

# Collins Law Office

314 West Main  
P.O. Box 307  
Highland, KS 66035



Ted F. Collins  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

PHONE: (785) 442-3281  
FAX: (785) 442-3282

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Re: Iowa, Sac & Fox Presbyterian Mission  
House Bill 2408

To the Members of the House Federal & State Affairs Committee

I am writing in my capacity as a life-long resident of the community of Highland, Kansas and in my official capacity as City Attorney of Highland, in which I have served since 1978. In addition to my professional connections to "The Old Mission", as we know it, I have ancestors that helped restore the mission and who contributed many local artifacts when it served as a local museum.

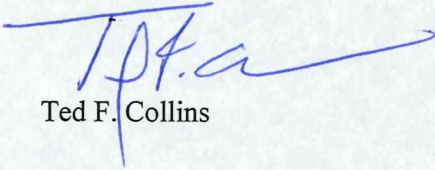
Samuel Irvin, Presbyterian minister, established the mission at its current location in 1837, being one of the first permanent settlements west of the Missouri River. Within two decades, Dr. Irvin and others founded both the town of Highland and Highland Community College, the first college in the state of Kansas. As such, the history of the mission is closely tied to not only Highland and Highland College, but also to Doniphan County and the entire State of Kansas.

After the mission closed in 1863, a portion of the structure was razed, with the materials used in construction at the college. As time passed, it fell into disrepair and was salvaged by a group of local historians that opened it as a local museum. Later, the state took over its operation and in 1996 it was established as a showcase for the arts and history of the emigrant tribes of American Indians in Northeast Kansas. Located along the Oregon-California Trail and what was formerly US Highway 36, the building is now closed to the public.

The facility and grounds, all things considered, remain in relatively good condition. It is my firm belief that this property should be put into active use and that such use would be beneficial to the community. Not only is the structure amenable to a variety of uses, the grounds could be a great location for special events.

Given the historical significance of this property and its connection with the Native American peoples, it seems to me that ownership and operation by the Iowa Tribe, as proposed by House Bill 2408, is logical. Moreover, I do believe that both the city and college could benefit from such operation and would be supportive of local events that could be both culturally and economically positive for the community.

Sincerely,



Ted F. Collins