



Tallgrass Gazette

Summer 2005

“The Newsletter for Docents and by Docents”

The Kanza People of the Konza Prairie

By Dr. Verlyn Richards, *Konza docent*

Katherine Ordway, the major donor to The Nature Conservancy's financing for acquisition of the Konza Prairie Biological Station property, requested that the property be named for a Native American peoples. In line with this request, the name, Konza Prairie, was adopted to recognize the Kanza tribe of Native Americans who had inhabited this area. But, who were these people, where did they come from, and where did they go?

The Kanza (or Kansa, Kansas, Kaw or Canzes, among other names used for the tribe) were part of the broader Dhegiha (They-gee-hah) Siouan group of Native Americans, which included the Osage, Ponca, Quapaw and Omaha. It is generally accepted that the designation, Kanza, translates as “The Wind People” or the “People of the South Wind.” Addison W. Stubbs, for many years a Kansa interpreter, reported in 1896 that the word closest to Kansa in their spoken language was Konza, which, to them meant “plum.”⁽¹⁾ Never a populous people, reports by French and American explorers placed the Kanza population at about 1,500 in the 1702 to 1840 period. The reported population declined to 1,375 (1855), 1,035 (1859), 825 (1865) and 600 (1872) when the tribe was relocated to Indian Territory in Oklahoma.

The known Kansa legends suggest vague recollections of a westward movement from an undefined area east of the Mississippi River, where, according to native accounts collected in the 1860's, the Kansas, Quapaws, Omahas, Osages, and Poncas once lived together as a nation. The crudely constructed and dimly outlined map based on Pere Jacques Marquette's journey down the Mississippi River in 1673 is the oldest known historical document that refers to the Kansa peoples. The Dhegiha Siouan peoples were thought to have migrated from an area around the mouth of the Ohio River to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers and subsequently up the Missouri River to the mouth of the Osage River where the Kanza separated from the other Dheghian Sioux. The Kanza subsequently migrated up the Missouri River to an area between Kansas City and Fort Leavenworth. By the early 1700's, the French fur traders were referring to the “Grand Village des Canzes,” which probably stood near the site of present Doniphan, Kansas.

Forced westward by more powerful tribes, by 1800, the Kanza had relocated along the Lower Kansas River Valley, concentrating their villages between the mouth of the Big Blue River and Stranger Creek. Their Blue Earth Village served from 1800-1830 as the last unified village of the Kanza peoples. Excavations during the late 1930's indicated that this Blue River site was near the Kansas River about two miles east of Manhattan. Soon after 1800 the Kanza began to stake out substantial portions of the lucrative bison plains of the Upper Arkansas Valley, sometimes forcing them into violent competition with the Osages and more powerful, wide-ranging tribes of the High Plains. This western hunting country was more accessible from the Blue River location than from the old Missouri River villages.

Western travelers in the early 1800's described the Kanza males as tall, handsome, vigorous and brave with coppery color, straight black hair, high cheek bones and large, well formed bodies. Their clothing included a blue or red breechcloth secured with a girdle, plus leggings and moccasins of dressed deer skins. A blanket, discarded in hot weather, rounded out their utilitarian wardrobe. On the other hand, the fact that Kanza women generally were undernourished, shabbily dressed and obligated to perform most of the manual labor about the village contributed to their crude and somewhat unkempt appearance. A Kanza woman wore moccasins, leggings, a course cloth secured to her waist with a crude belt, a loosely attached shoulder garment, that was often laid aside to expose her from the waist up, and long, braided hair tinged with vermilion.



Kanza Chief Allegawaho

(continued on page 2.)

Buffalo and deer skins for constructing the utilitarian tipis used during hunting excursions to the High Plains also appear to have been used in erecting the more permanent village lodges although repeated relocation of core villages and the indiscriminate timber cutting practices of white squatters may have ultimately forced the Kanza to rely almost exclusively on sod as their primary building material. Evidence from the Blue Earth Village indicates that timber piles were driven into the ground in the form of a circle and left extending four or five feet above the ground. At these several points, pole rafters were attached at an elevation of six or seven degrees and joined together at the apex of the circle, leaving a small aperture to allow smoke to escape from interior fireplaces. Some of the lodges were more rectangular in form, generally sixty feet long and twenty feet wide and constructed of stout saplings and poles arranged in the form of a common garden arbor and covered with skins, bark and mats.

