to get people, interested in history, to visit us. Our location next to a large metropolitan area makes us an ideal one-day trip for a large number of tourists.

This year we are celebrating two significant anniversaries: 60 years for the donation of the Carroll Mansion and 70 years for the Leavenworth County Historical Society. Our mission is to collect, preserve and share the history of Leavenworth, city and county. We take this duty very seriously as we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors and future generations will stand on ours. It is important that they know who we were and what we were thinking.

We collaborate with the other five museums in Leavenworth and Fort Leavenworth, the Chamber and the Convention Visitors Bureau in our celebration of Leavenworth History Day. We are all working together to market Leavenworth and attract tourism.

We receive no funds from the state, county, or city except through grants. This is a way to increase our funding for marketing our museums and Leavenworth businesses. It is a win/win for everyone in Leavenworth.

We will contract with Michael Young to do the historical design. Michael painted the Brown vs Board Mural on the third floor of the Capitol, of which I know you all are aware

Thank you for your time and support.

Carol Dark Ayres

President of the Leavenworth County Historical Society