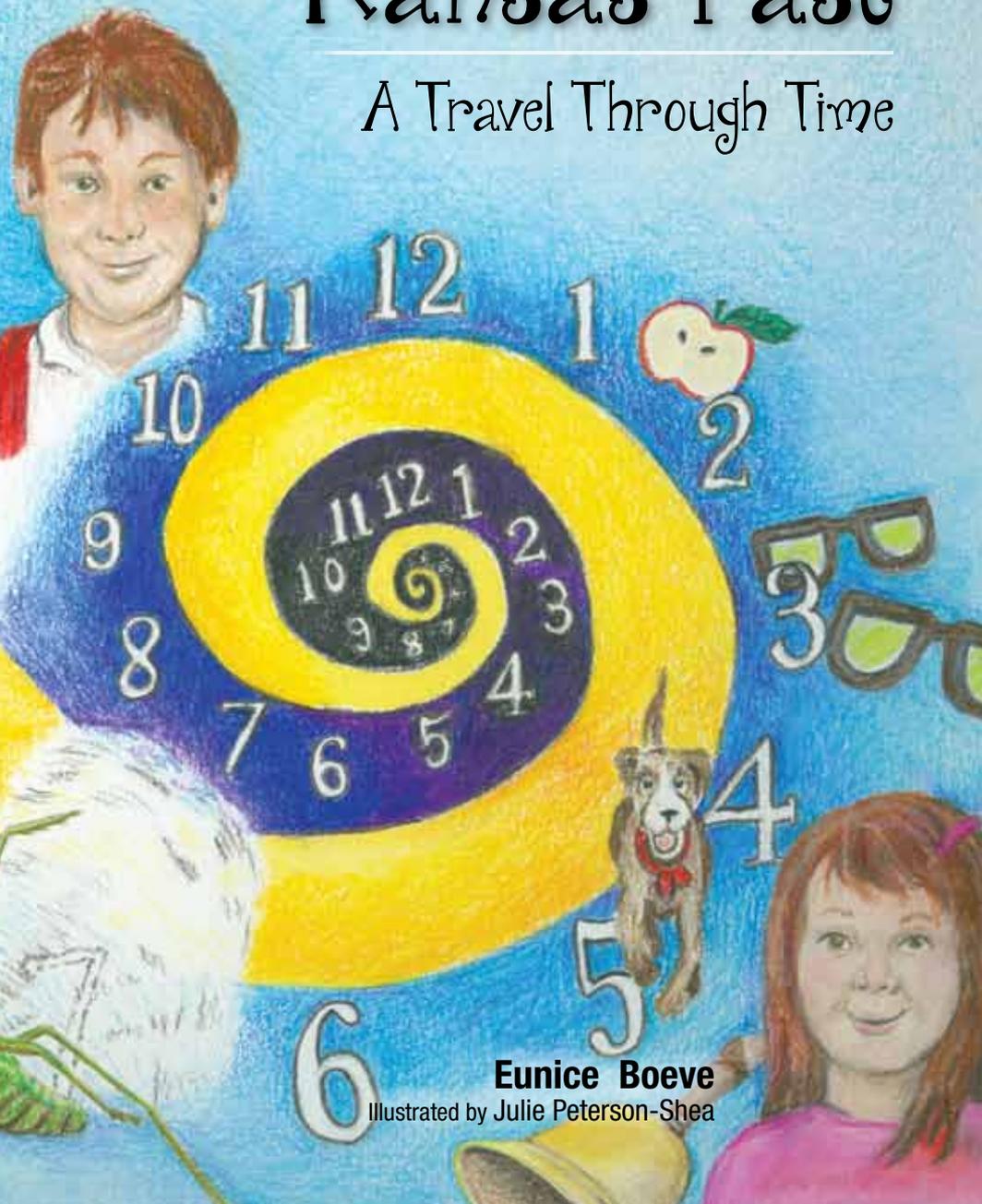


# Echoes of Kansas Past

A Travel Through Time



**Eunice Boeve**

Illustrated by Julie Peterson-Shea

ECHOES OF  
KANSAS PAST



*A Travel Through Time*



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*A Travel Through Time*

Written by

**Eunice Boeve**

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Rowe Publishing  
*and Design*

