

# **ROSSVILLE CENTENNIAL BOOKLET COMPILED IN 1971**

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**Note: The point of view of this document is 1971.**



## PEOPLES STATE BANK ROSSVILLE, KANSAS 66533

CAPITAL AND SURPLUS, \$400,000.00

SERVING ROSSVILLE SINCE 1909

### CONGRATULATIONS ROSSVILLE

In July, 1971, Rossville, Kansas celebrates its one hundredth birthday. No one living in Rossville today was around on the day that it was born. Many small communities in Kansas have withered away but Rossville will go on forever becoming a stronger community each year.

On March 11, 1971, Peoples State Bank quietly took notice of its sixty second birthday. Only one original stockholder is living today - Mrs. Leonore E. Gresser. This bank owes its existence mainly to Mr. C.E. Gresser, its organizer who spent over fifty years in Rossville and who brought this bank through many trying years. Time has taken its toll of past stockholders, directors, officers, employees and its many valued and loyal customers. The efforts of all those people made it possible for our bank to be here today and for us to enjoy the Rossville Centennial. We are proud to be located in Rossville and are deeply grateful to the people of the past, the present and we look forward to being associated with the future people of Rossville and its surrounding area at large.

#### ORIGINAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS in 1909

H. F. Pratt, M.D., President  
Morris Bond, Vice President  
C. E. Gresser, Cashier  
Vince Martinek, Ira Hopkins,  
H. J. LaFountain and J.K. Miller

#### PRESENT OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS in 1971

Joe M. Gresser, President  
Glenn Crayton, Vice President  
Juanita M. Cormack, Cashier  
Donis L. Reser, Asst. Cashier  
Don F. Gresser, Rolland D. Parr  
Dillon E. Fisher

During the interim years we were fortunate to have the services and loyalty of the following officers and directors:  
Mrs. M. E. Vawter, Mr. A. S. Hartzell, Mr. H. F. Syring,  
Mr. L. T. Houck, Mr. Gus Kassebaum, Mr. John Reid and  
Mr. Frank R. Dannefer.

PEOPLES STATE BANK, ROSSVILLE, KANSAS

Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation  
Member Federal Reserve System



## **FOREWORD**

The research and writing of the local history has been a fascinating and enjoyable experience for everyone who has helped with the project.

Historical facts are available from many sources, but it was only through the fine cooperation of the people in the community who generously shared their pictures, experiences and other materials, that it was possible to provide this book with warm, human interest stories.

We have tried to give a comprehensive history of Rossville City and Rossville Township as the two are linked closely together. Space requirements prohibited the use of all the information collected, however we have endeavored to give an over-all picture of the growth of Rossville through the past century. The material that was not used will be filed in the Rossville Community Library for the use of future historians and students.

Any discrepancies or errors that may appear in this book are purely unintentional, and there was no desire to cause injury to any person or family.

We especially want to give credit to the Kansas State Historical Society for their assistance.

LETTER FROM THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON  
June 2, 1971

To the people of Rossville, Kansas

The observance of your one hundredth anniversary is an occasion of deep pride for you as well as for the nation.

The high purpose and vital community spirit that are reflected in your eventful history are in the best tradition of our American way of life.

Armed with these same qualities in the years ahead, I know that you will strive to be in the vanguard of constructive civic accomplishment. I welcome your full partnership in the demanding tasks we face as a nation, and in the good that promises to come from our united efforts.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard Nixon", is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

## **EARLY HISTORY**

It is believed the aboriginal Indians of Kansas were those of the Caddoan family, the principal tribes being the Wichitas and the Pawnees. The Pawnee were reported in the valley of the Kansas River where these tribes were, in the greater part of what is now central and eastern Kansas until about 1700. About that time the Kansa Indians of the Dhegiha group of the Siouan family traditionally came from the Ohio valley, settled first along the Missouri and by 1880 had moved up to the mouth of the



Blue. The westward movement of the Siouans was due probably to food quest as they followed the straggling buffalo.

M. de Bourgmond, a French trader, crossed Eastern Kansas to the approximate location of Salina in the year 1724. He left the Kansa village site (near present Doniphan, Kansas) accompanied by forty persons on October 8. The French flag was carried at the head of the column and baggage was packed on horses. On October 11, 1724, he crossed the Kansas River.

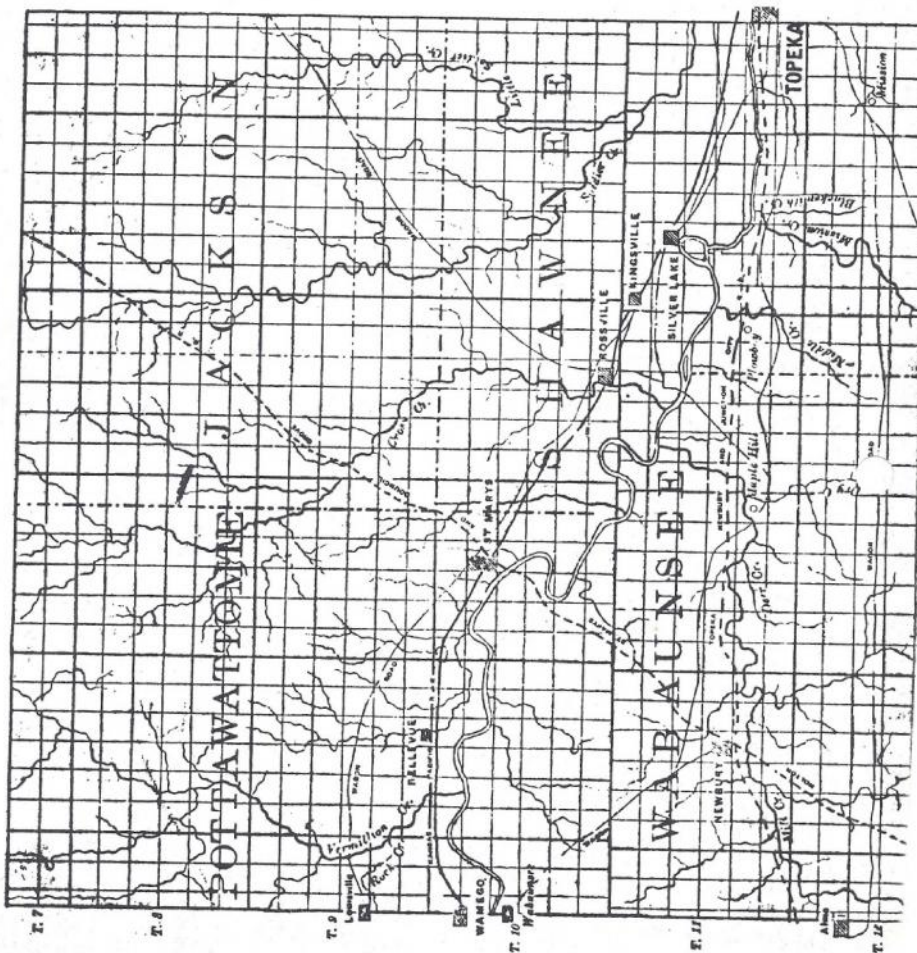
It is quite likely Bourgmond forded the Kansas River south of Rossville. The following is from Bulletin 174 from the Bureau of American Ethnology, "An Introduction to Kansas Archeology" by Waldo R. Wedel: "His mention of a ford suggests, though it does not necessarily prove, that from the Kansa village he was making for a crossing well known to the Kanza, Missouri, Padouca, and other Indians accompanying him – a point, perhaps, where better footing could be found than elsewhere along the stream. Such a crossing place, known as Rocky Ford and apparently frequently utilized during the nineteenth century, was situated about 18 miles above Topeka, near present Rossville and the juncture of Cross Creek with the Kansas River."

The Pawnee were a large and powerful tribe and many battles confined the Kansa to the Missouri and Kansas River bottoms. The Kansa tribe battled with the other Indian tribes, mainly Iowas, Sacs and Otoes who ventured into their territory and who were more numerous and better armed. The Kansa began to diminish in number, both from warring and from disease, and did not learn ways of supporting themselves when the supplies of wild game decreased. The Kansa ceded their lands, in 1825, to the United States, much of which they did not own as the Pawnees held claim to Kansas country except for a narrow margin along the Missouri River.

The Pottawatomie Indians along with the Chippewas and Ottawas, signed the last great treaty with the Indians east of the Mississippi at Chicago in September, 1833. These tribes gave up their holdings of some five million acres of land for a consideration of insignificant amount.

They were coerced and consented to the cession for the simple reason that they were helpless and they knew it. They protested that they did not wish to sell their land but were unable to stand against the power of the government. In the years of 1835 and 1836 many of the Pottawatomie were herded and driven by soldiers to the "Platte Purchase," that part of north Missouri, west of a line drawn due north through the mouth of the Kansas River. These were principally of the Prairie Band. They were permitted to remain there but for a short time. The Pottawatomie were then settled in southwestern Iowa, most of them living in the vicinity of the present Council Bluffs. In 1846 a treaty was concluded by which the Pottawatomie, Chippewa and Ottawa tribes which had desire of reunited should have the east thirty miles of the old Kansas reservation then recently taken over by the government. The tract of land given to the Indians lay in the present counties of Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Jackson and Pottawatomie. No member of the Ottawa and Chippewa tribe, or at most very few, settled in the reservation on the Kansas River. The Michigan Pottawatomie were the last to come to the Kansas River reservation. In 1848 the first group of Pottawatomie Indians passed through Uniontown, which was located about a mile south of the Kansas River, southeast of the town of Willard. The group crossed the only ford on the river north of Uniontown, and later reached the location of the present city of Rossville. The number on the Reserve in 1855 totaled 3,440. Several of the influential chiefs lived along Cross Creek. The agency was established at the point where the old Oregon Trail crossed that stream – now Rossville.

From information in the official reports of the Indian agents there was continuing and increasing pressure to allot lands to those Indians desiring to have title. The Citizen Band could adopt white ways and settle down and till the soil. The Prairie Band wished to hold lands in common and hold to their old ways and customs. A treaty was signed at the Indian Agency at Rossville in 1861, providing for allotment in separate tracts to those who had adopted customs of the whites and desired to have their lands allotted. The lands, given to those desiring to hold them in common, were to be selected in a single body. This was to be the Prairie Band located on the Diminished Reserve in Jackson County. All were to retain an equal right to the proceeds of the surplus land which, by treaty, was to be sold to the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad. An 1862 census showed a tribal population of 2,259. In the report of the Commissioner of Indian affairs for 1863, the agency report of W.W. Ross stated "the allotment of land under their treaty of the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, 1861, has been completed." It was recommended that those holding their land in common should be permitted to sell their reservation and buy a home in the Indian Territory. The report said: "I cannot but think it is for the interest of both portions of the tribe and the government, for them to be separated." This was the old argument. It was always invoked in some form to the detriment of the Indians. The white man wanted the Indian's land. He did not care how he got it – just so he got it. While many Indian agents were upright men, having the good of the Indians at heart, a great majority of them were against the Indians, and for the speculators.



Sedgwick's map of the Pottawatomie Reservation in Eastern Kansas

An early newspaper account tells us that a Mr. Joseph Bourassa lived in this vicinity among the Indians. He helped form the Pottawatomi alphabet and was an interpreter. He was considered the best they ever had, and signed the 1861 treaty as "United States Interpreter." He also wrote a manuscript of the History of the Pottawatomi Indian. He was employed by a Chicago company for the purpose of investigating land titles for possible fraud in and around that city which formerly belonged to a portion of the tribe.

The Pottawatomi reserve was traversed by the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Riley military road and the Oregon and California roads. Several families settled on the west side of the creek near the Cross Creek ford where the roads crossed that stream. Those who settled here, about 1848, were John Bassho, Stephen McPherson, William Martel, Alexander Rodd, Francis Bergeron, Anthony Tacier, William Masseau and a man named "Metsepa," meaning the "cross" because its junction with the Kansas River resembles a cross.

A bridge was built with government funds for Military and Indian use by three of the first settlers, Bergeron, Tacier and Lawton. It was located in the northern part of present Rossville near or at the ford, and was a toll bridge for immigrants.

In 1853 a white trader, William Dyer, who had married an Indian, built a trading post of logs. The floor was made from logs split in halves and laid with the flat, splintered side up. The door was also made of the split logs and hung on wooden hinges. The building was covered with oak shingles RIVEN FROM THE TREE. The only other dwellings along Cross Creek were a few bark wigwams with a hole in the top for the smoke to escape and an entrance at the side covered with a Mackinaw blanket. These were the residences of the Indians at Rossville. Dyer, after a year or two, moved to Ozawie where he helped to start that town. He was an active proslavery man of the Blue Lodge societies.

A year or two after Dyer left, Colonel A. G. Boone, a grandson of the famous Daniel Boone, had a small log store here in association with James Dahoney. Colonel Boone was noted as a resident of Uniontown before coming to Rossville and had a trading post there which was reported in 1856 to have been plundered by armed marauders.

Within a few years, the small community, then called Cross Creek, began to take on the aspects of a town. A blacksmith shop and a wagon shop were added and in 1861 Doctor Gabbey was moved in by the government for the benefit of the Pottawatomi Indians. Licensed by the government, James Dahoney, a trader, erected a cottonwood board shanty with a door hung on "genuine" iron strap hinges, the wonder of the whole tribe. Soon after a log school house was built and a yellow-haired school teacher, Mrs. Gibson Metty from Iowa, was hired. Mrs. Metty had been a teacher for the Pottawatomi Indians in Iowa before they were moved to this reserve. There were about 15 students, most of which were Indians.

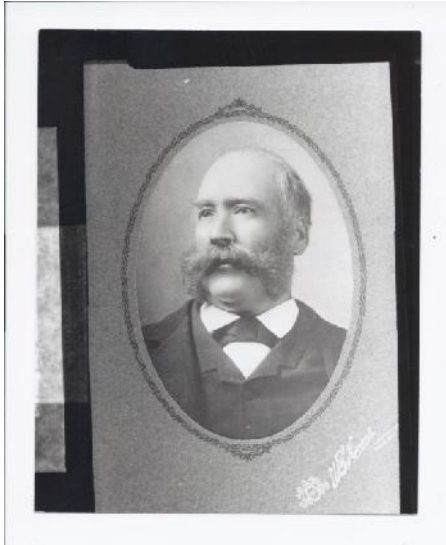
James Baldan came to this area in 1846 and settled west of the creek in 1855 (now the Pete Navarre estate). He was the maternal grandfather of Peter and Joe Navarre. In 1855, George W. James, who was from Maryland, was on his way to California, but was detained here because of sickness. Upon recovery he became identified with the interests of the Pottawatomi and remained, devoting his attention to them. He later was general store clerk on the reservation and was considered an authority on any matter connected with the Pottawatomi. He became agent for them in 1897 and 1898. Cyrus Higginbotham came to Cross Creek in 1858 and later married Miss Mary Howard. He was for many years a leading citizen of Rossville. George Stackhouse, a stone mason, settled here in 1858 and remained the rest of his life.



Cyrus W. Higginbotham

A few hides, furs, and pelts bringing in some \$2,000.00 per year were shipped from the 30 mile square reserve. These were shipped to some point on the Missouri River in great lumbering wagons drawn by oxen. All merchandise, lumber, grain, or supplies of whatever nature were drawn in these same ox wagons from Leavenworth City, St. Joseph and Westport Landing (now Kansas City).

Dr. Robert S. Gabbey was appointed government physician at St. Marys in 1857 and at Rossville in 1861. he was the first justice of the peace appointed by Governor Crawford in 1867.



Dr. Robert S. Gabbey





Mrs. Robert S. Gabbey

The Indian Agency for several years was located at Cross Creek and it was here that the Treaty of 1861 was made and concluded November 15, between "William W. Ross, Commissioner on the part of the United States, and the chiefs, braves, and headmen of the Pottawatomi nation of Indians, on the part of said nation." "Said nation of Indians did, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 1862, by a committee composed of Shawque (chief), Topenubbee (chief), We-wehseh (chief), Mc-yenco (chief) and Shomen (brave), appointed to transact all their national business between them and the agent of the United States and the Indian Department, and by Joseph N. Bourassa, George L. Young, B.H. Bertrand, M.B. Beaubien, L.H. Ogee, John Tipton, and Lewis Vieux, in the presence of Clark W. Thompson (Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Superintendency) and Lewis S. Hayden, John B. Gordon, and Elisha Goddard, give their free and voluntary assent to the amendments made by the Senate in the resolution aforesaid."

When the allotments were made under the treaty of 1861, about 75 white men and six or seven white women who had married into the tribe also received allotments. The Prairie Band of the Pottawatomi, numbering about 780, moved to the diminished reserve in present Jackson County.

Lewis Bellaire with his family came to live on the west side of the creek.

From this point forward, the success of the community was a certainty. The Indians and whites became citizens together. "A baseball club was formed, a race track made, a preacher, Brother Conant, hired. The attendance to each of these on Sabbath was good, each respecting the business hours of the other. A game of ball was engaged in before services, the racing coming off immediately afterward, but from conscientious scruples, the Minister never joined in these."



William W. Ross

W.W. Ross was born in 1828 in Huron, Ohio. His parents, Sylvester and Cynthia Ross, were youthful pioneers on the Western Reserve of Ohio and were originally from the New England States. Ross was deprived of formal schooling as he grew up in the Ohio territory where educational advantages were limited. He learned much concerning history and government affairs from daily conversations with his father, who was a man of intelligence. In 1846 he went with his parents to the new territory of Wisconsin and saw history in the making as it grew into a state. By this time, Ross was 18 years of age and had become dissatisfied with farming. He took an interest in the printer's trade and learned the business at Janesville, Wisconsin. Proving himself an apt student, he soon became foreman of the FREE DEMOCRAT, a newspaper in Milwaukee.

He married Mary Elizabeth Berry in the spring of 1855, and he and his bride started out in a wagon drawn by a team of oxen, pioneering into Kansas territory. Ross had with him as teamster a free Negro whose papers he had secured before leaving Wisconsin. He encountered serious difficulties in passing through Missouri when the Missourians at different times tried to take the Negro away from him, under the pretense that he was an escaped slave. Even after reaching Lawrence several unsuccessful attempts were made to take the man by force. This circumstance identified Ross prominently with the free-state men.

He located on a claim near Lawrence and very shortly after a mob made a third attempt to capture the colored man. About 50 men, armed with rifles, rallied to the protection of Mr. Ross, his family, and the colored man, after threats of violence had been made against him. This is said to be the first rally against pro-slavery aggression.

In 1855, Ross came to Topeka to assist John Speer in printing material for the constitutional convention. In December of 1856 he became associated with Speer in the editorial management and publication of the Kansas Tribune. This was one of the first newspaper publications in Kansas. Early in 1857, his brother, Edmund G. Ross (later appointed United States Senator to fill the unexpired term of James Lane) purchased Speer's interest and it was published by the Ross Brothers until the summer of 1858.

In 1858, W.W. Ross was elected public printer and in 1859 the Ross Brothers established the Kansas State Record in Topeka. They conducted this publication until 1861, making it "one of the finest, ablest Republican papers of Kansas" according to the words of a fellow newspaperman.

In his participation in the free-state struggles, Ross engaged in conflicts between the free state and pro-slavery forces. He was a member of the Leavenworth constitutional convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln for President. In May 1861, he was appointed by Lincoln as government agent to the Pottawatomí Indians, and served until 1865. It cannot be denied, however, that Ross helped negotiate for the purchase of Indian land for real estate speculators and other white men who wanted the land.

Because of the treaty of 1861, four townsite promoters were able to purchase the 100 acre townsite in 1870 from Anthony Navarre, a Mormon preacher, and his Indian wife So-na-ne-qua. The abstract of title of most lots in town still bears their names. Anthony Navarre had much influence over the Pottawatomí, and for many years served as their representative in Washington. After 1859 the Indians received their annuities at his farm.

Although this was an extremely desirable area for agriculture and the raising of livestock, it was not possible for the early settlers to procure manufactured goods from the East without paying an extremely high freight bill. It was also impossible to ship their grain and produce economically. River freight was tried but the Kaw River often times did not have enough water to make shipping dependable so the answer to this problem was the railroad. Rossville's answer came May 18, 1866, when the first train passed through the town.

In 1855, Rossville was located in Douglas Township, Calhoun County; however in 1858 the name was changed to Jackson County. Another change was made in 1868, and this area was brought in Silver Lake Township, Shawnee County. This change did not meet with the approval of many of the townspeople mainly because taxes would be higher.

## **ROSSVILLE TOWNSHIP**

As the population increased, it became necessary to petition the Board of County Commissioners for a new township. In the January 16, 1871 Journal of the Board of County Commissioners we find the boundaries of the new Rossville township. They also ordered an election to be held in April, 1871. The journal of April 13, 1871 lists the names of the newly elected township officials.

**16 January, 1871**

**Adoption of  
Rossville  
Township**

Ordered by the Board of County Commissioners of Shawnee County Kansas at an adjourned term of the regular January term 1871 of said Board that a new township be organized and set off from a portion of Silver Lake Township, Shawnee County Kansas to be known and described as follows:

**“To Wit” Commencing in the channel of the Kansas River where said road is crossed by the range line between Ranges Thirteen (13) and Fourteen (14) in said Shawnee County, thence northward on the range line to north line of Shawnee County, thence westerly on the county line to the northwest corner of said county thence southerly on the county line to the center of the Kansas River, thence down the channel of said river in the center thereof to the point of commencement.**

Said township known and styled as Rossville Township, Shawnee County Kansas. The first election in said township shall be held in the village of Rossville in said township.

**P.J. Bonebreak,  
Clerk**

**William Wellhouse,  
Chairman**

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13 April, 1871

The Board of County Commissioners of Shawnee County Kansas approved Bond for newly elected township officers.

T.W. Meserve	Justice of Peace	Rossville Township
E.T. James	Justice of Peace	Rossville Township
A. Merriett	Justice of Peace	Rossville Township
Samuel Beal	Trustee	Rossville Township
James Cass	Treasurer	Rossville Township
Frank C. Saunders	Clerk	Rossville Township

The Oregon Trail passed through the little settlement in the 1840s. The trail began at Independence, Missouri, and after following the Santa Fe Trail for a short distance, branched and followed the Kaw River. Some of the caravans crossed the river at what is now Topeka and came through Silver Lake to the ford on Cross Creek. Others followed the river west to Uniontown (located about a mile southeast of Willard), crossed the Kaw at that point and then drove north to the ford on Cross Creek. From this point they continued north and west past the St. Marys Mission to the Platte River then west to the mountains and eventually they reached the promised land in Oregon. The first big influx of travelers was in 1843 and continued until 1849. When gold was discovered, the travelers turned toward California instead of Oregon. In the [1850s] the use of the trail continued, but at a slower rate, until the railroad went through in 1866. The settlers on the west bank of Cross Creek developed a nice trade, servicing the needs of the travelers on the Oregon Trail.



The settlement on Cross Creek was in a very strategic position on the Military Road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley. Travel up the Kaw could not be depended upon and man and supplies had to be hauled to Fort Riley overland. The ford and the bridge on Cross Creek were indeed popular places. The Overland Stage Company also used this route. Because of the heavy traffic, "Big Alex" Nadeau took advantage of his farm's location two and one-half miles west of town and built a large house for an inn. The stage used to stop there for either a meal or for overnight. The large house was divided into small rooms just big enough for a cot. There was one large room over the kitchen with room for five men. "Big Alex" was a very large man and filled the entire seat on his spring wagon. After the railroad was built, the train crew would stop at the inn presumably to buy some "buttermilk" but actually they were buying wine. This is how the "Buttermilk Station" came to be given to the old inn.



