**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Cemetery tour explores history, meaning of symbols on headstones**

Ottawa, Kansas—Historic cemeteries are filled with symbols, and on October 9 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., the Franklin County Historical Society will host a special event at Hope Cemetery in Ottawa, Kansas. FCHS’s cemetery tours are designed to help participants interpret symbols and discover the stories behind some of Ottawa’s oldest cemetery’s most interesting graves.

“The art in cemeteries is as meaningful as it is beautiful,” said Diana Staresinic-Deane, manager of the Old Depot Museum. “The symbols and iconography can often tell us about the people they honor, including more about their lives, their roles in the community, their military service, and the organizations that mattered to them.”

FCHS has developed three different self-guided tours: secret societies, Victorian art, and interesting graves. Participants can choose which treks they want follow. FCHS staff and volunteers will be on hand to introduce visitors to history of Hope Cemetery and to answer questions.

“We really wanted to give participants the opportunity to customize their experience based on their own interests,” said Staresinic-Deane. “It is our hope that if, after this event, you find yourself walking through or driving through a cemetery, you’ll start to see the stories beyond the names and dates on the markers.”

The tours are designed as walking tours, and when participants arrive, they’ll be directed where to park. Participants are encouraged to dress for the weather and wear shoes that will be comfortable while walking on uneven ground. The event is free, though donations are always appreciated.

These tours are offered in conjunction with the Old Depot Museum’s current exhibit, *Secret Societies: A Search for Fellowship, Knowledge, & Security in Early Ottawa & Franklin County*. October 9 is also Free Second Sunday at the Old Depot Museum, and visitors are invited to tour the exhibit at no charge from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. (extended hours).

In the event of inclement weather, the cemetery tour will be rescheduled for Sunday, October 16. For more information about the cemetery tour, please call (785) 242-1250 or e-mail manager@olddepotmuseum.org.

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