

The Fred and Barbara Harvey Home

Leavenworth, KS

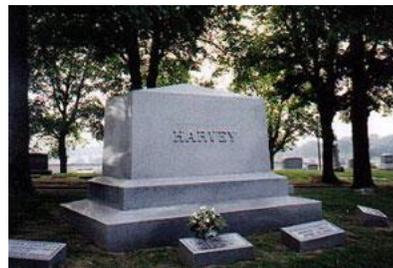
From firstcitymuseums.org/fredharvey website:



Fred Harvey
(1835-1901)

Born in London on June 27, 1835, Frederick H. Harvey immigrated to the United States in 1850. Initially, he found jobs in restaurants in New York and later in New Orleans. In 1855 he moved to St. Louis where he married Barbara Sarah Mattas. He and a partner opened a restaurant which later folded during the Civil War. Fred and Barbara moved to St. Joseph, Missouri where he worked for the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad. In 1865 they moved to Leavenworth, Kansas. The H&SJ became the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy Railroad, and Harvey became a ticket agent, then general western freight agent. Traveling in performance of his work, he recognized the deplorable lack of decent meals and lodging for railroad travelers. In 1876 he persuaded the manager of the new Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railroad that he could provide quality food in pleasant restaurants inside railroad stations.

The first Harvey House Restaurant opened in the Topeka Santa Fe Depot Station in 1876. It was an immediate success, which led to other Harvey House Restaurants, and later Harvey House Hotels along the entire Santa Fe route. When dining cars were added, "Meals by Fred Harvey" were featured on the Santa Fe railroad. Mr. Harvey insisted "Maintenance of standards, regardless of cost". This meant that the food must be first rate, served promptly, in fashionable surroundings, at a reasonable cost. Young women were recruited to become "Harvey Girls", efficient poised waitresses. When he died in 1901, there were 47 Harvey House restaurants, 15 hotels, and 30 dining cars on the AT&SF Railroad.



The Harvey family plot located at Mount Muncie Cemetery.

Harvey Houses

Fred Harvey established a network of restaurants, first along the Santa Fe Railroad and later at stations on other lines. The Harvey Houses, with waitresses known as Harvey Girls, set a standard of excellence for food and

fine service in a part of the country previously known for its gastronomic tortures! Harvey also developed the dining car system on American railroads.



The Harvey Girls

The Harvey Girls became perhaps, the most lasting legacy of the Fred Harvey story. These young women, age 18 to 30, brightened the Harvey House restaurants with cheerfulness and impeccable service, and in the process became a national legend.



In the beginning, they brought a civilizing influence and charm to the rough and barren Southwest frontier. Recruited from the North, South, and middle sections of the country, they signed on to work as waitresses, in exchange for a modest salary plus tips, lodging in dormitories, and distinctive black and white uniforms. Often they were the only females for miles around. Long after the American

frontier became settled, they continued to exemplify the high standards demanded at the Harvey House restaurants, hotels, and resorts.

Their public image and esteem were celebrated in the 1946 MGM movie, *The Harvey Girls*, starring Judy Garland. For thousands of young women, being a Harvey Girl was the most memorable experience of their lives. Although the Fred Harvey Company faded into history in the 1960s, there are women today who proudly claim that they were a Harvey Girl.



Vada Johnson (center) with fellow Harvey Girls at Kansas City Union Station Harvey House



The Residence
624 Olive Street
Leavenworth, Kansas

The three story, 12 room, rim rock building was constructed in 1869 for Mr. A.A. Higginbotham, a wealthy real estate broker. Fred Harvey paid nearly \$25,000 in 1883 to purchase the mansion for his family. The Harveys filled their home with the finest furniture, art objects, and comforts of the era. The family remained in the residence until 1944 when they donated it to nearby Cushing Hospital to become a dormitory for nurse candidates. In 1949 the building was turned over to the Leavenworth Board of Education. During two years of remodeling, the building was converted into meeting rooms and offices. In 1984 the Board of County Commissioners received the property and used it for various county services. In 1997, the structure was deeded to the Leavenworth Historical Museum Association, Inc but actual change of possession did not occur until 2001.

The Harvey mansion is being converted into a museum featuring artifacts and memorabilia of Fred Harvey and his famous Harvey House Restaurants and Hotels. The structure is currently undergoing substantial restoration and is not open for tours.



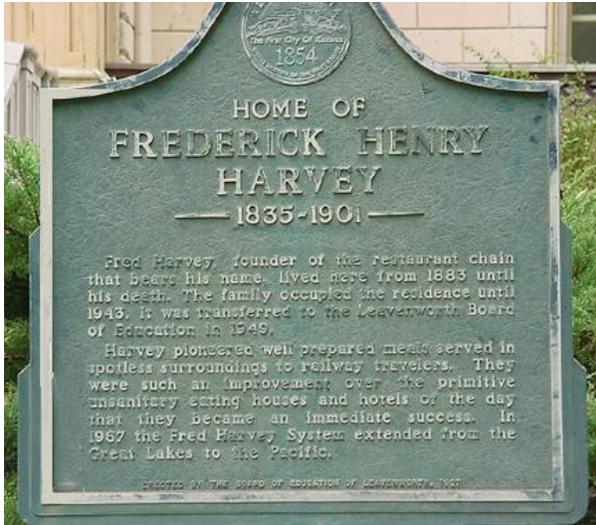
In 1883, Fred Harvey purchased the mansion at 624 Olive Street for \$25,000. At that time it had porches and Gothic dormers on the exterior, and seven fireplaces inside.



View of the east side.



View of one of the new window dormers.



Harvey Fred Harvey, founder of the world's first chain of restaurants and hotels, lived here from 1883 until his death in 1901. The family occupied the residence until 1943. In 1944 the family gave the house to Cushing Hospital to be used as a dormitory for nursing candidates. In 1949 the house was given to the Leavenworth Board of Education.



Oil painting of Fred Harvey in Private Collection



The entrance of the mansion is embellished with a lion head.



Sibyl's Toy box



Toys of Sibyl, youngest daughter of Fred and Barbara Harvey



Harvey children's shoes



Mrs. Harvey's dresser



Sterling Silver drink labels

http://www.firstcitymuseums.org/fredharvey_pages.html (accessed 6 March 2014)

From *harveyhouses.net* website:

“...the former home of Fred Harvey...in Leavenworth, Kansas.... Fred Harvey [contributed] to the shaping and civilizing of the west as well as the improvement (dare we say civilizing) of railroad cuisine and comfort.”



<http://www.harveyhouses.net/states/kansas/leavenworth/leavenworth.html>, revised August 5, 2002 (accessed 6 March 2014)