BUTTERMILK STATION

"Buttermilk Station"

Mr. and Mrs. John Pearl, who have retired to a home in St. Marys, lived for many years in the old house. It is believed to be one of the oldest houses still standing in the Rossville area. Mr. Pearl said that when they remodeled the house in 1944 they discovered that the only finished lumber was the door casings and the wainscoting. Some of this bore the stamp, A.P. Nadeau, Cross Creek. Mr. Pearl said this lumber was freighted in from Leavenworth. The remainder of the house was built from native lumber sawed in this area. The old house is built of heavy native timbers, mortised and tenoned and still stands true after more than 100 years.

The early village was known as "Cross Creek," taking its name from the nearby creek. In January, 1862, James Dahoney applied for a post office in the name of "Rossville," honoring Wm. W. Ross,

Indian Agent. When the request was granted by the United States Government he received the appointment as the first postmaster. James Dahoney lived in a log cabin on Walnut Street (where Mrs. Ora Pelfrey now lives) and this was Rossville's first post office.

From Kansas Daily Commonwealth, 19 May, 1870, Topeka, Kansas.

### **A New Town**

Edna is a new town recently laid out on the K.P.R.R., 18 miles west of Topeka. This town has a most beautiful and attractive site on Cross Creek, near its junction with the Kaw River.

No part of the Kaw Valley presents a finer location for an active business place. The surrounding country for miles is of the most fertile character, and is being rapidly settled by an industrious and intelligent class of citizens. We are informed by one of the proprietors, Mr. Harvey H. Wilcox, that the town is now platted and everything ready for business. Messrs. James and Line of Topeka have established themselves here and are doing a thriving trade in dry goods, groceries, tinware, etc.

There are several other business houses in the course of erection, and many live men are procuring locations for trade and residences. The liberality of the citizens has already erected a comfortable school house in which the day school is maintained; also Sabbath school and regular preaching.

A generous policy has been adopted by the proprietors toward settlers. To those who will erect substantial buildings and engage in any legitimate business, lots will be given them sufficient to place their buildings on; but lots will neither be given nor sold to those contemplating a traffic in whiskey.

It is the design of the proprietors to render Edna, in all respects, an attractive and profitable point to engage in any respectable business, but they will spare no pains to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors, believing that to be suicidal to the interests of any town.

All those desiring to avail themselves of the opportunity there presented, will do well to call on Wilcox, Adams & Co., opposite court house, Topeka.

From the above article in the Kansas Daily Commonwealth we learn that the city now known as Rossville was originally called Edna. The village of Edna was conceived by a group of four men, A.C. Sherman, Colonel George W. Veale, H.H. Wilcox and Fielding Johnson. These four original proprietors purchased in 1870 100 acres of land on the east side of Cross Creek, from Anthony Navarre and So-na-ne-que, his wife. The townsite was surveyed and platted by J.B. Whittaker, County Surveyor, Topeka.

Of course there was already a rather haphazard village on the west side of Cross Creek, dating back to the first settlements made in 1848 when the Pottawatomie Indians were moved to this area. In 1862 this village was granted a United States Post Office in the name of Rossville. There was no formal city government in Rossville and things were probably rather wild and woolly, judging from Dr. Robert Gabbey's account of the early days.

The founders of the new village of Edna saw an opportunity to purchase some land, promote a new town and in turn benefit financially. This entire area was opening up to settlers and was bound to grow. It is difficult to promote a new town in an entire new region, but they tried to make Edna spring up like a mushroom beside a village with another name already established. The settlers already here simply would not accept the town of Edna. With all the grandiose plans of the promoters, Edna was not a success. The railroad stopped on the west side of the creek at the village of Rossville. There was a small water tank filled by a pump, operated by one horse, pumping water from the creek to service the engines. There was not a depot building as we think of depots today but there was a rude shelter for the use of the passengers.

Colonel Veale and A.C. Sherman realized that where the depot was located would determine the success of their town, so after much haggling and some pretty hot arguments a compromise was reached; they would abandon the name of Edna and accept the name of Rossville; and they paid \$1,000 to build a depot in their town. This first depot stood in the area where Mrs. Andricks now lives. Early in 1871 the town of Rossville became a reality and a success for the townsite promoters.





## **ROSSVILLE TOWNSHIP**

The population of the township in 1878 was 600. By 1899 the population had climbed to 954 with Rossville city registering 524. There were 895 horses, 109 mules, 5,000 cattle, 146 sheep, and 18,000 hogs. Personal property outside of exemptions was \$99,600.

There are three public cemeteries in Rossville Township.

The Olive Branch Cemetery was started in connection with the United Brethren Church. When there was a funeral at the church, the bell would slowly and mournfully toll the number of years of age of the individual who had died.

Rossville Cemetery was developed in many stages. There is the very old part on the crest of the hill. The next development was by John Fritz and it is located west of the small building on the grounds. Later Jennie Pratt and Gus Stanley laid out the remainder of the present cemetery. A number of graves that were originally in the cemetery near Kingsville were moved here. In 1962 Judge W.W. Harvey left a special bequest of funds for improvements and now water is available on the grounds.

The Moravian National Cemetery started with the wish of Mrs. Martin Stach wanting to be buried near her home. She contacted George Hejtmanek and John Kratina about her wish, and with the acre the family donated, the cemetery was platted about 1893. The first deed was in 1897 and has the following names recorded: Martin Stach, George Olejnik, John Kratina, Paul Kovar and James Rezac.

The Moravian Cemetery Organization is very active. They meet once a year (always the day after Christmas) and elect officers. One of the main functions of the group is to see that there is someone to care for the cemetery. At present there are about 113 graves.

Memorial Day used to be observed by everyone bringing their flowers to the Hall (before the Hall was built they met at the Victory School No. 101). Bouquets were arranged and carried to the cemetery and all the graves were decorated. There would also be a program, with a speaker, children giving recitations and the singing of Czech songs. Memorial Day is still observed with a service at the cemetery. The minister gives remarks and Czech songs are sung. A collection is taken to help defray the expenses in caring for the cemetery for the coming year.

Another service of the township was fire protection for rural areas. In 1949 Rossville Township received a new International truck for the fire department. In January, 1950 the Rossville Fire Department was credited with saving the Delia Grade School from burning. The building had caught fire from an overheated furnace. About five years ago Rossville Township fire department was made a part of the Shawnee County Fire District Number 3. This too, was a stride forward for our township fire department.

In more recent years maintaining the Rossville Community Building and the Rossville Community Library have been added to the numerous responsibilities of the township board.

On June 1, 1949, a public meeting was held to discuss a proposed community building project. Various possibilities were discussed; including moving one of the abandoned school houses into town, but after a second meeting it was decided to try a bond election to raise funds to construct a building. Petitions were circulated to have the township board call a special election.

The bond election was set for August 16. It carried by a narrow margin. Two hundred nine voters—about one-third of those eligible resulted in a vote of 119 yes to 90 no.

Officers for a permanent organization were elected June 19, 1950, when a meeting was held to plan the dedication of the new building. They were: president, Bess Conley; vice-president, John Simecka; secretary, Ruth Hesse; and treasurer, Bob Gentry. It was proposed at this meeting that a library be established in the front room of the community building.

Dedication ceremonies for the Rossville Community Center Building were held July 3, 1950, and since that time it has been used by countless organizations and individuals.

The library was organized on November 9, 1950. Volunteer workers made it possible for books to be cataloged and shelves to be built. The only money available for starting the library was \$150 which was left from an obsolete fund and the amount collected from the sale of library cards at \$1.00 each. By the end of 1950 the Rossville Community Library was in operation with a total of 492 adult books and 100 juvenile books.

Mrs. Ellen Coleman was librarian with Mrs. Lyda Zickefoose as an assistant. Mrs. Coleman resigned in February, 1951, and Mrs. Millicent Renwan was appointed to the position.

After a struggling beginning, the library became tax supported through a 359 to 111 vote in the election of November, 1953.

When the library in the Community Center became too crowded it was moved to the Bahner building on South Main. It was housed here until the books were moved into the new library building. This building was dedicated on December 1, 1968. Mrs. Alice Farley was the librarian. This library was made possible through the generosity of three families in our community. Perry and Sidney Stumbaugh gave the start with their generous gift. The library board immediately began working on an application for matching Federal Funds which were granted. Later Miss Mabel Boyles added to the fund with her liberal gift. Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Miller donated the lots in memory of the Doctors H.H. Miller and H.B. Miller. (This site had been the location of the doctors' office.) The library is used by many—young and old alike and is something of which the people of Rossville and the surrounding area can be justly proud.

During recent years libraries in Kansas have been established into systems through acts passed by the legislature. Rossville is now a member of NEKL (North East Kansas Libraries) and is able to provide many more services to our patrons than ever before.

## **MAIN STREET ROSSVILLE**

Before the town was platted in 1870, there was a small one-story frame school building at the corner of Main and Marion Streets which was built in 1865. It was the first building on what was later to be Main Street.

Although the first store on the village site was that of J.C. McIlvane (the Vernon Myers home) on the corner of Navarre and Anderson Streets, C.W. Higginbotham constructed the first store building on Main Street. Mr. Higginbotham who came to the town in 1858 traded with the Indians. He spoke the Pottawatomie language fluently and was a popular merchant with them for many years after his move to Main Street.

During these early years, Rossville was a trading center for the Pottawatomi Prairie Band. Residents of the frontier village were friendly with the Indians but they were alarmed June 4, 1876, when nearly 100 armed warriors rode into town at daybreak, awakening the citizens with war whoops.

A contemporary newspaper correspondent wrote: "The occasional discharge of a shot and the glimpses one had of brave men darting hither and thither in their night clothes, armed with everything from a scythe to a Belgian rifle, led me, with very little stretch of imagination, to believe that all the horrors of a regular Indian massacre were being enacted.

"The Indians, however, were in pursuit of four horse thieves who had camped in the city with a number of ponies stolen from the tribe.

The thieves fired upon their pursuers, fatally wounding Chief Lah-Kah-Wah, before they were captured. Rossville men urged the Indians to place their captives in their custody but the warriors, infuriated by the loss of their leader dragged the horse thieves to Cross Creek, west of town, where their bodies were found later."

Rossville continued to prosper and from the July 11, 1879, issue of the Kansas Valley Times, the following appeared:

#### **A REVIEW OF ROSSVILLE AND HER BUSINESSMEN**

Beginning at the Rossville K. P. depot, we find our courteous station agent, John STOEYELL, who came from New York in 1866, and has held the position since 1874. The business at this point has assumed proportions that has justified the KPRR in placing a night operator at Rossville, the only one between Topeka and Wamego. L.C. CLEVELAND, originally from Indiana, in 1875, is the night operator stationed here.

Passing up east side of Main St., we find the Saddlery and Harness shop of E.A. BUSHOR, who also maintains a Boot and Shoe department. Mr. Bushor is a harness maker of 17 years experience and manufactures the most of his work.

We next come to the Post Office, modestly settled behind the Town Pump—an evident part of the institution; as scarce a visitor to the one but patronizes the other—and the well-worn doorway of the building, is only equaled by the pliable working of the constantly gushing pump. The Postmaster, H. KLINE, originally from Ohio, in 1859, has presided over the department for many years. Mr. Kline is also a Bee culturer, and has a large collection of fine bees. Much of the honey consumed in the valley comes from these well kept hives.

Adjoining the post office is found the office of DR. R.S. GABBEY, originally from Penna. in 1857. The Doctor has a large practice extending throughout this section, and always takes an active interest in public affairs, holding the growth of Rossville near at heart. His fine homestead farm of 160 acres adjoins the town on the east, and his office and residence are connected by telephone.

We next reach the office and scales of A.C. SHERMAN, from Indiana in 1870. The Rossville Stock and Grain Dealer has identified himself with Rossville as one of her founders. "Sherman of Rossville," is known everywhere, and seems to be everywhere; he is encountered everywhere—always good natured, friendly, active and brim full of business, a general favorite; no wonder he is our County Commissioner. A telephone connects Mr. Sherman's office with his residence in the southern part of town. W.C. SHERMAN, a younger brother, assists in the varied duties of the business. He is a young

college graduate of rare attainments and good business qualifications, and is the leading member of the Temperance and Debating Societies, and not unknown to our readers as Associate Editor of the Times.

We now come to the store of Joseph F. Cannon, who carries a stock of nearly everything required for family use or adornment. Mr. Cannon came from Delaware in 1866; was for some years largely engaged in Indian trade at St. Marys and has also occupied the position of store manager for Andy Wilson at Kingsville.

Next we reach the Blacksmith and Horse Shoeing Shop of GEORGE E. COOKE, who came from New York in 1857. Mr. Cooke is the soul of good humor; and with sleeves rolled up is working away with hammer and tongs, doing every variety of work that comes under his line of trade. Here also is the manufactory of the new celebrated Cooke Cultivator, Harrow and Corn Marker combined, invented and patented by Mr. Cooke. L. HOLLENBECK, originally from New York, in 1869, has his Wagon Repairing and Cabinet shop here, and the combination of the two form a repairing and manufacturing depot of no small proportion.

We next cross the street to the West side and inspect the general Blacksmith Shop of RICHARD MASON, who came from Canada in 1869 and is a professional in all the arts of iron fashioning, from the finest buggy work of every variety, to ordinary farm work. Mr. Mason has filled important positions in the finest carriage shops in the State, and now maintains his own establishment in Rossville. He is assisted by Mr. W.S. Templin, also a blacksmith who came to Kansas from Illinois, in 1877.

At the rear of Mr. Mason's shop we find the wagon and repairing shop of David Henderson, a Missouri man, who came to Kansas in 1868.

Just here let us point across to near the corner of Navarre and Pottawattomie Streets, to one of the neatest and prettiest residences in town, with its white front and fresh green blinds. It is the residence of DR. H.H. MILLER, (the present home of Mr. Bergsten). The Dr. has a large and increasing practice and friends everywhere. He gives a portion of his attention of late to the opening up of his new farm just north of town, that promises to be, when complete, one of the most valuable farms in this section of the country.

Passing southward, we next reach the old Rossville land mark, and Merchandising Emporium of KERR & HIGGINBOTHAM, the oldest and heaviest mercantile establishment in town, about whose weather stained sign board clusters the dignity of years, and the untarnished honor of a good name. Mr. Samuel Kerr came from Ohio, in 1868, and attends to the buying of goods for their trade, besides constant attention in the salesroom. Mr. Cyrus Higginbotham came from Virginia, in 1858. He devotes the most of his time to the wants of his customers, and also manages the affairs of his splendid farm at the northern limits of town, one of the gem farms of the Valley. Mr. Frank Sanders, also a large land owner here, assists the above gentlemen as head clerk in their establishment.

We next come to the Pottawatomie Land Office, established in 1870 by O. Leroy Sedgwick of Brooklyn, New York, and from whence the eastern states were flooded with circulars and pamphlets for years descriptive of the charms of the Pottawatomie Lands, and directing emigration thither. Here are kept the Records of Titles of the Pottawatomie Lands and here is found probably the most varied and attractive list of Bargains in land to be found in any one locality in Kansas, embracing as it does, the entire Pottawatomie Reserve. Here also is the KANSAS VALLEY TIMES office, established at St. Marys in 1864, removed here in February, 1879.



Now we reach the Biggest – Little Drug House in the Valley, the busy little emporium of Messrs. Hartzell and Tatman. Mr. David Hartzell coming from Ohio in 1867, and Mr. M.F. Tatman from Indiana in 1862. This store room is far too small and will at an early day be exchanged for new and commodious quarters.

Next door, we find J.M. Stevenson, our prosperous young tinner, who came from Pa. to Kansas in 1877. His cheery hammer is tinkering away all day long, and great piles of every variety of tinware of his own manufacture fill the shelves and counters on either side.

At the rear of this store we find the carpenter shop of Peter Shearer, from Michigan who came West in 1878. R. Binns of Indiana in 1870, another of our Rossville carpenters has of late been associated with Shearer in the building of the Baptist church.

The next store is the general merchandise warehouse of A. Urbansky under the able management of D.M. Cohen. This store is one of the largest of Rossville.

Now we come to the boot and shoe shop of L.T. Snyder, the champion bootmaker of the Valley who came from Illinois in 1877. He can turn out as fine a specimen of work in that line as any man in the country with all the elaborate polish of morocco, patent leather and colored trimmings, gay colored thread work and gilt edge finish if desired.

In the store room next adjoining, we find the Rossville Ice Cream and Lemonade saloon, prosperous temperance Institution owned and operated by HENRY L. SNYDER, whose papa has thus set the young gentleman up in business for himself. Here you can get a fine plate or ice cream or an excellent lemonade, at any hour in the day or evening.

We have now reached the railroad track again and turning our steps southwesterly along the sidetrack, stand a moment to gaze at the Rossville mill. This institution is of greater magnitude than any other single business enterprise in the entire Valley, from Topeka, to Manhattan. THE ROSSVILLE MILL CO. is composed of Messrs. S.D. Alfred from Illinois in 1877, and John R. and Joab Mulvane, originally from Ohio. Recognizing the advantages of Rossville, they secured the original mill building and machinery some two years ago and have since, by the erecting of large additions to the main building, numerous out buildings, and vast cribs adjoining, an entire renovation inside as well, with the introduction of new and improved machinery entirely transformed the original rural mill, into the bustling ponderous, yet well regulated center of trade it presents today. Its long rows of cribs holding thousands of wagon loads of Kansas corn present a handsome spectacle, the great cloud of black smoke constantly vomited from its tall smoke stack an indication of the ceaseless grinding of grain. Its capacious bins are ever filled with golden wheat, and well ground grist, its store rooms with choicest brands of flour. Wagons deposit here their loads of corn and wheat, while railway trains depart laden with flour and feed for delivery in neighboring cities. This mill is now running 16 hours per day and cannot fill orders as fast as received, their flour being second to none in the state. But few of our local readers are fully aware of the amount of business done here by this firm and its incalculable value and benefit to Rossville.

A large and well stocked Lumber Yard is also operated by this company. Mr. S.B. Maxwell is head miller, Mr. N. Nunes, assistant miller, Mr. H.L. Huntington, engineer, and Mr. C.B. Alfred, general assistant.

Going now southwesterly to Adrian St., we note the pleasant little residence of B. P. Elder, our merchant tailor. He came from Pennsylvania in 1876.

North of Mr. Elder's and west of the mill there stands an immense stone structure two stories high, evidently the monument of some exploded venture. It is all that remains of the Rossville Cooperative Mfg. Co., an enterprise started on sponge capital some years ago that met an untimely fate and was cleaned out under the sheriff's hammer. This building is now owned by Mr. David Howard and is used as a storehouse by the Rossville Mill Co.

Retracing our steps to the Post-office, we turn east along Perry Street and find the ROSSVILLE HOTEL, a two story frame building, which is the only professional hotel in town and is owned and operated by Mr. O. Wood, who came from West Virginia in 1878. Adjoining the hotel, and under the same management, is a large and well-kept feed stable. On opposite side of street is the comfortable restaurant and boarding house of W. EMMERSON, who came from California in 1872. Mr. Emmerson sells groceries from a neat little stock carried on his shelves.

Across the creek, away on the westerly side of town, a handsome two story frame house embowered in trees, greets the eye (the home of Mrs. Ora Pelfrey). Here is the office and residence of our Rossville plasterer and paper hanger, DANIEL WILT, who came from Pennsylvania in 1877. his work is to be found on every hand and speaks volumes for his skill.

George Stackhouse is our stone mason, who came from Indiana in 1867. John P. Hurd who came from Illinois in 1866 is the champion fence builder of Kaw Valley. David Hartzell, who has for a year or so kept "open house" for his friends as a matter of accommodation, and those he has once entertained, never consent to stop elsewhere when in Rossville; hence he is unwillingly running quite a little hotel of his own. The cheerfulness of his home and the bounty of his table have a flattering reputation far and near. John O. Marney is a horseman of 17 years experience who has had under his training some of the finest thoroughbred horses of the state. S. J. Oliver, originally from Pennsylvania in 1876 acts as both court and attorney, and of whom we may say, as did Lorenzo Dow at the grave of the village lawyer: "God works wonders now and then, Here is a lawyer, an honest man." Our Constable is Perry Wyatt who came from Vermont in 1865, a young gentleman of unflinching courage. Rossville has one Barber shop and with it is combined a billiard room with tobacco and cigars, no liquor. It is presently operated by F. Hartzell and is located just north of the mill and furnishes the requisite facilities for tonsorial embellishments in the highest style of modern art. A butcher shop has just been opened here by Lewis Martin, recently from Henderson, Kentucky, who supplies our citizens with choice cuts of fresh meat and fills a much needed branch of trade.

Main Street was either dust or mud, both creating problems for many years. In dry weather, the fine powdery dust was as much as six inches deep, almost suffocating when stirred up by wagon traffic and later by automobiles. Some graveling of the street was begun in 1901, but it wasn't until 1936 that, as Pete Navarre wrote, "black stripping of Main Street buried the dust bowl under the tar cover in short order."

The first sidewalks were of stone or boardwalk and then only in front of the widely scattered store fronts. Crosswalks were made of boards. In 1896, bids were taken by the city for "sidewalks four feet wide with two inch No. 1 pine or oak planks, no less than six inches in width, with three 2 by 4 stringers for nailing ties to be placed on solid rock, no less than four feet apart, with said plank to be nailed to the stringers with 20 penny spikes in a good workmanship manner." The city, in 1902,

contracted for new stone walks, stone curbs and gutters. In about 1910, new cement walks were poured and in 1935, curb and gutters.



1910 – Building sidewalks in front of (now) Wehner's. l to r Howard Marney, J.P. Marney, Wes Harder, Roy Fisher

Main Street was dark at night except for a few lanterns hung in front of the stores. On a very dark night in October of 1892, Robert Walker, while going home stepped off the sidewalk by the city building, and broke his leg above the ankle. The sidewalk at that point was about two feet high.

U.G. Stewart, the popular editor, wrote in 1901, "The city street lamps should be put in without delay. The Northern lights we are using at the present time are too remote to be of much service. The strain on the nervous system produced by our effort to locate the sidewalk after dark, with our eyes hanging out like knobs on a cupboard door, and a gait peculiar to the string-halt horse, is fast making us physical wrecks."

The city experimented with a new gasoline arc lamp for street lighting and later Stewart wrote, "The city council has put up the new gas street lamps on Main Street and now the night pedestrian can see from Dan even unto the Bad Lands the darkest, murkiest night, that e'er came rolling down the pike. The city's new gas street lamps work to perfection. They send a gleam of pearly whiteness far into the recesses of the darksome alleys, and the wayfarer e'en tho he be loaded with "rotgetti de squirrel," can see the error of his way. We overheard one citizen who is a natural born knocker speak thusly: They're no good I tell you. Why as I turned the corner on Main Street the other night, I was completely blinded by the flood of light. No sir: They're no good." As the laughter subsided he hid his little hammer snugly under his coat and sullenly, blinkingly wended his way along the brilliantly lighted street wrapped in a large gob of gloom..."

