

THE FOUNDING OF VALLEY CENTER

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THE FOUNDING OF VALLEY CENTER

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PREFACE

The purpose of writing this thesis was to set forth the events that led to the formation and chartering of the town, the experiences of the people who settled Valley Center, and the development of the town after it was chartered.

In order to do this, I have had to depend upon the goodness of the pioneers who were willing to be interviewed. I am especially indebted to Mr. Dwight Beach and Mr. George Thompson, who have been very valuable aids. The people I interviewed were willing to give all the information they could and to help in every way.

I am also indebted to Dr. John Rydjord, who has taken his time to help by giving valuable suggestions.

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CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF KANSAS

For many years Kansas had remained a part of the great unexplored region west of the Mississippi River. The Spaniards had taken possession of all North America during their period of exploration and settlement in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but were unfamiliar with the country.

In 1536 the King of Spain encouraged Narvaez to send settlers to Florida, and a party was sent out. The ship was wrecked and a few of the passengers among whom was Cabeca de Vaca were saved. He wandered through southern United States and finally reached a Spanish settlement in Mexico. His reports of his wanderings lead to the expedition of Coronado, who went in search of Quivera. This journey resulted in the Spanish crossing Kansas, the first time that white men had ever set foot in this territory.¹

In 1601 Onate began his search for Quivera, and he too came to Kansas and is reputed to be the first white man to come to the forks of the Arkansas River.²

The next few years the Spanish ignored this territory

1. These facts can be found in any standard text on Kansas History.

2. Ibid.

as they were more occupied with settling land closer to Mexico. Yet this region was not wanting in explorers, for the French were soon in this section of the country. La Salle sailed down the Mississippi and took all the land drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries, in the name of the King of France.¹

Trouble arose between Spain and France as to the ownership of Louisiana (the name given to this region by France), and the difficulty was settled in 1763 when France was forced to surrender her territory in North America. In 1800 Spain secretly ceded the territory back to France from whom the United States purchased it in 1803.²

Although both the Spanish and French had had the Louisiana Territory under their rule for years, they knew practically nothing about it. It had been used as a trapping ground for the French, and both nations had used it as a mission field. There was some trading with the Indians. Neither of these nations planted colonies or sent expeditions to explore this region.

Jefferson, who was president of the United States at this time, was anxious to learn about the newly acquired territory, so sent several exploring expeditions into this

1. Ibid.

2. Anne E. Arnold, History of Kansas (W. R. Smith, Topeka, 1916), p. 17.

1
region.

The first was the expedition of Lewis and Clark, 1804, who crossed Kansas on their route. They returned two years later and the reports they gave of this region received little attention.

In 1806 Zebulan Montgomery Pike took an expedition over the Louisiana Territory, and on his return gave the following account of the value of the region west of the Mississippi:

From these immense prairies may rise one great advantage to the United States, viz., the restriction of our population to certain limits, and thereby a continuation of the union. Our citizens, being so prone to rambling and extending themselves on the frontiers, will, through necessity, be constrained to limit their extent on the west to the borders of the Missouri and Mississippi, while they leave the prairies, incapable of cultivation, to the wandering aborigines of our country. 2

Such reports tended to keep people out of Louisiana for the majority of people at this time were farmers and had to have soil suitable for cultivation. This idea was held for several years and was intensified by Stephen H. Long, who explored this region, and gave the following

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1. Ibid., p. 20.
 2. Anne E. Arnold, History of Kansas quoting Coles ed., Expedition of Zebulan Montgomery Pike, pp. 23-24.
 3. N. L. Prentis, History of Kansas (Printed by Caroline Prentis, Topeka, 1909), pp. 16-17.

report in 1819:

In regard to this extensive section of country, I do not hesitate in giving the opinion, that it is almost wholly unfit for cultivation, and of course, uninhabitable by a people depending on agriculture for their subsistence. . . . The vast regions commencing near the sources of the Sabino, Trinity, Brazos, and the Colorado (all in Texas), and extending northwardly to the forty-ninth degree of north latitude. . . . is throughout of similar character. . . . This region, however, viewed as a frontier, may prove of infinite importance to the United States, in as much as it is calculated to serve as a barrier to prevent too great an expansion of our population westward. 1

This report tended to keep alive the old idea that the plains would never be settled by the white man and were fit only for Indians. Acting upon this general idea, Congress organized the land into Indian Territory and provided for a permanent Indian frontier just beyond the first tier of states west of the Mississippi. Congress was so sure that this would remain Indian Territory that the Indian Intercourse Act was passed, "which forbade any white person, without license from the Indian Commissioner, to set foot in the Indian Country."²

As late as 1835, President Jackson made the following report:

The plan of removing the aboriginal people who yet remain within the settled portions

1. F. L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1924), p. 216.

2. Ibid., pp. 277-278.

of the United States to the country west of the Mississippi River approaches its consummation. . . . It was adopted on the most mature consideration of the condition of this race, and ought to be persisted in till the object is accomplished. . . . The past we can not recall, but the future we can provide for The pledge of the United States has been given by Congress that the country destined for the residence of this people shall be forever secured and guaranteed to them. . . . A barrier has thus been raised for their protection against the encroachment of our citizens. . . . After the further details of this arrangement are completed, with a very general supervision of them, they ought to be left to the progress of events. 1

By 1840 most of the Indians had been removed to the Indian Reservations, but the white man had not remained out of this region. The people became interested in the reports of Pike emphasizing the wealth to be found in the Spanish country. 2 They soon began to make their way across the country to Santa Fe, one of the larger Spanish cities. This trail, the Santa Fe Trail, was begun by Captain Becknell of Missouri, who was the first to use it when in 1821, he made the first trip to Santa Fe. The trade was profitable, 3 and at the end of a few years, many traders were crossing Kansas to go to Santa Fe.

As Kansas had been set aside as Indian Territory, there was trouble between the Indians, who resented the approach of the white man, and the trader. In order to make

1. Ibid., p. 284.

2. Anne E. Arnold, History of Kansas, p. 29.

3. Ibid., p. 29.

the journey safer, the United States Government sent commissioners to Kansas to make a treaty with the Indians. On August 10, 1885, these men and representatives of the "powerful Osage Nations met under a great oak tree near the place where the Santa Fe Trail crosses the Neosho, and made a treaty which led to the stronger establishment and freer use of the Trail."¹

The trade remained very profitable until 1864, when the war was declared between the United States and Mexico, and trade temporarily stopped. The soldiers replaced the traders on the Kansas plains. Forts were established in Kansas, and many soldiers were sent to Mexico via Kansas.²

For years the Oregon country had been of interest to the Americans. Fur traders had been in Oregon and had become wealthy. The missionaries had also gone into this region to convert the Indians. Settlers began going to Oregon after news reached the East of the value of Oregon land. Many crossed Kansas on their way to Oregon.

Another group was yet to cross Kansas before the settlers actually came. These were the "forty-niners," who were going to California in search of gold. The "forty-niners" did not take the time or effort to see the value of the country that they crossed.

1. N. L. Prentis, History of Kansas, p. 44.

2. Anne E. Arnold, History of Kansas, p. 41.

The soldiers, the Oregon emigrants, and the "forty-niners" crossed Kansas, but did not think that there was any valuable land in Kansas due to the many reports given out earlier. Yet in spite of this, some of the emigrants saw the possibility of settlement and the news gradually spread eastward that Kansas might become a prosperous region some day.

The gold seekers of "fifty-nine" had but one thought in mind, that was gold, but after they found none, they returned to Kansas and began to make settlements, some of the first to be made on the plains. During the same time, eastern Kansas was being settled.

Since the first colonies were planted on the eastern shores of the United States, there had been waves of civilization westward. The first settlements were made along the coast, then the people began pushing back to the falls region. From here, they moved westward until the Alleghanies were reached. There was a brief rest period, then the people gradually moved across the mountains into the Ohio Valley and into Kentucky and Tennessee. After these regions were settled, the migration continued to the Mississippi River. By 1820 this wave of migration had reached Missouri, and then the areas around Michigan, Wisconsin, Arkansas, and Louisiana were settled.

Kansas was not colonized during this period of expansion, but was to be later because of the slavery question.

In 1820 Kansas became involved in this question. The Missouri Compromise had been passed, and provided that all territory north of 36°30', except Missouri, was to be free and all south was to be slave.¹ When the Compromise was passed, John Quincy Adams said that for the present the contest was laid asleep.

The phrase, "laid asleep," was wisely chosen, for the terrible question gained new strength through repose; when it awoke, many years later, it showed itself, as Jefferson predicted it would, more irrepressible and more formidable than ever.²

The question was awakened from its slumber in 1848 after the Mexican War. The United States had acquired a vast amount of territory, and immediately the question arose as to whether the new territory should be slave or free. The question was settled temporarily by the Compromise of 1850 and was again laid to sleep. But the slavery question was only to slumber for four years because it was awakened to its full heat and fury in 1854 with the passing of the Kansas Nebraska Bill.

The bill was introduced into Congress by Stephen Douglas. He wanted to organize the Territory of Nebraska and open it to popular sovereignty.³ Douglas' idea grew

1. N. L. Prentis, History of Kansas, p. 67.

2. Ibid., p. 68.

3. F. L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, p. 434.

and a few days later, he divided the Nebraska Territory into the Territories of Kansas and of Nebraska, each having popular sovereignty. Later an amendment was added saying that the Missouri Compromise was repealed.¹ After much debate, the bill was passed in Congress, and on May 30, 1854, the new Territories of Kansas and Nebraska were created.

Kansas now became one of the most talked of sections. The pro- and anti- slavery politicians were putting out propaganda about Kansas urging people to go there.² And as a result, eastern Kansas was being rapidly settled.

When the bill was first passed, many in the North believed that Kansas would be a slave state in spite of all that the North could do, but Eli Thayer thought something could be done. He began advocating the idea of free state emigration to Kansas.³ As a result, the New England Emigrant Aid Society was formed. The purpose of the organization was to

induce first class emigrants to go to Kansas, to protect them from the hardship of pioneer settlement, to select territory under experienced leaders, to invest capital, and provide hotels, saw mills, grist mills, newspapers, schools, and other improvements.⁴

1. Ibid., p. 435.

2. Ibid., p. 435.

3. N. L. Prentis, History of Kansas, p. 73.

4. Ibid., p. 74.

People did make use of the opportunities for the company sent eleven hundred fifty-one emigrants and spent \$140,000 in 1854.¹ Other companies were organized, and a steady flow of emigrants were going into Kansas.

The South was not idle while the North was sending free-state people to Kansas, but was organizing societies and sending the pro-slavery men into Kansas. It was the plan of the South to use Missouri as a stepping stone to Kansas. As soon as the bill was passed, the Missourians crossed the borders and staked claims in Kansas. The settlers asking for claims were to build houses on them, but many of the Missourians evaded this law.²

Both slave and free state men were building towns and preparing to have the state admitted according to their beliefs. More free men came into Kansas than slave, but on election day, the Missourians would cross the border to vote. After much bloodshed and unfair voting, Kansas was admitted to the Union as a free state in 1861.³

Trouble was not over for a few months later the Civil War began, and Kansas was to be a participant.