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# DEDICATION

*To all  
Kansas kids,  
including mine.*



# CONTENTS

- 1 Chapter One — *Worry and Fear*
- 9 Chapter Two — *A White Swirl of Space*
- 15 Chapter Three — *The Kansa*
- 22 Chapter Four — *The Orphan Train*
- 29 Chapter Five — *The Great Depression*
- 35 Chapter Six — *Home On the Range*
- 41 Chapter Seven — *The Cabin On Beaver Creek*
- 45 Chapter Eight — *The Traveling Princess*
- 52 Chapter Nine — *Indian John*
- 58 Chapter Ten — *Osa Johnson and Snowball*
- 64 Chapter Eleven — *Langston Hughes*
- 70 Chapter Twelve — *Camp Concordia*
- 76 Chapter Thirteen — *Comanche*

- 83 Chapter Fourteen — *Lincoln and the Runaway Slaves*
- 89 Chapter Fifteen — *Ghosts of Past and Present*
- 96 Chapter Sixteen — *The Flying Machine*
- 103 Chapter Seventeen — *Susan B. Anthony*
- 109 Chapter Eighteen — *A School In Name Only*
- 115 Chapter Nineteen — *There's No Place Like Home*
- 121 Chapter Twenty — *Alcove Spring*
- 127 Chapter Twenty-One — *The Marshall of Dodge City*
- 133 Chapter Twenty-Two — *Boot Hill and a Future President*
- 140 Chapter Twenty-Three — *Grasshoppers!*
- 147 Chapter Twenty-Four — *The State of Kansas*
- 154 Chapter Twenty-Five — *Ancient Bones*
- 161 Chapter Twenty-Six — *Home At Last!*

CHAPTER FOUR  
THE ORPHAN TRAIN



“We’re not Indians anymore,” Mollie whispered. “And we’re on a train.”

“I know,” Jack whispered back. “And it’s full of kids and we’re dressed just like them.”

Mollie looked down at her long brown dress, faded and worn, and at Jack’s patched knee pants and faded blue shirt, and on down to their high-topped shoes, the black leather dull and cracked.

They were not aware of the two women riding in the train car with them until one stood to announce

they'd soon be arriving at the station in Concordia, Kansas. The woman, in an ankle length black skirt and white blouse, smiled brightly before adding, "Where your new parents will be waiting."

*New parents?* Mollie clutched Jack's arm. "Oh my gosh! We're on an orphan train! I know about them. They give away children!"

Remembering their glasses, she quickly felt in the pockets on each side of her skirt and with a grin of triumph brought out both hers and Jack's. "If someone tries to adopt us. We'll just disappear."

Jack frowned. "Where did you hear about Orphan Trains?"

"Remember Mom used to get eggs from Mrs. Burwell before she moved to Topeka?" Mollie said.

Jack frowned. "So, what does she have to do with orphan trains?"

"She said her mother came to Kansas in 1911 on an orphan train." Mollie's eyes grew wide, "What if she's on this train?"

"Even if she is, you wouldn't know her," Jack said.

"Her name was Clara. She and an older brother were orphans living on the streets of New York. They slept in alleys and stole food until the police caught them. They grabbed her, but the brother got away. She never saw or heard from him again."

“That’s because they shipped her off on an orphan train,” Jack said.

Mollie heard the anger in her brother’s voice and shuddered. Both could understand the empty sadness Clara must have felt over losing her brother.

Mollie knew she would not be able to tell if Clara was on this train, still she turned and was looking each girl over carefully, when Jack poked her in the ribs.

“Quit staring at them,” he hissed.

Embarrassed, her cheeks burning, Mollie faced forward. Still seeing them in her mind, the boys as well as the girls, sitting quietly on the seats, eyes straight ahead or downcast, she realized there was no talking, not even whispers and no laughing, not even giggles or smiles. *They’re afraid, she thought. Afraid of who might choose to take them and just as afraid that no one will want them.*

A mist of tears shadowed her eyes and she turned to look out the window and tried to focus on the Kansas landscape rolling by. She thought the fields and the hills of limestone looked much the same as in her own time, probably a hundred years in the future.

