

Leavenworth's Mural & Statue Safari



Leavenworth offers visitors a unique opportunity to learn about the exciting people, places and events that contributed to the city's illustrious past. You can walk or drive this self-guided tour of some of our favorite landmarks – it stretches a little less than a mile from north to south, and about half a mile east to west. Each mural or statue stop tells a story of Leavenworth.

Safari Stop #1 (416 Cherokee St.) was completed by local artist Leigh Coffman in 2020. On the far left, you'll find explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark scouting across the Missouri River, seeing Kansas' potential as they mapped the untamed west in the early 1800s. Scanning right, you'll find odes to Leavenworth's military community, suffragette rebellions, railroad history and more. You'll even catch a glimpse of Fort Leavenworth's stately Buffalo Soldier Monument, dedicated in 1992, should your visit not include a trip on post to see it for yourself.



Safari Stop #2

Local artist Nancy Bauder created several murals around Leavenworth, including this tribute to the daily lives of the early Plains Indians, found on the side of the First City Museum (743 Delaware St). A glance at a Leavenworth map will reveal streets named for Plains communities like the Kiowa, Osage, Pawnee, Dakota and Cheyenne.

Safari Stop #3

This is the seal of the First City of Kansas, founded in 1854, nearly seven years before the Kansas Territory was declared an official state. Found on the eastern side of the River City Community Players historic Art Deco theater (500 Delaware St.), this mural was painted in 1978 by local artist Michael Young. It's a tribute to America's early westward expansion and Leavenworth's contributions to two historic byways: The Oregon and Santa Fe Trails.



Safari Stop #4

The Leavenworth Main Street Program is a non-profit focused on the economic health, historic preservation and revitalization of key downtown corridors. One method is the First City Passageways Project, which spruces up familiar facades with artwork ranging from the whimsical and abstract to gestures of state and city pride.

Visitors will find bits of art popping up around every corner downtown, so keep an eye out for the stray sunflower, meadowlark or curious cow!



First City Passageways locations include:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 121 Delaware Street | 427 Delaware Street | 531 Shawnee Street |
| 401 Delaware Street | 500 Delaware Street | 600 Shawnee Street |
| 414 Delaware Street | 520 Delaware Street | 529 Cherokee Street |



Safari Stop #5

On Dec. 5, 1859, an estimated 1,500 people gathered to hear Abraham Lincoln speak from the steps of the Planters Hotel, a Leavenworth meeting spot known for hosting pro-slavery groups. “Fellow Republicans, do not capitulate to Southern demands to recognize slavery as being right, but to stand by our duty, fearlessly and effectively,” he urged the crowd. “We do, in common with our fathers, who framed the Government under which we live, declare our belief that slavery is wrong.”

This statue on the front lawn of City Hall was unveiled in 2009 to mark the 150th anniversary of Lincoln’s visit. Additional Lincoln mementos can be found at Fort Leavenworth’s Frontier Army Museum, which showcases the sleigh that carried the future president between campaign stops, and the special collections at the University of St. Mary, with several items written or signed by Lincoln, including a copy of the 13th Amendment. And, though the Planters Hotel is long gone, the “Lincoln Steps” were relocated to the Leavenworth County Historical Society, should any visitors want to take a few photos or practice their public speaking.

Safari Stop #6

In celebration of the Boy Scouts of America’s 40th anniversary, more than 200 replicas of the Statue of Liberty were created by a Midwestern manufacturing firm between 1949 and 1952. The Scouts made it their mission to distribute these “Little Sisters of Lady Liberty” as far and wide as possible, gifting them to communities in more than 30 states and the U.S. territory of Guam.

Leavenworth Boy Scout Ed Mura was instrumental in securing a statue for the First City. It was dedicated on the south lawn of City Hall on July 4, 1950, unveiled in front of a crowd of 1,000 that included the commandant of the Command and General Staff College, the Fort Leavenworth Army band and the Boy Scouts’ Kaw Council. Like the original, she was placed on an 11-point, star-shaped base, though her pedestal is made of native limestone.



Between 2001 and 2002, a conservation grant, a community fundraising campaign and a specialist from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art repaired 50 years

of damage done by the statue’s exposure to the elements. She made her second grand debut on July 4, 2002, and was again met with a cheering crowd.

Safari Stop #7

Katlin Spain, a graduate of both Leavenworth's Immaculata High School and the Kansas City Art Institute, added this ethereal touch to the Candle Queen Candles Gift Boutique (500 Shawnee St.) in 2018. It's become one of the most popular selfie spots in town; after you snap yours, be sure to tag the shop (#cqclv) and join your fellow angels on social media.

And be sure to strike a pose with the Candle Queen's other colorful murals, including a set of fluttery butterfly wings and the shop's "Sparkle and Shine" slogan.



Safari Stop #8

Rest a bit in a pocket park (415 Shawnee St.) that honors two legends with Leavenworth connections: Susan B. Anthony and Carry Nation.

Anthony, champion of the women's suffrage movement, often visited the city to see her brother, Daniel, an outspoken abolitionist. Other visits brought Anthony together with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other leaders to argue the case for universal voting rights for both women and African-American citizens.

Carry Nation, meanwhile, made her name as a fervent prohibitionist who would burst into saloons and smash every bottle in sight with a small hatchet. "Cyclone Carry" or "Hatchet Granny," as she was notoriously known, visited Leavenworth in March 1901, prompting every saloon in town to close out of precaution.



Safari Stop #9

This welded bronze sculpture outside Mutual Savings Association (100 S. 4th St.) was created by Topeka, KS, artist Jim Bass in 1981. It signifies the celebration of early Midwest families on the frontier.