During the early days of settling, there was little attention paid to western Kansas because the settlers were

1. Ibid., p. 74.

2. Anne E. Arnold, History of Kansas, p. 64.

3. Ibid., p. 108.

too busy protecting their homes to venture far from the settled areas. During the Civil War, the Homestead Act of 1862 was passed. This provided that

any person who is head of a family, or who is 21 years of age, and who is a citizen of the United States or has declared his intention to become such, may acquire a tract of land one hundred and sixty acres of public land on condition of settlement, cultivation and occupancy as a home for a period of five years, and on payment of certain moderate fees. 1

The promise of free land did not induce the people to move westward. It was not until after the Civil War that people began to seek homes in western Kansas. The soldiers that had been dismissed returned to the East to hunt for jobs. There were many more men than jobs, and they had to have some means of livelihood, so decided that the West would be their salvation because they could get land there and begin life anew.

Some of the soldiers had found good land along the Arkansas River and made their homes there. But before the wave of migration of 1870, there were interesting events to take place on the Kansas plains in the area that was to become the town of Valley Center.

1. Ibid., p. 119.

CHAPTER II

PREPARING THE WAY

It had been the custom of the United States Government since 1785 to survey the public lands before the settlers would go into the new territory.¹ Kansas had been settled so rapidly after 1854 because of squatter sovereignty that the surveyors had not been able to mark off all of the Kansas Territory before the settlers came. Eastern Kansas had been surveyed, but it was not until after the Civil War² that western Kansas was surveyed into sections.

In 1867 H. C. Ramlow, a Union soldier and surveyor, was sent to survey Sedgwick County, which had been attached to Butler County for judicial and other purposes by an act of the legislature in 1862.³ After the sections and quarter sections were marked, Butler County was divided and Sedgwick became a separate county with the county seat at Wichita in 1870.⁴

This new county embraced the territory between the

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1. F. L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, p. 63.
 2. Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.
 3. John P. Edwards ed., Historical Atlas of Sedgwick County (E. Bourquin, Philadelphia, 1882), p. 7.
Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.
 4. N. L. Prentis, History of Kansas, p. 341.
John P. Edwards ed., Historical Atlas of Sedgwick County, p. 7.

north line of township twenty-five and the south line of township twenty-nine, south and east of range two east, and the west line of range four west of the sixth principal meridian, except in township twenty-five and twenty-six, along which the west line of range three west is the western boundary.¹

At each corner of the section, stones were placed, giving the number of the section.² From these section lines, the townships were marked. In 1870 Grant township was established. This township then included the present townships of Grant and Valley Center. Grant township was first settled in 1868 by old soldiers, but none of these lived near enough to be of interest in the settling of Valley Center.

The first one to locate near Valley Center was Alexander Jester, who located on Jester Creek, January, 1868, staking³ his claim about three miles northwest of Valley Center. Two years later he returned to Indiana where he spent the winter. He met a young boy who had a "good team, some money, a trunk, and a silver watch." He gained the confidence of the boy and accompanied him as far as Missouri on his way back to Kansas. Here he is said to have murdered the boy for the

1. John P. Edwards ed., Historical Atlas of Sedgwick County, p. 7.

2. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

3. This is now called Badger Creek.

team and money, and returned to Valley Center with them.¹
He was captured and put in jail, but soon escaped. Thirty-
two years later, while Jester was away from Valley Center
preaching, the authorities from Missouri came to take him
back for trial.² He and his sister had quarreled before
he left, and she told the authorities from Missouri where
to find him.³ Jester went back to Missouri and hired an
attorney. He was tried, but freed on the grounds that
since the body could not be found, there was no proof that
the boy had been murdered.⁴

Many of the settlers who knew Jester declared that
this story gave the wrong impression of him. He was re-
spected by the people of his community, even acting as the
Sunday School Superintendent. He had served as a chaplain
in the Civil War, and when he was discharged, he still
took an active part in religious work and was reputed to
be able to make a better prayer than any one in the com-
munity.

By 1869 companies were established along the Arkansas

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1. John P. Edwards ed., Historical Atlas of Sedgwick County,
p. 9.
A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, (A. T.
Andreas, Chicago, 1883), p. 1386.
 2. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.
 3. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 4. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

River with the sole purpose of killing buffalo for their
hides.¹ As a result they became scarce, and the pioneers
suffered from lack of food. One severe winter the settlers
along the Arkansas had hunted for buffalo, but were unable
to find them. Jester, who was admired as a hunter, real-
ized that some must be found in order to keep the people
from starving. He decided that his luck might be better,
so he left his family and went in the vicinity of Hutch-
inson to hunt buffalo. In a few days he returned with six.
According to his generous nature, he divided the meat among
the settlers. His home always served as a store house,
and any one lacking food would always receive help from
Jester.²

He has been described as a typical westerner. He was
quick to take offense and willing to defend himself with
his guns, being able to shoot with one hand as well as with
the other.³

Although Jester was the first settler in the township,
he had very little to do with the establishment of the new
community. This task was left for the pioneers who came
later.

In 1868 Otto Ramlow came to Kansas. His brother had

1. Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.

2. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

3. Ibid.

written to him telling him of the opportunities to be found in Kansas, and after several such letters, he decided to come. He joined the State Militia and was stationed at Wichita.

There was a great amount of trouble with horse thieves and cattlemen, who did much damage and blamed it on the Indians. ¹ As part of their duties, the militia would have to scout the country for these marauders. At night, about eight, the group would divide and go in different directions to see if everything was safe. If no disturbance could be found, the men would return to camp.

Mr. Ramlow tells the following story: One night a group of horse thieves stole all the horses and mules (about thirty) in the neighborhood. The settlers banded together and went in search of the horses and the men. There were no trees or buildings to obstruct the view, so it was not long until the settlers saw the robbers. Soon after spotting them, they were captured. It was the custom at that time to hang horse thieves, and since there were no trees to use, a wagon was propped up so that the tongue ² extended into the air, and the thieves were hanged on it.

After a few years, Mr. Ramlow tired of this military life so filed a claim north of Valley Center. He paid fif-

1. Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.

2. Ibid.

teen dollars for a quarter section of land, but had to live on it six years before he secured the deed.¹

He built a dugout consisting of one room near the creek bank. At one end he constructed a fireplace which he used as a stove. His furniture was of the simplest kind, consisting mostly of tree stumps. His bed was most unusual. He took two forked sticks and fastened them in the floor of his dugout. He then cut willow branches from along the river bank. These were fastened to the forked sticks to resemble a hammock. The willows were covered with buffalo robes and the bed was then completed. His dishes consisted of tin plates and cups, A tin pan, skillet, and camp kettle served him as cooking utensils.

The dugout did not serve very long for a home. The rainy season set in, and the dugout filled with water. Mr. Ramlow then built a hay house. He cut stakes, placed them in the ground, and filled in around them with hay made from blue stem grass. When he built the house, he also built a barn. It was made of logs filled in with mud. The roof was made of hay.

Mr. Ramlow began to raise crops as soon as his home was constructed. He had raised a good potato crop, but had a hard time keeping it. Although he kept careful watch, his potatoes continued to disappear. One day his hay house

1. Ibid.

burned, and in order to still keep his potatoes, he hid them under a hay stack. He went to live with a neighbor, but continued to make visits to see if the potatoes were safe. They were disappearing, so he decided that he would find out who was taking them. He told his friends that he was going to visit his brother, but instead, he took his dog and went to his claim. They lay in the grass all day, and late in the evening, Mr. Ramlow heard some one approaching. Soon three men were seen. The dog barked, and the men started to run. Mr. Ramlow picked up his gun and started after them firing all the way, but was unable to capture them. He was never bothered with potato thieves again.¹

Watermelon thieves gave Mr. Ramlow trouble later. His mother had sent him some watermelon seeds from Michigan. These he planted with his corn. When the melons were ready for use, they began to disappear. He wondered what was becoming of them for he did not have enough near neighbors to consume all that were going. After investigating, he found that some man had been stealing the melons and selling them in Wichita. Those that were left were gathered and covered with straw to be used as part of the food for his oxen that winter.²

There were so many thieves as it was hard to raise all

1. Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.

2. Ibid.

that was needed, and many of the settlers were so isolated that there would be no means of protecting themselves against robberies. Horse thieves were in abundance, and the pioneers had to protect their stock. Mr. Ramlow had two ponies that he valued very highly. There had been several attempts made to steal them, therefore Mr. Ramlow decided to sleep in the barn with them. He armed himself with two guns and a knife. At different times, he saw men, supposedly thieves, around his barn, but a few shots soon frightened them away. By this means, he kept his ponies.¹

These experiences of Mr. Ramlow were typical of frontier life. There was a certain class who came with the sole purpose of making their living off of the homesteaders rather than filing claims and working themselves. As the settlements became more and more compact, these marauders would move on because there was less opportunity to steal and more chances of being caught.

Every inducement was given the pioneer to settle in western Kansas, especially is this true of securing land. There were three possible means of getting land; that is, homesteading, purchasing school lands, or purchasing railroad lands.

According to the Homestead Act of 1862, the settlers could have the land by paying moderate fees and living on

1. Ibid.

the land for five years and improving it.¹ This land had originally been part of the Osage land and when the Indians were sent to the reservations in Oklahoma, the government took the land, a strip sixty miles wide. The thirty miles to the north became homestead land distributed according to the Law of 1862. The south thirty miles was called trust land and sold for a dollar and a quarter an acre. This price was levied so that the government would have some means of financing the move of the Indians to the res-²ervations and paying them for the land.

The school lands were granted the states by the national government to encourage education in the new regions. Each state was given sections sixteen and thirty six in each township. These lands could be sold with the understanding that the money be used for schools. In Kansas the method of sale was as follows:

The lands are appraised by three householders of the county, who are appointed by the County Superintendent of Public Instruction. They are then placed in the hands of the County Treasurer for sale at the appraised price, which can not be less than \$3 per acre. At the time of sale the County Treasurer exacts one-tenth of the amount of the purchase price; the remainder is payable in twenty years from the date of sale, with interest at the rate of 7 per cent per annum. A failure to pay the interest when due subjects the land to forfeiture; but the purchaser may stop interest and procure a patent at any time by payment of the interest and

1. Anne E. Arnold, History of Kansas, p. 119.

2. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 1, 1931.

balance of the principal due. The lands become taxable as soon as purchased. 1

About 40,000 acres of school land was sold with an average price of four dollars and nine cents per acre. It was on a part of this land that the town of Valley Center was later to be established.

The railroad companies as the railroads were built westward were given land by the government, usually alternating sections on each side of the road. This land could be purchased in one of four ways.

No. 1: Eleven years time, 7 per cent interest, appraised price.

No. 2: Six years time, 7 per cent interest, 20 per cent discount from appraised price.

No. 3: Two years time, 10 per cent interest, 30 per cent discount from appraised price.

No. 4: Cash, 33 1/3 per cent discount of appraised price. 3

With so much land and such easy methods of procuring it, the news speedily moved eastward and people began leaving their homes in the East to make their fortune in the West. The year of 1870 saw many coming into Kansas and settling along the Arkansas River; forming the nucleus for the town that was to be chartered several years later.

1. A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 294.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

CHAPTER III

COMING TO KANSAS

In the spring of 1870 several young people in the eastern states were discussing the advisability of leaving home and friends to come to Kansas. After much thought and consideration, it was finally decided that they would give up their life of comparative ease and seek their fortune in a new land.

