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editor)

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## An Orientation: Past and Future

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GOING PLACES  
*Risk Hazekamp*

## AN ORIENTATION: PAST AND FUTURE

Since 1854, the year Kansas was opened for settlement, 6,000 of the state's towns have disappeared. What did the successful communities have that the failed ones didn't? And what can rural communities that are the keepers of Flint Hills culture do to ensure a brighter future? In the words of historian Jim Sherow, "history never repeats itself." Many rural towns learned the hard way that the resources that guaranteed success in the late nineteenth century – proximity to rivers and access to railroads – were no guarantees of success in an increasingly urbanized twentieth-century. The communities that remain can take heart in the fact that twentieth-century struggles are no guarantee of failure in the twenty-first-century. If history never repeats itself, then the past is not a blueprint for the future. Still, it may provide both cautionary tales and inspiration for those seeking to build a future that respects the past but takes its cues from today's economic, technological, and environmental realities.

In this section of the *Field Journal*, historian Jim Sherow makes the case that the Future of the Flint Hills relies on the ability to adjust to a rapidly changing economic and technological climate. John Campbell comes full circle with the story of his return to the Flint Hills. Farrell Hoy Jenab explores the story of Minnie D. Morgan, who leveraged mockery into political change for Cottonwood Falls. Vicki Patton offers the history of Clements, a community whose nineteenth-century promise evaporated in the twentieth century. Jim Hoy recounts the tale of Yeager's Raiders who wreaked havoc on Chase County at a time when great economic and cultural changes left the nation's future hanging in the balance. Thomas Averill, as William Jennings Bryan Oleander, offers a comedic piece about our Kansas state song, *Home on the Range*. This section ends with a short story of how one building determined the fate of an entire community.