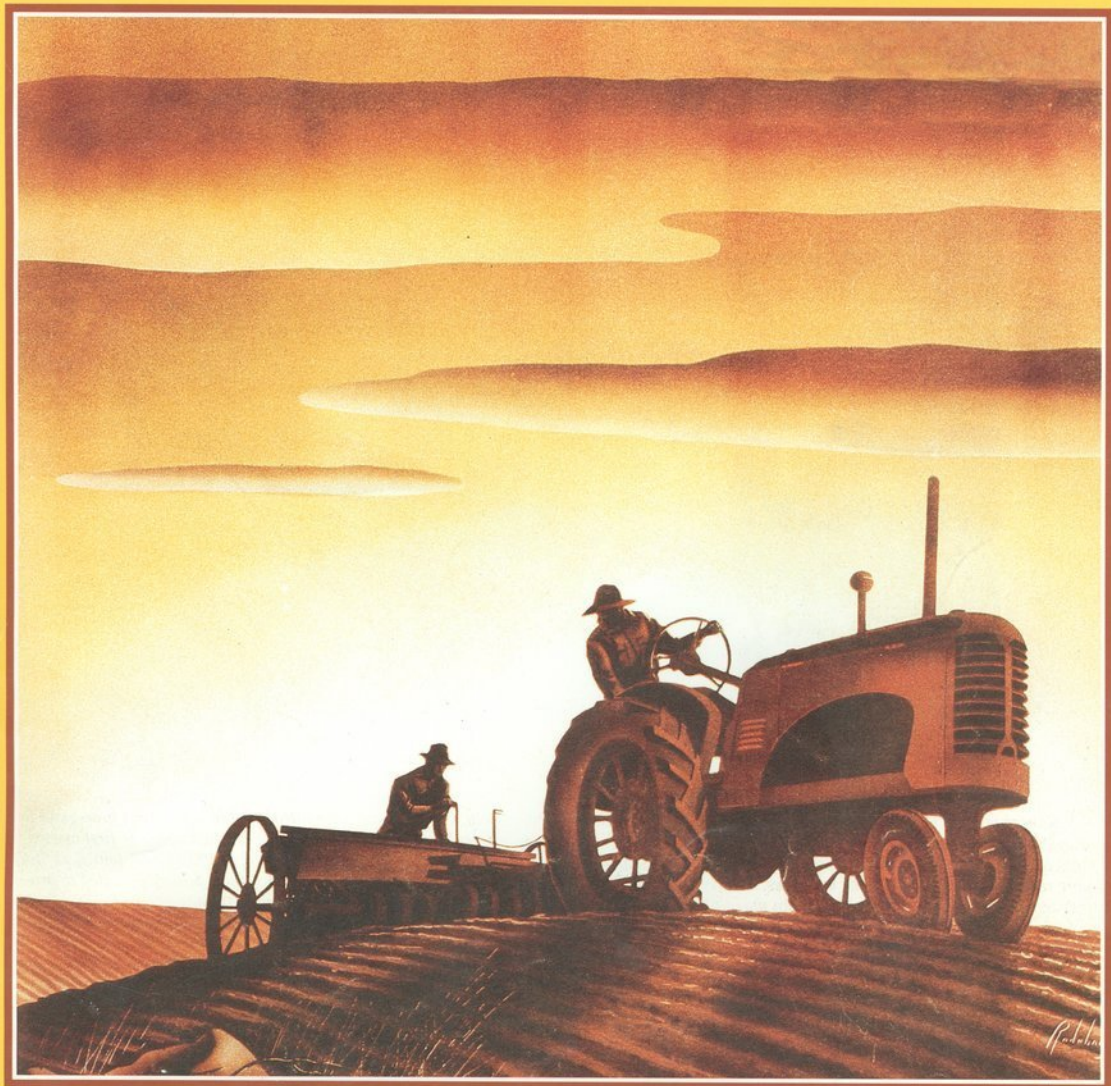


# KANSAS HISTORY

A Journal  
of the  
Central Plains

Volume 19, Number 3  
Autumn 1996





*"Gems from the Walnut," Walnut Creek, Rush County*

Kansas is not a state of great rivers or many navigable waterways, but riparian habitats have always been vital to the inhabitants of this prairie. Fish from the region's rivers and creeks, and more recently innumerable ponds and lakes, have supplemented the diets of "Kansas" families for centuries. In modern times fishing for sport or recreation, such as that depicted in this Rush County photograph, has been a popular diversion for many and a passion for others. Interestingly, while Kansans have not always been perfect stewards of their water resources, they have long been quite mindful of the types of species inhabiting their waters.

As a result, the Kansas legislature created the office of Commissioner of Fisheries in 1877, and by the fall of the next year Fish Commissioner David B. Long was stocking the streams with salmon and shad. Additional species such as black bass and, unfor-

tunately, German carp were introduced in subsequent years, and to facilitate the stocking process a state fish hatchery was first opened near Pratt in February 1904; by October 1912 it was touted as "the largest in the world," with its eighty-three ponds "expected to produce a million fish a year for lakes and streams."

Legislation affecting the fish commissioner and later the state fish and game warden also placed some restrictions — usually unpopular and difficult to enforce — on fishermen. In the 1880s the legislature prescribed penalties for killing or taking fish by the use of explosives, nets, seines, or traps, and the first "closed season" against hook-and-line fishermen was imposed in 1895. Hunters had to pay a license fee by 1905, but it was 1927 before resident anglers, like the man in the photo above, had to pay for the privilege of wetting a line in Kansas waters.

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VIRGIL W. DEAN  
Editor

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of our lives is the subject of  
"A Most Original Thinker."*

Back Cover: *A 1932 cartoon  
depicts the woes of taxation.  
An article on property tax  
begins on page 200.*

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From the New Orleans Times-Picayune.

TOO MUCH OVERHEAD!

