

# Chanute, Kansas

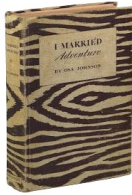
## Live the Adventure!

Chanute is centrally located in the southeast corner of Kansas. Chanute celebrates its Sesquicentennial in 2023 since the adventure began in 1873 when four townships finally agreed to come together so they would have a greater opportunity at becoming a railroad stop. That was on the recommendation of **Octave Chanute** for whom the town is named. He was a civil engineer who built the first bridge to cross the Missouri River in Kansas City. He also designed and constructed the Chicago Stock Yards and the Kansas City Stock Yards. He served as a mentor to the Wright Brothers and was one of the first to hear of their successful flight at Kitty Hawk. Chanute's book *Progress in Flying Machines* was published in 1894 and was influential in aviation research.



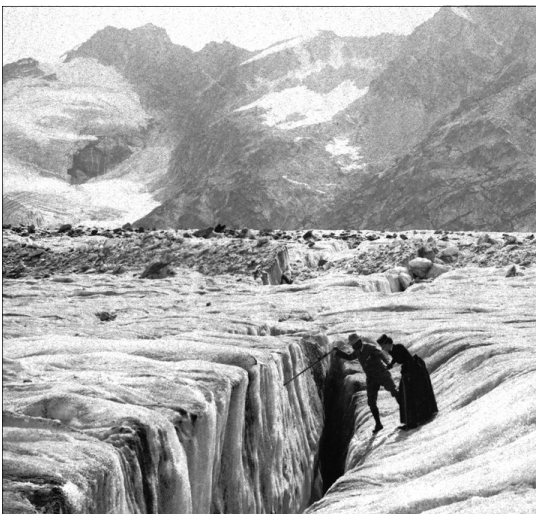
Flight Park Sculpture

The City of Chanute's connection with aviation and adventure continued with **Martin and Osa Johnson**, who were the first to film and photograph in Africa, the South Seas and Borneo in the early 1900s. After learning to fly in 1932 at the Chanute Municipal Airport, they utilized their planes, "Osa's Ark" and "Spirit of Africa," to document the lands they visited and their time living for nearly four years at Lake Paradise in Africa. Among their accomplishments were being the first to record the sound of a lion roaring and the first to take an aerial photograph over Mt. Kenya.



"Osa's Ark" and "Spirit of Africa" in flight

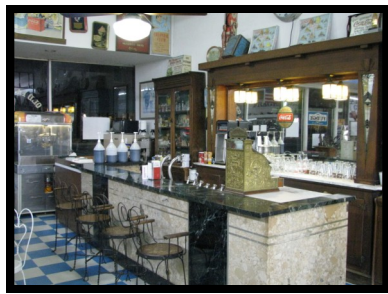
They worked with George Eastman of Eastman Kodak to refine camera and film equipment. Their films and shows offered many Americans their first sights of these faraway lands. Osa's *I Married Adventure* was the bestselling non-fiction book of 1940 and is still well-known today with its iconic zebra-striped cover. The Johnsons were the first to use product placement to help fund their safaris and, in 1935, were the first married couple to appear on the Wheaties cereal box. Martin died in a commercial plane crash in 1937. Osa continued their legacy through her writing, public appearances and television's first wildlife series, *Osa Johnson's The Big Game Hunt*. She also had a clothing and jewelry line and authored several children's books. After her death in 1953, her mother Belle Leighty began work on a museum, which became the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum in Chanute. It opened in 1961.



Lizzie LeBlond graphs and personal archives of Elizabeth Hawkins-Whitshed Burnaby Main Le Blond. **Lizzie LeBlond** was an author, mountain climber and one of the world's first female filmmakers. Her stunning nature photographs along with the photos of Lizzie climbing mountains in Victorian skirts highlight her amazing accomplishments, which include 20 first ascents conquering peaks no one had climbed previously.

The **Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum** began with a core collection of the Johnsons' films, photographs, manuscripts, books and personal belongings. It has continued to expand and now has one of the most extensive collections of African artifacts in the Midwest. The museum is also home to an unprecedented collection of more than 2,000 photo-





Chanute is also home to the Chanute Art Gallery, the Chanute Historical Museum, Cardinal Drug Store Old Fashioned Soda Fountain, Howard's Toys for Big Boys automotive museum and Summit Hill Gardens. It is the center of Google Earth on Apple products due to the Google programmer being from Chanute and wanting to honor his hometown.

### The Chanute Art Gallery

The Chanute Art Gallery is home to a permanent core collection that includes 25 mediums representing 135 artists. Collections include Luigi Kasimir etchings, the Kansas Prairie Print Makers and local and area artists.

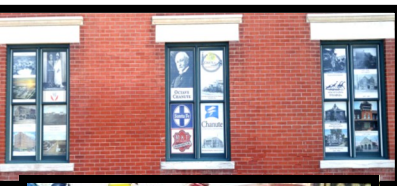
### Summit Hill Gardens

Summit Hill Gardens is a blend of art, nature and historic preservation. The first school in Neosho County is part of the property. Owner Patsy Smeed handcrafts soaps and lotions and sells them at her store and online. She also transformed her old barn into an event center and created a small Bed & Brew (coffee) cottage on site.



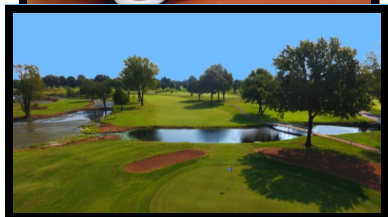
### Outdoor Recreation

Chanute is home to a public golf course, five city parks, an aquatic center with a lazy river and slide, a spray park, two sensory parks designed for use by all, a fishing lake, an RV campground where the first two nights are free, hike and bike trails and Lakeview Recreation Center that houses a disc golf course, walking trails and exercise stations.



### Howard's Toys for Big Boys

For more than 50 years, Howard Alger has collected automobiles and other automotive items. When he sold his business and "retired," he opened his museum. One vehicle on display is a 1925 Cadillac, one of only three made that year.



### Chanute Historical Museum

Showcasing railroad items and oil and gas exploration as well as sports collections from baseball great Paul Lindblad and basketball's Ralph Miller, the Chanute Historical Museum is also home to a replica of the Octave Chanute 1896 bi-plane glider, which was part of a Smithsonian traveling exhibit.

### Festivals

~ The Chanute Mexican Fiesta celebrated its 106th anniversary in 2023. The large Hispanic community in Chanute began with those coming to work on the railroad and then staying to raise their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

~ One wouldn't think an alley in downtown Chanute could serve as the inspiration for an event showcasing artists and welcoming home former residents. Artist Alley, which celebrates its 54th anniversary in 2023, does just that every September.

~ Chanute has a Spring Safari Family Fun Day and an Oktoberfest event.