Among this group was Dwight Beach of Illinois. He and his young wife were discussing the possibility of coming to Kansas, and the visit of his sister and her husband at the Beach home helped to persuade them to come.

After two weeks preparation, the four young people were ready to go. A covered wagon was secured to which a team of horses and a team of mules were hitched. Mr. Beach built an addition of six inches to each side of the wagon to give more room. In the front of the wagon was placed a bed. Under the bed the clothing and extra bedding were stored. In the back of the wagon there was a small stove. On chilly days a fire was built so the occupants of the wagon could keep warm.

When the small party had nearly crossed Illinois, they were forced to stop their journey for three weeks and two

1. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 4, 1931.

1
days on account of the mud. While they were waiting for
the roads to dry, Mr. Beach found a job cutting hedge at
2
one dollar a day.

The Beaches had planned on crossing the Mississippi
River at DeQuincy, Illinois, but the river was a raging
torrent due to the floods and could not be crossed. They
had to go ten miles north of their destined course to
cross the river into Missouri.

The journey through Missouri was not exciting until
Boonesville was reached. Mr. Beach and party had camped
for the night and turned the horses loose. Several hours
after the people had retired a noise was heard. Mr. Beach
arose to see what was happening. He arrived in time to
see a man, a supposed horse thief, trying to mount his
best horse. The horse, not being broken to ride, was ob-
jecting to being mounted, so was causing a disturbance.
Mr. Beach hurried to his horse, but the thief saw him be-
3
fore he got there and ran away.

The party finally reached Kansas after a six weeks
journey. Mr. Beach had planned to settle at Fort Scott
because his brother who had been a soldier in the Civil
4
War had told him about it. Circumstances were to prevent

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., March 11, 1931.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

his settling there. When he reached Humboldt, he met two young men, a Mr. Snow and Perry Rickard, who were going to Wilson County to homestead land, and they asked Mr. Beach to accompany them. Mr. Beach accepted the invitation, and the three men planned to go to see the land and to return in three or four days. They supplied themselves with potatoes, flour, beef, and eggs. The other supplies were to be purchased as they were needed. Corn was taken for the team.¹

When they reached Wilson County, they found nothing but the Flint Hills that had not been taken. They decided they would look elsewhere for land. They took the trail known as the Fifth Parallel to Wichita, and camped at Thompson's Ford ten miles north of Wichita.²

After spending the night at the Ford, the men awoke early so that they could spend the day looking for land. They saw Mr. Richards, who was in charge of Thompson's land, and he told them that all the land along the Arkansas River had been taken. He referred them to Mr. Dunlap, who knew of land that was still available. After the men found him, they learned that in order to secure information about the land, each would have to pay him two dollars apiece. The

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

money was paid, and each found a suitable claim.¹

The party followed the Chisholm Trail into Wichita where they remained part of one day. That night they camped three miles from Wichita.

The three men were anxious to return to eastern Kansas, for the planned journey of three or four days had now become one of weeks, and they were wondering about the fate of those whom they had left behind. Not only were they worrying, but when they reached their temporary home, they learned that the people there were worrying about them. Many believed that they had been killed by the Indians.²

Plans were then laid for the journey westward, and while waiting for their fulfillment, Mr. Beach worked several weeks for the railroad.

Finally all were ready and after a two weeks journey, the claim was reached. Mr. Beach was in need of cash so went to work for Mr. Thompson, putting up hay.³

Since Mr. Beach was busy working for Mr. Thompson, he did not have time to build a house of any kind. He and his wife used the covered wagon and a tent for their home. As fall approached, some different means of shelter had to be

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 1, 1931.

provided. Mr. Beach's father-in-law had come to Kansas and had purchased a claim on which was a small house. This house was moved to the Beach homestead and served as their home.¹

In 1871 Mr. Beach was called back to Illinois, where he remained a year, on account of the illness of his mother.²

Mr. Wallenstein Goodrich was another of the pioneers of 1870. His native state was New York, but the opportunities to be had in the west caused him to move to Wisconsin before the Civil War.

He had never liked Wisconsin, and after the War when he heard about the homestead land in Kansas, he decided to go there.³ He started out alone, but as he was crossing Illinois, he met the Beach party and joined them. He was a merry addition to the group because he had a violin which he was able to play quite well, thus helping to pass many a weary hour.⁴

Mr. Goodrich said that he had never seen such deep mud as there was in Illinois. In going for supplies the men could not take a wagon as the horses were not able to pull it. The wagon box would be removed, and the rest of

1. Ibid., March 11, 1931.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.

4. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 11, 1931.

it was taken apart so that only the front wheels, axle, and tongue were left. This was hitched to two teams of horses. The men sat on the axle and drove, and the supplies would be placed beside them.

Mr. Goodrich settled in eastern Kansas, and since he planned to live there, he did not accompany Mr. Beach when he went to look for a claim. Mr. Goodrich found suitable land and purchased it. Later trouble arose over the title, so instead of waiting for the courts to settle the question, he left eastern Kansas and went westward. He filed a claim on land one and a half miles south and a mile east of Valley Center.

Since it was the law that the homesteader build on his claim, Mr. Goodrich had stopped at Emporia to purchase lumber. Emporia was the last place on the westward journey where lumber could be secured in 1870. He built a one room house using cottonwood lumber on his claim. The boards were put on crosswise of the building and the cracks were filled in with concrete. The roof was made of shingles.

As soon as the house was completed, Mr. Goodrich re-

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1. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
 2. Ibid.
 3. The Goodrich family is one of a very few that still own their original claim.
 4. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.

turned to Wisconsin to get his wife and children. They came on the train as far as Newton, then drove to their new home.

Other important pioneers were yet to come. The spring of 1870 saw an Ohio family packing and planning for a trip across the country to Kansas. This was the Perrin family. They, too, had heard reports of the land in Kansas and the opportunities to be had there, so were leaving their Ohio home to secure homestead land. The goods were placed in a prairie schooner, and after a tiresome journey of three months, Kansas was reached. Perrins settled on a claim north of Valley Center and filed for it at the government land office at Humboldt, Kansas.¹

It was difficult for the homesteaders to go to Humboldt. The majority of pioneers came in the spring and should have been working on their claims building homes and breaking sod. But before this work could be done, the settlers had to take several weeks to make the journey to Humboldt and back. This delay in beginning of farm work so greatly inconvenienced the homesteaders that the land office was moved to Augusta, Kansas, which would be a much shorter trip for them.

Another settler coming to the Arkansas Valley was to become the leader of the community and to be given the title,

1. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1931.

"the Father of Valley Center." This man was John Carpenter, a native of Illinois. During the gold rush of 1849, he went to California where he amassed a fortune consisting of ten thousand dollars.¹ After the death of his wife and child, he returned to Illinois, where he settled on a farm. He, too, became interested in Kansas after the Civil War, so sold his farm and came to Kansas.² He found land that suited him along the Arkansas River and built his home there. Mr. Carpenter was a leader of practically every enterprise that found its way into this locality.³ His wealth helped him to this place of responsibility, but even more than this was the kindly feeling that the people had toward him. He acted as counselor and advisor to many people in the community. It was not long until he was known as "Uncle John" and the people used this title in highest reverence to him. His obituary expressed the feeling of the community towards him.

He lived in this country in the time that tried the souls of the frontier settlers. At a time when this new country needed courageous men and wise counsel, he was always in the front ranks. Sedgwick County people had confidence in him in the early days, and he was always true to every trust reposed in him. When hard times, incidental to frontier

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1. A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 1402.
 2. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 3. Ibid., March 11, 1931.

life, gave way to prosperity and Wichita began to grow into a city, John T. Carpenter was a helper in every movement for the advancement of this city and this county. A life-long acquaintance said of him; "He never gave up. What he thought should be done, must be done." 1

There were many more families that migrated to Kansas and made their homes along the Arkansas River. All were interested in getting land on which they could start life anew. The pioneers' life was a hard one, yet there was enough pleasure in it for them to remain happy and contented. The people enjoyed the same good times and as a result many new friendships were formed.

The friendships were lasting ones. Forty-three years after coming to Kansas, five of the six families settling in Kechi Township met at W. D. Goodrich's to renew old times. The dinner was served in the cabin built by Mr. Goodrich when he homesteaded his land. Those present were the W. D. Goodriches, the Irwin Beaches, the P. G. Rickards, the H. L. Dewings, and J. D. Emerick. The sixth was D. C. Snow, who had died.

The following statement was printed in the newspaper at the time of the reunion:

Each has felt the deprivation and hardships of the frontier; each has rejoiced in the pleasure of helping build a great county and city out of raw material and rejoiced to see

1. This was taken from a clipping in Mrs. Carrothers' scrapbook.

the vast prairie broken up and divided into
fertile farms. 1

The group furnished their own entertainment and as a
part of it one of them read this poem which he had written.

Do you remember 'way back in the seventies
When the high price of living was unknown;
When we hadn't a sign of a telegraph
And never heard of a 'phone?
Do you remember those days of hardships,
The rain, the hail, and the snow,
And just how that old boiler rattled
In that winter's midnight blow?

Do you remember those nights in the wagon,
Those nights with fiddle and bow;
All sitting along like a tailor,
All sitting quite comfy you know;
While Daken gave us the music
Entitled, "The Turkey in the Straw."
How we always joined in a chorus
With a ringing and merry Ha! Ha!

I remember each face as they looked then.
Some brown locks, some black, and some red.
Not one of the lot had a gray hair,
Not one with a glossy bald head.
No clouds were so dark or so gloomy
But the sunlight came glittering through;
No day was so dry or so windy,
But the morning brought us the dew.

And now as I look 'round me
And see furrows in temple and brow
There's but one of our number that's missing
And I wonder and wonder just how.
Your smiles are so friendly and glad some
Though your hair has grown hoary and gray
Your hearts are as true as of old time,
Your lives are as sunny as May. 2

1. Clipping belonging to Mrs. Ralph Newman.

2. Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE ON THE PRAIRIES

The residents of the prairies found life very different from that of the East. There was much more to be done, and the women as well as the men had many tasks to occupy their time.

The first task had been to find a suitable claim, then to file for it at the government land office at Humboldt, Kansas. The housing problem came next, and was met by the construction of one room houses to shelter the pioneer from the weather. Some of the earlier settlers lived in dugouts, but they were not satisfactory. The pioneers coming later learned this fact, so built frame houses made of lumber that they hauled from Emporia.

The settlers had to begin to plan for the future, and their main thought was to provide food for their families. The ground was covered with tall blue stem grass which had to be destroyed before the ground could be broken. The most common way was to burn it off.¹

The sod was broken by plowing, but was so hard to break that often the homesteader had to hire it done by men whose business it was to do this kind of work. Mr.

1. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.

Goodrich had fifteen acres to break and hired a man with a¹
team of oxen to do the work.