As the train approached the station, it gave out a piercing whistle, and the children sat up straighter and those by the windows pressed their faces against the glass.

The two women ushered the children down the steps and out on a wooden platform where a large group of people waited.

Mollie knew the two things she'd be thinking if she were one of the children. *Will anyone pick me? And will they love me?*

After hurrying them away to a large building, the crowd following, the two women lined them up on a stage, the smallest to the biggest and invited the people to come forward.

A woman spoke to a girl beside Mollie. "Would you like to go home with us?"

Shyly the girl looked up at the woman and nodded.

"We lost our little girl to whooping cough last winter," the woman continued. "You favor her some. May I ask your name?"

"Clara," the girl said, and goose bumps raised up on Mollie's arms.

As the girl left with the two people who had chosen her, Molly turned to Jack who stood behind her. "Her name's Clara," she whispered. "Do you think ..."

Jack frowned. "*Quiet,*" he mouthed.

As child after child was led way, Mollie found herself next to a brown haired girl of about twelve. The girl's eyes were fixed intently on a young couple

making over a little blond boy held in the woman's arms.

"Do you know that little boy?" she asked.

"He's my brother," the girl said, tears welling in her eyes.

"Go up there." Mollie gave the girl a small shove. "Tell them you're his sister, so they'll take you, too."

"They might not want two children, especially one as old as me. I want Joey to go with them, for they have kind, gentle faces. I will not spoil Joey's chances for a mother and father."

Mollie turned to Jack, but before she could say a word he was gone, moving toward the couple with Joey.

"Excuse me," he said, "But this boy has a sister here."

"We decided on only one," the man said.

"But a sister." The woman looked up at her husband. "We cannot turn away a sister."

The man smiled at Jack. "Bring her to us," he said.

When it was over, the few children that were left would ride the train to the next stop where they would have another chance at finding families. No one had approached Jack or Mollie and the twins wondered if somehow the time machine protected them.

As the last of the wagons and buggies left carrying a child or two away to a new home, Jack and Mollie went outside and put on their glasses. Immediately the sights and sounds were typical of a day in their own time. And just to their right stood the time machine. A car came down the street and they held their breath. But the driver did not appear to see them or the time machine.

As it had before, the computer gave the date, place, and subject of this present stop in time. Mollie read the words aloud, "1911, Concordia, Kansas, the Orphan Trains."

She turned to Jack. "That was Clara! She came in 1911. It had to be her."

"Maybe," Jack said as he scrolled down reading the information on the Orphan Trains. "It says here, the trains ran from the 1850s to the 1930s sending thousands of children from the city streets and orphanages in the East to the Midwest, where most all of them found homes.

"Look," Mollie said. "There's a National Orphan Train Complex here with a museum and a research center."

"If we'd come back in our time," Jack said. "We might find out what happened to that girl and her little brother, Joey. Did you get her name?"

“No. Just Clara’s. And I still think she was Mrs. Burwell’s mother.”

This time, the computer screen gave their departure time as 6:00 p.m. A quick glance at the computer’s clock told them the time was almost gone.

“Maybe this time we’ll go home,” Mollie said.

PRAISE FOR  
ECHOES OF KANSAS PAST

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**W**hen my mother was a child, she gathered “weeds” for Indian John. We still put flowers on his grave every Memorial Day.

—Bertha Morgison, Lawrence, KS

“**J**ack and Mollie’s adventures across Kansas history through their time machine will enrapture young readers as they read about many places and faces from the Sunflower State’s past.”