But then in 1903, things were not so bright and Stewart commented: "I notice the gas street lamps have petered out. At first they shone with a brilliancy that would knock one's eye out unless protected with smoked glass, but they have dwindled down until their brightness is about equal to that of a big white bean in a dark barn. Rous mit 'em and put up some Jap lanterns."

In 1907, carbide lights were introduced into the town and in that year, ten new carbide street lamps were installed. But they were not turned on every night, and after a band concert on a Saturday night, U.G. Stewart wrote: "There is a thing that looked rather pimply, pusillanimous and pinheaded; we refer to the absence of street lights. There was a crowd of perhaps 500 people on Main Street milling around in darkness. Wouldn't it have been the nice, cheerful, courteous, inviting, hospitable and generous thing to have turned on the street lights?"

In 1927, the Kansas Power and Light Company's first year in Rossville, the carbide lamps were replaced by twelve electric lights. In 1950 the KP&L installed nine new whiteway lamps.

The business block of the town, like all the other streets, was lined with trees, many of them cottonwood and catalpa. The shade from these trees was quite welcome in the hot summer time. Time and disease has made the removal of these trees necessary until today only the tree in the Bahner yard remains on Main Street.



Early Rossville – West Side Main Street



Sauer & Moode

## WEST SIDE

On the northwest corner of main, the white stucco building was built in 1946 by Dr. C.S. Smith for use as his office. Going back to 1871, on this same lot, a frame building, two story, 45 by 65, was built by A.N. Freeborn. The north room of the building was occupied by David Hartzell as a drug store and the south room was used as a wagon shop and run by R.W. Spencer. A. N. Freeborn lived upstairs. The building burned in 1877. In 1886, peter Shearer built a two story building, the upstairs of which housed the Shearer Opera house. The entrance to that part was on the north side. The following is taken from an article, November 21, 1886, "the work of finishing and stage fitting is rapidly going on. J.W. Miller is doing the stage carpentering. We doubt if any stage in the state is fitted up in a more elegant manner. B.D. Mileham is completing the finest lot of scenery it has been our fortune to witness anywhere. He is painting four sets of scenery, namely parlor, street, kitchen, and landscape with wings and all appurtenances. The drop curtain is painted a Mexican scene of striking effect and merit. The Shearer opera House is an enterprise of which the people may well be proud.

Peter Shearer had his general merchandise store on the first floor of this building. In the September 6, 1886 paper the following appeared: "Peter Shearers' store is now lighted by an ingenious system

of carbon lights, making it the best lighted as well as the most attractive place to visit for evening purchases."

C.W. Higginbotham later had his general store here, followed by the Sauer & Moode General Store. Phelps Lewis had a grocery and general store in the building when it burned in the early 1920s.

The Perry Plumbing Shop stands on the south lot of what was originally the Peter Shearer building. This building was used by the Eventous Doud Post of the American Legion when it was first organized in 1919. J.W. (Jake) Miller operated a woodworking and cabinet making shop in this location, and also sold undertaking supplies. Earl Stovall had his plumbing shop there until he sold to Lawrence Farley who in turn sold to L.R. Stone and in 1946, Milt Perry and his brother, Alvin (Buss) Perry bought the business.

In 1882, C.W. Higginbotham constructed an office building 16 by 45 feet. This was later a part of the Sauer & Moode Store. B.D. Mileham had his studio there in 1885 and the newspaper (Carpenter's Lyre) was located there for a short time. "Babe" DeGraff and his sister Frances lived there many years. May Stiles operated a millinery shop and later started her real estate office in the same location. May Stiles' office was a popular "gossip center" for the women when they came to town. Later G.W. Waller operated The Rossville Produce in this building until he sold to Frank Doty in 1940.

In 1968 construction was completed on the new Rossville Community Library building. The library stands on the location of the old office of Dr. H.H. Miller and later the office of his son, Dr. Henry B. Miller.



Mason's blacksmith shop, l to r Richard Mason, owner; Frank Boyles, farmer; L. Hollenbeck, wood worker; W.S. Templin, blacksmith; Jim White, farmer; William Strange, farmer





Mrs. M.E. Vawter and Mr. C.E. Gresser in Peoples State Bank



C.E. Gresser, long-time Rossville banker and active in church and civic affairs

In 1879 the blacksmith shop of R. Mason was located where the bank now stands. Later he was located about one-half block northwest on Pottawatomie Street. The original People State Bank building was erected in 1909 and opened for business that same year. Dr. H.F. Pratt was elected the first president. Mr. Morris Bond was vice-president and C. E. Gresser, cashier. Other members of the board of directors were Vince Martinek, Ira Hopkins, H.J. LaFountain and J.K. Miller. Joe Gresser, son of C.E. Gresser, assumed the position of cashier in 1945. The building was remodeled and enlarged in 1961. The small telephone office was incorporated into the expansion of the bank building.

The sales room portion of the Rossville Truck and Tractor was built in 1894 by John Fritz. The description of this was as follows: "The Fritz block, 40 by 70, ground floor containing two large store rooms, both of which will soon be occupied. The Upper floor contains a large hall and some convenient office rooms. The Fritz block is a credit to the place and always will be. Mr. Fritz deserves much credit for this enterprise and we are sure his efforts are appreciated by the citizens. What do you think of those commanding stone hitching posts in front of the Fritz building? That's the kind, gentlemen, and they will stay right there and don't resemble the corner support of a Kansas stable."

This hall was used for various types of entertaining over the years. The Eagle Lodge had the hall leased for a short time. And high school classes were held there when the old school became too crowded. The old silent movies were shown there and in 1915, Pete Navarre wrote: "The Perils of Pauline, a serial which has been running at the Electric for twenty weeks, was completed Tuesday

night after keeping the followers of the fortunes of Pauline in a state bordering on apoplexy during the series." Irene Howard and Gladys hook took turns at playing the piano during the shows. Joe Kramer operated the picture shows at one time and his wife played the piano. The hall was known as the Fritz hall until it was purchased by Morris Bond and then became known as the Bond Hall. When the Fritz building was first completed, it housed the Wesley Davis Grocery and Dry Goods, the post office, a drug store and upstairs B.C. Mitchner had his law office.

In 1901, Charley Cless started his business in this building. He was a furniture and hardware merchant and remained in business for 40 years. The Opera House Pharmacy, owned and operated by G.P. Pierce, was located in the north side of this building. The first telephone switchboard was located there.



Pierce's Drug Store, l to r Ferg Jamieson, Mrs. Pierce, Mr. Pierce



Bruce Jamieson and the milk delivery wagon

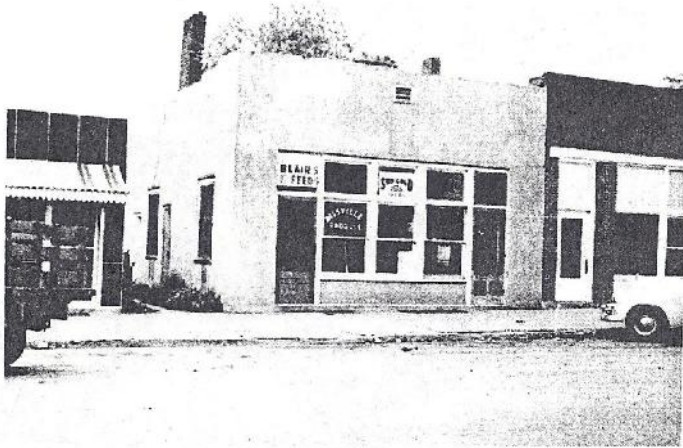
In 1944, the building was sold to Claude F. Radcliff & Son, owners of the local International Harvester Hardware and Implement Company. They sold to Mr. Neely and the business became known as the Neely Farm Store, Inc. Norville Wingate and Frank Burrows purchased the store in 1947 and Roy Peddicord continued as manager. Frances Pardee later became manager of the Rossville Farm Store, Inc. In 1957, Bill Martinek and George Stadler purchased the business and it became the Rossville Truck and Tractor Co., Inc.

The main shop of the Rossville Truck and Tractor was originally built by R. Binns about 1910, for use as a restaurant. In 1929, Ed Kovar started the Rossville Produce Store and in 1941 sold the business

to Luther Foster. The building at this time was owned by Morris Bond who sold it to the Radcliffs in 1944 and Luther Foster vacated it in 1947 when it was made into a shop for the IHC dealer. The building was erected after a restaurant and bakery operated by Charley Griffin burned. Prior to that, A.W. Gabbey, son of Dr. R.S. Gabbey, had a clothing store here. H.L. McAdams operated the Golden Belt Café from this same location. Later George Conrad purchased the business.

The south building of the Rossville Truck and Tractor, which is also used as a shop, was built by Dr. Pratt for his office about 1910 after his original office building burned. Later Grace White lived there with her mother and operated a dressmaking shop. Virginia Gentry operated the Rossville Hardware in this building for several years.

The building now occupied by O.M. Nichols Barber Shop and Wanda Bird's Beauty Shop was built by Abner Cless. The north side for many years was Dr. C.S. Smith's office. The Leeper Millinery was located in this building in the early 1900s. Luther Foster, J.B. Hayes and Walter Preble operated produce and feed stores at this location.



### Foster's Produce

The rear of the building was used as an apartment for many years and the Eventous Doud Post of the American Legion was located there a short time in 1925.

The Farm Bureau Insurance building was erected in 1953 on the site of the first building on Main Street. The old Rossville landmark was built by C.W. Higginbotham about 1870. It was the home of the Kerr & Higginbotham Mercantile establishment and later the Kerr and Allen mercantile. In 1894 Edward Preble and his brother William had a harness shop in the building. An account in 1917 tells us that Dave Hartzell's drug store was burned, also E.D. Hartzell's Poultry and Feed store, Hower's shop and William Aye's Harness Shop.

It is not known when the building now occupied by Nellie Countryman's Variety Store was built. Pat King had a butcher shop there in the early 1900s. Lewis Martin also had a butcher shop there. Doc Stroup at one time had a restaurant there and in the 1920s it was used for the old silent movies and Williamette Navarre was pianist. It was known as the Rezac Theater building. It was later used for a billiard hall by Charles Turecek, then J.H. "Bud" Johnson, and later by Clyde McCollough, who called it Mack's Barbecue. Mr. and Mrs. Tom O'Donnell had it prior to 1949 when it was sold to Earl Bracken.



R.W. Nason Merchandise for Cash building with caption "Early Rossville"



Kerr & Higginbotham Mercantile Co. and Hartzell & Tatman Drug Store

L.H. Spears was issued a dealer contract by the Massey-Harris Equipment Company. In 1948 a 25' by 70' building was built for the Rossville Implement Company by Mr. Spears. Clyde McCollough and Henry Cerny were associated with him in the agency. After the death of Clyde McCollough, J.M. Adams purchased one-half interest, joining in partnership with L.H. Spears.

It is believed the building occupied by Charles Klesath's Pharmacy was built in 1899. It was occupied by Goyette's Drugstore around 1917. Later druggists were John Martin, Mr. Walterstead, L.J. Henderson, A. Nichols, and Thinnies' who sold to George Young in 1947. John Hurley purchased the business from George Young in 1952.



Mr. Goyette inside his Drug Store

The old north part of the A & M Market was built in 1898 by Richard Binns. There were steps leading into the building, the floor setting more on a level with the drug store building next door. Dave Yocum had his grocery store here in the early 1900s. A.A. Cless and wife, Bertha, had their restaurant and bakery here, and they later sold to Hook and Jamieson who operated the restaurant until about 1925. Around 1915, the rear of the building housed the telephone office. Vera Miller was one of the operators. Around 1925, Ira T. Hopkins started his grocery business. Kenneth Wingert had his grocery there about 1931. In 1936, Mr. Buchmeier purchased the store and ran it until 1943. He later sold back to Hopkins. Mr. O.S. Boyd purchased the store from Hopkins in 1945, and he in turn sold it to Bob Rawlings in 1951. George House and Dale Channel have also owned the store. Dale Channel purchased the lot to the south and incorporated it into this building. The present owner is Marvin Fordham.

One of the old landmarks, which was built about 1872, stood on the site of the present A & M Market. The building was used as a printing and a real estate office by O. Leroy Sedgwick in 1878. Dave Yocum sold groceries there in 1885, and later the building was used for a restaurant. During the occupancy of the restaurant it received the name "Boys Home." It was torn down in 1898.

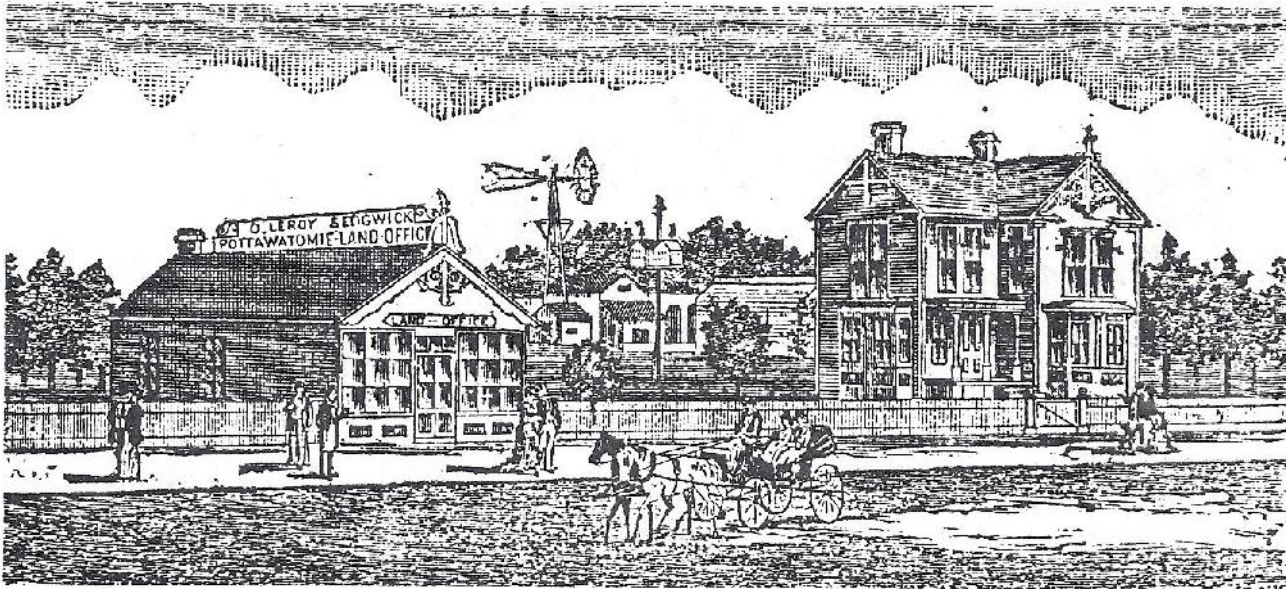


Hopkins delivery truck, Orbie Binney in truck



On the lot where the new part of the A & M Market building stands, J.M. Stevenson operated a tin shop in 1870. Peter Shearer and R. Binns, carpenters, had a shop in the rear of the store.

In the October 10, 1879 Kansas Valley Times the following appeared: "The cellar wall of the Masonic hall was completed last week. It is a specimen of substantial masonry." In November 7, 1879, "The iron front columns of the Masonic hall have been successfully reared into their proper position and the brick front with its iron balcony fairly underway. The sidewalls are steadily rising toward completion." The lower part was used as the Post Office from the early 30s until 1949 when it was moved across the street. At one time Dave Hartzell had his drug store here.



Sedgwick's home and office – 1882  
(Milton Bahner home)

The laundromat was built by Alfred Wille after tearing down the old building which was used prior to 1882 by I. Larrance for his grocery store. In 1882, he sold it to O. Leroy Sedgwick who located his land office there. Sedgwick enclosed this lot and his house, which was situated 80 feet north, with a garden fence. The land office was sold in 1885 to Zenas B. Shipman along with the abstract books, etc. In 1886, W.S. Willits, the "Ambidextrous tonsorial artist moved his instruments of torture to these rooms." In 1907, the building was renovated by Mrs. Hattie Miller for a boarding house, Doc Stroup had a saloon there, Frank Diehl operated his "Greasy Spoon" restaurant there and Dave Kesler later had a restaurant. May Stiles had her real estate office at this location. Dr. Donald L. Pile, Chiropractor, had his office there and the building was later the home of Elmer Stewart.

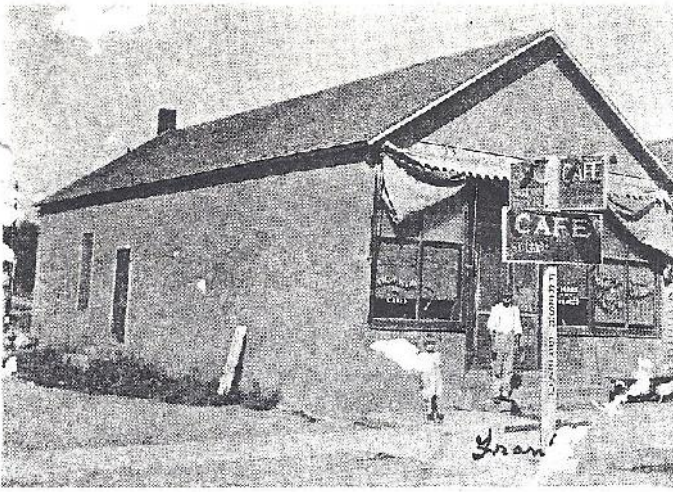


Stiles Land Office – Mae Stiles

The Milton Bahner home was built in about 1878 by O. Leroy Sedgwick for his home. It was considered the showplace of the town.

In 1873, J.K. Conley had a cigar store near the location of the Centennial Headquarters. In 1879 A. Urbansky had a branch store at about this location which was managed by a Mr. Cohen. The Centennial headquarters building was moved from the Cox farm (Elmer Lynde's) east of town in early 1900. Anna Van Vleck and Fannie Reser had a dress shop there around 1910. In 1911 the building was used for the Post Office and remained so until 1934. Since then, it has housed a beauty shop, and in 1949, Nellie Countryman started her Variety Store. It was later used by the Rossville Community Library and in recent years the G. & G. Electric.

The apartment building on the corner, owned by Earl Prater, was built in 1882 by I. Larrance for his grocery. The approximate size was 22 by 50 feet and "presented a magnificent sales room which will hold as large a stock of goods as any city establishment." There was a 16 foot platform along the south side of the building. At the time Larrance started his store in 1872 he was operating a butcher shop which he moved to the new location. S.E. Kuy Kendall grocery and Dave Yocum's grocery store was located here for a time, also Diehl's Dew Drop Inn.



Frank Diehl & Alice Diehl Gentry in front of Dew Drop Inn

In 1940, Junior Martin had a creamery station in the back rooms and in 1942 Ross Heazeltine had a cream and egg station. Ray Kilburn's had a Home Variety store, and they sold out in 1946 to Glen Garrett and Vencille McClain.

### **EAST SIDE**

The Bahner Garage was built in 1919 on two McPherson and one Howerton lot, and originally was to house a horse and mule barn; however, the market for these animals disappeared soon after the building's completion and the owners opened an automobile business, known as the McPherson Motor Company. This company was succeeded by the J.E. Williams Company in 1925. Other owners of the garage have been Judd Bennett, Carl Parr, Steven Martinek and Robert Kersey.

Dr. Smith had his office at the rear of the building next to the alley in the 1920s and Alfred Hause operated a battery and welding shop for many years at that location.

Kline and Lee erected a building on this site in 1871. H. Kline was the first postmaster after the new town was platted and used the building for the Post Office. The building burned in 1882.



Main Street looking North in the early 1920s

In 1940, the Bahner Brothers, Harvey and Milton, purchased the McPherson Building to use for a garage. It was occupied at the time by Lee Porter's International Harvester Company. Milton Bahner now owns and operated the garage.



The lots on this corner were vacant for many years except for the Bandstand and a children's merry-go-round. Large cottonwood trees stood at the front of the lot. Many band concerts were held here and it was also a favorite location for church ice cream socials. The depot was just across the street, and the evening train, called the "Plug" would wait for the passengers while they patronized the popular ice cream socials.

Guth and Oldfest operated a grocery store at the present location of the American Legion. For many years this building was used as a café. Some of those persons who were in business here were Jack and Grace Robason, Francis and Velda Pardee, R. S. Bivens, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Curwick, Dalles Small, Mr. and Mrs. Theron Lister, and the Emersons. Jimmie Lillard Post No. 31 of the American Legion has occupied the building since 1958.

The building immediately north of the American Legion was used as a garage for many years. Robert James and C.L. Somers, Earl Barney, E.J. Howard, and Joe Shenk were in this location. After the death of Mr. James, the property was leased to the Shawnee County Highway Department by the new owner, Mrs. L.B. Franz. The Highway Department occupied the building for 35 years until Gale Bennett purchased it in 1970. it is currently being remodeled and incorporated into the American Legion building.



E.J. Howard and Howard's Garage

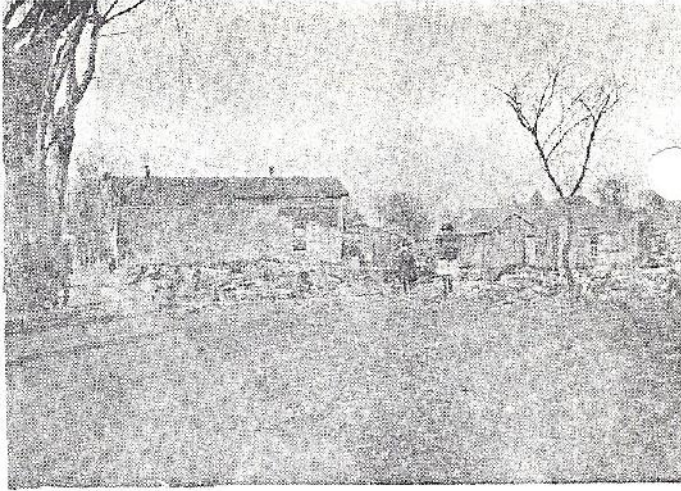


l to r Joe Navarre, Bill Lynde, and C.L. Somers

The exact location of many early-day businesses in this area is unknown; however, we do know that Dr. Amis had an office in this locality and also J.W. Jamieson Dry Goods. Edna Smith operated a millinery shop; Johnnie Lumpkin, a barber shop; Don Wilson, a grocery store; Paul Patell, a furniture and funeral supply store; Al Streater, a café; Herman Johnson, a café; and the Masopusts, a Shoe

Shop. In the general area, Mr. Overhuls had a harness and saddlery shop which he sold to A.C. Borchers in 1885.

The building housing the Post Office was purchased and remodeled in 1949 by Everett Pelfrey. Prior to this the Post Office was located across the street in the Masonic Building. Ira T. Hopkins operated a grocery store at this location.