By the 1840's, pressure from white settlement forced the Kanza to break up into smaller villages along the Kansas River. In 1846, increasing pressure from white settlers and land jobbers forced the Kanza to negotiate a major concession treaty with the United States and accept a greatly reduced reservation in the Upper Neosho Valley. New villages were located a few miles southeast of the small white settlement of Council Grove.

(1) William E. Unrau, [The Kansa Indians: A History of the Wind People, 1673-1873](#), p. 10, University of Oklahoma Press (1971). The material throughout this article is drawn from Mr. Unrau's study of the Kanza people.

Continuing Docent Education

By Larry Loomis, Docent, Class of 2004

The training I received during my docent training classes was interesting, exciting, and very fast-paced. Occasionally, I found it impossible to retain all the information that was given. I thought I knew all the facts concerning the history of KPBS, the effect of fire on the tall grass prairie, the many species of wild flowers on the prairie, the invertebrates in Kings Creek, the various types of grasshoppers, the story of the Hokanson brothers homesteading their property, the main trails on Konza, the bison herd, the Schoolyard Long-term Ecological Research programs, and many, many other facts about Konza. However, when I began my docent duties by leading groups on tours, or just describing KPBS to friends, those facts I thought I knew suddenly were rather vague.

At our graduation in September we were encouraged by those attending the ceremony to continue learning about Konza. Dr. Valerie Wright invited us to attend the training classes for the next docent class beginning in February 2005. I have attended several of the classes. And, I am planning on attending future classes. When I began guiding tours, participants asked me questions relating to a fact about Konza, and I was uncertain of the correct answer. My inability to answer the question indicated to me I was unprepared to be a good docent at Konza. It is amazing to me how many answers to these questions I have learned by attending the classes and hikes a second time. Attending the classes a second, third, or fourth time will help me be the best docent I can possibly be.

Meeting the new docents-in-training is another benefit of attending the classes. In a few months they will graduate and become active docents. Certainly, it will be easier working with someone I have already met than working with a complete stranger.

Dr. Wright is constantly updating the handout materials for the various classes. Keeping your docent manual current is important, as new research data is constantly being collected and presented. To provide the most up-to-date information to my tour participants, I must have that new information. The only way I can obtain the information is by attending the current classes.

I recommend and urge all active docents to attend the current training classes. I am certain it will benefit you and the visitors to KPBS.



Dr. John Blair with docents. April 2005.

Prairie Patter

By Dr. Valerie Wright, Environmental Educator and Naturalist

After several hundred children and nearly as many adult groups passed through Konza Prairie this spring, I would like to thank all of the docents for their participation. Whatever small or large part you do, please consider how valuable it is to us. Just last week the LTER program, of which we are a part, was given glowing comments in the review that happens once every six years. The education program review was very positive, especially in the efficiency of its running. That is in a large part due to the hundreds of hours of volunteer time that you give to us. It is impressive to say to a reviewer that the ratio of adults to students in the Schoolyard LTER (SLTER) program is 1:3 because our trained volunteers interact with students during the science activities. The review panel was also impressed with the tight match the SLTER program has with the research on Konza. The level of interest and understanding shown by the docents for the ecology, management and conservation of the tallgrass prairie is exceptional.

Other important events this spring included a group of 22 exceptional docents-in-training, who have stuck with us through a rigorous schedule and mountains of handouts to read. Several are already participating in science activities, workdays and scouting events. I am looking forward to a lot of interaction with the class of 2005.



Larry Loomis with students.



Docents in training. April 2005.



Matt and Annie Baker

You may already know that my terrific assistant, Annie Clark (Baker), was married this April. She and Matt will be staying in Manhattan since he has accepted a teaching position at Junction City High School. I am so pleased that she will continue to work with me and Sue Hunt. We are a great team!