After the sod was broken, corn was planted. Corn was
the only crop raised for several seasons because the ground²
was not in shape to plant any other cereal crop. The
next crop to be planted was wheat. The crops that were not
needed for supplies were sold to the government. In 1876³
an elevator was built which held two carloads of grain.
One load could be dumped at a time. Mr. Snyder, the manager
of the elevator, urged the farmers to bring their grain to
him, and he would sell it for them. This relieved the
farmers of the burden of finding a market for their crops.
As the products were brought to him, he told the settlers
that he would pay them on Saturday night. They believed
in his promises, so left the grain, but on Saturday when
they went to collect, Mr. Snyder was not to be found. He
had sold the wheat, taken the money, and disappeared from⁴
Valley Center, never to be seen again.

Not all of the homesteaders depended upon wheat and

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1. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
 2. Interview with Goy Carnahan, June 14, 1930.
Interview with Dwight Beach, March 4, 1931.
 3. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 16, 1931.
 4. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 16, 1931.

corn for crops, but sowed alfalfa. Mr. O. G. Jacobs, seeing that grass grew so abundantly on the prairies, decided that alfalfa could be raised. His experiment proved successful. There was always a demand for alfalfa, so Mr. Jacobs had a ready market for his crop and as a result became quite well to do.¹

Trees grew along the river banks, but very few on the prairies. When the Perrin family came in 1870, there was only one tree between their claim and Wichita, Kansas.² Some means had to be found to inclose the farms and pastures, so the homesteaders would go to the river and cut young cottonwood trees. They were taken back to the farms where they would be cut into about three foot lengths, then set into the ground. Some of these cuttings would take root and grow. Many of the cottonwood trees in and around the town of Valley Center were at one time fence posts.³

Hedges were later used for fences, but much care had to be given them before they could be used. The hedge tree seeds, which resemble apple seeds in appearance, were sent from the East in large gunny sacks. They were planted in hot beds and after a short time, they were transplanted,

1. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.

2. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

3. Interview with Goy Carnahan, June 14, 1930.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

usually in long rows. The hedge plants had to be carefully cultivated for the next two or three years. Then they were set out as fences and allowed to grow.¹

The problem of food was one that confronted every pioneer family. The buffalo served as the main source of food during the first winter. The settlers went in groups to hunt buffalo, usually going to the vicinity of Hutchinson or Pratt. Aside from the difficulty of finding buffalo, there was also the constant danger of horse thieves. Once Mr. Beach and a few friends went buffalo hunting near Pratt and had found and killed several buffaloes, but it was getting so late that they could not return to their homes, so had to make camp for the night. During the night, three of the best mules were stolen.²

When the buffaloes were taken home, the women would tend to the meat. As much as could be used before spoiling would be eaten fresh, and the rest of the meat would be dried.³ The meat to be dried would be put into strips. Salt water would be placed on the stove and allowed to come to a boil. Then the meat was put in the vessel and cooked until about half done. It was then cooled and set

1. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

2. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 11, 1931.

3. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 4, 1931.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

aside to dry. After it had thoroughly dried, it was ready for use. Often it would be boiled, but it was used in the dried stage, being sliced off and eaten that way. This dried buffalo meat looked a great deal like the dried beef¹ that is used today.

Prairie chickens were very plentiful and furnished a part of the pioneers' diet. At night the chickens would roost on the houses, barns, and fences, and in the morning a bountiful supply could be shot from the doorway of the house.² Traps were used occasionally to capture them, but so many would be caught that the traps had to be weighted³ down to keep the chickens from carrying off the traps.

Prairie chicken eggs were also used. After a prairie fire, they could be easily found. The chickens made their nests in the blue stem grass, and as the fires would sweep across the prairies, the eggs would not be harmed. A few on the top of the nest might be slightly scorched, but the rest were unharmed. Cases have been known when as many as a bushel basketful could be picked up within ten yards of the house.⁴

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1. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.
 2. Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.
Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
 3. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.
 4. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.

Many of the homesteaders came early enough in the spring of 1870 to be able to raise a corn crop, and that helped to supply food during the winter of 1870-71. Corn often provided the main part of the meal, and often it was used several different ways for the same meal; for example, boiled corn, corn bread, and corn coffee. The corn was parched on the stove, then boiled in water until all the taste was taken from it, and this was used as a coffee substitute.¹

A few people had planted potatoes in eastern Kansas before homesteading and had returned for them. They helped to give diversity to the diet of buffalo meat, prairie chicken,² and corn.

Some of the food, especially dried fruit, was purchased in Emporia and brought to the farmers. The fruit came in the same kind of sacks as were used for wheat. This fruit would be so hard that an axe would have to be used to break it up. When this was cooked, it was very palatable and was the main fruit of the pioneers.³

In the spring of 1871, the homesteaders planted vegetable gardens, with seeds that had been purchased in Wichita. The gardens helped to provide food for the following winter and after this time, they were able to pro-

1. Interview with Wallace Spearfish, March 30, 1931.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

vide larger quantities and larger varieties of food products.¹

The problem of fuel was one that caused many a worry. It was difficult to get wood because Mr. Thompson, who owned most of the land along the river, refused to sell any.² A few, however, were allowed the right to pick up what drift wood they could find along the creek banks. The first winter the majority burnt cow or buffalo chips for fuel.³ After corn was raised more abundantly, cobs were used.

It was impossible to get coal the first two winters for there was no railroad on which to ship it. Even after the railroad was built from Newton to Wichita, coal was not always obtainable. The winter of 1877-78 was severe and the community suffered from a coal famine. Coal had been ordered, but for some reason, it had been delayed in its delivery. Mr. George Thompson heard that there was a sufficient supply at Sedgwick, so went there for coal. It was so cold that he had to walk both ways, but was successful in getting coal. When he returned, every one came to him wanting to get some. He was not able to refuse, but fortunately for Mr. Thompson, coal was shipped in before

1. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.

2. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 4, 1931.
Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.

3. Ibid.

his supply had been exhausted. The people were only allowed two hundred and fifty pounds per family until several carloads had arrived.¹

The furniture in the pioneer home was of the crudest kind. The people had sold their furniture before coming to Kansas as they had no room for it in their schooners. For a table, a dry goods box was often used, and in some cases, a board placed on the laps of the father and mother served. The children sat on boxes along the sides of the board. For beds, bunks were built on one side of the house,² and later home made beds were used.

The worst peril in the fall season was the prairie fires. The sod had not all been broken, and the prairies were covered with acres of blue stem grass which had dried during the summer months. When this grass caught fire, it was almost impossible to curb it. If the men saw the fire in time, they would plow around it so that it would not be able to continue. This was not always successful as the fire would jump across the plowed area and even across streams.³

Another method used was that of "back fire." The

1. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.

1. Interview with George Thompson, July 7, 1930.

2. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, March 4, 1931.

3. Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

grass next to the cleared areas would be set on fire and the settlers would force it back to meet the on-coming prairie fires.¹

Many disasters were caused by these fires. One of the settlers had put up fifty tons of prairie hay which he was going to use as food for his stock in the winter. In the fall a fire spread across the country and the hay was all burned before any could be saved.² In another fire, Mr. Perrin's horses were burned to death, so the people of the community took up a collection and bought him another team.³

The Indians did not cause the people any trouble as they had all been moved to the reservations in Oklahoma. Every spring, however, the Indians would leave the reservations and wander back to their old homes. They would go from farm house to farm house, begging food, and when it was given them, would reply by saying, "tankee" the only English they knew.⁴

The Indians often frightened the women. One day Mrs. Goodrich was left alone with the children. A large

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1. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.
Interview with Dwight Beach, March 4, 1931.
 2. Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.
 3. Interview with Goy Carnahan, June 14, 1930.
 4. Ibid.

Indian man came to the house and began muttering to Mrs. Goodrich. She could not understand him, but believed he was going to murder her and the children. She did not know what to do, but finally decided to give him something¹ to eat. As soon as he was fed, he turned and went away.

During the early days, many pioneers saw the herds of cattle driven from Texas to Abilene, Kansas,² on the Chisholm Trail which was just a mile east of Valley Center. The cattlemen seldom caused any trouble unless the settlers first troubled them. When returning from Abilene, the men would want to find shelter for the night, and would go to the farm houses and ask if they might spend the night. If they came after the farmers had retired, the head of the household would tell them to come in and sleep wherever they could find room, but the farmer would not usually get up to provide a bed for his callers.³

The year of 1874 is one that the homesteaders would not be apt to forget. The people noticed a dark cloud rising in the northwest and were preparing for a storm. As the cloud came nearer and nearer, it became evident that it was not a storm cloud, but millions of grasshoppers. They

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1. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
 2. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 4, 1931.
Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
 3. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.

flew around all day, and about night fall began to settle
on anything in sight.¹ They ate the corn and only the
stalks were left standing. In these were large round holes
where the grasshoppers had eaten. The leaves on the trees²
were eaten and some orchards were destroyed as a result.
The clothes that were hanging on the lines were eaten so
badly that they could not be used again. They ate what
they could of the buildings, and a pitchfork in an hour be-
came so rough that it had to be sandpapered before it could
be used again.³

The grasshoppers stayed until the wind changed, two
days later.⁴ The farmers were destitute. The crops had
been ruined, much of their clothing destroyed, and their
buildings partially destroyed. It was difficult to know
what to do, for the pioneers had little or no money. All
that there was in the community was the pension money of
the old soldiers.⁵

There was some local help given. The needy would go

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1. Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.
Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
 4. Interview with Otto Ramlow, July 24, 1930.
Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
 5. Interview with George Thompson, July 7, 1930.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

to the township clerk who gave them an order which was taken to the county clerk who then gave them the right to go to the store and receive necessities.¹

An appeal was made in the East, and carloads of food and clothing were sent in response. Some money was also donated by the East.

Most of the help came from Ohio, and the pioneers did not forget the kindness shown them by these far away friends. In 1879 Ohio was devastated by floods, and the people of central Kansas hearing of this wanted to help. A train load of provisions were collected and sent. On the sides of the cars, large grasshoppers were painted so that all might know that the supplies were coming from the people whom Ohio had helped a few years before.²

The frontier woman had a responsible job and without her help, the menfolk would not have been able to build new communities. Her tasks were many and varied. It was always her duty to plan and cook three meals a day for her family. This was often difficult due to the scanty supplies of her cupboard. All the bread used was a product of her efforts. Clothing was too expensive to buy, so it fell to her lot to make all the clothing for the entire family with

1. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1931.

2. Ibid.

the exception of the shoes which would be purchased in Wichita. All the garments had to be made by hand for the pioneer woman did not have a sewing machine. The mittens and stockings, she knitted. There were chickens to take care of, for they helped to furnish food for the family. It was the woman's duty to milk the cows, care for the milk, and make the butter. The cream would be placed in a pan, since there were no churns, and the woman would stir it with a fork or spoon until the butter came, then it was worked and salted ready for use. There was no laundry, so she had to do her own washings. This was done with the use of old fashioned tubs and washboards. In addition to all these duties was the one of caring for her children.¹ "When one adds to the grinding and unavoidable labor, the anguish that came from sickness and danger, the frontier woman who survived becomes an heroic character, and the children who felt her touch become the proper material from which to choose the heroes of a nation."²

The hard tasks of both men and women were soon to be lightened because the railroad was constructed and many necessities were sent in from the East that tended to lessen their labors.

1. F. L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, pp. 114-115. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.