East Side Fire



L to R Chris Viergever, Jack Gleason

A spectacular fire destroyed several frame structures in the area now occupied by Grace White, the N & A Café and the Kansas Power and Light Office. The frame buildings were replaced by brick construction and over the years have housed many varied businesses, some of which were Zemborski's Shoe Shop; Henry Lambotte's Shoe Repair Shop; Robert W. Hyder's Shoe Shop; Joe Barney's Star Barber Shop; Glen and Ava Criss's Barber and Beauty Shop; Ralph Chatham's Beauty Salon; Chris Viergever's Liquor Store; Jo Jacobson's Beauty Shop; and for many years the Rossville Reporter. Peter and Minnie Navarre published the Rossville Reporter for many years in the building now housing Ken's Café. They sold the paper to Bill and Betty Murray in 1953 and they remodeled the building and put in a new store front. Murrays sold the paper to a Topeka publisher in 1967. Later,



Nolan and Ardith McGinnis opened the N & A Café. The Kansas Power and Light Company purchased their building in 1927. Mr. Von Bloom was hired as manager and Mrs. Mabel Bruce was hired as bookkeeper, a position she held for 24 years. Mr. Von Bloom remained there for 27 years and upon his retirement, Alvin Perry was hired. George Sullivan succeeded Perry and now holds the position.



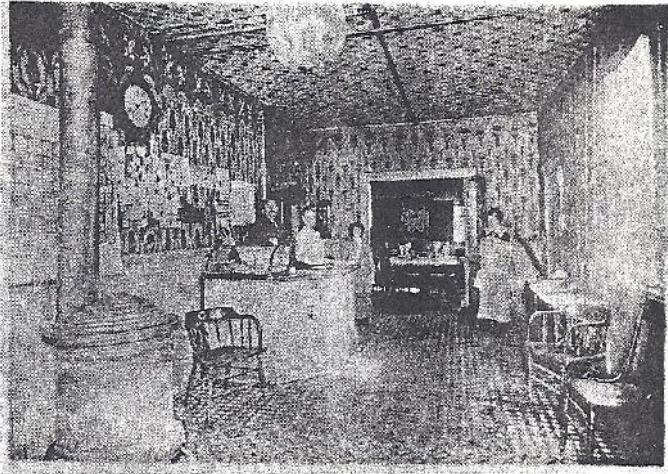
Laurel Jarrett, Maude Sneller, Nellie Sebring and Arlene Reid in front of Wilt Plumbing Shop and old Light office

Before the Kansas Power and Light Company received the franchise for electrical power in Rossville, a local company owned by Mr. I.B. Alter furnished power for the city. Mr. Daws was the manager of the system.

The vacant lot north of the Kansas Power and Light office was the site of a frame building sometimes known as "The Joint." It figured prominently in newspaper accounts and the Police Court docket during the early 1900s. It was frequently raided and once was the site of a "shooting." In later years, I.B. Wilt operated his plumbing shop from these quarters. Earl Stovall purchased the business and was operating it when the 1941 tornado damaged it so severely that it was necessary to tear it down.



National Hotel, Isaac Miller, Propr.



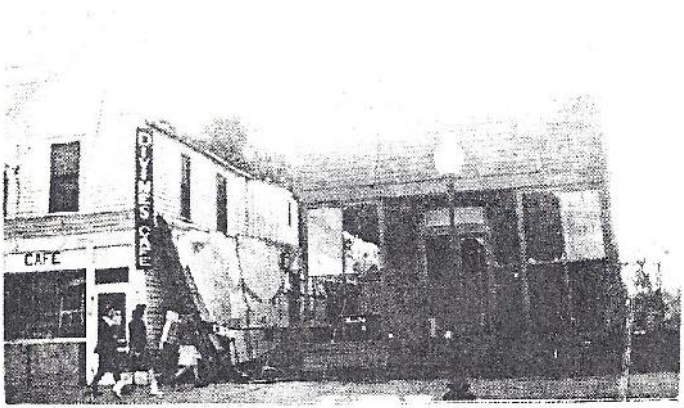
Interior of National Hotel

The hotel building is one of the oldest buildings on Main Street. The front half of the building was originally used for the school and stood at the corner of Marion and Navarre Streets. After the new brick school was constructed on east Pottawatomie Street, C.W. Higginbotham had John Fritz move the old school to the location on Main Street and remodeled into a store building. Sometime after its location on Main Street, they discovered the front protruded about two feet into the walk area. Rather than go to the expense and trouble of moving the building two feet east, they merely cut the lower story back. The rear half of the building was a hotel located approximately where the Earl Wilt home stands on Navarre Street. It was moved to its present location and joined to the old school building. Robert Nason purchased and remodeled the building for the Nason Hotel. The name was later changed to the National Hotel when Isaac Miller became proprietor. It was a favorite stopping place for the “drummers” (traveling salesmen) and on warm summer evenings they would often bring their chairs out to the sidewalk and sit in the shade of the large tree that stood in front of the hotel. They and the townspeople would chew tobacco and discuss politics and other events of the day.

Fred Stalker owned the building for many years. The family lived in the rear portion while renting rooms on the second floor. The front portion of the ground floor has served many businesses, some of which were: Dr. Gibson, dentist; John Balusek’s Shoe Shop; Jack Gleason’s Barber Shop; Mary Ann Lloyd’s Dance Studio; and the present occupants, Joe Babicki, lawyer; and The Lady Be Lovely Beauty Salon operated by Arletta Smith.



Silvers Café



Baylis building after 1941 tornado



Luce Bakery

As we proceed north we reach the location of the old Baylis building. It was a frame building and housed at various times E.E. Silver's Restaurant; Dave Yocum's Grocery; and Fred Conkle Bakery. It was also damaged so severely by the 1941 tornado that it had to be razed.

A few years later the people of the community felt the need of a building suitable for suppers, and other public meetings. The voters approved a bond issue for this purpose in 1949 and in 1950 the Community Center was built. It served as the meeting place for many organizations, church suppers are held here and it also serves as election headquarters and township and city offices.

In about 1880, A.C. and W.C. Sherman built a two-story building for a hardware business. Dr. H.H. Miller had an office upstairs. After they closed their hardware business, Hartzell and Tatman's Kansas Valley Drug Store occupied the location for many years. Gregory Navarre maintained a jewelry store in the front of the drug store. John Kratina had a clock repair and jewelry store for awhile. The newspaper was moved to new quarters, Harvey and Bess Divine started a laundry. They soon changed from the Laundry business to a restaurant. The popular restaurant remained here for many years. Francis and Velda Pardee purchased the restaurant and after several years sold to Ben and Marilee Wade. They sold to John and Annie Berberick. Nolan and Ardith McGinnis purchased it in 1967 and within a very short time lightning struck the old building and it burned. John Wehner purchased the lot and converted it to a parking lot for the use of his IGA Store customers.

The south portion of what is now the Wehner IGA Grocery store is located on Lot No. 66. It was at this location that A.C. Sherman erected a building in 1871. His brother, W.C. Sherman, later joined



him in business. They were dealers in grain, cattle and hogs. In the front of the building they had offices and scales with storerooms in the rear.

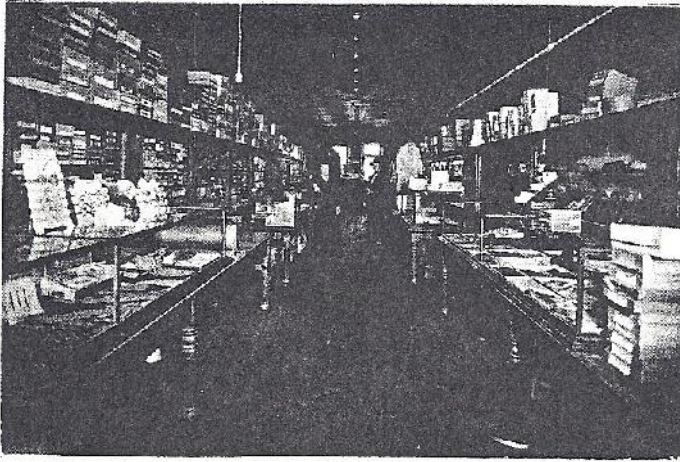
The north portion of the IGA Store is located on Lot No. 64 where Joseph F. Cannon built a large store to house his general merchandise business.

It is not known what happened to the two original buildings on these lots but in 1892 the present building was constructed to house the Rossville State Bank. The Rossville State Bank was established in 1893. The original officers were E.P. Merrian, President; I.B. Alter, Cashier; Dr. Henry H. Miller, Wesley Davis, and C.W. Higginbotham, Directors.

This building was originally divided into two large rooms. The south room housed the bank until 1927. W.G. Gilbert opened the Gem Clothing Store in the north room in the 1890s. Later it was H.L. Miller's Rossville Clothing Store. In 1935 Kenneth Wingert opened a grocery business in the south room. Charles Turecek operated a recreation parlor in the north side and Roy Hawks had a barber shop there for awhile. In 1947 Wingert sold his grocery business and building to Clarence Wehner. He had the building remodeled. The old bank vault was torn out and all the partitions were removed, making it into one large room.



H.L. Miller's Rossville Clothing Store and Rossville State Bank



Interior of Miller's Clothing Store. George Higginbotham and customer

The upstairs hall was used for a banquet room by various organizations. The Knights and Ladies of Security held regular meetings in the hall.

In 1946, Rossville business men and other civic boosters volunteered to raise \$300.00 to help subsidize a new movie theater in the second floor of the hall. The proprietor, W.C. "Deacon" Gates, leased the big hall on a long-time option. He installed 325 cushioned seats and two of the latest 35 millimeter projection machines. Tickets were 14 cents and 39 cents. John J. Wehner purchased the Gates Theater in 1949 and continued to operate the movies. The old theater is now used as a storage room for John A. Wehner's store.

The building adjoining the Wehner IGA store on the north and now housing Wehner's Western Auto Store was originally built by Pat King and used for his butcher shop. Pat King was a butcher in Rossville for many years and like the merchants of earlier days kept much longer store hours than do today's merchants.

In November, 1913 paper the following appeared:

**"Notice: After November 8<sup>th</sup>, my meat market will not be open after 7 o'clock in the evening except on Saturday night, and will not open on Sunday morning during the cold weather. Get your meat for Sunday on Saturday night."**

**Pat King, Proprietor**

Seth Weeks and then "Pop" Comstock had a recreation parlor in this building for many years. Johnny Wehner purchased the building and the merchandise of Comstock. He opened two doors between his grocery building and added a stock of hardware making it a very complete store.

The lot used by the Rossville Truck & Tractor to display their equipment was the location of the blacksmith shop built in 1879 and operated by George E. Cooke. L. Hollenbeck, who did wagon repairing and cabinet making, had his shop in the rear of the building. This location was used by several other blacksmiths including Bill Sneller, Elmer Lynde and Chet Paine.

The cement block building immediately north was built by Zim Enos for his garage. He did a good business servicing and repairing automobiles traveling the Golden Belt Highway. Later occupants of



the building were Dick McCoy, and H.E. Ishmael, who operated blacksmith shops. Rossville Township used it for many years to house their road maintenance equipment.

A large frame structure was built by the Wilt Brothers, Reuben and John in 1885 to house their hardware and implement company. The following is from a 1898 Rossville newspaper, "A fine windmill and pump is being placed in front of Wilt's Hardware Store for the benefit of the public. Wilt & Company will put down the pump and (John) Fritz will erect the windmill. The whole thing will be constructed on the subscription plan." Wilt Brothers continued their store until 1904 when it was sold to Hopkins and Son.



East side Main Street looking South

In 1913 the building burned. At that time it was occupied by the Skaggs Hardware. After it was rebuilt in 1914, the Wilt Brothers went back into business for a few years. Since that time many uses have been made of the building, from the storage of cotton (raised locally) to the serving of church dinners. The Acme Manufacturing Company operated by L.B. Crow, was located there for many years. Mr. Crow manufactured and sold livestock supplements, and minerals over a large territory in Eastern Kansas. M.L. (Slim) Harris was a longtime assistant to Mr. Crow. Don and Judy DeVader now lease the building for the DeVader Floor Covering store.

## OTHER ROSSVILLE BUSINESSES

On the corner of Pearl and Perry Streets, A.C. Sherman constructed, in 1871, the first hotel in Rossville (the present location of the James Dodge residence.) M.V. Lee operated the hotel until in June of 1877 when the following appeared in the paper: "The hotel is being repainted and renovated. It has done a smashing business through the summer and fall but now there is rumor of change. M.V. Lee is going back to Ohio. We are sorry for no finer man ever kicked the Kaw Valley sand off his feet." Lee sold to Mr. O. Woods, who sold, in 1878, to S.B. Maxwell, who renovated the hotel, enlarged the stables, and built a carriage house and hay shed. The hotel then became known as the Maxwell House. It was 26 by 58 feet and had twenty sleeping rooms, two parlors, an office, a dining room and a kitchen. There were many salesmen and "drummers" who would stay at this hotel. When the military traveled through the town, often encamping south of Rossville, the officers would register at the hotel and several famous personages signed the hotel register. Among these were General Miles and General Shafter. Also, in the early settlement of the town, new people to Rossville would live at the hotel until homes could be found or built. Parties were often held in the large parlors of the hotel. A.W. Gabbey, son of Dr. Gabbey, purchased the hotel and renamed it "The Rossville Hotel" operating it until Mr. and Mrs. Charles Vorhees commenced their operation of "The Union Hotel" in 1898. They continued the operation until it burned on February 14, 1901. Mrs. Beulah McIntire remembers the fire. She and her sister had opened their valentines and their father burned the paper wrappings. Evidently there was a faulty flue as the building caught fire and was destroyed.



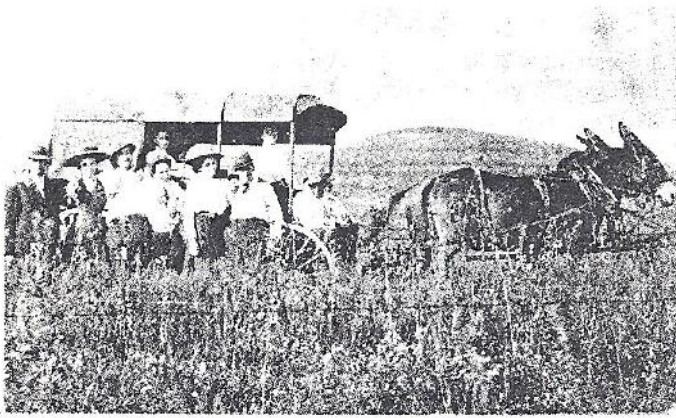
L to R Dave Hartzell, Dr. Gabbey's dog, Emma Nailor, Rebecca Vorhees, Dollie Lillard, Mr. and Mrs. Vorhees, Dave Yocum, Bradley (traveling man) in front of Union Hotel

To the west of the Maxwell House, next to the alley, was the McPherson Livery barn, which C. C. McPherson opened in October of 1879. In 1883, he kept three buggies, two spring wagons and nine head of horses. He expanded his business to house more in the early 1900s and had a "carry-all" which was particularly popular with the young people who often rented it for their outings. In one side

of the barn, the hearse was stored. A small black team, Tom and Reuben, was reserved for drawing the hearse and was driven by Billy Hawk and later by Charley Boyles.



C.C. McPherson's Livery

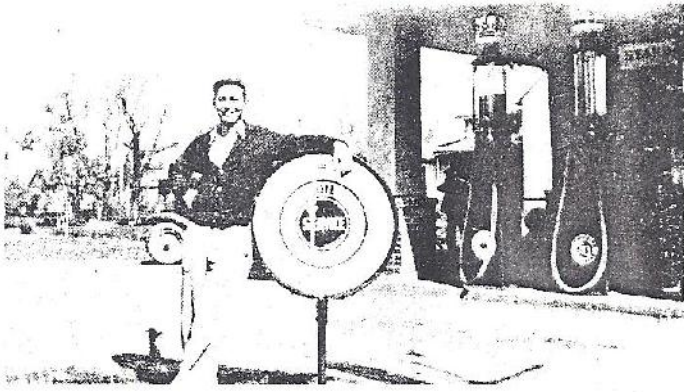


McPherson's Carry-all

The depot was located on the site of Mrs. Andricks home on the south end of Main Street. It must have been an inviting sight for a stranger alighting from the evening "Plug" to see the small park area (Bahner's Garage) with its huge cottonwood trees, the livery stable and the Maxwell House to the east. In the 1880s Maxwell placed a street lamp in front of the hotel which "loomed up like a woman's suffrage movement," and later McPherson installed one also. These were the only street lamps in town at the time. A difficult feat for the young boys in town was to climb McPherson's lamp post to retrieve a nickel placed there by one of the workmen. C.A. (Tot) Bixby's blacksmith shop was located across the street south from McPherson's livery barn.

As more and more cars were seen on the Golden Belt Road, gas stations were started. One of the earliest was located on the corner in the same building where Mrs. Andricks now lives. This station was owned and operated by Abner Cless and his wife, Bertha. Mrs. Cless was a great flower lover and her well kept yard with its big cottonwood trees was a very pretty setting for the station.





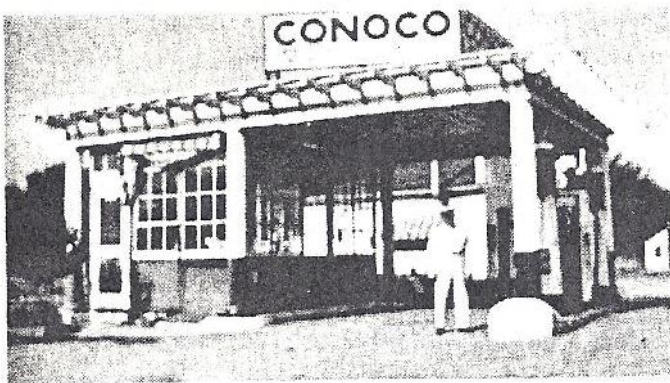
Earl Wilt by Frank Page Station

Another early station was that of Ted Fields at the corner of Pottawatomie and Main. Frank Page also operated this station for many years until he sold out to Raymond Sedlacek in 1947.

Ted Fields, in 1925, moved into his new gas station on the corner of Hiway 24-40 and Main (now Perry's Liquor Store). He sold to Walter Van Vleck in 1945. Leo Bennett operated the station until Charles Sharp took it over.

At the present location of Bennett Brothers Standard Service was the station of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Jeffries who also carried a small line of groceries. Other operators of the station have been Bill Hill and Gerald Larson. A.A. Cless moved into his new White Eagle Service station in 1925. It was located on the site of the present Mobil Oil station. Mr. Cless continued until the late 1930s, when Frank Zickefoose purchased the business. Other operators have been Bill Meyers, Leroy Masters, Henry Olejnik, Ernest Dolezilek, Clifford Cormack and Allen Rose. In 1966, Roy Wilt purchased the Mobil Oil station and at the present time it is operated by Kenneth Smith.

The Van Vleck Service station was started by Walter Van Vleck as the KVB. It was managed by Henry Cerny, and Omer Van Vleck is now the manager.



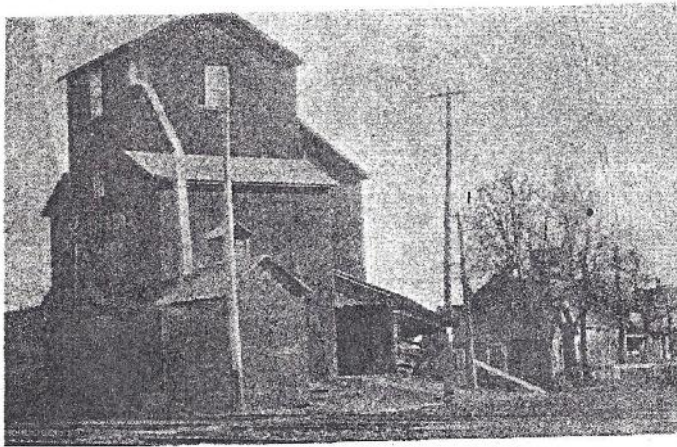
Leo Bennett in front of Conoco station

The Fina station, which is now operated by Everett Wheeler, was built by the Conoco Oil Company until the station and tract of land was sold to Frank Muller of Delia. Leo Bennett, Rolland DeGraff and Al French have operated the station. Muller sold to Adams of Mayetta in 1945.

Commission agents of the Standard Oil Company bulk plant have been George Fawl, Jim Coe and at present, Luther McClain.

Commission agents of the Mobil Oil Company bulk station have been Jack Jackson, and in 1937, Roy Wilt started as agent. In 1966, Wilt bought the bulk plant from the Mobil Oil Company. Robert Wilt is now associated in the business with his father.

John Stevens owned and operated a Texaco service station for many years near the site of the Herman Lister home. Mr. Stevens also operated an ice house in the old stone building at the rear.



Andrews Elevator

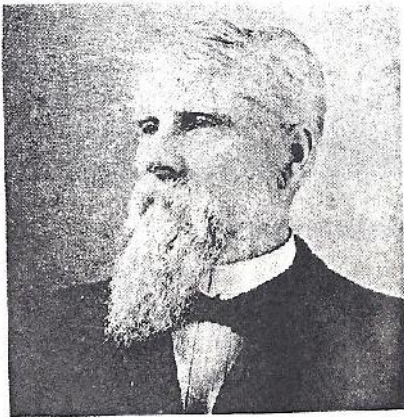
On the northeast corner of Main and Highway 24, was the Empire Elevator erected in the 1890s by A.C. Sherman. Tom Andrews was manager for Sherman and later owner. The Farmers Union purchased the elevator and Cal Bradley and Bolten were managers. In 1929, Berry Grain Company, which came to Rossville in 1926, purchased and operated it with their other elevators until it burned in 1936. Leo Berry, Sr. was manager of the Berry Grain Company until his death in 1949, when his son, Leo Dale and Carl Rupin became managers. In 1953, they installed their irrigation equipment on the site of the old elevator.





J.C. Bradley in Grain office

Another elevator was located north of the highway and west of the Mobil Station. This was part of the old Rossville Mill Company which was erected, in the 1870s, by John W. Burton. In 1877, the St. Marys Times had this item: "The Rossville Mill has been stopped for several weeks for the purpose of putting in new machinery. A stone addition, two story, 18 by 40 feet, to be used as an elevator, is being erected. A new sheller, with capacity of shelling 600 bushels of corn per hour, has been put in with a wagon dump." In 1879, Rossville had a steam whistle at the mill, and Engineer Huntington blew it promptly at 7 a.m., 12 noon and 6 p.m.



W.M. Mitchner, grain dealer

W.M. Mitchner was a manager of the Mulvane Company. The elevator later became known as the P.V. Elevator and was operated by E.J. Howard as late as 1908. The elevator burned about 1915.



Forrest Ropp

The old ice plant (the Lamp Factory) was operated by Forrest Ropp and later by Nick Bush. It was equipped for frozen food storage by C.G. Black in 1943. F.E. McBurney had a blacksmith shop there. It is now used by the Berry Lamp Company for the manufacture of yard lights.

Harvey Divine's Café was located where Mrs. Dee Young lives. It was later operated as Duffy's Tavern until Chalmers Dee Young purchased it for his liquor store in 1949.

Chris Viergever's liquor store was located where Kenneth Patty's Swirly Top is now. It was built by Chris Viergever in 1952 and was later converted into the Swirly Top. Mr. Brown bought out Viergever and in 1958 sold to Kenneth Patty.

Bob's Tavern was the old Cedar Bluff school which was moved to town to replace the Francis Martin restaurant, which burned in 1943. Pete Darting had a café in that building and sold to the Casto Brothers in 1948.

