



Constitution Hall-Topeka

**427-429 South Kansas Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66603
2nd Congressional District**

The name "Constitution Hall" was given to the two-story building, with a basement at this site. Construction began April 1855. It soon became the official headquarters for the "Topeka Movement," "code name" for the then illegal activities against the Pro Slavery laws. John H. Kagi, who died at Harpers Ferry with John Brown, was a reporter for the Tribune located here. Joseph Miller, the treasurer for the Topeka Underground Railroad lived and had a tin shop and stored supplies in the basement. Reverend Lewis Bodwell, preacher for the Congregational Church and a major conductor of freedom seekers, used the facility. Armstrong, organizer for the Underground Railroad in Shawnee County, also used the facility. The building, being the only substantial one in the embryonic city, became the hub for the political, military, religious, economic, educational, social, commercial, and safety activities for citizens and fugitives during the period in Kansas history known as "Bleeding Kansas." The Free State Capitol building of Kansas (1864-1870) encapsulated old Constitution Hall and expanded it by extensions on each end. It contained all of the offices for the newly organized state government and was used until after the Civil War when funds were appropriated to construct the present more prestigious state capitol building.



Constitution Hall – Topeka
Shawnee County Historical Society
<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/preservation/downtown>.

\$7,500 NTF Grant—

Topeka, Kansas: Historic Preservation Plan/Free State Capitol

- Grant funded the development of a Historic Preservation Plan by nationally known preservationist William Seale, to direct the site-specific course in actions to document, preserve, and restore the historic building and to interpret its essential historic significance as a Network to Freedom site.