2. F. L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, p. 115.

CHAPTER V

THE COMING OF THE RAILROADS

In settling the land east of the Mississippi River, the railroad had played an important part. In the East, the first consideration was to procure land, then to obtain the capital to develop it, and later find a market for the crops raised. The products of the western farmer were the sole means of his getting money to buy land or to pay off his debts. The markets at home furnished no demand, so the only way was to send his products to eastern market. This demand¹ resulted in the construction of railroads.

Because of the engineering difficulties, the roads were seldom constructed across large rivers. The large towns furnished the terminal point for the roads built in the country that supplied the cities with agricultural products.²

As the settlement moved westward, railroad construction followed. When eastern Kansas was being settled, there was a demand for a railroad. The nearest one was at Saint Joseph, Missouri, and the crops would have to be hauled there before they could reach the markets of the East. The agitation resulted in the Territorial Legislature charter-

1. F. L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, p. 403.

2. Ibid., p. 404.

ing the Saint Joseph and Topeka Railroad Company, February
20, 1857.¹

"The road was to start from Saint Joseph, Missouri, opposite Elwood, Doniphan County, thence crossing the Missouri, through Doniphan, Atchison, and Jefferson County to Topeka, as its first terminal point."² On March 20, 1860, the first rail was laid, and on April 28, 1861, the track had been completed to Elwood, and the locomotive, "Albany", was brought across the Missouri River on a ferry, and placed on the track.³

Later the original charter was amended extending the road in the direction of Santa Fe to the southern or western line of the Territory; thus authorizing its location over essentially the present route of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad.⁴

Atchison wanted the eastern terminus of the road so the city accordingly raised or loaned its credit to the amount of \$150,000, by the aid of which subsidy a direct road was built on the Missouri side of the river from Saint Joseph to that place and thenceforth under another charter with Atchison, Kansas, instead of Saint Joseph, Missouri, as the eastern terminus, the enterprise

1. A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 244.

2. Ibid., p. 244.

3. Ibid., p. 241.

4. Ibid., p. 243.
Wichita Eagle, April 19, 1872.

was carried on; the sympathy and interest of the inhabitants being transferred to the new project which promised the same advantages with the added prestige of its being wholly a Kansas corporation. 1

In 1859 the Territorial Legislature of Kansas chartered the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. The charter allowed the company to "survey, locate, construct, complete, alter, maintain, and operate" a railroad with one or more tracks from Atchison to Topeka.² Construction was started, but due to the drought of 1860 and the Civil War, progress was checked. During the drought, help was solicited from outside the state, and supplies were sent to the "receiving station" at Atchison because it was the only railroad station in Kansas.³

In 1863 the national Congress gave the state of Kansas alternating sections one mile square, ten in width, on either side of the proposed road providing it were completed at the end of ten years from the approval of the act.⁴ The grant was accepted by the state and on February 9, 1864, the land was given to the railroad company.

Eight days later the corporation stockholders met to

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1. A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 243.
 2. Ibid., p. 243.
Wichita Eagle, April 19, 1872.
 3. N. L. Prentis, History of Kansas, p. 131.
 4. A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 243.
Wichita Eagle, April 19, 1872.

elect officers, and "such other business as the new order of things required" was transacted. A commission was appointed to sell stock. It was to be offered first to the citizens of the state, then if they refused to buy, it was to be sold in the eastern monetary centers.

The stock was sold in the East, and in Boston alone two and one quarter millions of dollars were raised in three weeks time.¹

George W. Beach was hired to construct the road, but his several attempts to build ended in failure, due to the lack of money. After his contract expired, Thomas J. Peter² became the engineer and the work was started.

The company began building south from Topeka, and by August 1, 1870, the road was opened to Emporia, and by July 17, 1871, the road had been extended as far as Newton,³ a total of one hundred and thirty six miles.

The original equipment of the company consisted of fifteen engines, thirteen coaches, six baggage cars, twenty-two box cars, one hundred stock cars, one hundred combination cars, forty-two platform cars, ninety-four coal cars,

1. Wichita Eagle, April 19, 1872.

2. A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 244.
Wichita Eagle, April 19, 1872.

3. O. H. Bentley, History of Sedgwick County, (C. F. Cooper & Co., Chicago, 1910), Vol. II, p. 563.

3. Wichita Eagle, April 19, 1872.

and four cabooses. By 1871 there was so much transported on the road that additional equipment had to be purchased, which consisted of eight engines, eight coaches, four baggage cars, one hundred stock cars, one hundred combination¹ cars, ten box cars, fifty coal cars, and four cabooses.

After the railroad had been completed as far as Newton, the business men in Wichita realized the advantage that Newton had, so began planning to have the road built into Wichita. In 1871 the Wichita and Southwestern Railway Company was organized and the charter secured June 28, 1871, permitted the construction of the railroad into Wichita when the capital of five hundred thousand dollars was secured. The corporation elected the following officers: J. K. Mead, president; C. F. Gilbert, vicepresident, H. C. Sluss, secretary; and William Griffenstein, Treasurer.²

In 1861 the state had passed a law demanding each county to issue bonds "to the road for a like amount of stock" and limited the maximum to two hundred thousand³ dollars. So according to this law, Sedgwick County had to raise bonds. The people voted and the bonds were raised, but the settlers never had to pay for them, for before the

1. Ibid.

2. O. H. Bentley, History of Sedgwick County, Vol. II, p. 563.

3. A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 243. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

date of payment a committee of the Santa Fe bought and
paid for them.¹

It was left to the company to determine the right of way from Newton to Wichita. After it was decided, the company began securing the land. The people were asked to donate land, and many responded, thus helping to get the road to Wichita. If the land was not donated, it would be appraised and the money paid the owner. The amount was determined by where the road went through the farm; more was paid if it cut the farm in half than if one small corner would be cut off.²

The construction was much simpler than that of today. The ground was plowed, throwing the furrows together, for a width of fourteen feet. Then it would be "surfaced." If the ground was too uneven, it would be graded off and used to fill in the valley. In the grade from Newton to Wichita, there were only two places that the ground had to be leveled.³ The ties were placed on the ground⁴ at the desired distances apart by a group of men. Another group

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1. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 2. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, April 6, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 3. Ibid.
 4. O. H. Bentley, History of Sedgwick County, Vol. II, p. 565.
Interview with Wallace Goodrich, April 6, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

would place the rails on the ties, and still a different group would fasten the rails to the ties.¹ The tracks were laid on the average of three miles per day.² After the rails were laid, the track would be jacked up and the road filled in with dirt.³

By March 1872 the road had reached Sedgwick, and two mails were leaving Sedgwick daily, one at eight thirty in the morning and the other at three forty-five in the afternoon.⁴ On May 11, 1872, the road reached Wichita.

The construction of the road was considered first class at that time. The road beds were wide with strong masonry at all the openings, the bridges were of super structure, Howe trusses with iron bottom cords were used, the rails were the best English fifty-six pound with fist joints. Water stations were built along the road, and enclosed tanks were each provided with wind mills. The depots were all substantial frame buildings.⁵

The company brought in some of their laborers, but depended largely upon the homesteaders to supply the neces-

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1. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, April 6, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 4. Sedgwick Gazette, March 21, 1872.
 5. Wichita Eagle, April 19, 1872.

sary labor. Many of the regular railroad laborers disliked the men the company used, and to them the term "homesteader" was one of reproach.¹

When the railroad crossed Mr. Carpenter's land, he gave the company the land on which to build a depot. The gift was readily accepted and the depot was built. A few years later when the Frisco came through Valley Center, an agreement was made with the Santa Fe to use the same depot, but to use one farther south. So the depot donated by Mr. Carpenter was moved away without his knowing anything about it.²

In 1887 the business men of Wichita projected the idea of an Omaha, Abilene, and Wichita Railway. The men learned that the Rock Island had planned to build a similar road. Later the leaders of both proposed railroads met at the Manhattan Hotel in Wichita.³ They formed a new corporation called the Midland Railway Company, and elected C. R. Miller as president and O. H. Bentley as secretary.⁴

This company used the Santa Fe tracks from Wichita to

1. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

2. Ibid., March 4, 1931.
Interview with Wallace Goodrich, April 6, 1931.

3. O. H. Bentley, History of Sedgwick County, Vol. II, p. 585.

4. Ibid.

Halstead for several years. The right of way was later leased by the Frisco Railroad and a new track was then laid.¹

When the road went through Valley Center, the town passed the following ordinance:

Ordinance No. XXIV

An Ordinance granting the right of way through the City of Valley Center across certain streets and avenues therein to the Kansas Midland Railway Company,

Be it Ordained by the Mayor and Councilmen of the City of Valley Center.

Sec. 1. That the right to be and the same is hereby granted to the Kansas Midland railway Company, the successors and assignor to build construct and maintain its line of railway and the side tracks and swiches appurtinant thereto over, upon and across avanue B., Avanue C. and third street in said City of Valley Center in accordance with the present survey and location of said railway,

Sec. 2. This shall take effect and be in force from and after its bublication in the Valley Center News, and after said Company shall construct there railway on said line, they shall have the right to maintain the same there on forever.

Approved Jan 4th 1887

Mayor

Passed Jan 3 1887 and published in the Valley Center News Jan 7th 1887

Attest

E. M. Carnahan City Clerk 2

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1. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930. O. H. Bentley, History of Sedgwick County, Vol. II, p. 585.
 2. Valley Center Ordinances, No. XXIV.

Even before the ordinance had been passed, the city had regulated the railroads. In 1886 the city passed this ordinance.

Ordinance No. XXIII

Railroad Crossings

Be it ordained by the Mayor and Councilmen of the City of Valley Center.

Sec. 1. That the A. T. and S. F. Railroad Company build crossings across said track on first, second and fourth streets running east and west inside the corporate limits (limits) of the City of Valley Center.

Sec. 2. That this ordinance take effect after its publication in the Valley Center News.

Approved June 2nd 1886 Mayor

Passed June 1st 1886 and published in

the Valley Center News June 4th 1886

Attest

E. M. Carnahan City Clerk 1

A few years later the city passed an ordinance governing the obstructing of crossings.

Ordinance No. 29.

(Published June 15th, 1888.)

Be it ordained by the mayor and councilmen of the city of Valley Center:

Sec. 1. That any railroad operating in Valley Center that shall permit their trains to obstruct the public thoroughfare for a longer period than five minutes, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall upon conviction thereof be fined any sum of not less than \$5.00 nor more than \$25.00 and in default of paying said fine and costs thereof, shall be confined in the city prison until such judgment shall be complied with.

Approved June 12th, 1888.

S. R. Hepburn, Mayor.

Passed June 12th, 1888, and published in the Valley Center News Jun 15th, 1888, and the record of the final vote is on page 82 in the Journal.

Attest: E. E. Hodge, City Clerk.

Both of these roads have been important in the settlement of Valley Center. The one coming in 1872 was responsible for the formation of a town, centering around one of the section houses that was built by the company. The other, coming after the town was chartered, helped to bring in more settlers and to increase transportation for it connected Valley Center with the northwest part of Kansas and parts of Nebraska.

1. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 26, 1931.

2. Ibid.

Interview with Douglas Thompson, July 21, 1930.

Interview with Mrs. W. E. Davis, April 7, 1931.

3. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 26, 1931.