The J. Thomas Lumber Company started in Rossville in the 1880s. James B. Hall was manager for several years and in 1909 Mr. Vawter became manager. Wm. Hesse started work at the yard in 1925, and in 1932 bought a half interest in the business and, in 1943, bought the other half. It then became the Hesse Lumber Company. Bill Hesse remembered counting the houses in Rossville in the 30s, when the population of the town was perhaps 500, -- 75 north of the tracks and 76 south. His sons, Billy and Burns succeeded him in business and it is now owned by Billy Hesse in partnership with Bill Larson.



William L. Hesse, lumber dealer

The present site of the Cedar Drive-In was the location of the large Oliver Nursery barn, which was destroyed in the 1941 tornado. Later, a garage building was constructed and operated by Albert

Coleman. The building was remodeled in 1965 by Bennie Dick, Jr. and Melba Gentry for their Cedar Drive-In, which was sold to Jim and Ann Burkett in 1970.

In 1944, a new alfalfa dehydrating plant was built just east of the Standard Oil Company bulk station and is now the Kaw Dehydrating Company.

Hurley's Funeral Home was owned by John Hurley in the 1950s and was located where the Dale Mahan's presently live on Perry Street.

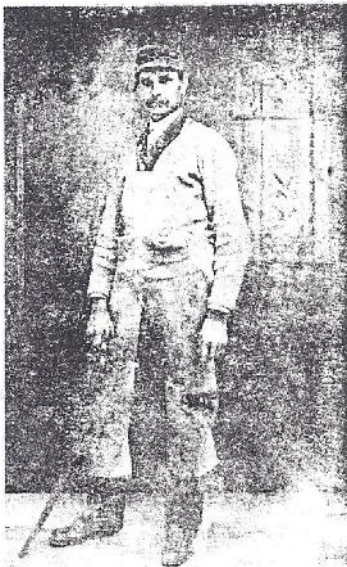
Back in the 1880s, the Rossville Brickyard was located on the east edge of town and operated by Charles Mowers. He kept five men employed and burned about 400,000 bricks. He had the contract for the original Presbyterian Church building.

Josh Harding, in the early 1990s, had a cement block factory located north of Pottawatomie Street near the old wagon bridge. The home of Sam Cottle, built of these blocks was located near the factory. The People State Bank used these cement blocks in the construction of its building in 1909. The building across the street from the bank, built by Zim Enos, is of these blocks. Josh Harding's first factory was located where Harold Irwin now lives. Harding erected that house also.

Paul Patell, in the 1880s, had a carpenter and wagon shop at the east end of the wagon bridge. Templin's Blacksmith Shop was just east of Patell's shop.

At the rear of the lots on which Ed Macha's house is located was the blacksmith shop of C.A. (Tot) Bixby and across the street to the north Richard Mason had a blacksmith shop in the early 1900s.

F.E. McBurney and Harold Irwin had welding shops at the rear of the lots where the DeVader Floor Covering is located.



Richard Binns

Richard Binns, in 1881, constructed a large barn and carpenter shop across the alley from the present DeVader Floor Covering. The barn and shop burned in the Skaggs Hardware fire of 1913.

North of Dr. R.S. Gabbey's home, the present home of Mrs. Mamie Marney, was the Gabbey and Company Go-Devil factory and Gabbey's Cultivator Works established in the 1890s. Another inventor, George Cooke, blacksmith, had his shop in that building. An article from the Rossville items in the St. Marys Times in 1877 was as follows: "George W. Cooke, our village blacksmith, has applied for a patent on an adjustable sulky harrow corn worker and corn cultivator combined. The light draught and ease with which this machine can be worked by the mere twist of the wrist while riding on the cultivator make it desirable. The harrow can be raised off the ground or tilted with east without stopping the team. This is the only machine of this kind ever invented."

In the 1880s, H.L. Sherwood, inventor and patentee of adjustable bed springs, manufactured them at the Binns Hardware where he sold them.

Real estate agents in the Rossville area have been O. Leroy Sedgwick, May Stiles, Howard Stiles, Walter (Babe) McCleery, Joe Gresser, Everett Hoobler, Earl Wilt and Burns Hesse.



Howard French Trucking

The first trucking business was Howard French who started in 1929 and continued operation until 1946. When he first started in business he would haul anything. His truck line later hauled principally livestock, feed and freight.

Rossville has been fortunate to have many good carpenters throughout her 100 years. Richard Binns came to Rossville in 1871, from Pennsylvania and built most of the early business houses and residences. In later years, his sons, John, Frank and William joined him in the trade.

A.J. Parr, Charles Sebring, Paul Patell, R. Shipley, John Lillard and his son, John, Ivan Britt and Bill Farley and his son, Carl, were all Rossville carpenters.

George Stackhouse was an early day stonemason and James Marney was a popular plasterer and concrete contractor.

John Fritz was a bridge builder who came to Rossville in 1877 from Pennsylvania. Many of the early bridges in this vicinity were constructed by him.

J.H. Lillard and Alvin Besta were draymen for many years.

Cal Bradley was the first in the oil business as he delivered kerosene of the Standard Oil Co.

Additional businesses, most of which the location is not known were: Hiram Lyon, groceries, lunch room and Singer Sewing Machines in 1883; R. DeBarrows, butcher; Nadeau Lunch counter; Zickefoose Brothers, restaurant; James S. Olmstead, manufacturer of boots and shoes; Isaac Stanley, livestock dealer; A.J. Parr and S.H. Miles, dry goods, groceries and jewelry; Abe Startup, livery barn; Wesley Davis, grainman; Mr. Van Laey, jeweler; Frank DeBarrows, shoemaker; Parks and Joy, groceries; Otto Lohman, boot and shoe repair; W.H. Eisenhower, shoe shop; J.G. Lumpkins, barber; Dorothy Richardson, Velda Pardee and Norma Martinek, beauty shops, George Stewart Meat Market, Carl Luce Bakery and Edna Brooks, Millinery. Delbert Olson has served for many years as a mechanic and has his garage in the south part of town.

A steam corn popper on wheels, pretty, clean and shiny was owned by Frank Diehl and is remembered by many as it was frequently seen at all outdoor functions.

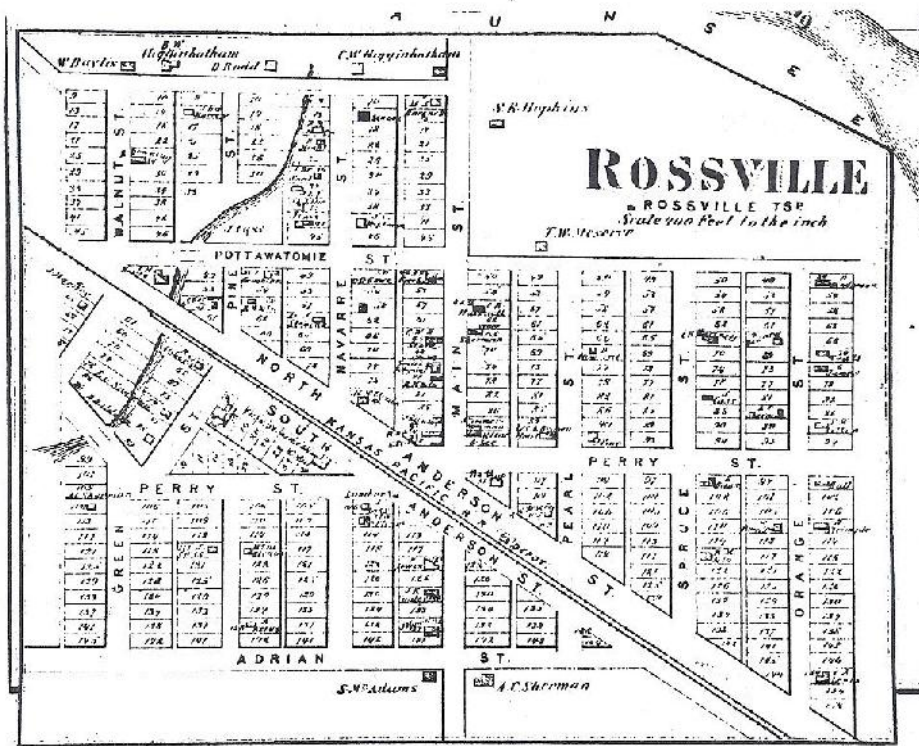
David Hartzell was in the drugstore business on Main Street for 54 years. He came to Rossville in 1868, making his first trip for the purpose of plastering the Alex Nadeau station west of Rossville. Gregory Navarre brought Mr. Hartzell to Rossville, driving across country in a wagon. In May, 1872, he returned to Rossville, opened a drug store, in partnership with Altmont Allen. He later operated the drug store alone until he went into partnership with Melville F. Tatman. Dave Hartzell sold out his business in 1926.

Daniel Wilt came to Rossville in 1876, and besides farming, was a plasterer and paper hanger. Since then, there has always been a member of the Wilt family in business here.

Other businessmen of long standing through the years have been: Bill Hesse, Lumber; George Cooke, blacksmith; Richard Mason, blacksmith; C.A. Bixby, blacksmith and grocer; Besse Divine, restaurant; William Aye, harness shop; C.E. Cless, Hardware and Implements.



1873 City Map



1873 City Map

## ROSSVILLE CITY

"The first election of Rossville, the queen city of the Kansas Valley, was duly held with imposing ceremonies on Monday, June 27, 1881. The polls were held in Dr. Gabbey's office, the time honored city hall of the town. The day was sweltering hot, 103 degrees in the shade, yet the voters came up manfully to the number of 64 and deposited their ballots with unflinching bravery." The foregoing was taken from the local Rossville paper. H.H. Miller was elected mayor with S.B. Maxwell, Samuel Kerr, M.F. Tatman, John Stoyell, and D.P. Elder, Councilmen; C.W. Talmadge, Clerk; D.G. Smith, treasurer; W.C. Sherman, City Attorney. The list is incomplete, but mayors to follow were: Mrs. H.H. Miller, Wm. Howerton, J.C. Bradley, Dr. H.F. Pratt, Jerry Owens, Lester Parr, C.E. Gresser, C.M. McPherson, Will Van Orsdol, E.G. Griswold, Edd J. Kovar, Clyde Strimple, Leo Berry, Edward Zickefoose, F.E. Pardee, L.B. Crow, George E. Fawl, L.H. Spears, William Smith and Chris Viergever.

Rossville claimed attention all over the state when the ladies took over the management of the city in 1889. The victorious ticket included Mrs. H.H. Miller, mayor; Mrs. J.H. Cannon, Mrs. Samuel Kerr, Mrs. C.C. McPherson, Mrs. W.M. Mitchner, Mrs. W.C. Sherman, councilwomen; Mrs. R. Binns, police judge. Mrs. Binns declined the office saying that it properly belonged to a man. Mrs. Emma Ellis was treasurer.



Mrs. H.H. Miller, Mayor



Mrs. Samuel Kerr



Mrs. C.C. McPherson



Mrs. Emma Ellis



Mrs. Richard Binns



Mrs. W.M. Mitchner

The origination of the winning ticket was kept a secret until 7 A.M. of the morning of election day. Most people hadn't the slightest idea that such a ticket would be in the field, and some thought it was done at first as a joke. An effort was made by the men to nullify the ticket by introducing a second one, but the ladies were equal to the emergency and triumphantly elected their whole ticket by a 35 majority.

Probably in an effort to retain neutral ground, the editor of the Rossville Times had this to say – "In addition to personal abilities, the officers-elect have husbands eminently qualified to help them, if they happen to need help – a most likely thing." Whether the ladies solicited "help" from their husbands was never recorded, but the record does show that the ladies served out their term and carried on the business of the city. At the end of their term in office, no one could say that the women weren't efficient.

The history of telephone service in Rossville dates back to Dr. R.S. Gabbey having a telephone between his home and office in 1879. He reported, to the townspeople's amazement, that "conversation, music and singing at either end of the wire is plainly audible and that he could almost sniff the aroma of his turkey dinner in preparation at home before leaving his office." This telephone came soon after Alexander Graham Bell received his patent for the telephone. The inventive doctor probably constructed his own telephone from Bell's plans.

About this same time A.C. Sherman had a private line from Rossville to St. Marys.

Telephone service to the public did not get started in Rossville until August 1900, when Manager McMahan of the Alma Telephone Co. offered to establish an exchange. G.P. Pierce asked for and received a 20-year franchise from the city. By the end of the year, telephone lines connected Maple Hill, Rossville, and St. Marys. The line was being extended to Silver Lake, Valencia and Topeka.





Velda O'Donnell, operator

The following list was the phones with numbers of the same for Rossville:

1	McMahan toll line	14-2	John Howerton, residence
2	Rhinehart toll line	14-3	Wm. Howerton, residence
3	Union Pacific Depot	14-4	Charles York, residence
4	J.W. Jamieson, Dry Goods & Gro.	15	C.W. Higginbotham, Gen. Mdse.
5	Wilt Hardware & Implement	16	Nason Hotel & Bakery
6	Dr. Miller, office	17	Shawnee County News
7-2	Rossville Mill & Elevator Co.	18	S.R. Bagwell, residence
7-3	T.W. Andrews, residence	19	W.M. Mitchner, Grain Merch.
7-4	J.C. Bradley, residence	20	G.P. Pierce, residence
8	J.H. Mills Hardware & Impl.	21	C.W. Higginbotham, residence
9	C.C. McPherson Sale Stable	22	J.D. Rocky, residence
10	Thomas Lumber Co., L. Ward, Mgr.	23	M.F. Tatman, residence
11	Stewart Meat Market	24	Rossville State Bank
12	Parks & Joy Grocery	25	Joe Lane, Grain Comm. Merchant
13	Opera House Pharmacy		

The telephones were sold outright to the subscribers for \$18.00. After 25 telephones had been placed in town, a small monthly fee was charged.

Improvements were made in the telephone service and by August of 1901, the Shawnee County News reported: "The telephone is coming into such general and popular use that it is only a question of time until the thrifty farmer's wives will first call up the town merchants and obtain quotations before



bringing the daily yield of hen fruit to market. In the matter of adopting modern improvements the average Jayhawker may generally be found just a little in advance of the procession."

The telephone system in the early days was quite primitive by today's standards. The battery powered, ground return system worked fine in dry weather but during wet periods was sometimes extremely noisy. Often the poles supporting the wires were a crooked pole cut from some nearby tree. The calls had to be handled by "central," usually a young lady from the area. She kept track of the doctor's whereabouts. She also knew most of the other local news. Often times she was asked "give me so and so" instead of being asked for a number. She usually could identify all the residents by the sound of their voice. In emergencies, she could locate the doctor, give the fire alarm or give assistance in other ways. Her personal touch was appreciated and was missed when the exchange was converted to the dial system.

Charles Williams purchased the telephone system from G.P. Pierce. Walter Swenson was the next owner. Later, he sold to the Northern Kansas Telephone Co., but remained here as manager for a time.

The Northern Kansas Telephone Company bought several of the little independent exchanges and rebuilt the lines. They put in modern switching equipment and converted to the dial system.

The Northern Kansas Telephone Company was sold to a new company renamed the Kansas Telephone Co. This company has in turn become part of the Continental Telephone System. They are currently improving the local system by installing underground cable.

One hundred years ago the telephone was unknown and unneeded but today's business could not get along without Alexander Graham Bell's handy invention.

In 1901, when Bradley was mayor, the new city hall was constructed. In the years 1901 and 1902, the first fire department was formed, the first fire engine was purchased, gas street lamps were put in, Main Street was graveled, and many new crosswalks were added. U.G. Stewart, editor and city clerk, campaigned vigorously with his newspaper for fire protection, water works, sidewalks, and clean-up of the town. The first cisterns for fire protection were constructed and through the years many were added.

In 1901, U.S. Stewart and Cal Bradley promoted the purchase of a park area at the south end of the Main Street business block, but it was not until 1919 that an election for a park proposition carried, 64 for and 52 against, authorizing the council to purchase a tract for park purposes. In April, 1923, the city park grounds were purchased from J.K. Conley, five acres for the sum of \$5,000.00. An additional \$3,000.00 was required to start work on driveways and landscaping. This was not to be Rossville's first park, however, for in the Kansas Valley Times of 1879, the following appeared: "Rossville is to have a city park. C.W. Higginbotham has fenced and broken his block south of the school house and put it down to blue grass. Our town will come to the front yet."

Also, in the 1890s and early 1900s, the DeVinney grove, just to the west of Cross Creek and south of the tracks, was a popular picnic area. The timbered area was seeded to blue grass and kept like a park by Mr. DeVinney. Howard's Grove, south of town was used for many of the town celebrations.

All of Rossville was characterized for its cleanliness. For years, it was called "the cleanest little town in the state." Its neat, well-kept yards were dotted with freshly painted homes in good repair. The yard of Dr. Pratt (Guyle home) at the north end of Main was used for various outdoor functions.

On the east side of town was a race track, races being a popular sport in the "horse" days.

In 1907, gas lights came to Rossville and it was written by U.G. Stewart: "the convenience, cleanliness, absence of heat and purity of light is all that could be desired." In 1915, E.J. Steckel & Son started operation of an electric light plant. In 1917, the Rossville Electric Light and Ice Company was granted a charter.

In 1925 an ordinance was passed to hold an election for a sewer and water system, but it was defeated. Again, during the depression years, another election was held under a government plan and carried five to one. This was a complete revenue bond proposition. The WPA asked that the city vote \$10,000.00 of property tax bonds as their share. Somehow this became pigeon-holed until the WPA was about to cease functioning and there the matter rested. In 1941, another election was held but was turned down; and, in July of 1945, the citizens voted again. The Rossville citizens voted 166 yes to 35 no for a waterworks and sewer system which called for \$58,500.00 Work was begun and in 1947, the water tower erected and the last of the watermains were laid. In July of 1948, the last section of the lateral sewers was laid.

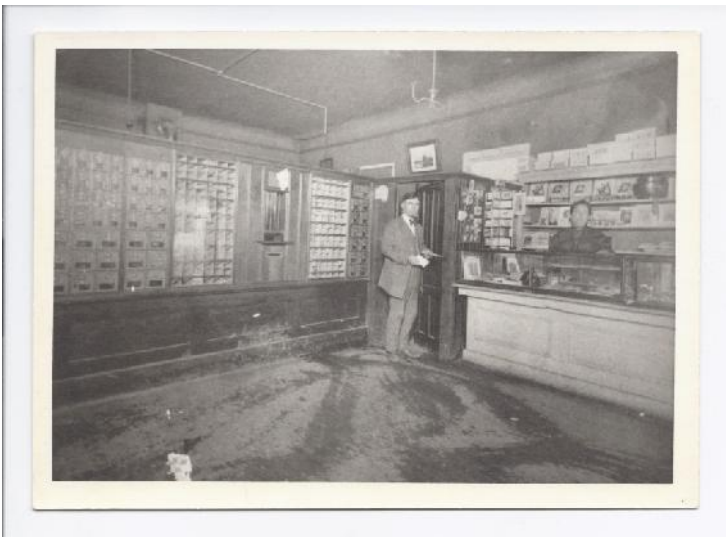
In 1931, natural gas was piped to Rossville.

In 1941, the City Council published an ordinance establishing a local Defense Council which included about ten local people to work with the administration officials in all activities such as the Red Cross drive, waste paper drive, or other movements during the war. C.E. Gresser was chairman assisted by Mrs. Vida Stumbaugh, Mrs. Peter Navarre, Mrs. Irene Campbell, W.L. Hesse and A.F. Buchmeier in the city. Mrs. Flo Emert and Mrs. John Pearl were the representatives in the country west of town; Mrs. Edna Spears and Mrs. Irene Davis, north of town. C.E. Gresser and L.J. Henderson were the tire committee; members on utilities committee included V.A. Bloom, J.D. Barney and J.M. Lillard. N.G. Moody and Peter Navarre were to look after publicity and waste paper. In 1942, to avoid conflict with possible blackout practice or fire alarm in the early evening, the council voted to do away with the nightly curfew signal. However, since the siren was sounded daily to make certain it was in working order, it was tested each noon.

The defense council had charge of Red Cross drives, waste paper drives, ration books, scrap iron drives, war bond drives, scrap rubber campaigns and air raid blackout practices.

## **POST OFFICE**

Rossville's first postmaster was James W. Dahoney, who received his appointment January 29, 1862. Those to follow were Joseph B. Oliver, 1864, C.W. Higginbotham, Feb., 1867; Gregory Navarre, Aug., 1867; Harlow Kline, 1871; Adrian C. Sherman, 1879; Mitchal Frishman, 1885; Adrian C. Sherman, 1886; Samuel Kerr, 1892; Bennett Swearingen, 1897; Thomas J. Cox, 1901; Ulysses G. Stewart, 1908; Reuben L. Wilt, 1911; Chas. E. Van Vleck, 1913; Ulysses G. Stewart, 1924; Arthur B. Jamieson, 1934; Everett Pelfrey, 1938, and Mrs. Bernice French, 1967.



Post Office, Mr. and Mrs. U.G. Stewart



Everett Pelfrey, long time postmaster

The first post office was located west of the creek approximately where Mrs. Everett Pelfrey now lives, and in 1871 was moved to Main Street. There were various locations for the post office through the years, and where the office was located when U.G. Stewart was postmaster in 1908 to 1911, we are not certain. However, the following letter appeared in the Rossville News in 1910:

A "Roar" from the P.M.

"The postmaster is tolerably even-tempered, longsuffering and slow to wrath. But patience ceases to be a virtue and the occasion calls for great indignation when a man comes into the lobby with ten cents worth of "Horse Shoe" tucked away in his jaw and squirts about a quart of thick juice on the carpet. That's when we rush to the coal hod and select a big chunk of hard coal with the idea of doing great bodily harm to the offender. Just as we are about to hurl the mass through the money order window at some vital sport, the thought comes that perhaps he isn't so much to blame after all. That no doubt he spits on the wallpaper at home, wipes his face on the door mat and blows his nose on the tablecloth. Then we go back to the stove and meditate that some

day the Department may bar this unclean class from the post office and require him to go to a livery barn and scratch around for their mail with a four-tined fork.

The postmaster feels he has reason to be proud of the neat and rather attractive appearance of the office and with a little consideration and more thoughtfulness on the part of the tobacco chewers it would show his efforts were appreciated.

Are you guilty? Then resolve to never do it again; however, if you are tempted to spit and feel unable to overcome the desire, spit in your pocket or in the pocket of a friend. Otherwise spit right out in the middle of the floor where we can get at it with a scoop and mop – rather than in some corner or along the base board – and you will have the grateful thanks of Yours truly, UG. Stewart, P.M.”

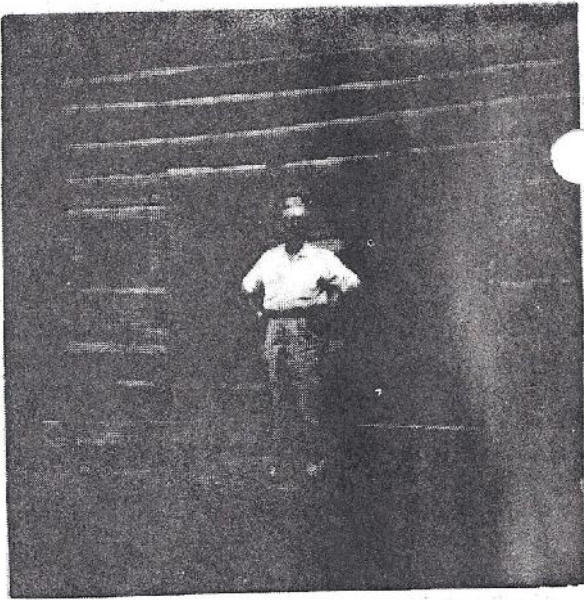


William C. Baylis

William Cyrus Baylis' name often came up in transfer of lots in Rossville. When they laid out the townsite those who could – bought lots. He came West as timekeeper in 1866 for the railroad and stayed in Rossville to run the water tower. He had some money so he bought lots to help out. Later he went to Oklahoma and practiced law.