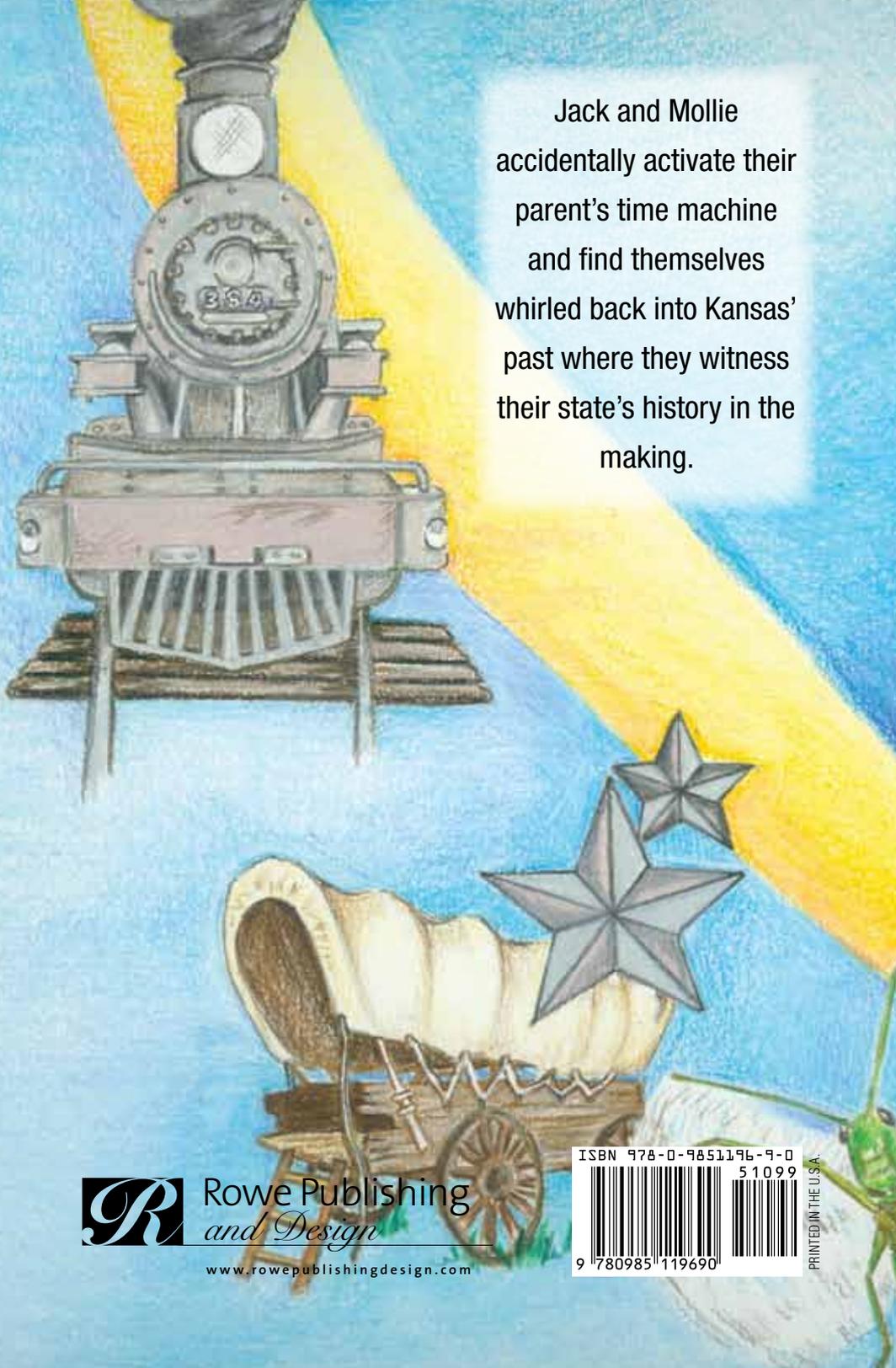
—Jan Pope, retired teacher, Blue Rapids, KS

**M**y grandfather, who spoke German, worked at that POW camp and made several life-long friends among the prisoners. I have a carving of a small wooden dog one of them made for my grandfather. I wonder if it’s a carving of Mary Sunshine. I am sending the book to my granddaughter in England.

—Mary Beth Boyd, Norton, KS

**M**y father was Dave Strait. I was a just a boy, but I vividly remember the POWs arriving by rail car, the camp, and Walter coming to our house for dinner.

—Bill Strait, Denver, CO



Jack and Mollie  
accidentally activate their  
parent's time machine  
and find themselves  
whirled back into Kansas'  
past where they witness  
their state's history in the  
making.



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