4. Interview with W. E. Berrill, July 23, 1930.

1. Ibid., No. 29.

CHAPTER VI

CHARTERING THE TOWN

While the railroad was under construction from Newton to Wichita, Mr. Carpenter believed that a new town might be built along the right of way. His own farm was too far west to have the right of way through it, but section thirty-six was not, so he purchased it for the new town site.¹

The Carpenter family organized themselves into a town company.² Mr. John Carpenter was president; his wife, treasurer; and his son, Arthur, secretary.³ It was part of the work of the organization to have the land surveyed and plotted into town lots. There was some difficulty in the surveying. When the county had been surveyed, rocks had been placed at the corners of the sections to serve as markers. When the settlers came, they saw the piles of rock and often took them for their own use.⁴ The surveyors were not able to find any of these markers, therefore

1. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

2. Ibid.

Interview with Douglas Thompson, July 21, 1930.

Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.

3. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

4. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

began surveying from the spot they believed to be the section line.¹ Several years later, Mr. Westfall discovered the fact that the surveyors had been wrong in determining the section lines and had the mistake corrected by straightening the streets² in the new town of Valley Center.

Mr. Carpenter had this work done in 1873³ and had hoped that the settlers would soon come and buy land. For several years the section house that had been built by the Santa Fe Railroad Company was the only building in the new town.⁴

In 1875 George Carrothers went there and established a general merchandise store across the street from the section house. Aside from his duties as store keeper, he became the postmaster of Valley Center.⁵ There was so little mail that the farmers made only one trip a week in-⁶to town for it.

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1. Interview with Douglas Thompson, July 21, 1930.
Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
 2. Interview with Douglas Thompson, July 21, 1930.
 3. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
 4. Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
 5. Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, March 11, 1931.
Chapman Brothers, Portrait and Biographical Album of Sedgwick County, p. 893.
 6. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, April 10, 1931.

For the next several years there were no additions to Valley Center, but in the early eighties, other stores were established and some residences were built.

A Mr. Thompson and O. G. Jacob had a general merchandise store and for a time the partnership was successful. Later the two men quarrelled and dissolved partnership. Mr. DeMott, a resident of Valley Center at the time, gave this account: When the two men dissolved partnership, all the goods had been disposed of with the exception of half a bushel of potatoes and in order to give each one half of the weight one potato was cut in two.¹

By 1885 there were two general stores, two drug stores,² one bank, one implement house, and one lumber yard. Mr. John Carpenter had been responsible for the establishment of most of the stores and owned many of them.³ The lumber yard belonged to him, and in connection with his lumber, he sold grain, hay, and coal. He advertised his business the same as the Wichita merchants. There was a tendency for the people to go to Wichita to trade because they believed that better bargains could be obtained there, and the Valley Center merchants let the facts be known that their

1. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.

2. Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.

3. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 11, 1931.

Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1931.

goods were as good as any in Wichita. Mr. Carpenter used this advertisement:

All kinds of Lumber constantly kept for sale.
I have the best facilities for Pressing and
Shipping Hay, for which the highest price will
be paid. Different kinds of Coal always on hand.
Wichita prices in cash paid for all kinds of
Grain. 1

The first business buildings were of wood. Mr. McCafferty wanted to establish a pool hall and sold his farm in order to build a brick building.² It was only one story high, but the people looked upon it with civic pride for the town now had a brick building.³

Sidewalks in the business district were four feet wide and made of boards.⁴ The ground was so uneven that the walks were not all the same distance from the ground, varying from a few inches to several feet.⁵ In the residence districts, the people had to make their own walks and keep them in repair. As soon as the town was chartered, the City Council passed an ordinance to this effect:

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1. E. P. Edwards, Historical Atlas of Sedgwick County, p. 12.
 2. This building is used today for John Temple's Barber Shop.
 3. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.
Interview with Dwight Beach, March 11, 1931.
 4. Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.
Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
 5. Ibid.

Ordinance No. XXII

Relating to sidewalks

Be it Ordained by the Mayor and Councilmen of the city of Valley Center.

Sec. 1. That a sidewalk be constructed of substantial material four feet wide with the stringers commencing at the south side of lot no fiftyone, running north to lot no forty six, said lots being situated on Avenue A. between second and third street.

Sec. 2. That said walk shall be constructed within thirty days from publication of this Ordinance,

Sec. 3. That this shall be in force and effect after its publication in the Valley Center News.

Approved April 8th 1886

Mayor

Passed April 7th 1886 and published in

the Valley Center News April 9th 1886

1

Attest

E. M. Carnahan City Clerk

The streets were unimproved and during the rainy season they were so muddy that it was almost impossible to drive through them.² Mr. Craig asked the city if he might have the job of sanding and grading the streets. The job was given him, and the work of improving the streets began.³

The government before the town was chartered was of the simplest form. There was a justice of the peace and a constable who had complete control of the city. These men were elected by popular vote. A caucus would meet and nominate

1. Valley Center Ordinances, No. XXII.

2. Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.
Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.

3. Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.

the candidates and on a designated day the people would vote on these nominees. There was an election board composed of three judges and two clerks appointed by the township trustee. Instead of voting by secret ballot, the voter would be given a piece of paper and he would write the name of the person for whom he wished to vote on it. The paper would then be handed to the judge who placed it in the ballot box.¹

This government was satisfactory for a while, but when the prohibition amendment was passed by the State of Kansas in 1881,² the two officers were not enough to keep the violaters of the law in check.

There were three saloons in Valley Center in 1881, and after the prohibition law was passed, two of them closed. Mr. McCafferty, who had the third one, refused to stop selling liquor in his pool hall.³

The church people tried to get him to stop this illegal practice, but Mr. McCafferty did not listen to their pleadings. The selling of liquor had resulted in minor crimes, but when three people were shot as a result of

1. Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.

2. N. L. Prentis, History of Kansas, p. 203.

3. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

¹
intoxication, the people of the community rose up in defense and decided that something must be done.

A town meeting was called and after much discussion as to the best way to cope with the liquor situation, it was finally decided to incorporate the town and let the city officials mete out justice to the violaters of the prohibition law. Mr. Dwight Beach was appointed as the committee of one to see about securing the charter. He went to the County Attorney and later to the Secretary of State, Edwin Bird Allen, at Topeka, to get the charter. It was granted by the charter board and signed by the ² Secretary in 1885.

On the following Tuesday, the voters of valley Center were to vote for mayor and councilmen. The pro- and anti-saloon men had met and named their candidates. Mr. Beach, who owned a newspaper at that time, printed the names of the candidates, but urged the people to vote for the best interest of the town, which would mean vote for prohibition. ³

On election day the prohibition candidates won by a majority of seventeen votes. For the next three years, the election was won by seventeen votes. Mr. John Carpenter

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1. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 2. Interview with George Thompson, June, 17, 1930.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 3. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

was elected mayor of the town, and Mr. Dwight Beach was president of the Council. These men were both anxious to rid the town of McCafferty, so began at once to have him removed. The Council met and passed the following ordinance:

Ordinance No. XIII

Intoxicating liquors

- 1st Penalty for selling.
- 2nd Penalty for keeping club room.
- 3d Giving away to be deemed selling.
- 4th Rules in regard to complaint and evidence.

An Ordinance concerning intoxicating liquors,

Be it Ordained by the Mayor and Councilmen of the City of Valley Center

Sec. 1. Whoever shall sell barter or give away any spiritous, malt, vinious, except druggists having a permit from the Probate Judge of Sedgewick County, as required by law, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, shall upon conviction thereof be fined the sum of one hundred dollars.

Sec. 2. Every person who shall directly or indirectly, keep or maintain, by him self or by associating or combing with others, or who shall in any manner aid, assert or abet in keeping or main taining any club room on other place in which any intoxicating liquor is received or kept for the purpose of use, gift, barter or sell as a beverage, or for distribution or divis ion among the members of any club or association by any means whatever, and evry person who shall use, barter, sell or give away, or assist or abet another in bartering, seeling or giving away any intoxicating liquors so received or kept, shall be deemed giulty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be fined the sum of one hundred dollars.

Sec. 3. The giving away of intoxicating liquor for any valuable consideration whatever, or any shift or device, to evade the provision of this Ordinance, shall be deemed selling within the provisions of this Ordinance.

Sec. 4. In prosecution under this Ordinance, by complaint, it shall not be necessary to state the kind of liquor sold, nor the place where sold nor the the name of person to whom sold, neither shall it be necessary in the first instance for the city to prove that the party charged did not have a permit.

Approved Oct 26th 1885 Mayor
Passed Oct 19th 1885 and published in the
Valley Center News Oct 31st 1885 1
Attest E. M. Carnahan City Clerk

Since it was now against the city ordinances to sell liquor, the men began to hunt for proof of McCafferty's violating the law. They were sure that he was selling liquor, and had raided his pool hall several times, but had never been able to find any proof. News reached the Council that the liquor was being hauled in at night and for them to keep watch for it.

The Council had been called in session one night to discuss this question when Mrs. Beach came rushing in.² The Beaches lived just across the alley from the pool hall, and she had seen a wagon draw up behind the pool hall. She was so certain that it was loaded with whiskey that she told the men to go at once for there was now sufficient evidence

1. Valley Center Ordinances, No. XIII.

2. Interview with Dwight Beach, March 11, 1931.

to arrest McCafferty.

By the time the men reached the pool hall, the wagon was gone, so the men went inside to search, but could find nothing. The city marshall went to Mr. Beach to ask him what to do. The two men went to Mr. Carpenter, the mayor, who advised them to search the place thoroughly again, and if any property was damaged, he would pay for it.¹

By this time the entire community had become aware of what was taking place and were in front of the pool hall when the marshall returned. A number of the men went into the pool hall and searched every conceivable place. They were ready to give up in despair when one of the men began kicking a table and accidentally kicked the bottom. He had unconsciously broken a bottle, and in a few minutes some liquid began to drop from the table. The marshall examined this and found it to be whiskey. The pool tables were all equiped with false bottoms, and the liquor was stored in them.²

Mr. McCafferty and his sons were arrested and brought before the Council. The Council told them that they would each have a hundred dollar fine to pay. They refused to pay this fine at first. When told if they refused, all

1. Ibid.

2. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

their property would be taken, they consented to pay their
fines and close their place of business.¹

After this saloon was closed, there was no more trouble
with the anti-prohibition men. The City Council and people
spend their time in developing the city. This episode of
the McCafferty's paled into insignificance when Valley
Center was affected by the boom.

Wichita was under the influence of one of these
booms. New industries began to flourish, houses and school-
house buildings were constructed, and land increased in price.
People came into Wichita to gain wealth and to take advantage
of the opportunities that were awaiting them. The buying
and selling was a roaring market.

The effect of this boom was felt in the territory sur-
rounding Wichita. Valley Center, just twelve miles farther
north, was affected by it. The town was too small to at-
tract many people, and too small to have a boom, but the
general prosperity of Wichita stimulated a boom in Valley
Center.

It was first experienced in Valley Center in the spring
of 1905 when Mr. Fisher purchased some land north of the
town. It was difficult for all the people coming to Wichita
to find a place on which to live, so Mr. Fisher had his land
platted off, hoping to sell it to these people. It was his

1. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

CHAPTER VII
THE VALLEY CENTER BOOM

In the history of the United States there have been times when the country has been unusually prosperous and a period of expansion resulted. These waves of prosperity and expansion also apply to certain localities. In the "eighties" Wichita was under the influence of one of these booms. New industries began to flourish, houses and business buildings were constructed, and land increased in price. People came into Wichita to glean wealth and to take advantage of the opportunities that were awaiting them, the buying and selling on a rising market.