When he returned to Rossville he was asked to take the Rural mail route from its inception. He drove the twenty miles five days a week for twelve years (when Congress started Rural Free Delivery in 1896). When they started the town of Delia he had to deliver a mail stack to Mr. Wolpert, who was the mail carrier for that area.

Other mail carriers to follow were Eventous Doud, Sr., Arthur White, Leon Dann, Joe Navarre and Walt Preble.

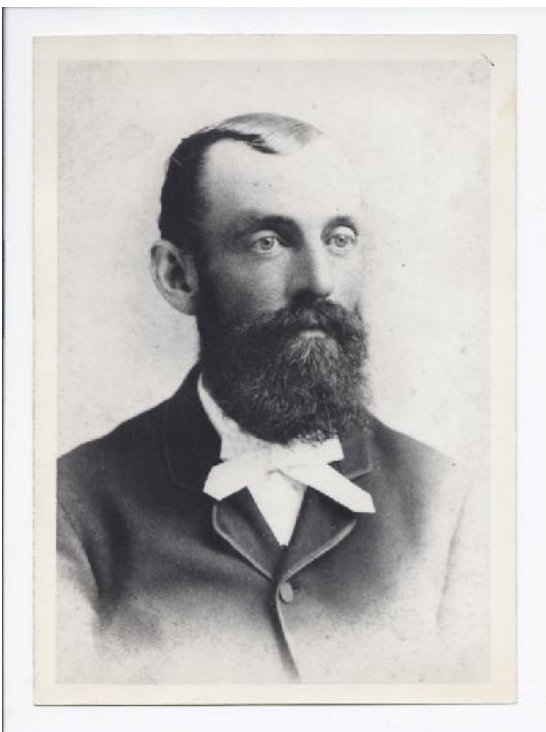


Joe Navarre, 45 years as Rural Mail Carrier

Joe Navarre started carrying mail in May, 1917 and retired in August, 1962, a period of 45 years. His courteous and accommodating manner was appreciated by all on the route. Patrons have commented "they could set their clock" by Joe's efficiency.

#### **EDITORS**

For nearly 92 of Rossville's 100 years, we have been fortunate to have a local newspaper. Some editors were dedicated men who struggled tooth and nail to produce and publish a newsworthy, commendable paper, and others were only politically inspired and therefore folded early.



Mr. O. Leroy Sedgwick





Mrs. O. Leroy Sedgwick

O. Leroy Sedgwick, who had already made a name for himself in the Kaw Valley as a “land boomer,” published Rossville’s first paper. He established the Pottawatomie Land Office in St. Marys in 1870, and four years later began publishing a newspaper. In August, 1878, Sedgwick moved his land office to Rossville, where pasture land sold for \$1.75 an acre and good crop land could be had for \$3.00 to \$5.00 per acre. The newspaper, **THE KANSAS VALLEY TIMES**, was moved to Rossville from St. Marys in February, 1879. Sedgwick used the publication to promote his land business. Detailed descriptions of what the area had to offer new settlers were numerous. The newspaper was published until his death in 1881, and in June of 1882 was sold to the Kansas Valley Publishing Company in Topeka. Its office was at 70 Kansas Avenue where the newspaper was edited by F.W. Kroenke. Mr. C.W. Talmage of Rossville was the local correspondent.

Rossville’s second publication was started July, 1883. It was called **THE ROSSVILLE NEWS** until it was changed to **CARPENTER’S KANSAS LYRE**. J.C. Carpenter, the editor, thought he might as well have the “name as the game” and boldly announced himself as “one of the liars.” The **LYRE** ceased publication February, 1887, and Mr. Carpenter moved to St. Marys where he published the **ST. MARYS GAZETTE**. Next came Mr. Joseph Frishman who successfully chronicled the local news and reported the council proceedings. He was here for a short time when he moved to Council Grove, and in September of 1888, George A. Weller bought the newspaper and changed the name to **THE ROSSVILLE TIMES**. Mr. Weller gained not a little notoriety as a local news reporter. It is alleged that he would start out afoot in the morning with a penny tablet and a hunk of cheese and spend the day searching the country for miles in every direction. Mr. Weller’s successor was his son, E.A. Weller. About this time there were rumors that a rival paper was to be established and Mr. Weller encouraged the venture by saying, “Jump in, brother editors, as Rossville is large enough for two papers, at least.” Subsequently, in June of 1892 **THE WEEKLY CRITIC**, edited by A.W. Gabbey and Benjamin Mileham, began its rocky publication. After the third issue, Mr. Mileham severed his connections with the paper by announcing he was “dropping the quill and taking up the brush, reverting to an

occupation for which his natural endowments eminently qualified him.” Following Mr. Mileham came Bryon C. Mitchner and numerous other editors, until August of 1893 when the **CRITIC** ceased publication.

**THE ROSSVILLE TIMES** has in the meantime thrived under Mr. Weller’s ownership. However, he sold it a year later to Newton J. Baker, who later sold it to C.M. Dunn, who was to be its last editor. In the fall of 1899 H.J. Richmond broke into the newspaper field at Rossville and started **THE ROSSVILLE NEWS**.



Printing Shop – L to R: U.G. Stewart, Ray Bartley, and Paul Stewart

In June of 1901, U.S. Stewart became the colorful owner of the **NEWS**. In his own words, “A new and dazzling literary genius shot athwart the horizon in the person of Mr. Richmond’s successor.” Truly a remarkable, self-educated writer, he could be brave and fearless concerning controversial matters when a man of lesser grain would have resigned the fact as hopeless. Indeed, U.G. showed “spirit”...and the people of the Valley responded well to it, for in the ten years that he published the paper, subscriptions increased by 500 percent. He polished up his news stories in a cleverly entertaining manner and could make the most insignificant item have absorbing interest. It would only be Editor Stewart who would name his weekly column “Thought Thunk by Simon Plunk” ... or refer to ones head as your “Thinktank” ... or the floor leader in the State Legislature as “the Blinking Blighting Bat of the Body Politic” and then ponder ... “When a man’s suspender’s burst just as he stoops to pray, how do you suppose it affects his religion?”

One classic article appeared when the editor had made a special effort to go to bed early so he would awaken early to see the sunrise, but instead found a roan cow standing in the middle of his lettuce patch! He reported he grabbed a barrel stave and chased the cow out of the garden and half way through town before giving up. It so irritated the Editor that he wrote a poem entitled “An Apostrophe

Addressed to the Town Cow” which appeared in the next issue. U.G., which stood for Ulysses Grant, was born March 3, 1870, in Woodstock, Richland County, Wisconsin. He came from a family of nine children. His early years were spent in Kansas and Missouri, and he began his publishing career at the age of 16 in Marysville. When he was 30 years old, he came to Rossville and assisted Mr. Richmond in the newspaper office and within a short time became the sole owner. It was during these early years that he became associated with Pete Navarre, a friendship that lasted 35 years. In August, 1901, U.G. hired Pete as “compositor and body guard with the **NEWS**, a position with extraordinary powers. Anyone desiring to lick the Editor will be referred to Pete.” Another familiar faced around the **NEWS** office was the town blacksmith, Bill Sneller, whose talents were necessary when the old press failed. Stewart wrote on one such occurrence, “the gilderfluke agitating the popdinger on the job press busted during the rush of job work in this office this week and we fear the editor will be compelled to dig up the price of a new press. Blacksmith Sneller has taken the busted machine apart and declares he can fit it good as new. Perhaps so. It has to be pretty rotten when Sneller fails.

Mr. Stewart sold the paper in 1910. In his farewell to his readers, he wrote, “... I have had bushels of fun and retire from the field with a whole skin and colors flying. Kind friends, farewell.”

He served as Postmaster from 1908 through 1910. He was reappointed in 1924 and served for ten more years.

Besides his avid interests in politics, U.G. was a great lover of music, and although the never had lessons, was leader of the Rossville Band for many years. Equal to his love of music was his love for flowers. His home was surrounded with lovely flowers of every known variety.

U.G. Stewart passed away in January, 1935, and as he used to write of fellow editors who had died, “Passed on to that land where the delinquent subscriber cannot enter.”



Peter Navarre's Office

Peter Navarre and his wife, Minnie, who served as owners and editors of the **ROSSVILLE REPORTER** for 40 years, purchased the paper in March, 1913, from Dwight T. Harris, Jr. the Navarres were the first husband and wife team to operate the paper; both well experienced in every phase. Mr. Navarre had been associated with printing and publishing newspapers all of his adult life. Mrs. Navarre was an experienced reporter, previously working with the **WESTMORELAND RECORDER**, and **THE MANHATTAN INDUSTRIALIST**.

Peter Navarre was the first printer to graduate from Haskell Institute in Lawrence. Once while attending the school he walked all the way home as he was homesick to see his little brother Joe.

During the early days of Pete's career, he worked in the **ROSSVILLE NEWS** office, then owned by U.S. Stewart. To quote Editor Stewart: "Pete Navarre is a fine printer and with the exception of Charles Curtis, is the brightest Indian in the state." Later, in 1903, he wrote: "Peter Navarre who has been foreman for the **NEWS** office for the last two years expects to leave in a few days for White Earth, Minnesota, to assume control of an Indian school journal published at that place. Pete is an exceptionally good Indian and a swift, accurate typesetter; sober, industrious and reliable. If there are any laurels growing around White Earth he will pluck them as fast as they ripen." Pete stayed in Minnesota one year and then returned to the **NEWS** office as foreman.

In 1909, he again left Rossville and moved to Manhattan where he was employed by the **MANHATTAN INDUSTRIALIST**. It was here that he met Minnie Massey who was also on the staff. They were married September 24, 1910, in Manhattan and later moved to Beloit, where their first daughter, Williamette, was born.

They purchased the **ROSSVILLE REPORTER** in 1913 and Peter Navarre wrote, "We do not give two whoops in a rain barrel for politics and hope to keep out of everything that tends towards strife or controversy." But there were times during the next forty years that Peter would take a firm stand on a controversial problem and air a lot of common sense.



Peter Navarre at Linotype

Peter and Minnie Navarre produced a newsworthy paper. We still remember Minnie diligently collecting social news items, and there was little that escaped her handy notebook and pencil. She made good use of every source and once made the statement, "there was a news story behind every moving van."

Many remember Pete Navarre as an excellent editor with keen logic and even temperament; that is until the old press would break down at a strategic time and then his nerves would become frayed, to say the least! The only solution to this ordeal was the skillful aid of Rossville's welder-mechanic, Alfred Hause. "Hausey" did more for Pete's mental state than any aspirin on the market, for soon the old press would be purring like new.

Peter Navarre was born March 26, 1884, in Rossville, and was the seventh child in a family of eleven. His parents, Gregory and Mary (Baldan) Navarre were both early settlers in our community. The Navarres arrived from South Bend, Indiana, in 1866, and the Baldans in 1855. Mary Baldan was



raised on the farm west of town, presently owned by Clarence Emert. She remembered the arrival of the first train, and it was her father who stood off the Union Pacific surveyors with a shot gun when they sought to establish their 400 foot right-of-way through his farm. Pete used to tell the story of how he searched for years, without success, trying to locate his Grandmother Martha Baldan's grave. He knew that she died in the late 1850s and was buried in the family cemetery on the old Baldan farm. He finally found the missing tomb stone; not in a cemetery but in his printing office, for he had been using it as a composition stone. It was not until he decided to change the old stone that he noticed the writing and discovered that this was the stone he had spent years looking for.

The Editor's grandfather, Peter Navarre, was a brother to Anthony Navarre. He and his Indian wife, So-na-ne-quah sold the 100 acres to developers for the townsite of Rossville in 1870. Anthony was a trusted friend of the Pottawatomie. For many years he served as their representative in Washington. And after 1859, the Indians received their annuities at his farm, immediately west of Cross Creek. This farm is still owned by the Navarre family.

Peter died in August 1970, and Minnie in April, 1971, but both have left a lasting mark on our community.

Bill Murray and his wife, Betty, purchased the paper in March, 1953, after the Navarres retired.



Murrays, L to R Bill Murray, Diane Murray, and Betty Murray

The name was changed to **THE SHAWNEE COUNTY REPORTER**, boasting to be "The rural voice of Shawnee County." The Murrays published a commendable paper, and this was proved in 1958, when they were "Sweepstakes winner of Kansas' Better Newspaper Contest." While here the Murrays completely remodeled the old printing office. A modern brick front was added and updated printing equipment which included a new five ton press was installed.

"Way Back When," "Bylines by B.J.M." and "Coffee Brea," which consisted largely of Rossville's past history were written by Betty. Her interest in our town prompted her to do a great deal of research.

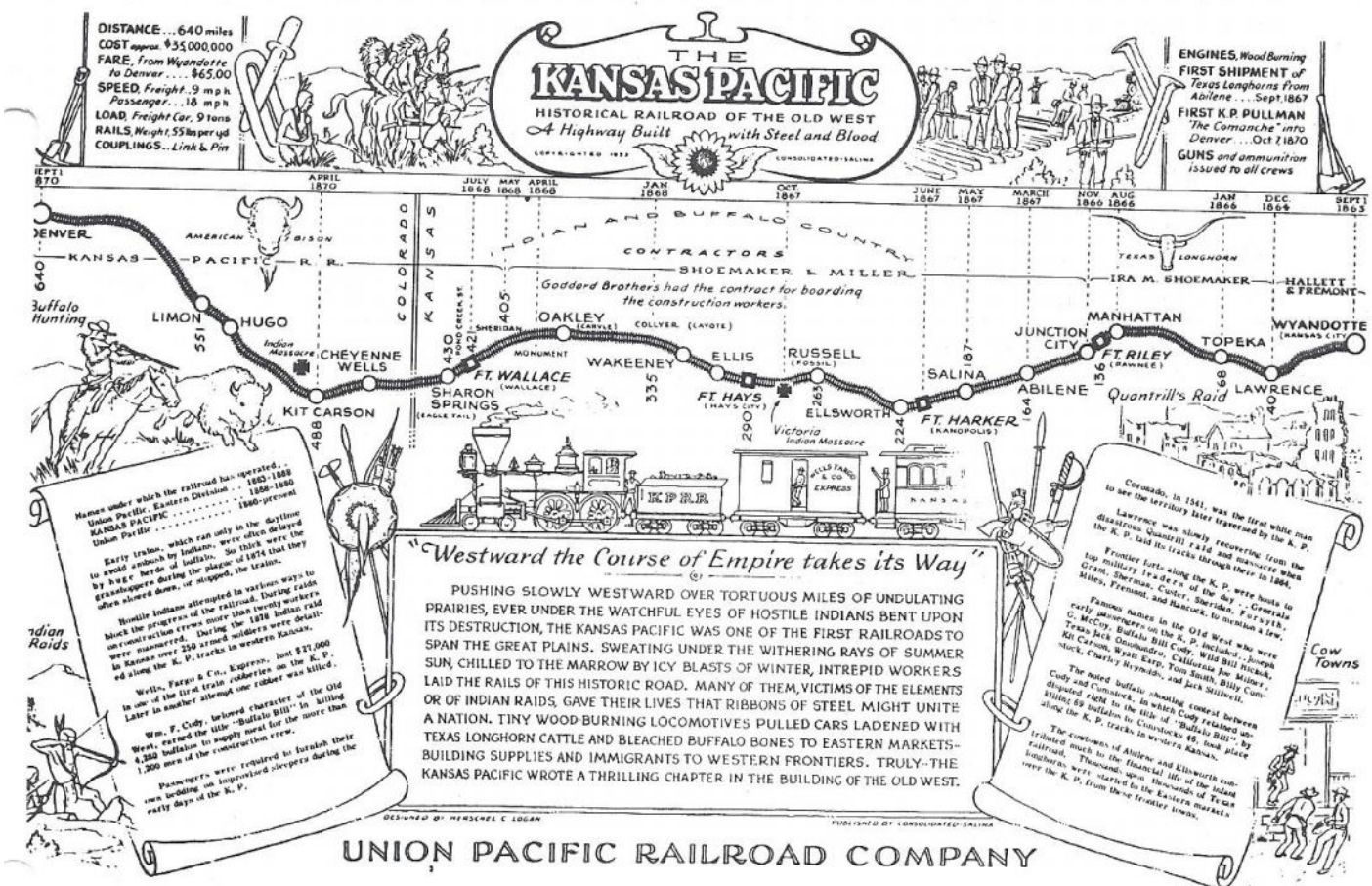
The Murrays sold the **REPORTER** in 1967 to the **PICTORAL TIMES**, A Topeka paper. They lived in Topeka for a short time and continued to be associated with the paper, although it was no longer printed in Rossville. They are presently editors of a publication in Estes Park, Colorado.

Rossville was without a newspaper for three years until Charles Franklin Fox started the **ROSSVILLE ADVOCATE** in November, 1970. His venture was short-lived, as he folded six months later. Once again Rossville is without a home to a paper.

## BUILDING OF THE RAILROAD

Although this was an extremely desirable area for agriculture and the raising of livestock, it was not possible for the early settlers to procure manufactured goods from the East without paying an extremely high freight bill. It was also impossible to produce and ship grain economically. River freight was tried but the Kaw River often times did not have enough water to make shipping dependable so the answer to this problem was the railroad.

In early day Kansas, the railroad bug was very prevalent and "bit" many of the early settlers. Many railroads were chartered but lack of money and the Civil War combined to delay the building of railroads.



Courtesy of Union Pacific Railroad

The Kansas Pacific: historical railroad of the old west

(Excerpt from article, "Early Days on the Union Pacific," written for the Kansas State Historical Society by John D. Cruise of Kansas City, Kansas.)

Courtesy of Union Pacific Railroad

In 1855 the first Kansas legislature had followed the example set by Missouri in chartering her own railroads. Among the first dozen charters issued was one to the "Leavenworth, Pawnee & Western Railroad Company," which hoped to cross the state and eventually reach the Pacific Ocean. Kansans then did not have the money to construct the road and the East was not yet ready to invest in Kansas railroad stocks. Hence it was not until 1857 that preliminary work began on this line at Leavenworth, and that the road was surveyed as far west as Fort Riley.

By 1862, Ross, Steele and Co., of Canada, undertook the construction of the road. Everything progressed favorably until the summer of 1863. The construction company, under the supervision of Mr. Carter, had expended a large sum of money for material, and grading was then in full operation.

Suddenly, all work stopped. General John C. Fremont, and Samuel Hallett of Steuben County, New York, had purchased the controlling stock of the road and had changed the name to the "Union Pacific Railway (Eastern Division)." The old construction contract was pronounced invalid by the new stockholders, and preemptory orders were given for the work to cease. Carter refused. Hallett declared war, and by some means, unknown to anyone but himself, secured control of a company of United States Dragoons and rode down the contumacious contractors, agents and men.

Ross, Steele & Co. did not resort to force, but to the law, and tedious litigation ensued.

Hallett soon got out of patience with Leavenworth. It had been a military post and central depot of the West. Emigrant trains had stopped there to purchase supplies, and military expeditions equipped themselves at the fort. The little city believed itself indispensable to Hallett, and the only possible eastern terminus of the road he was building. Therefore it demanded exorbitant prices for land and for all supplies, and although it had voted the bonds requested by the company, the mayor withheld them until a certain number of miles should be completed. As the much needed money could not be had, Hallett transferred all property into the hands of the new company, left Leavenworth to its fate, and removed everything to Wyandotte, making that the initial point of the road, in accord with the terms of the charter.

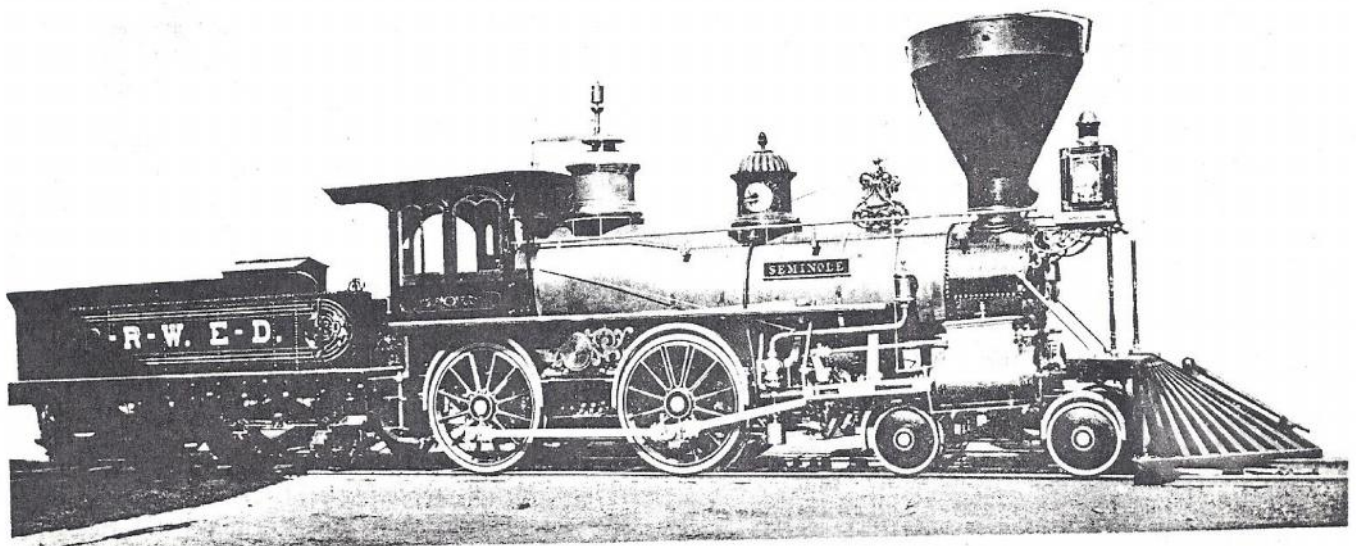
The first ground was broken at Kansas City September 7, 1863. Among those present were Samuel Hallett, A.B. Bartlett, a lawyer, Silas Armstrong, a leader of the Wyandots, and H.H. Sawyer, a foreman. Sawyer handed an ax to both Bartlett and Armstrong, asking each to fell a tree, saying that the honor of doing the first work on the right of way would fall to him whose tree fell first. Armstrong's tree fell first, but it remained attached to the stump. Bartlett's fell a few seconds later, clean cut. At one time the contestants threatened a friendly lawsuit to decide to whom the honor belonged. Mr. Sawyer then drove a post into the ground near where they stood, and exactly on the state line, just east of the present Union Pacific Bridge. On the Missouri side of this post he wrote with red keel the word "Slavery" and on the Kansas side, "Liberty." Captain H.H. Sawyer died February 28, 1910, at Fifth and Minnesota Avenue, Kansas City, Kansas, within a mile of where he drove the post.