Safari Stop #10

The central figure of this mural (406 Shawnee St.) is Buffalo Bill Cody, who called the “First City” home until, at age 12, he left to work the wagon trains that operated across the Great Plains. Other local landmarks and notable people featured include Great Western Manufacturing, the oldest firm of its kind in Kansas; Wild West legend Bill Hickok, who lived in 1850s Leavenworth; the Union Depot along the Missouri River; a young Buffalo Soldier; and a covered wagon making its way down the Old Military Road, now known as the Frontier Military Historic Byway.

Safari Stop #11

“The Forefathers and Mothers of Leavenworth” (302 Shawnee St.) was painted in 2015 by local artist Nancy Bauder. The figures depicted in the mural are Abraham Lincoln, who visited the city in 1859; Sister Xavier Ross, who led the Sisters of Charity here in 1858 and founded the school that would eventually become the University of St. Mary; a Plains Indian; a Buffalo Soldier; and the city's namesake, Henry Leavenworth.



Safari Stop #12

The Richard Allen Cultural Center and Museum (412 Kiowa St.) celebrates African-American history and pioneering individuals like the Buffalo Soldiers. Cathay Williams, the only known female Buffalo Soldier, was born a slave in 1844. At the end of the Civil War, the newly freed Williams had trouble finding work and looked to the military to make ends meet. Posing as a man named William Cathay, the 22-year-old managed to pass a medical exam without being discovered and joined the 38th U.S. Infantry. She served in non-combat roles for two years before a case of smallpox ended her military career.

The National Park Service estimates that 400 women posed as men in order to fight during the Civil War, but Williams was the only documented woman to serve in the Army during the Indian Wars. This bust found in the Richard Allen rose garden honors her memory.



Safari Stop #13

The Covid-19 epidemic upended a lot of plans worldwide, including Leavenworth's annual summer festival. Normally known as Camp Leavenworth, a two-day event full of free music, children's activities and food trucks meant to bring the community together, it evolved that year into Camp Lovingworth, a scaled down fest with offerings that took social distancing into account. This mural on the south side of the Riverfront Community Center (123 S. Esplanade St.) marks the year our community made some big changes to keep our loved ones safe. It's the work of prolific Kansas City-based muralist JT Daniels.

The entrance to Leavenworth Landing Park isn't far from the mural. Just cross the train tracks (carefully!) to enjoy this .25-mile stretch along the Missouri River with a relaxed walking trail lined by several sculptures. Many follow themes you've already spotted around the community, including early westward expansion and 19th-century railroad travel.



Safari Stop #14

The original "Over the Top to Victory" was designed to honor the 88 residents of Marion County, Oregon, killed during "The Great War." This version of the American Doughboy statue found on the south side of the Leavenworth County Courthouse (300 Walnut St.) was first erected as a memorial for our own soldiers lost in WWI, but it was rededicated in 1985 to salute veterans of World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam War as well. Chapter 75, the Leavenworth Vietnam Veterans of America, aided in its most recent restoration.

And don't hesitate to duck into the courthouse to see murals that depict both the struggles and accomplishments of early Kansas, including the "Bleeding Kansas" era. You'll spot nods to the Plains Indians, the Buffalo Soldiers, Abraham Lincoln, Quantrill's Raid on Lawrence, the Underground Railroad and the suffragette spirit.

Safari Stop #15

This Rasta Lion was painted on the exterior of Island Spice Jamaican Restaurant & Lounge (325 Delaware St.) in 2019. Island Spice is a veteran-owned spot with a full bar and frequently hosts live entertainment; it's popular for its Saturday night open mic "jams," so bring your own instrument to play. It's an inspiring restaurant that brings a taste of Jamaica to the Leavenworth community. It also offers gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan options.



Safari Stop #16

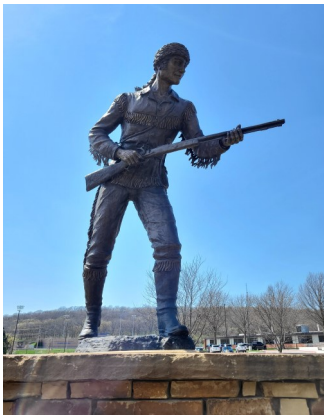
A portrait of Leonard Nimoy as Mr. Spock of "Star Trek" fame adorns the side of Gators Games and Hobby (720 Shawnee St). The artist is Jeremy M. Raymer of Pittsburgh, PA. It seems appropriate to end your safari with a wish for you and your group to "live long and prosper!"

Gators is a table-top gaming store where you can play a huge variety of games, including Magic: The Gathering, Pokemon and Yu-Gi-Oh! Guests are welcome at Saturday afternoon open board game days, or even to rent out a space to host their own private party and game night.



Other works not far from downtown Leavenworth

The 800 block of Spruce Street was once home to a small amusement park, Kiddieland, which operated from 1948 to 1998. Rex the 25-foot tyrannosaurus was added in 1977, and he became such a beloved local mascot that even when Kiddieland closed and was demolished to make room for new businesses, Rex remained. He's changed colors over the years, and his eyes no longer have the eerie red glow imagined by his original designer, but he still keeps watch over Spruce Street and his neighbor since 2002, Crown Lanes Bowling Alley.



The mascot of Leavenworth High School (2012 10th Ave.), the Pioneer, was introduced in 1944 as a tribute to pioneering sports teams as well as Leavenworth's "First City of Kansas" status. This 8-foot statue affectionately known as "Pioneer Pete" was designed by local artist Michael Young and erected in 2011 during the school's annual Homecoming celebration. The LHS Alumni Association handled fundraising for the statue and a number of memorial plaques and benches honoring former students.

This 2021 mural covers the façade of Family EyeCare Center's children's clinic (2301 10th Ave.). It's the work of Kansas City artist JT Daniels, who also crafted the "Lovingworth" mural on the south side of the Riverfront Community Center.