The effect of this boom was felt in the territory surrounding Wichita. Valley Center, just twelve miles farther north, was affected by it. The town was too small to attract many people, and too small to have a boom, but the apparent prosperity of Wichita stimulated a boom in Valley Center.

It was first experienced in Valley Center in the spring of 1885¹ When Mr. Fisher purchased some land north of the town. It was difficult for all the people coming to Wichita to find a place on which to live, so Mr. Fisher had his land plotted off, hoping to sell it to these people. It was his

1. Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 16, 1931.

aim to have the workers in Wichita live in Valley Center
and go back and forth to work.¹

In order to provide a means of transportation, he and
two men, Butler and Powell, organized a company to build
and manage an interurban between Wichita and Valley Center.²
The men did not have enough capital, therefore they sold
stock. The people thought this would be a profitable in-
vestment, and all those who had ready money in Valley Center
invested in the company.³

The Wichita terminal of the road was on Douglas Avenue.⁴
It followed the street car track to Thirteenth Street and
Market. The track was laid on Thirteenth to Arkansas, then
came up Arkansas Avenue as far as the present site of Sub-
urban Rest, then west one-half mile to the Santa Fe track,
then followed it to one mile south of Valley Center where
it angled over to Meridian, then over to the station which
was at Carrothers' Grocery Store.⁵

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.

Interview with Thad Goodrich, April 10, 1931.

3. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 10, 1931.

4. Ibid.

5. Interview with Thad Goodrich, April 10, 1931.

Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.

Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.

The motor cars, as they were called, contained a section for the engine and the coal bin. Coal or wood was used to furnish the steam. The remainder was filled with seats for the passengers. On busy days, a trailer would be fastened to the car to take care of the surplus passengers.¹

There were no freight cars, but freight and express were both hauled. The extra space in the motor room was used.²

It was the original intention that the cars should run every hour between Wichita and Valley Center. During the first few months of the boom, this plan was carried out, but it soon became a financial loss to run the cars hourly. The company then decided to run the interurban in the morning, at noon, and in the evening.³ As the boom slackened, the noon trip was discontinued.

It took forty-five minutes to go from Valley Center to Wichita if the interurban motorman had no trouble. Often the engine was unable to get up enough steam to keep to schedule. The car would occasionally run off the tracks, and the passengers would have to wait for it to be put on

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1. Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
Interview with Thad Goodrich, April 10, 1931.
 2. Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.
Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
 3. Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

again. There was little objection to these delays for the people had to pay only twenty-five cents a round trip.¹

The interurban owners conceived the idea of establishing a park as a means of attracting the people to Valley Center. Fisher's land two miles south of town was selected as a suitable spot, so preparations were made to get the park² in readiness. All the trees were carefully trimmed,³ the underbrush cut out, and the grass mowed.³ A dam was built in the river, and the water was raised to a depth of five feet.⁴ Mr. Fisher bought boats and rented them to pleasure seekers, and he also constructed a swimming pool.⁵

Mr. G. R. Davis built a stand and sold soft drinks, candies, and ice cream. A platform was built for the band which gave concerts on Sunday afternoons. Swings were put up, and on special days, such as the Fourth of July, Mr. Fisher would rent a merry-go-round for the use of the patrons. A diamond was marked off and base-ball games were played.

1. Ibid.

2. This park later became Wright Park and is now a part of the Continental Oil Lease.

3. Interview with Thad Goodrich, April 10, 1931.
Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.

4. Ibid.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 16, 1931.

5. Ibid.

Many people came from Wichita, and on Sundays the park was so crowded with picnickers that it was difficult for late comers to get a place.¹

Other people living on farms around Valley Center saw that they too might benefit from the boom, so they began having their land surveyed. Mr. Boyle added thirty acres east of Valley Center. Mr. Westfall added land south of the Main Street.² This included lands as far west as the Arkansas River and extended south for two miles. All this was graded for streets and the blocks and lots were staked off. There is some evidence found today on the farms south of town showing where streets had been graded.³

Some of this land was sold for business locations. There were very few new industries introduced into Valley Center during the boom. The majority of people coming to this part of Kansas to establish a business went to Wichita. In spite of the opportunities offered in Wichita, two new industries were started in Valley Center.

One of these new industries was the overall factory. It was located on the corner of Third and B.⁴ The factory

1. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 16, 1931.

2. Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 16, 1931.

3. Ibid.

4. McLaughlin's Garage now stands on this corner.

was equipped with sewing machines run by steam power. These machines were fastened to tables along one side of the room and on the other side were the cutting tables. The material would be placed several thicknesses deep and the outline of the pattern drawn on top of the cloth. A sharp knife instead of scissors was used for cutting. The men did the cutting, but the women did the sewing. There were about twenty-five employees.¹

The factory furnished a number of surrounding towns, as well as the local market, with overalls. These were as good as the overalls made today, but sold for only fifty cents a pair.² Shirts would be made for special orders.

There was a broom factory located west of the main part of town. Mr. Belden, the owner, and one other man made up the personnel of the factory. These two men were able to turn out brooms at the rate of one to two dozen a day. The factory was not very successful, so in a few years, it was closed down.

There were very few new stores established in Valley Center during the boom, but the ones that were here began

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1. Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
Interview with Thad Goodrich, April 10, 1931.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 17, 1931.
 2. Interview with Thad Goodrich, April 10, 1931.
Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 17, 1931.
 3. Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 17, 1931.
Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.

improving the interior and exterior of their stores.¹ Many of the merchants increased their stock of merchandise. Mr. Beach, who owned a general merchandise store in Valley Center, had been in Wichita and had seen the type of dress goods sold in the Wichita stores, so purchased a large supply² of the same kind for his store. But the women of the community preferred going to Wichita on the interurban to doing their shopping in Valley Center, and Mr. Beach did not get to sell his goods. Five years later, Mr. Beach³ sold the last of his dry goods purchased during the boom.

Many of the people were building and remodeling houses. The following is an excerpt from a current newspaper, showing the amount of building going on at this time:

G. H. Gregg has broke ground for a new house. Dr. Billings is ready for the carpenters on his.⁴ The frame work of the E. L. Carnahan's house on Avenue A loomed up in sight today showing us that he would soon be the possessor of a large and comfortable dwelling. Mr. Gearhart has nearly completed his residence on Meridian Street and our enterprising painter, D. W. Ellis, is giving it a coat of white.⁵

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1. Wichita Eagle, April 7, 1885.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 2. Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Wichita Eagle, April 7, 1885.
 5. Ibid., March 10, 1885.

The Burton Car Works had been established where Bridgeport is today, and the enterprising men of Valley Center saw an opportunity to increase the size of the town, so tried to influence the people employed in this factory to reside in Valley Center. A few came. The Valley Center people thought more would follow and began to build tenement houses in order that all new comers might have a place¹ in which to live. Many of these houses were never occupied and were torn down after the boom.

During the boom Luke Willis built a livery stable.² Prospective land purchasers would come up on the interurban then go to the livery stable and hire horses and drive to the farm land that was for sale. On some days every horse³ would be in use.

The price of lots greatly increased. Before the boom, the average price of lots was twenty-five dollars.⁴ During the boom, lots sold for two-hundred and fifty dollars in the residence district, and for more in the business district.⁵

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1. Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 17, 1931.
Interview with Thad Goodrich, April 10, 1931.
 2. Wichita Eagle, March 10, 1935.
 3. Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 17, 1931.
 4. Ibid.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.
 5. Interview with Mrs. G. R. Davis, April 7, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, April 28, 1931.

Nearly every one who had money was buying and selling land. One man made seventy-five dollars in three days by selling the lots that he had purchased. One man held his lots for forty years before he sold them in order to get his money out of them.

During the spring of 1885, the following was sent to the Wichita Eagle:

Uncle John Carpenter is exultant over our "prospectus future," and after a short conversation with him, it is very easy to imagine this place as spread over the larger part of Uncle J.'s farm, built up with fine residences having attractive boulevards and drives - in fact a populous and beautiful city besides which the radiance of Wichita pales into insignificance. We understand that he is about to make two additions on the north and west of town, and H. C. Boyle is about to make an addition of twenty acres on the east, and has already had applications for lots upon which building will be erected as soon as it is plotted. 1

Such was not to be the case, for "Uncle John" Carpenter had not taken into consideration that the boom would only be temporary. By 1886 the boom was declining and people were leaving with the newly acquired lots unpaid for. Any one wanting land could get it now by paying the mortgage or by paying twenty-five dollars for lots. The farm land that had been platted again became farm land. There was some trouble in regard to the titles to the farm lands because some of the lots had been sold from the center of the farms

1. Wichita Eagle, March 21, 1885.

and the individuals buying the land wanted clear titles to it all. Many had to take their cases to court to get them settled.

As the people began to move out many of the buildings were sold and taken away, and for several years Valley Center suffered from the collapse of the boom. At no time was the population any more than seven hundred and fifty¹ which is the population today (1931).

The school land in Valley Center had been sold to Mr. Carpenter and since he was interested in building up a city, he allowed the school house to be put on his ground.

On May 25, 1887, the people in the community held a school meeting and elected a school board. W. B. Goodrich, O. G. Jacobs, and B. I. Perrin were chosen. They met and decided that the next year there would be a three month term of school.

The first teacher was J. C. Barnham. In his boyhood he had been crippled, so was unable to do farm work. For this reason his family had given him a good education. He

1. A. N. Anderson, History of the State of Kansas, p. 114.

1. Interview with W. H. Perrin, April 17, 1931.

CHAPTER VIII

SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES

The majority of pioneer communities were interested in the welfare of their children, and as soon as there was a sufficient number, a teacher was hired and a school house secured.

The national government realized that the homesteaders did not always have money to finance education, so gave each township sections sixteen and thirty six. These lands could be sold with the understanding that the money be used for school needs.¹

The school lands in Valley Center had been sold to Mr. Carpenter and since he was interested in building up a city, he allowed the school house to be put on his ground.

On May 26, 1837, the people in the community held a school meeting and elected a school board. W. D. Goodrich, O. G. Jacobs, and S. I. Perrin were chosen. These men met and decided that the next year there would be a three month's term of school.²

The first teacher was J. D. Burnaugh. In his boyhood he had been crippled, so was unable to do farm work. For this reason his family had given him a good education. He

1. A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 294.

2. The Jasmine, p. 3.

graduated from a college in Lebanon, Ohio,¹ and taught school several years in Ohio before he came to Kansas. The school board knew that he had taught before, and when he was asked to accept the position, he readily consented.

Mr. Burnaugh lived north of Valley Center, and the men of the community mowed a path across the prairies from his home to the school so that it would be easier for him to get there.²

The following year a four month's term was held. Nellis Litson was hired to teach the school, and her contract read as follows:

Teacher's Contract

Kechi - Kansas.