The first rail of this great system was laid without pomp or ceremony April 14, 1864, in Wyandotte, at the foot of Minnesota Avenue, on a spur. The spur was laid for the



purpose of handling material brought by the river and landed at the levee. To get government subsidy it was incorporated into the system of which it must always remain a part.

The first locomotive was brought to Wyandotte, and also to grief, a few days later. She was an old wood burner and had been used by the Government on the Orange, Alexandria & Manassas Railroad in Virginia. Matt Cleary was transporting the rolling stock from Weston, on the Missouri River, the terminus of the Platte County Railroad, and the nearest rail point to Kansas City. He brought the engine down on a barge, and as the bank of the river was high above the barge, a cut was made, rails were laid from the water's edge to her deck, and on the engine was slid along to terra firma. J.L. Hallett fired her up and used her to draw a small push car. Alas!! He knew not the ways of locomotives and ran her too near the edge of the river. In she plunged up to the headlight, the rear end fortunately remaining on the bank. With the scarcity of both knowledge and tackle, it was several days before she was pulled out.



Courtesy of Union Pacific Railroad

Locomotive courtesy of Union Pacific Railroad

The Leavenworth papers, smarting at the change of base, had their laugh, but "he laughs best who laughs last." Leavenworth will never regain the commercial supremacy she lost. Old Wyandotte may become a metropolis.

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(From Brief history of the Union Pacific's Leavenworth-Lawrence Branch Line)

One of the very earliest railroad projects in Kansas was that of the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad Company, created by special enactment of the territorial Legislature, approved on August 30, 1855. The purpose of the Corporators was to construct a line from the Missouri River at Leavenworth to Pawnee or other point near the Government Reservation at Fort Riley.



To tell the whole story of the Union Pacific (Eastern Division) and its successors would require much space, and it may serve here to say that Fremont and Hallett soon separated, and a new source of money was found in certain St. Louis bankers, headed by John D. Perry. Thomas C. Durant, better known as the vice-president of the Union Pacific Railroad Company (the Omaha-Ogden line) during the building of the first trans-continental railway, became a partner of Hallett's and the St. Louis bankers, but he, too, left the enterprise not long after the tragic death of Hallett, who was shot by an ex-employee on a Leavenworth street, July 27, 1864. After this, Perry secured the interest of prominent Pennsylvania and Ohio Railroad men in the Union Pacific Eastern Division, and the building of the line went on under contractor Robert M. Shoemaker and Associates. There was much litigation over the claims of Ross, Steele and Co., General Fremont, Thos. C. Durant, Samuel Hallett's widow and others, which through a succession of years cost the company many thousands of dollars.

The line from Kansas City to Lawrence was completed first, and trains were running over it by July 1, 1865. While construction went on in the direction of Topeka and St. Marys, other forces now proceeded with the grading of the Leavenworth Branch, which was finished in October. Building bridges and getting out track ties for the branch went on during the last months of the year, and when the spring of 1866 opened, track laying began. On May 15, 1866, the Leavenworth-Lawrence Branch was completed and trains began to traverse it. In the meantime the main line had been completed to Topeka and was being rapidly extended to St. Marys and Wamego.

A second change of corporate name took place on April 6, 1869, when the Union Pacific Eastern Division became the Kansas Pacific Railway Company, and on January 24, 1880, the road was consolidated with the Omaha-Ogden line under the name of "The Union Pacific Railway Company." In 1898 the present Union Pacific railroad Company became the owner of the lines.

There is no specific mention in any of the Union Pacific files about the construction through this area. However, Peter Navarre, editor of Rossville Reporter, related one incident about his grandfather, James Baldan, holding the railroad surveyors at bay with a rifle and would not permit the line to cross his property west of town. The original railroad is supposed to have made a detour around his farm. Some kind of a deal must have been worked out later as the track runs in a straight line now and crosses this property, although the railroad does not have as wide a right-of-way at this point as on adjoining farms.



A view of Rossville from the west – 1880

In the beginning just having a railroad through town was cause for the townspeople to rejoice but with the passage of time, many problems arose. The residents of this area would take the morning train to

Topeka and after shopping all day could return in the evening. The mail came in on the evening train and it was commonplace for a great many of the townspeople to meet the train and afterwards pick up their mail at the post office.



Union Pacific Water Tower, F.E. Zickefoose was the pumper

In the early days of Rossville, there were several daily passenger trains. An east bound morning train was affectionately called the “Daisy” and the evening west bound, the “Plug.” The townspeople frequently rode a late afternoon train to Topeka, attended shows or other entertainment for the evening, and returned on a late 10:00 or 12:00 train.

The train frequently hit livestock that wandered onto the tracks, and on November 8, 1885, there is an account of a freight train traveling at thirty miles per hour hitting a cow just east of the depot. Ten cattle cars were derailed, killing 20 head of cattle and causing 210 head of longhorn steers to be turned loose. The residents of Rossville spent their Sunday afternoon trying to round up the stray cattle.

Because of incidents like the above tale the Union Pacific found it necessary to fence their right-of-way and to install cattle guards at the crossings. This did not meet the approval of everyone. The early wagon road meandered alongside the tracks and the fence necessitated the settlers making a new road. The editor complained “it will take a week or more to break another good traveled road through the weeds.”

In 1877 the Kansas Pacific Railroad advertised that “the quickest and safest route to all points east or west is the KPRR “Golden Belt Route.” This name was later applied to the highway that closely paralleled the railroad.

In December, 1903, the Union Pacific Railroad sent workmen to Rossville to remove the fence along land that A.C. Sherman claimed, and a new fence was erected along their right-of-way. This was in the area where the Berry Elevator stands and eastward to the next crossing. They did this in preparation for building a new set of cattle loading pens. Mr. Sherman did not take their actions kindly, and that night after the railroad workmen had gone home, another crew of townsmen ripped out the new fence and re-established the old fence on the old line. Later the railroad rebuilt their fence and also built the cattle pens. This area is now occupied by grain elevators, two petroleum fuel distributors, the alfalfa dehydrator, and Highway 24.

One amusing incident, probably not amusing to the conductor of the freight train, occurred when he was arrested by Marshall Perry Davis because the train blocked the crossing for longer than the legal period. The irate conductor was fined \$15.00 in Judge Binns Court.

In July, 1892, Marshall DeBarros announced in the paper that he would arrest any boys found swimming at the railroad bridge. Evidently this had always been a popular spot.

In July, 1947, it was reported that the train destroyed young Kenneth Bennett's bicycle that had been parked on the bridge. It seems the bridge was a popular spot for all boys.

The association of the Union Pacific Railroad and the city of Rossville has generally been a happy and prosperous partnership for the past 105 years. The railroad has provided employment, passenger and freight facilities, while the farmers and businessmen provide the railroad with a large amount of grain to ship each year. Thus, the railroad prospers. May this happy association continue for the next 100 years.

Early agents include such names as John Stoyell and his Assistant L.C. Cleveland, L.P. Hartzell, Dunaway, John Johnston, Chas. Alexander, Lloyd Coberly, Pumphery, and the present agent, Keith Manbeck.

Many dignitaries and nationally prominent men have traveled the Union Pacific. The Rossville News of April 24, 1903, reports that, "President Theodore Roosevelt will pass through Rossville May 2, at about 8:15 A.M. An effort is being made by our citizens to have him stop for a few minutes. Agent Dunaway has received a large supply of bunting and flags with which to decorate the depot. Other buildings along the railroad will also be decorated by the citizens in honor of the President." Their efforts were in vain as the train did not stop as they hoped.

April 2, 1969, the train bearing the body of President Eisenhower passed through Rossville in the early morning. Even though the hour was early, many Rossville citizens got up to stand silently and pay their last respects to this great Kansan.

## **AUTOMOBILES AND ROADS**

In the March 14, 1902 issue of the Rossville News we find a short item about what was probably the first automobile ever seen in Rossville, "Mr. George Burghart of the Burghart Cigar Company of Topeka was in our city Tuesday with the automobile. Several of our citizens took a ride in the vehicle, and we expect to see automobiles a common luxury among our people in the near future." Mr. U.G. Stewart, editor of the Rossville News probably never realized just how prophetic a statement he made. Today's automobiles, trucks and super-highways would certainly amaze him.

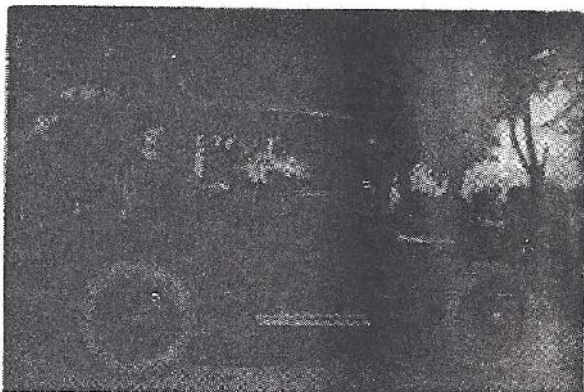


C.E. Cless' Ford demonstrator, Archie Cless, Carl Parr, Irene Howard

The early roads were mighty poor according to our standards but as more and more people purchased automobiles, the demand for better roads also brought many changes. The engineering techniques of today were unknown. They went to work building roads with horse drawn graders and hauling gravel with wagons. During the off-seasons, the local farmers would hire their teams and equipment to the Township. Gravel banks were discovered in some of the nearby hills and it served to get the early roads out of the mud and made life easier for the residents of this area.



Loading gravel for early day roads



Aunt Chettie Howard in Electric car, 1919

In the period of World War I and the following years, the number of automobiles increased by leaps and bounds and some of the farmers in this region made good money working on the roads in the slack seasons. Often there would be as many as twenty teams and wagons hauling gravel. The

wagons were equipped with loose boards in the bottom so that the load could be dumped, but usually the men scooped their own loads. Some of the younger men made a game of this hard job. They would race to see who could get to the gravel pit first in the morning, get their allotted number of loads hauled and quit early in the afternoon. They would sometimes have races on the roads. It was hard work but the job they did served as the beginning of the wonderful roads we enjoy today.

As the number of automobiles increased so did the yen to travel longer distances increase among the early auto pioneers. The first cross-country roads generally followed the old trails, the Santa Fe Trail, the Oregon Trail and others. The trail that passed through Rossville was the Oregon Trail and the early highway for autos closely followed that trail. The highway was called the "Golden Belt." There is some question as to where the name actually started. In a very early day advertisement of the Union Pacific Railroad, they advertised the "Golden Belt Route" perhaps referring to the goldfields in Colorado. Although the origin of the name has been lost, the name was also applied to the highway route. Each early highway in Kansas had its distinctive marking. The marking chosen for the "Golden Belt" was a yellow band painted around telephone poles along the route. The following is an extract from the Official Log of the Golden Belt Road between Kansas City, Mo, and Denver, and Colorado Springs, Colorado, printed in 1913, with directions from Kingsville to Rossville and on to St. Marys. "The Golden Belt Road is marked from end to end. Signs bearing the words "**GOLDEN BELT ROAD**" in blue letters on yellow background are at each corner where a turn is made. Preceding each turn, where practicable, three telephone poles are marked with a yellow band on every telephone pole along the road. "Danger" signs give warning of dangerous places.

Good hotels and garages are in every town. The road bed is excellent and is being improved to make it a model highway.



Golden Belt Road at Kingsville

Kansas City to Denver

Miles

90.5 **KINGSVILLE** station on right

92.9 Cross railroad tracks

93.0 Turn right

93.1 Turn left. City of **ROSSVILLE**

**Z.A. ENOS GARAGE**

### **GOLDEN BELT CAFÉ**

Short Orders or Regular Dinners

Cold Drinks – Ice Cream

Geo. Conrad, Prop. Rossville, Kansas

-----  
93.5 Turn right Main St. Turn left

93.6 Cross iron bridge

98.8 Approach bridge over narrow hill road



Repairs and Storage  
Phone 440 Open Nights  
Rossville, Kansas

99.0 Turn left. Cross Railroad track. **DANGER**  
100.2 St. Mary's College on right  
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These directions are a far cry from the well-marked highways we know today and the official Log is quite different from the road map your friendly service station passes out free to anyone.

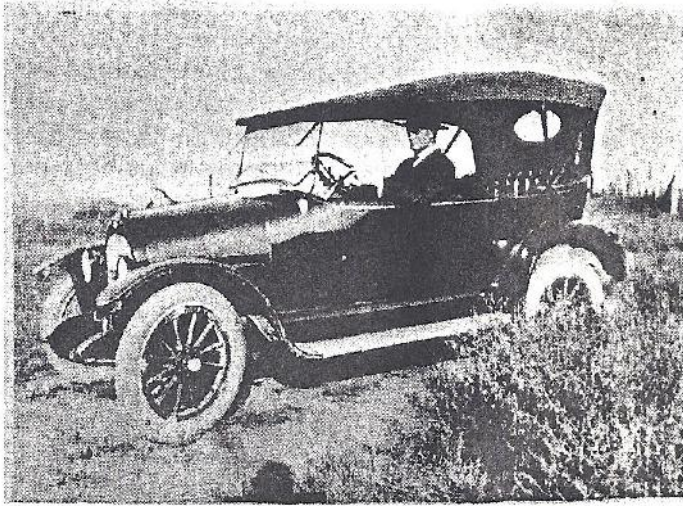
It would seem that to make a cross-country trip in 1913 would have required a driver and a co-pilot or navigator to keep an eye on the odometer, the Official Log and also keep a constant watch for the landmarks mentioned. Of course they did not go 70 miles per hour so they were able to manage. Traveling in those days also required the ability to fix innumerable flats and to be able to make repairs.

In the beginning, the "Golden Belt Road" was administered by each county that it passed through. As a result of this, the road would be in excellent shape in one county and would be hardly passable in the next. Some County Commissioners were reluctant to vote enough taxes to adequately maintain the road. Eventually these problems grew to such magnitude that the legislature had to take steps to develop a state highway system.

In the late 1920s plans were made and right-of-way acquired for a new road roughly following the old "Golden Belt." This was to be a concrete paved highway that eliminated a great many of the sharp corners and other hazards that were in the old road. It was built through the Rossville area in 1929. The new highway was laid to the south side of the railroad and it was necessary to move and tear down some buildings. The Mitchner house was moved to a new location and is now occupied by the Robert Cox family. Originally the highway was designated U.S. Highway 24 and 40. When it was built an 18 foot slab was thought to be sufficient but it was found that they needed a wider roadway for safety purposes. In July, 1945, a reconstruction program added four feet. It has been resurfaced with an asphalt covering and daily carries a great deal of traffic, even though Interstate 70 is just six miles south of Rossville.

The first automobile owned by a Rossville Resident was a red 1908 Aurora Runabout belonging to Dr. H.H. Miller. Soon after, some of the more adventurous souls purchased a machine and the great automobile business was founded. At one time there were dealers for Overlands, Fords and Maxwell, but today there are no automobile agencies in town. The Rossville Truck & Tractor are dealers in International trucks.

The north-south road through Rossville remains part of the county system. The Rossville News of September 27, 1901, reports, "A force of men with teams and scrapers are putting the Rossville-Willard boulevard in fine shape. When complete this will be the 'boulest' road in the country." The April 11, 1902 issue reports that the Willard bridge is completed except for final work on the approaches but it can be used. The 1903 flood of the Kaw River washed out the bridge and did considerable damage to the road. It was several years before this road was again usable.



Joe Parr in Overland car



Rossville Main Street, early 1900s

Main Street of Rossville was just a dirt street that was either muddy or dusty. In the beginning the horse and buggy traffic did not cause too many problems but with the increased traffic on the "Golden Belt," mud and dust became serious. The street was graveled to help the mud problem but in the dry periods dust was still a problem. In 1935, the WPA, the county and the owners of the Main Street property combined to cover the street with a heavy rock base and an oiled surface and also to build curbs and gutters. The paper reported that, "Traffic was stopped on Main Street one afternoon to permit the workmen to progress with the work of paving. A six inch base of crushed rock was laid on the east half of the business block. Ernest Tschantz's big nine-ton-pull engine with the lugs removed from its big drive wheels has been running continuously packing the rock to a smooth, even surface. In the meantime dirt from the west half of the street is being hauled to the railroad grade and the trafficway widened."

The streets of Rossville have been blacktopped and some of the county maintained roads are covered with an asphalt topping. Most of the many miles of township roads are graveled and improved as time and money permit.

## FERRIES

One of the obstacles to be overcome by the settlers moving West was the crossing of the Kaw River. The Oregon Trail followed along the south side of the river until it reached the vicinity of Topeka. One branch of the trail crossed at Topeka on Papans ferry, and the other crossed the river at Uniontown.

Desirable and safe crossing places were constantly being sought. As early as 1849, Charles Beaubein and Louis Ogee were operating a pole ferry across the river. The crossing was made near the mouth of Cross Creek to the opposite side and was the first ferry west of Pappans (now Topeka).

Uniontown, a small community near the present site of Willard, was one of the desirable crossing points. In the dry season very few problems arose. The bottom was gravel and the current was even. However, most of the travelers passed through in the spring of the year when the river was high and swift from the recent rains.

Two Indians maintained a ferry across the river at Uniontown for those who could afford to pay. The ferry was two large scows lashed together, and the charge was \$5.00 a wagon. Those who could not afford to pay floated their wagon beds across, and the livestock swam the river.

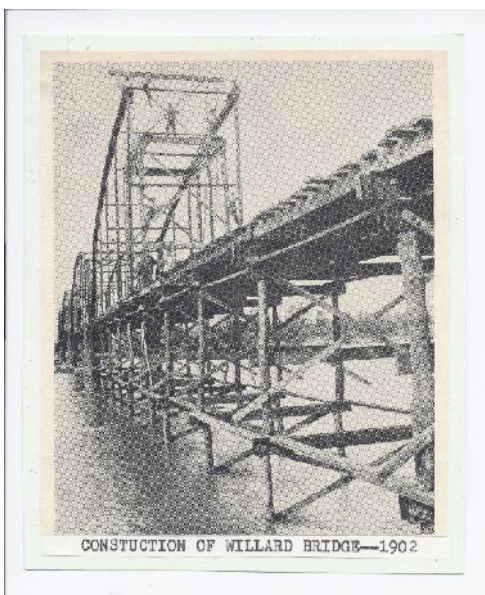
By 1879, much dissent had arisen over the poor accommodations on the old ferry operated by Uncle Joe Wilmott.

On August 1, 1879, negotiations were completed for the purchase of the ferry by the Rossville Ferry Company. The rates for crossing were 15¢ each way for either single or double teams and horse-men or two tickets for 25¢. Four tickets were 50¢, and eight tickets were \$1.00. Horns were placed on each side to blow for the ferryman if he was not in sight. Stockholders were residents from both sides of the river.

Mr. Franklin Adams of Maple Hill purchased half of the stock from the Rossville Ferry Company in May, 1882, and continued its operation. Mr. John Hurd was the ferryman.

In 1882, Mr. M.W. Janes negotiated for the establishment of a ferry at his ford directly south of Rossville. Permission was granted as long as it did not conflict with the other ferry four miles southwest of town. Jim McGuire was operator.

The ferries were abandoned when the bridges were built.



Construction of Willard Bridge, 1902

## **THE WAGON BRIDGE**

On August 2, 1870, the Board of County Commissioners ordered a bridge to be built across Cross Creek at a cost of not more than \$1,000.00. This bridge was damaged extensively in the 1903 flood. New piers were poured, and the other repairs made, but the piers shifted, necessitating the building of a new bridge in 1904. In 1908, it was found that the new bridge was not substantial enough to accommodate the military traffic.

The bridge constructed in 1904 was removed to a location two and one-half miles north, and a new one with a concrete deck was erected in its place. An item from a 1909 paper states, "We learn that the reinforced concrete floor has been in up for about a year, and seems to be a perfect success. It has been tested with heavy traction engines, artillery, and livestock and has met every expectation."

For a good many years, the old bridge, and the new one carried the traffic from the "Golden Belt" highway. It still serves the residents of the small community on the west side of Cross Creek. Of course later floods have caused damage to the bridge, but each time it has been repaired and still serves the public.

Most of the town "kids" have fished from it, waded under it, climbed on it, shot firecrackers out over the water from it, watched the floodwater logs floating by (even lassoing logs with telephone wire), ice skated under it and blockaded traffic with their array of bicycles parked on it.

In the spring and summer, after a heavy rain, there sometimes is a regular traffic jam near the bridge as the townspeople are checking to see "how high is the crick?"

## **AGRICULTURE**

The first mention of early agriculture came from Dr. Gabbey's account in 1886. "The Pottawatomi as a tribe never took kindly to agriculture, four or five acres in corn was a large field. Their fields were usually cleared up from the edge of the timber along the streams, as the Indian had little use for the Prairie kind." The Indians also raised many horses for their use and sale. Rossville township was blessed with fertile creek and river bottom land combined with the upland which consisted of bluestem grass. The early settlers broke and cleared the bottom lands and part of the upland prairie. A lot of the upland native bluestem grassland still remains – never touched by man's plow. The settlers of the 1860-70s began farming and found the soil fertile and productive. However, the task of clearing the timberland and breaking prairie sod must have seemed insurmountable. Corn and wheat the main crops; along with cattle, hogs and other livestock raising became the basic agriculture of Rossville township. Many of these early farmers came to Kansas seeking land. They traveled by ox cart and wagon before the railroad went through, following the Oregon and other trails. Settlers bought land from the Santa Fe Railroad or from members of the Citizens Band selling their allotment land. One account gives the cost of prairie in the early days from \$2.50 to \$4.00 per acre. Lumber was worth from \$25.00 to \$39.00 dollars per thousand feet. Oxen cost \$100.00 a yoke, mules from \$100.00 to \$200.00, horses \$75.00 to \$150.00, sheep \$2.00 a head and chickens 25¢ each. Masons and carpenters received \$2.00 to \$3.00 per day in wages. Wheat was worth \$1.50 per bushel and flour \$4.50 per hundred pounds. From newspapers of 1877: "New corn brought in for shipment is getting 18¢ to 20¢ and corn huskers have been in demand at \$1.00 per day and board; 2.5¢ per bushel thrown on the ground or 3.5¢ in the crib." "Mr. Lambert James, a farmer living a few miles west of town has this season manufactured 1,500 gallon of sorghum molasses, which he readily disposed of at 50¢ per gallon."



Corn was the main crop and early editors gave much space extolling its excellence. Corn cribs were numerous along the south side of the railroad tracks and on the east side of north Main. A water powered grist mill was located on Cross Creek north of town (the place presently owned by Carl Hultgren). Mulvane Bros. built a steam powered mill south of the railroad tracks, west of the present Mobil station.

One of the earliest farmers was Henry Ford who acquired 80 acres southwest of Rossville in 1864. His wife was the former Mary Nadeau who came to Rossville from Indiana in 1862. Henry Ford came to Kansas in 1863 and was a stage coach driver for the Overland Stage Company between Topeka and Manhattan. He met his wife at "Buttermilk Station" when she worked for her brother, Big Alex Nadeau. In 1864 they rode the state to Manhattan to be married.



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford

While working to clear their land of timber and build a log house they lived in one room of a three room house, west of Cross Creek, north of the old Oregon and California trails. The other two rooms were occupied by Dr. and Mrs. R.S. Gabbey and Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Higginbotham.

