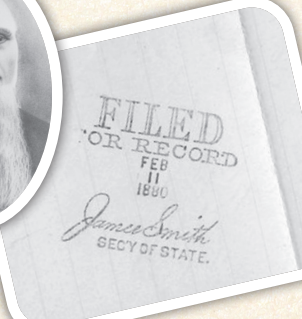
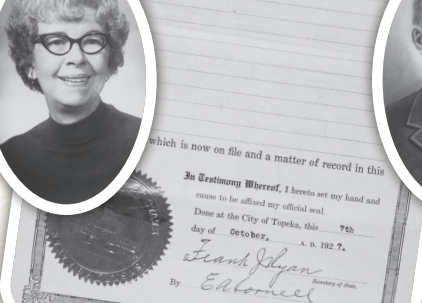
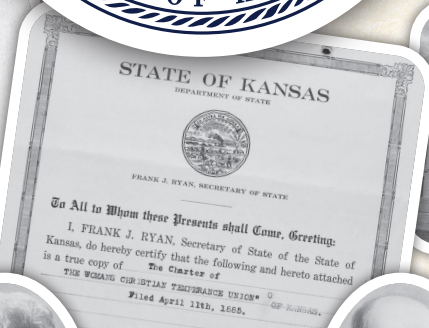
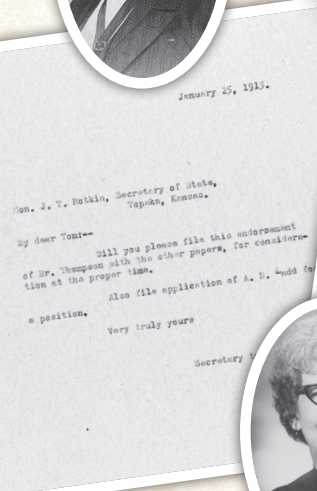


# Office of the Kansas Secretary of State

A HISTORIC GUIDE FOR VISITORS



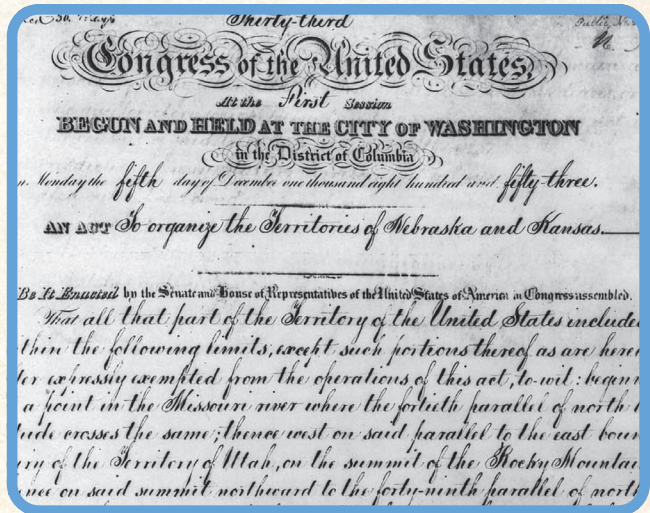


Welcome to the Office of the Kansas Secretary of State. This brief pamphlet is intended to provide Kansans with an overview of the agency's historical origins, program structure, and list of the secretaries who have served in the office dating from the Kansas Territorial period through today.

## Origins of the Office

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 created the Territory of Kansas and established the framework of government, including the appointment of Territorial Secretary. It was the duty of the office to record the activities of the territorial government back to Washington and the president. This included a report of the laws passed during the territorial assembly, today's version of session laws.

The Secretary served a four-year term for the salary of \$2,000. The Secretary was appointed to serve as interim Governor upon the resignation of the sitting Governor and until a replacement had been selected.



