

Ezekiel and Mary Jane Colman's home in Douglas County, Kansas

This is a photograph showing Ezekiel and Mary Jane Colman's home in Douglas County, Kansas. It was called Colman's Retreat and was built in the 1860s. Ezekiel Andrus Colman, the son of Cyrus and Lydia Townsend Miles Colman, was born in Ashby, Massachusetts on August 10, 1814. He married Mary Jane Wendell on November 22, 1838 in Salem, Massachusetts. She was born October 16, 1817 in Salem, Massachusetts and her parents were Joseph Wendell and Mehitabel Ludden. Before coming to Kansas, Ezekiel was involved in wallpaper manufacturing. Being ardent Abolitionists, the Colmans joined the fourth Emigrant Aid party and came to Kansas in 1854 and settled in Lawrence. For nearly two years, they lived on a farm three miles southwest of Lawrence, then moved into town to run a grocery store. In 1858, they purchased a farm in the Kanwaka community six miles west of Lawrence. Their farm house had a special room where they could hide slaves who were seeking freedom. The Colmans had fourteen children. Ezekiel Andrus Colman died December 11, 1898 in San Diego, California. Mary Jane died on October 17, 1905 at the age of 88 and is buried in Oak Hill cemetery, Lawrence, Kansas.

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