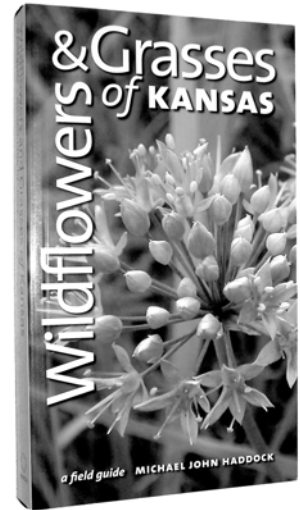
My former assistant, Jan Evans and baby Jackson are doing well. Jan was recently asked to join the Friends of Konza Prairie Board of Directors. Her presence on the Board along with a number of docents gives that body a strong basis for understanding of Konza Prairie and the Konza Environmental Education Program.

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Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas: A Field Guide

Haddock, Michael John. (2005) *Wildflowers & Grasses of Kansas: A Field Guide*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 374 pp. \$19.95



Book Review: By Earl Allen

Most docents own at least one book on the subject of wildflowers. No matter how many you have, there is a new one that you will want to add to your bookshelf or backpack.

The University Press of Kansas has recently released *Wildflowers & Grasses of Kansas* by Michael John Haddock. Professor Mike Haddock is Agricultural Librarian and Science Libraries Web Coordinator at Kansas State University. He may be best known to wildflower enthusiasts for his popular website, [Kansas Wildflowers and Grasses@www.lib.ksu.edu/wildflower](http://www.lib.ksu.edu/wildflower). Haddock can frequently be seen at the KONZA, walking the trails with his ever-present camera. Many docents have looked at his flower pictures which he shows on his laptop computer during the KONZA Open House, or met up with him at docent-led SLTER activities in which he was participating as a parent.

The content and arrangement of the book shows thoughtful consideration for the reader. The text of *Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas* is divided into four parts: Introduction, Wildflowers, Grasses, and Grasslike Plants. The concise **Introduction** lets the reader know how the material will be presented to them. Short sections on general subjects such as wildflowers, grasses, and plant morphology, accompanied by helpful illustrations, are presented. Next a discussion of common and scientific nomenclature for plants is presented, with the protocol for naming the book's plant subjects being established. This arrangement, and the presentation, ensures the book will be useful to a wide audience of Kansas's plant fans from the casual observer to the more serious enthusiast looking for in-depth information. There is also a very helpful "Finding Guide," sometimes referred to as a "key," near the end of the book.

The **Wildflower** section is grouped according to the four broad color categories that are commonly used for wildflower books. They are then grouped within the color categories alphabetically by family, and then alphabetically by scientific name. The author states, "This will allow the user to compare the characteristics of species with like-colored flowers". I have already found this arrangement to be helpful. The **Grass** section contains a larger selection of grasses than most guidebooks that are not devoted exclusively to grasses. It will be very helpful to docents who seem to have found it harder to identify grasses than wildflowers. The **Grasslike Plants** section will likely get a lot of use by docents as it contains many of the sedges and rushes that are found on the KONZA.

Each entry is accompanied by a photograph of the subject plant in its natural setting. The photographs attest to the author's skill, as they are beautiful pictures while still presenting the subjects in sufficient detail to maximize the reader's ability to use them as identification aids. The scientific name, family, common name, the flowering period, height, and where the plant can be found in Kansas are presented. I do wish that there was an index of the location in the state where the pictures were taken. There follow descriptions of the plants that are very complete and will fill the requirements of the most technical readers' needs. The novice enthusiast can also benefit from this section as the author gives everyone the opportunity to use this section and further their understanding by including a glossary of terms at the end of the book. Most of the individual selections also have a section entitled "comments," which is one of the most unique and enjoyable features of the book. It covers many subjects particular to the plant being covered, such as how the plant got its name, how Native Americans utilized the plant, and how the plant relates to insects and grazing animals.

This is a user-friendly book that would enhance any docent's understanding of the plants on the KONZA and in the state of Kansas. The book describes 323 plants of the almost 2100 vascular plants found growing in Kansas. Many of the plants included are not found in other Kansas guidebooks, and the sections on grasses and grasslike plants are more extensive than some other guidebooks. I highly recommend that you look at a copy soon. It is available for purchase at local bookstores and may be checked out from the Manhattan Public Library.