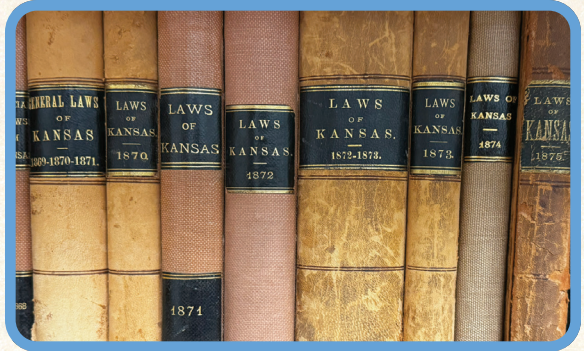
There were five Secretaries from 1854 until February 9, 1861, when Kansas entered the Union. Each of the Secretaries served at least a brief period as acting Governor during the territorial period. Ironically, only one Secretary of State has served as Governor since statehood, that being Bill Graves who was Secretary of State from 1987 until 1995, and Governor from 1995 until 2003.

The Office of the Secretary of State is created by Article 1, § 1 of the Kansas Constitution. The Secretary serves a four-year term. The Constitution creates the office, but several hundred state laws established the duties of the agency. The agency's organizational structure is determined primarily by statute. The agency's deputies supervise its primary divisions, including administration, elections, business services, publications, and information technology.



# Historic Office Duties

The 1861 Kansas Legislature gave the Secretary of State the duty to compile, print and distribute session laws each year, continuing the duties of the Secretary of the Territory to compile session laws and sending them to the federal government in Washington.

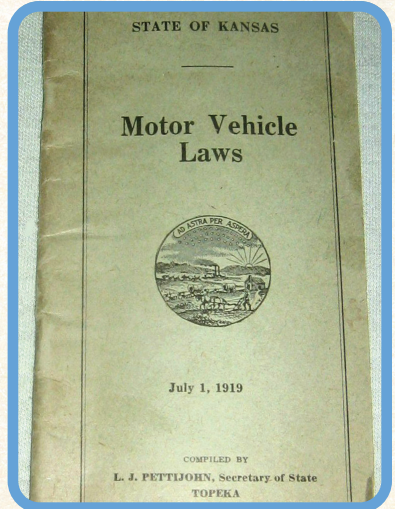


The Secretary of State also was the original keeper of the Great Seal of the State of Kansas, among other official duties, including effectively making the office the record keeper and archivist for state government. The office performed many of the duties that the State Archives and the Department of Administration do today. This meant the Secretary had to produce copies of official documents when requested and mark them with the state seal.



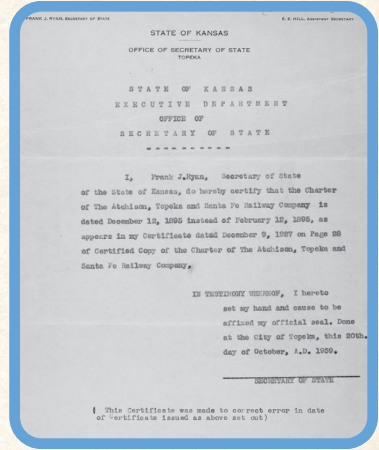
In the early 1900s, the Legislature gave the Secretary the authority to issue motor vehicle licenses, with fees shared by the state and counties for the maintenance of the primitive road system in Kansas. Responsibility for vehicle and driver's licenses were moved to the State Treasurer in the 1930s in effort to centralize fiscal management.

The Secretary was also responsible for providing space for the Legislature, securing the desks and chairs when the bodies were not in session, and "such other duties as are or may be imposed upon him by law."

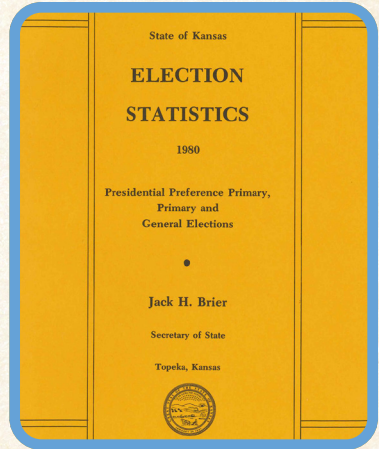


# Current Office Duties

**B**usiness services expanded in the office during the 1900s with the requirement that all corporations file articles of incorporation, amendments, annual reports and other business documents with the Secretary of State. As part of the larger government reorganization in 1967 and 1968, Kansas adopted the Uniform Commercial Code and established a new department within the Secretary of State, separate from Business Services. Business Services and Uniform Commercial Code merged into one division in 2002, and many of the functions moved online.



