

Frank Carlson, Kansas Native Son, former state legislator, Congressman, Governor and U.S. Senator was the only person in Kansas history to hold all four offices.



The Kansas Oral History Project interviewed Carlson’s 97 year old daughter, Eunice Rolfs, to gain information about her father and the times in which he lived. This interview is pertinent for teachers of Kansas History for middle school children. The study guide is based on the attached transcript.

The full interview is available at https://ksoralhistory.org/interview/interview-of-eunice-rolfs-by-joan-wagnon-august-29-2024/?_sfm_interview_data_kohp_collection=126

Sample Compelling Questions include:

- Why did Charles and Anna Johansson Carlson and other Swedes immigrate to Cloud County, Kansas? What factors cited in the interview influenced this move? How did religion play a role in their decision to come to Kansas. Or did it?
- Eunice describes her life on the farm in Concordia. Was it typical of farm life in rural Kansas in the 1930’s? How does it compare to children of today?
- What role did the railroad play in the westward expansion of this family?
- **Frank Carlson**, born in 1893 in humble beginnings, rose to one of the highest positions in the county—U.S. Senator. What prepared him to assume leadership roles in government? What personal characteristics did he have that equipped him to serve in a policy role in government?

Use this STUDY GUIDE to Learn about Frank Carlson:

- I. **Describe Carlson’s Early Years – from 1893-1920’s—on the Carlson’s Concordia farm.**
 - a. Does the interview reveal why wasn’t Frank interested in being in the Kansas Legislature?
 - b. What experiences did Frank have in World War I that shaped his future?
 - c. What motivated him to run for Congress in 1934?

- d. What attracted Carlson to public service? What were elements of his leadership style that helped him succeed? How did he relate to others? Do you think his Bible study groups helped him relate to others?
- II. What was family life like for young Eunice while Frank Carlson was in Congress?**
- Where did they live?
 - What issues did Carlson Champion?
 - Why was the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 important to the rural areas of Kansas? To the Country?
 - The development of a concept of withholding tax for income was proposed by Carlson. Why was it important? Do we have something similar today?
- III. Rep. Carlson left Congress in 1947 and ran for Governor and won.** He served four years. **Governor Carlson** is best remembered for improving public education, reorganizing public welfare, increasing rural medical care, completing public works projects and improving mental health facilities. At the end of his term four years later, Kansas went from 48th to 11th in the nation.
- A resignation of a Kansas Senator created a vacancy in the US Senate.
- IV. Carlson became a US Senator from 1950 to 1967.**
- Who were some of the nationally prominent figures Carlson worked with or campaigned for? Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, Conrad Hilton and the National Prayer Breakfast are prominently mentioned.
 - The bible study groups remained an important vehicle for meeting people, as did the National Prayer Breakfasts? Why do you think they were so important? Would they be important today?
 - Carlson farmed for another 20 years after leaving the Senate before he died in 1987.
 - Read Eunice Rolf's description of Frank Carlson at the beginning of the interview: *"Dad was a devout Christian, a family man, a farmer, and once he met you, he always knew your name and your issues."* How important were these characteristics to his success as a public leader?
 - Read the Biography provided by the Carlson Library (attached).**