It is hereby agreed, By and between School District No. 46 County of Sedgwick, State of Kansas and Miss N. Litson a legally qualified Teacher. . . . for a term of 4 months, for the sum of Twenty Six 26 00/100 Dollars per month, commencing on the 23th day of Aug. A. D. 1875, and the said School District hereby agrees to (honest) keep the School House in good repair, provide the necessary fuel and school register, and for the services of said Teacher, as prescribed above, well and duly performed, to pay said Teacher the sum of One hundred fore 100/100 Dollars on or before the 15th day of Jan.A.D. 1876

(Signed) Aug. 16, 1875

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1. Chapman Brothers, The Album of Sedgwick County, (Chapman Brothers, Chicago, 1888), p. 243.
 2. Interview with W. H. Perrin, July 24, 1930.

Attest
G. W. Gregg
District Clerk

Daniel McNeal
Director
Nellis Litson
Teacher 1

The building that was used had been built in the country as a home for one of the early settlers, and since it was not in use, the owner was willing to sell it to the school board. It was moved in from the country and placed across the street from the site of the present school house.²

It was not long before the school house was too small to accommodate all the children. Three children sat in seats which were built for two.³ In 1876 the building was sold⁴ and a new one room frame school was constructed.

Mrs. Thompson had given the community eight lots on which to build in 1876, and the new structure was built on these.⁵

For eleven years this building was used, and then it

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1. Letter from Jessie Carrothers in which was a copy of the contract.
 2. Interview with George Thompson, July 7, 1931.
Interview with Mrs. Mable Sharples, June 26, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. M. E. Sweetland, July 7, 1930.
 3. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
 4. This building now serves with a lean-to addition as the home of McCoins, west of the A. V. I. tracks.
 5. The school today stands in the same place.

was sold to the United Presbyterians, who used it as a
church.¹

While the new building was under construction, some
place had to be found where school might be held. All of
the empty business houses² were used as well as the rooms³
above the overall factory.

The new building was of brick and consisted of two
rooms. There was a great deal of trouble in regard to the
new school. The people had disagreed as to its location,
and those who did not get their way about the school site
began condemning the construction. A crack appeared in
the wall, and many of the people declared it unsafe. It
was finally decided to tear down the building, and the man
who wrecked it said that it was so well put together that⁴
he could hardly tear it down.

When the school was first established, there was one
teacher to teach all eight grades, but in a few years, two
teachers were hired. If the pupils wished to attend high

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1. Interview with George Thompson, June 14, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. M. E. Sweetland, July 7, 1930.
 2. Interview with Mrs. Mable Sharples, June 26, 1930.
Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
 3. Interview with Thad Goodrich, April 10, 1931.
Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
 4. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.

¹
school, they would have to go elsewhere, usually to Wichita.

The social life of the town centered around the school. The most common entertainment was the spelling contest. The County Superintendent would be invited to attend the contest, and the honor of pronouncing the words fell to his lot. Two captains would be elected and they would choose sides. The people would line up on each side of the building and the words would be pronounced, first to one side, then to the other. Each person would be given one chance to spell the word, and if he missed, he had to take his seat. As the spellers decreased in numbers, the words became more difficult. In some instances the people were able to spell all the words in the spelling books, so the Superintendent would take names from the Bible in order that one individual could win the contest.²

Another form of entertainment sponsored by the schools was the literary society. In these the debates furnished the most enjoyment. The speakers, three for each side, were elected the week before they had to debate. The question, usually one dealing with some government problem, would be given to them when they were chosen, and for one week they could study the question as much as they wished.

1. In 1906 Valley Center offered a two year high school course, and a few years later the complete four years were given. Valley Center Index, August 13, 1906.

2. Interview with Josephine Thompson, March 4, 1931.
Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.

The crowd was anxious to hear what each had to say, and often the arguments became quite heated.¹

At each meeting the editor would read his paper. He was elected for one month, and each week he was to learn all the humorous and unusual happenings to relate in his paper. This was the one means of providing comedy for the crowd.²

In addition to the debate and the reading of the paper at each literary, there would be singing. Occasionally the entire crowd would join in the "community sing" and again different people would give solos. The school as a whole often furnished a song or two as part of the entertainment.³ Sometimes readings were given.

These meetings were held in the school house and the country as well as the town people would attend. The school house would usually be so crowded that it was impossible to place another chair in the room.⁴

The school met the educational and social needs of the community, but the spiritual need had to be met as well. Mr. Carpenter was interested in religion and helped to or-

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1. Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.
 2. Interview with Wallace Goodrich, March 10, 1931.
 2. Interview with George Thompson, April 2, 1931.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

ganize the first Sunday School in this part of Kansas.¹ He had just built a new corn crib on his farm, and after talking to Mr. Case and Mr. Thompson, it was decided to hold the newly organized Sunday School in the corn crib.² Every Sunday about a dozen people would gather for the services. These were opened with singing, without the accompaniment of any musical instrument. After several songs were sung, a prayer would be offered and the Scripture read. This was followed by a discussion of some Biblical subject in which all the adults took part. The children would sit in awe and listen to these Bible students discuss the weighty problems and wonder if they would ever be able to do the same thing.³ After the discussion the men would take turns in giving addresses.

By 1875 there were enough Methodists in the community to want their own church. So they left the non-denominational Sunday School of Mr. Carpenter's and organized their own. They were not enough in number or with large enough finances⁴ to build a church so used the school house from 1875-1885.

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1. Interview with Josephine Thompson, March 4, 1931.
Interview with Dwight Beach, March 11, 1931.
 2. Interview with Josephine Thompson, March 4, 1931.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Interview with Goy Carnahan, June 14, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. M. E. Sweetland, July 7, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. Mable Sharples, June 26, 1930.

In this year Mr. Boyle, one of the wealthy citizens of Valley Center, gave the Methodists part of his land on which to build a church.¹ The members began to raise the money necessary to build the church. Soon enough money was available, and the lumber was hauled in from Emporia and the construction started. It was not long before the one room building was completed.² The church was dedicated by Reverend Osen, who was the minister of the church.³

The Sunday School was held every Sunday morning and the church every other Sunday morning and every Sunday night. On alternating Sundays the minister had to go to Park Church to preach.⁴

The church soon became too small and another room was added on the south side of the building. This building served the Methodists as a church until 1915 when a new one was built.⁵

As soon as the Methodists were able to finance a pastor, they wanted a parsonage for him to live in, and secured a

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1. This church was built where Mrs. Ramsey's house now stands on Meridian.
 2. Interview with Mrs. J. J. Lambert, July 7, 1930.
Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
 3. Interview with Mrs. J. J. Lambert, July 7, 1930.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. J. J. Lambert, July 7, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. M. E. Sweetland, July 7, 1930.

small two room house in the west part of town. Later two rooms were added, which was a great event in the life of the Methodists who were able to finance the work. When the new church was built, the members wanted the parsonage to be closer to the church, and therefore one was constructed just north of the church.¹

The Christian Church was the next one to be organized. A group of settlers from Illinois formed the nucleus for this church.² They had settled northeast of Valley Center and had used the Park School House for their services³ from 1884 to 1886.

In this year Mr. Westfall gave land in Valley Center to the Christians on which a church was to be built.⁴ The building was financed by pledges from the people, but the old soldiers with pensions had most of the financial burden to bear for they were the only ones that had any ready money.⁵ They did not develop as rapidly nor were they as influential as the other churches due to the lack of finances

1. Interview with Mrs. M. E. Sweetland, July 7, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. J. J. Lambert, July 7, 1930.
Interview with Mrs. Mable Sharples, June 26, 1930.

2. Interview with Mrs. Mable Sharples, June 26, 1930.
Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.

3. Ibid.

4. The church constructed in 1886 is still used by the Christians.

5. Interview with George Thompson, June 14, 1930.

and to the absence of a resident minister.

A number of the people wanting a United Presbyterian Church met and organized one in 1887. A committee purchased the school house and then moved it to the north part of town.¹ The church was a prospering one of a hundred members, but so many of the congregation left in 1889 when the Oklahoma strip was opened² to settlement that the church was not able to survive much longer. The few that were left were not financially able to support a minister and keep up a church, so they disorganized a few years later³ and the members joined one of the other churches. The church building was sold to the Rivers Brothers, who moved it east of town to be used as a community house.⁴

The Baptist Church was the last one of the three permanent churches in Valley Center. In 1882 W. J. Sandefer organized a church in Kechi Township, but they were unable to keep up the expenses, and soon disbanded.⁵ In 1886 a few members from this church and part of the residents of

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1. At this time it was no farther north than the Methodist parsonage is today. The church was located on the same ground. Interview with Mrs. Clara Vallance, June 30, 1930.
 2. F. L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, p. 69.
 3. Interview with Mrs. Clara Vallance, June 30, 1930.
 4. Ibid.
Interview with George Thompson, June 17, 1930.
 5. W. A. Ayers, History of the Walnut Valley Baptist Association, p. 47.

Valley Center formed another one in Valley Center. There were only seventeen members, and in 1891 the Baptist Church was again disorganized and for a number of years, there was no Baptist Church in the town.

From these simple beginnings, the school and churches have continued to function and help to meet needs that can not be met by any other organizations. These two furnished practically all the social life of the community as well as the educational and religious life.

Mr. Wallace Goodrich furnished a great deal of material about the railroad and the early history of the town, as did George Thompson. The information about the early schools came from Mrs. Mable Stargles and Mr. H. F. Ferris, who were pupils in the first school at Valley Center. Mr. George Thompson gave a different side of school life, that pertaining to the social life.

The pioneer history before 1870 was the contribution of Mr. Otto Ruslow, who came to central Kansas in 1854.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

When one begins to write there is always the question of where to get the desired material. In this case the most valuable comes from the pioneers of Valley Center. Mr. Dwight Beach, a homesteader of the seventies, has a vast store house of information about the "early times." He saw the town develop from a bare prairie to a thriving city of eight hundred. Mr. Beach had the experience of travelling from Illinois to Kansas in a prairie schooner, filing a claim, and helping to build the town. He was in business in Valley Center before the town was chartered and helped to secure the charter for the town, and was the one to go to Topeka for it. He also helped in building the railroads. Mr. Beach is writing an account of his life and part of the material used came from his story.

Mr. Wallace Goodrich furnished a great deal of material about the railroads and the early history of the town, as did George Thompson.

The information about the early schools came from Mrs. Mable Sharples and Mr. W. H. Perrin, who were pupils in the first school at Valley Center. Mr. George Thompson gave a different side of school life, that pertaining to the social life.

The pioneer history before 1870 was the contribution of Mr. Otto Ramlow, who came to central Kansas in 1868.

The experiences that he had were typical of the pioneer before the coming of the settlers. He also helped to build up the community around Valley Center.

The information given by Mrs. G. R. Davis was valuable because she was directly connected as her husband was in the real estate business during the boom, and was the ticket agent for the interurban.

The material given by the other people interviewed was limited in importance due to their lack of participation in the events or because their memories were not reliable.

General information regarding the Kansas History came from the books that were used. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, was the most helpful because it gave an account of the surveying and settling of Grant Township, Sedgwick County, and information regarding the railroads. It contains so much material that it was impossible to devote much space to each small locality.

The History of the American Frontier by Paxson substantiates the facts given by the pioneers and gives a picture of pioneer life as it was.

For material pertaining to the State of Kansas, Arnold's History of Kansas and Prentiss' History of Kansas were used. Due to the fact that both are text books, the material was limited in scope.

Other sources were helpful for minor references, but are not as important as the books already mentioned.

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