At the same time, the Secretary of State became the state chief election officer and elections became a year-round function. Those new duties regarding elections included the compiling of reports, candidate filings, certifying elections and election statistics. Before that, counties did everything for state elections and the Secretary of State only added up the final election numbers after even-year primary and general elections. Counties gave up some control of state elections and took over the conduct of local elections for city government and school district elections.



In 1982, the office began publishing the *Kansas Register* (the official newspaper of Kansas). In 1988, it took over the filing of state agency administrative regulations from the Office of the Revisor and published the *Kansas Administrative Regulations* until it moved online in 2023. The office continues to publish the *Session Laws of Kansas* annually.



## — Office Locations Through the Years —

The Secretary of State's office was originally located in the north wing on the second floor of the Statehouse from 1896 until 2000. Today the original office is used for Statehouse and government-related events.



Currently the office is located in the Memorial Building on the southeast corner of the capitol square.



A move to the new Docking State Office Building on the southwest corner of the capitol square will occur in 2025.



# Kansas Territorial Secretaries

1854 - 1861

**F**ive individuals served as Secretaries of the Kansas Territory from 1854 until 1861, and each of them served at least one stint as territorial governor.



**Daniel Woodson** – June 29, 1854 - April 16, 1857. Democrat. A printer and journalist from Virginia, Woodson was proslavery. In private life, he founded the Coffeyville Journal. Served as acting territorial governor from April 17-June 23, 1855; August 16-September 5, 1855; July 24-July 7, 1856; August 18-September 9, 1856; and March 12-April 16, 1857.



**Frederick P. Stanton** – April 16, 1857 - December 21, 1857. Democrat. An educator and lawyer, Stanton also served in Congress representing Tennessee. He served as Territorial Governor from April 15-May 27, 1857, until the arrival of Robert J. Walker. Stanton sought a “fair and safe” opportunity for voters to decide the issue of slavery. He resigned in opposition to the Lecompton Constitution. Stanton served briefly again from November 16-December 21, 1857.



**James W. Denver** – December 21, 1857 - May 12, 1858. Democrat. Denver was U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs when he was named by President James Buchanan to be Territorial Secretary. He took over as acting Governor on May 12, 1858, serving until July 3, and again from July 30 until October 10, 1858. The capital of Colorado was founded during his administration when the land was part of the Kansas Territory.



**Hugh Sleight Walsh** – May 12, 1858 - June 28, 1860. Democrat. Walsh was born in New York and moved to the territory in 1857. He served as private secretary to Territorial Governors Stanton and Denver. Walsh served four times as acting Governor from July 3-30, 1858; October 10-December 18, 1858; August 1-September 15, 1859; and April 15-June 16, 1860.



**George Monroe Beebe** – July 1, 1860 - February 9, 1861. Democrat. An attorney from New York, Beebe moved to Troy in 1858. He served on the Territorial Council in 1858 and again in 1859 when appointed Territorial Secretary by President Buchanan. Beebe was acting Governor from September 11-November 26, 1860, and again from December 17, 1860, until February 9, 1861, when Charles Robinson became the first Governor of the State of Kansas.