SPOTLIGHT! on Chod Hedinger *By Annie Clark and Chod Hedinger*

Chod Hedinger became a valuable part of the Konza Environmental Education Docent Program in 2000. He has been recognized at Docent Graduation each year since for his committed participation, and has guided or assisted with over 70 groups in total. In 2004, Chod received one of two Docent of the Year awards.

He was born and raised in Manhattan, Kansas. After high school, he served in the United States Air Force for four years, and was stationed in Japan and Texas. While in the Air Force, he received special training and was granted Top Secret clearance. After being discharged from the Air Force, Chod began a career in the food service industry. For 13 years, he worked for and ultimately managed a grocery store, part of a locally owned chain. Then he worked 19 ½ years as a salesman, supervisor and account manager for a company that sold health and beauty aides to grocery stores. He currently works for Kehe Food Distributors located in Romeoville, Illinois. Chod travels across the region, up to 550 miles each week, to merchandise, stock shelves and sell gourmet foods to grocery stores.



Chod Hedinger

Chod has been married nearly 40 years to his wife, Sări, whom he met on a blind date. As only children growing up, both felt like they missed out on sibling relationships, so they raised three boys. All grown now, one son eloped while Chod was hiking in Utah and another was married on Chod's birthday. While two sons live nearby, Chod and Sări have one grandson and family, living in Washington state. Chod and Sări enjoy camping locally in their 5th wheel camper almost year round. This September they plan to travel to New Mexico to celebrate their wedding anniversary.

Chod became an assistant scoutmaster and scoutmaster while his youngest son was involved in Boy Scouts. For ten years, he attended many summer camps, high adventures and camp outs. He met docent Doris Burnett through scouts, who encouraged him to become a Konza Prairie docent after retiring as scoutmaster. Chod enjoys all ages and all activities on Konza, including guiding Nature Trail, Bison Loop, spring wildflower walk, and prairie chicken viewing.

Konza Director Changes

By Dr. Brian Spooner

Effective July 1, 2005, Dr. Dave Hartnett will step down as Director of the Konza Prairie Biological Station. Dave has completed 10 years (actually 10.5 years) as director, and has both led and overseen enormous progress in both facilities, usage, and support for Konza. He will relinquish the directorship, but will continue to be involved in Konza-related activities in numerous ways. In my opinion, Dave has been the perfect person for this responsibility, and I am grateful that he accepted the appointment (two times). I hope you will join me in thanking him for his terrific contributions during his tenure as director, and for the future contributions that he will make to KPBS through development of international programs and expansion of his research activities.



Dave Hartnett

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Eva Horne has accepted my appointment of her as Interim Director of the Konza Prairie Biological Station. Eva has served as Assistant Director of KPBS for the past 5 years, and has broad support from our Konza faculty investigators and the Konza staff, both of which were significant in her appointment to this position. I hope you will congratulate Eva on this appointment, which begins immediately. This leadership transition will be seamless and efficient with the cooperation and support of everyone.

Docents Go Green!

By Annie Baker



Docents Make a Difference.

Developing material for the January Docent Round-up, Valerie and I wondered, as Konza Prairie docents, are we as “green” as we claim to be? Compiling several internet conservation quizzes and adding some ideas of our own, we created the “living your commitment to environmental protection and conservation” survey.

Forty-seven docents anonymously completed the survey which includes questions in categories such as energy, toxins, transportation, waste management, and water. So how did we do? The results portray a very “green” docent population, with sixty-six percent of docents surveyed carrying out more than half of the basic conservation practices listed. The range was between 25%-88%.

Surprisingly, 60% of docents surveyed admitted to driving vehicles which get less than 27.5 miles per gallon, and 40% confessed to tossing batteries in the general garbage instead of recycling them. On the other hand, 95% of docents surveyed did not water their lawns frequently or during mid-day, and 76% said they recycle glass, aluminum cans, plastic, paper and newspaper. The purpose of our very non-scientific survey was to raise awareness about the difference one person’s choices can mean to environmental protection and conservation. If you would like a copy of the survey, please contact Valerie or Annie, and pick up a copy of the Flint Hills Recycling Directory to jump start your own “green” movement.



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