



Carry A. Nation

Carry A. Nation was a crusader in the temperance movement, battling the consumption of alcohol in pre-Prohibition America. She saw alcohol as a major factor contributing to domestic violence and the destruction of families. Nation established a branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Medicine Lodge, Kansas, and began campaigning for the enforcement of the state's ban on liquor sales. After leading protests and heckling saloon patrons, she prayed for more guidance on how to proceed. In June of 1900, she received what she believed to be a divine instruction. Over the next ten years, she physically destroyed fixtures and stocks of liquor in saloons – sometimes using rocks, and at other times, a hatchet. The hatchet became her trademark, and Carry A. Nation became a household name. Despite her notoriety and the violence of her methods, there's more to Carry Nation than just an extremist caricature. She was passionately committed to improving the lives of women, no matter what the cost.



J. Karen Ray (Carry A. Nation) is Professor of English at Washburn University and holds the PhD in Restoration, Eighteenth-Century British Literature from the University of Texas at Austin. She teaches courses in the British Eighteenth Century, in women's literature, and in the development of the drama. Before coming to Washburn, Dr. Ray taught at Emporia State University and at Tennessee Technological University. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Kansas Humanities Council and of the Brown Foundation. She is one of the founding members of the original Kansas Chautauqua, and she has researched and performed a number of women from Kansas history including Katherine Richards O'Hare, Laura Ingalls Wilder, and Osa Johnson in addition to Carry A. Nation. Ray wanted to be a part of the Famous Kansans Chautauqua because, "The Kansas Chautauqua is always a fun and enriching experience, and I had not traveled with Chautauqua in quite some time. I missed it." The opportunity to portray Carry Nation was also factor for Ray, "Carry Nation's enthusiasm is contagious; we need more rebels today. As William Allen White said, 'Hooray for Carry Nation; she's all right!'"