# Kansas Secretaries of State

1861 - 1911



**Robinson**



**Shepherd**



**Lawrence**



**Barker**



**Moonlight**



**Smallwood**



**Cavanaugh**



**Smith**



**Allen**



**Higgins**



**Osborn**



**Edwards**



**Bush**



**Clark**



**Burrow**



**Denton**

**John Robinson** – Feb. 9, 1861 - July 28, 1862. (R) Manhattan.

**Sanders Shepherd** – Aug. 28, 1862 - Jan. 12, 1863. (R) Topeka.

**Warren W.H. Lawrence** – Jan. 12, 1863 - Jan. 9, 1865. (R) Peoria City.

**Rinaldo Barker** – Jan. 9, 1865 - Jan. 11, 1869. (R) Atchison.

**Thomas Moonlight** – Jan. 11, 1869 - Jan. 11, 1871. (R) Leavenworth.

**William Smallwood** – Jan. 9, 1871 - Jan. 11, 1875. (R) Wathena.

**Thomas Cavanaugh** – Jan. 11, 1875 - Jan. 13, 1879. (R) Salina.

**James Smith** – Jan. 13, 1879 - Jan. 14, 1885. (R) Marysville.

**Edwin Allen** – Jan. 14, 1885 - Jan. 14, 1889. (R) Wichita.

**William Higgins** – Jan. 14, 1889 - Jan. 9, 1893. (R) Topeka.

**Russell Osborn** – Jan. 9, 1893 - Jan. 14, 1895. (Populist) Stockton.

**William Edwards** – Jan. 14, 1895 - Jan. 11, 1897. (R) Larned.

**William Bush** – Jan. 11, 1897 - Jan. 9, 1899. (Populist) Mankato.

**George Clark** – Jan. 9, 1899 - Jan. 12, 1903. (R) Junction City.

**Joel Burrow** – Jan. 12, 1903 - Jan. 14, 1907. (R) Smith Center.

**Charles Denton** – Jan. 14, 1907 - Jan. 14, 1911. (R) Attica.





# Kansas Secretaries of State

1911 - 2019



Sessions



Botkin



Pettijohn



McCray



F. Ryan



Cornell



F. Ryan



L. Ryan



P. Shanahan



E. Shanahan



Brier



Graves



Thornburgh



Biggs



Kobach

**Charles Sessions** – Jan. 14, 1911 - Jan. 11, 1915. (R) Topeka.

**John Botkin** – Jan. 11, 1915 - Jan. 13, 1919. (R) Galena.

**Lewis Pettijohn** – Jan. 13, 1919 - Nov. 10, 1922. (R) Wichita. (Resigned)

**David McCray** – Nov. 14, 1922 - Jan. 8, 1923. (R) Topeka.

**Frank Ryan** – Jan. 8, 1923 - Jan. 14, 1929. (R) Leavenworth.

**Edgbert Cornell** – Jan. 14, 1929 - Jan. 9, 1933. (R) Topeka.

**Frank Ryan** – Jan. 9, 1933 - Jan. 10, 1949. (R) Leavenworth.

**Larry Ryan** – Jan. 10, 1949 - Jan. 8, 1951. (D) Manhattan.

**Paul R. Shanahan** – Jan. 8, 1951 - Apr. 14, 1966. (R) Salina. (Died in office)

**Elwill Shanahan** – Apr. 28, 1966 - May 10, 1978. (Filled vacancy caused by her husband's death) Named Secretary of State Emerita, January 4, 1979.

**Jack Brier** – May 10, 1978 - Jan. 12, 1987. (R) Overland Park.

**William Graves** – Jan. 12, 1987 - Jan. 9, 1995. (R) Salina.

**Ron Thornburgh** – Jan. 9, 1995 - Feb. 15, 2010. (R) Topeka. (Resigned)

**Chris Biggs** – Mar. 16, 2010 - Jan. 10, 2011. (D) Kansas City.

**Kris W. Kobach** – Jan. 10, 2011 - Jan. 14, 2019. (R) Piper.



# Secretary of State Scott Schwab

2019 - Present

Scott Schwab grew up in Great Bend, Kansas and graduated from Fort Hays State University.

First elected to the Kansas House of Representatives in 2002, Schwab worked to bring local control and funding to Kansas schools while also supporting free enterprise to strengthen the economy. As Chairman of the House Elections Committee, Schwab championed several bills to safeguard Kansas elections and the voting process. Schwab also served as Chairman of the House Financial Institutions Committee, and Vice Chair of the Taxation Committee and the Committee on Commerce and Labor. Schwab was also elected to serve as Speaker Pro Tempore of the Kansas House of Representatives.



In 2018, Schwab was elected to his first term as Kansas Secretary of State and was re-elected in 2022. As Secretary of State, Schwab has placed priority on providing support and guidance to county election officials; improving the Office business filing system; implementing cutting-edge IT security; and ensuring Kansas remains a leading state in the nation for election integrity and that one vote equals one person. During his tenure as Secretary, Schwab served as President of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) and was selected a Rodel Fellow.

Scott and his wife, Michele, reside in Overland Park with their children.







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## *For More Information*

The Kansas Secretary of State's office is located downtown in the Memorial Building at 120 SW 10th Avenue, Topeka, KS 66612. Our office is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. More information about the office and the services that are provided can be found at **[sos.ks.gov](https://sos.ks.gov)**.

