

Abzuga “Zu” Adams

(1859 - 1911)

Zu Adams was born in Atchison, Kansas, on Jan. 13, 1859. Named Abzuga for her father’s mother, she was always known as Zu. As a child she lived in various Kansas towns including Waterville, Wichita, and Topeka.

In 1896 she became a founding member of the Kansas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and served as Kansas DAR’s first State Registrar. She belonged to the Topeka Chapter and was a member of the Santa Fe Trail Committee. She worked for the Kansas State Historical Society during its first thirty-five years. In 1904 she served as president of the Kansas Library Association and worked to record and catalog Kansas territorial and state documents, in addition to her work with the Kansas Historical Society. Her papers consist of two boxes and one letter book, covering 1872-1911. Her long association with the historical society made her a perfect Santa Fe Trail Committee member. She supported the original plan to place cement posts that cost \$5 every few miles. At important spots a larger monument of composite stone (cement with embedded pebbles) with a bronze plaque would be set. Zu Adams, along with KSHS secretary George W. Martin, was a zealous supporter of the composite stones. The committee voted this down and the red granite markers were selected.

In 1876, when Zu was seventeen, her father became Secretary of the new Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka, and she became his unpaid assistant. Later she was given a salary and the title of librarian. At the time of her father’s death in 1899, both she and he hoped that she would succeed him as Secretary. When George Martin emerged as a candidate for that position, however, Zu reluctantly withdrew her own candidacy. She worked as Martin’s assistant until her own death on April 12, 1911. Zu never married, remaining in the family home and raising her younger brothers and sisters. She adopted a daughter of her own in 1896. She is buried in the Topeka Cemetery, Topeka.