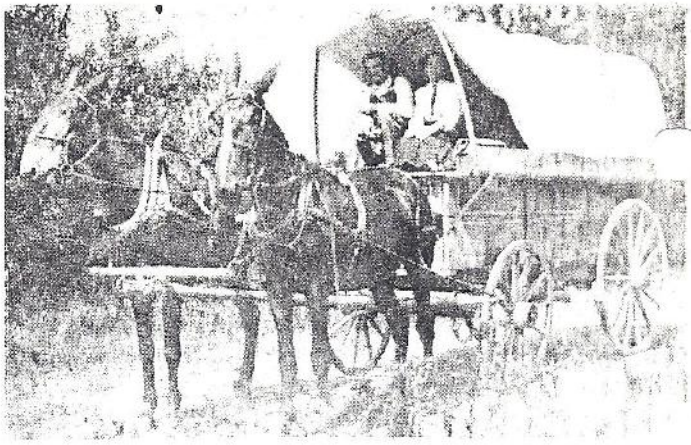
After the Fords moved into their log cabin, Mrs. Ford often rode horseback nine miles with her baby to the mission in St. Marys. The first flowers she had to plant by the cabin were given to her by the nuns at the Mission.

Another early farmer, John DeGraff settled south of Rossville in 1865. He and his wife, the former Frances Navarre, lived in a small dugout until their house was built.

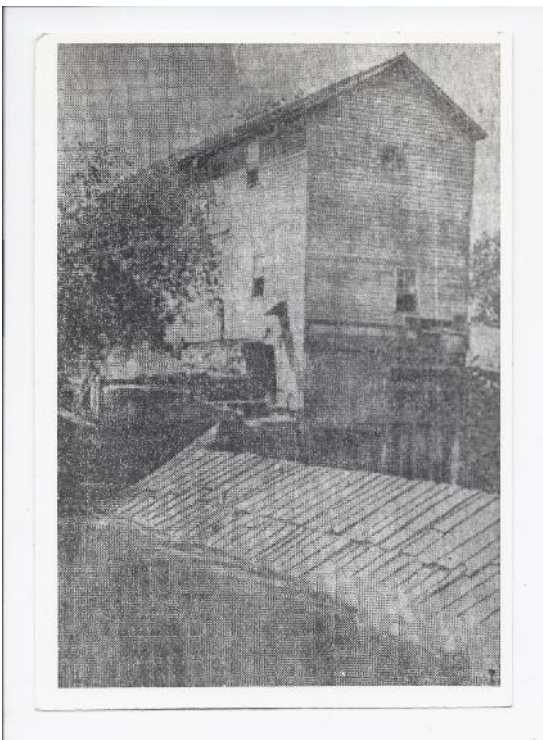
The following is a list of early farmers:

Name	Year to Rossville	Origin
Archibald Abbott	1870	Kingston, Canada West
Joseph Andrews		Westmoreland County, Pa.
W. Thomas Andrews	1879	McKay, Ohio
Joseph Beseau	1875	Monroe County, Michigan
John A. Bond	1872	Tyler County, W. Virginia
William Bond	1873	Tyler County, W. Virginia
John DeGraff	1865	
James DeVinney	1880	Ross County, Ohio
Benjamin Franklin	1869	Ross County, Ohio
John Fritz	1877	Somerset County, Pa.
Martin Hass	1877	Richland County, Ohio

Henry Kassabaum	1877	Brookmell, Prussia
T.J. Kiernan	1868	
Elzey E. Kinsey	1877	Ohio
Henry Lipp	1868	South Germany
Isaac McCollough	1873	Holmes County, Ohio
R. McCollough	1878	Holmes County, Ohio
Michael O'halaron	1880	
Samuel Oldfield	1878	Derbyshire, England
S.J. Oliver	1876	
Edward Partelow	1868	Newport, Kentucky
Thomas L. Ross	1882	Cincinnati, Ohio
M.M. Standley	1874	Carroll County, Indiana
Bennett Swearingen	1868	Meigs County, Ohio
Isaac B. Trostel	1877	Perry County, Pa.
Frank Van Vleck	1878	
William Wax	1878	Juniata County, Pa.
Daniel Wilt	1876	York County, Pa.
Henry York	1869	Zurich, Switzerland
Peter H. Zickefoose	1874	Highland County, W. Virginia
Samuel Beals	1867	
E.S. Doud	1869	
W.L. James		
Wm. Kirkpatrick	1871	
Frank L. Sanders		
John Heslet		
Noel Graves		
W.W. Janes		
J.K. Conley	1870	Yates County, New York
Startup, Ab		
Thomas Attebury	1877	
George Hejtmanek	1880	Wisowitz, Moravia, Austria
D. Hartzell	1872	
Francis E. Williams	1876	New York
Captain John Gutshall		
Col. A.S. Stanley	1880	Meigs Co., Ohio
Martin Nason	1872	
Jos. Van Vleck	1878	
M.L. Cless	1876	
B.W. Higginbotham	1861	
Thomas Moss	1877	
J.M. Parr		Clay Co. Indiana
J.A. Parr		Clay Co. Indiana
H.W. Lipp	1878	Illinois
Samuel B. Zickefoose	1869	West Virginia
Mrs. Jane Jackson	1875	Scotland



Early day travel – Edith and John Schidegger



The Cedar Bluff Mill was built in 1869 by Joseph Perry, three miles north of Rossville on Cross Creek (the present Carl Hultgren property). Flour was manufactured there until the 1880s and later the mill was used for coarser products. The Pottawatomi Indians were the principal patrons as they brought their grist to be ground. Ben F. Reser purchased it about 1900 and ran it for many years.

### **MORAVIANS**

In the February 5, 1927, issue of "Hospodar" there was an article written by Thomas Cerny (father of Mrs. Emil Kovar), concerning the first Czech homesteaders in Kansas. This was translated into the English language in 1966.

"In the year 1871 John Stach homesteaded 160 acres on Soldier Creek. He accumulated land so that by 1900 he owned 2,980 acres. His ranch was well known to the Americans by the name Stach. Many of his countrymen found a home and work there. He employed 20 to 30 people. All Stach's were evangelists, and every Sunday a

mass was provided at the ranch. Hymns were sung and Stach read from the Bible in wooden covers. About this time a brother, Martin, joined the Stachs near Cross Creek. After his death farming was continued by his son Frank and two daughters.

In 1876, the family of Pavel Svetlik and Pavel Kovar arrived and settled on Cross Creek next to each other. Beginning the year 1880 a large group of country men were coming, some of them include Joseph Bravence, George Hejtmanek, Dobias Cerny, Vaclav Kalcik, Jan Vacek, Jan Zlatnik, Dr. Juren and wife, Jiri Dolezilek, Joseph Macha, Frank Masopust, Karel Lysek, George Lura, Karel Candor, Joseph Spacek, Stephan Jirik, Frank Simecka, Vince Martinek, Frank Besta, An. Kaska, Frank Lara, Jos. Mikolas, Jos. Cuck, Fr. Hrnecir.

All of these pioneers came here with no titles or glory, but with understanding, trust and compassion for one another ambitiously and progressively worked in this land for Americans of today. Who knows who will replace the words of "Hospodar" after 25 or more years!

In conclusion, I still have to remember John Stach, for whom I have worked, and who, in reminiscing of his early days, was so interesting for me. He could handle Indians so well and friendly, knowing little of their language, they became his customers, buying butter, eggs and chickens, paid very well.

When Stach looked for his cattle or hogs scattered around the reservation, Indians invited him into their tents, most hospitable in their own way.

In the years 1880-1885, he handled business on the largest scale, sending a truck of cattle or hogs to Kansas City every week. The corn was bought in the largest quantity 20-25 cents per bushel. His son and his wife helped him vigorously.

I'm closing my memories with the wish that everyone who has an experience or remembers a story of the life of our pioneers would write to "Hospodar" – before it is forgotten."

(A wise bit of advice to all who have knowledge of history in their minds but not on paper – write it down.)



1917 Mogul tractor – Pulling hedge stumps – taken March 1923 – Albert & Emile Martinek



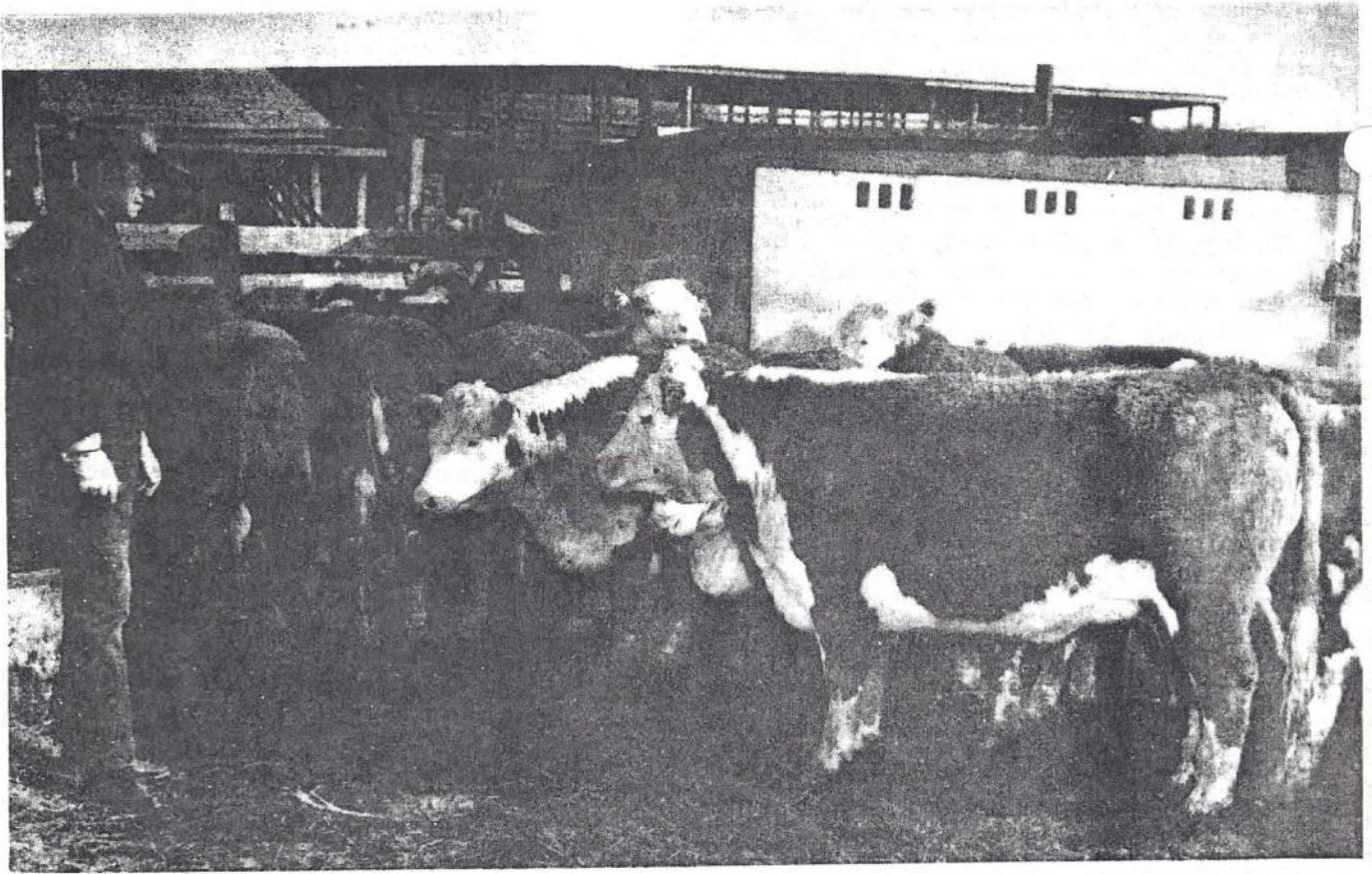


Shocking oats – Frances Martinek

Many Moravians worked in the cheese factory (present August Dolezilek place). It was built about 1865. The building was 60 feet long and had an elevator from the basement. It had 19 rooms. In 1955, the building was torn down and a lot of the lumber was used in the Ted Dolezilek home.

Another close-knit group in the Rossville area is the families who came from Kentucky. About the turn of the century a number of families from the West Liberty area settled here.

Rossville Township history includes two large ranches; the Mulvane ranch west of town and the King-Wilson-Holden ranch near Kingsville. An abstract map of 1873 shows section 32 owned by Veale and Mulvane. Col. Veale was also one of the founders of Rossville. Joab Mulvane was a wealthy Topeka banker and businessman who later became the sole owner of this ranch. It has remained in his family and is presently owned by David Hughes of California, a grandson of the founder. Portions of the original acreage have been sold and additional acreage acquired. The ranch now consists of over six thousand acres.



Francis Davis, manager of Mulvane Ranch

In 1884, the course of the river was changed where it made a large horseshoe bend. Now all the land is north of the river. The land within the old horseshoe, commonly called the Island, has always been in Wabaunsee County. The new river channel was made with horses and slips cutting across the narrow south end of the horseshoe bend. When the river rose it cut a new channel. David Mulvane, National Republican Committeeman, was in Washington, D.C. when word was sent to him of the river rise that was expected to cut a new channel. He immediately boarded a train for Topeka and came straight to the river to see the new channel made. J.P. Hurd was the contractor for the dirt work on this channel.

Managers of the ranch include Joel Ross, a brother of Mrs. Joab Mulvane, David Mulvane (son of Joab), Fred P. McCollough (son-in-law of Joel Ross). Mr. McCollough managed the ranch for 51 years.

The Rossville Reporter of February 8, 1917, records "Fred McCollough sold 18 steers from the Joab Mulvane Ranch in Kansas City for a record price of \$12.00 per cwt. They averaged 1,505 pounds a brought \$180.60 each."

Allen Engler succeeded Mr. McCollough and twice in 1947 topped the Kansas City fat cattle market at \$36 and \$38. The present manager, Francis Davis was born on the ranch and a Davis has lived on the ranch since 1901. Francis started work there in November, 1944, and became manager July, 1951. The last time he topped the St. Joe market was April 14, 1970, with steers weighing 1,068 lbs.

at \$31.50 and 990 lb. heifers at \$30.75. The ranch has had the name of Mulvane Farm and the MF brand for many years. They are known for their Hereford cattle and as reputation feeders.

There was a man by the name of Jack Mulligan who lived on the island (which is part of the Mulvane Ranch). Natives suspected he was trying to hide his true identity and that Jack Mulligan was his adopted name. Kids used to like to visit with him. He was never surprised as he always saw his caller before the visitor noticed him. He participated in the town band and would often play instruments when the kids requested.

He hunted and fished a great deal and Marion Davis told that one time Jack's fish lines had been tampered with while Marion was cultivating corn nearby. When he returned from the noon meal that particular day the wheels of his cultivator were missing (buried in the river sand, Jack later told him when he came to apologize. He had learned the true identity of the "culprit" and it wasn't Marion as Jack had first suspected).

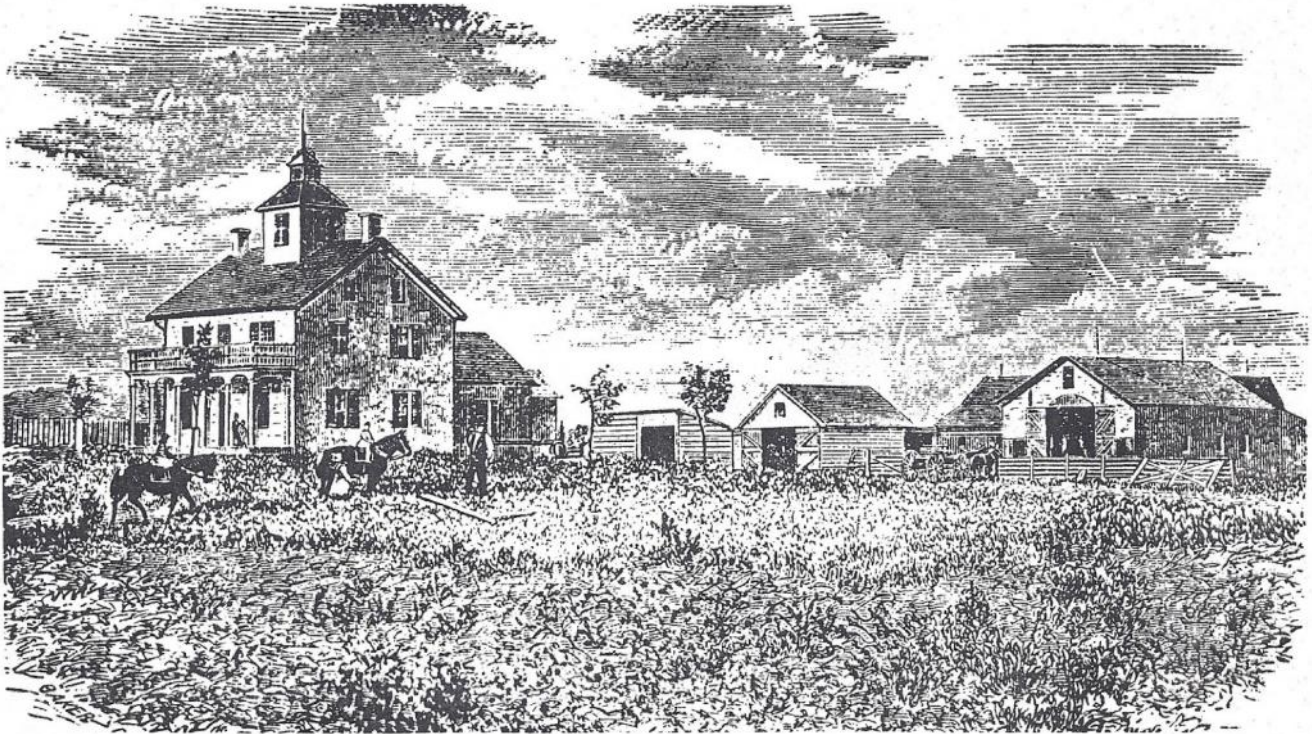
Another of his talents was operating a still. An office of the law rented a horse and canvassed the island for three days. Apparently the search revealed nothing, for Jack told a neighbor later that he suspected that the officer was looking for the still and "the damn fool had ridden over it three times."

The ranch east of town was first owned by a Mr. Zenas King and then purchased by Andrew Wilson. It was located on both sides of the river and the portion north of the river was in both Silver Lake and Rossville townships. Part of the ranch later was owned by Mr. Holden of Kansas City and Jerry Owens was the manager. The land sold to many individuals, thus breaking up the ranch. We have covered the Andy Wilson period due to information of his era being found.



Andrew Wilson





Andrew Wilson residence

Andrew Wilson came to Shawnee County in 1869 and purchased 2,300 acres of new prairie, an unfinished stone dwelling and a barn, the only improvements. The dwelling was finished into a fine home. This house is the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Estel Wyatt.

One mile north of the Wilson home, along the Kansas Pacific railroad, stood the town of Kingsville which he built and erected at his own expense; a depot, hotel, store, blacksmith shop, cattle yard, scales, and a stone school house. The school house was later paid for by the district and is still standing on the farm owned by Mrs. Melba Gentry.

A farm of 5,652 acres was soon opened up and stocked with horses, sheep, Berkshire hogs and Shorthorn cattle. Andy Wilson became one of the wealthiest livestock men in the state and was called the "Cattle King of Kansas." Few men had the experiences, the successes, the failures that befell him. In a series of ventures he had made \$100,000, but the 1873 financial panic paralyzed all trade and caught him and others selling on low markets. Then came the severe winter of 1873 and 1874, which was expensive for winter feeding. He was caught with 12 to 15 thousand head of hogs in shipping pens along the railroad line by a terrific winter storm. His hogs froze to death by the thousands and for weeks the railroad was unable to put through a train. Following these disasters, came the terrible grasshopper scourge of 1874 destroying all crops and grass, forcing the sale of cattle and hogs at distressed prices. He was compelled to sell many business interests to continue his livestock operations and regain his losses. One year he bought 7,500 Texas cattle and wintered them on stalk fields, then feeding corn before grazing them.

From the Kansas Valley Times, 1881: "Andy Wilson is feeding 2,000 head of cattle and 13,000 head of sheep at Kingsville keeping 35 men busy. The freight on the 13,000 head of sheep from New Mexico to Kingsville was \$4,090 and they filled 112 cars."



In the December 23 issue of 1882 of the commonwealth: "The Wilson farm at Kingsville sold for \$150,000. This is one of the largest private land sales ever made in Kansas and one of the nicest and best kept farms to be found in the state."

Andrew Wilson was a man of fine physical proportions, weighing 335 pounds, but his physical size was to affect his health for he died of a stroke in 1885 at the age of 46. His wife, Mrs. Georgia Wilson, died in 1921. Four children survived: Mrs. Walter J. Veale, Mrs. Alonzo Beal, Miss Mary Wilson, and T.R. Wilson.

In the Kansas State Historical files: "Kingsville in 1878 contains a Union Church and public school, ships corn, hogs and cattle, daily mail, settled 1871, population, 36. A Wilson, postmaster; George W. Bleu, farmer; Frank G. Gunning, livestock; P.P. Enos, farmer; John Heslet, farmer; I.M. Templin, railroad contractor; M. Templin, farmer; W.F. Templin, blacksmith; W.S. Templin, blacksmith; Marshall Welsh, farmer; W.L. Welsh, hotel and livery; A. Wilson, livestock."



Oliver Nursery Crew, Back Row: Frank Goodrich, Walter Patton, John Short. Middle Row: Chris Lillard, Rufus Lillard, Andy Chapman, Truman Paine. Front Row: Henry Martin, Ed Bixby, John Martin, William Marney.



Oliver Nursery – grafting house

Rossville has over the years had its share of specialty crops; possibly starting with the Oliver Brothers Nursery, operated by Messrs. Tom and Charles Oliver. The 1903 Reporter mentioned both Oliver Bros. and another nursery man, Mr. Taylor all of Topeka, renting land here for nursery plantings for a

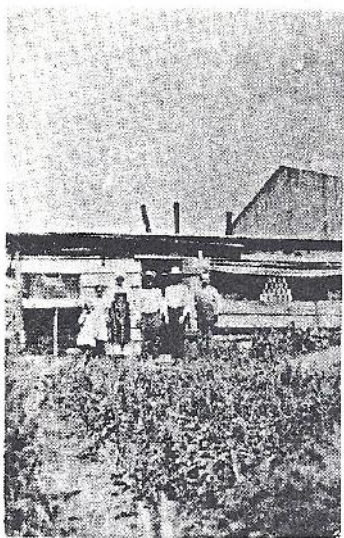
number of years. The Oliver nursery grew seedlings for root stock used for grafting and budding of different fruit varieties. They also raised general farm crops and livestock. They processed the seedlings and shipped most of them to other nurseries in Iowa. This was a large business employing many people. Mr. Henry Martin, Walter Patton and Louis Burns were foremen for the firm. The Nursery ceased operation during the 1930s as did many other businesses.

The Kaw Valley at one time was famous for its potatoes. Our township had large acreages for many years. Potatoes yielded well in the river valley soil and were shipped out by the carload. This was a fascinating business with the seed cutting, planting, spraying, cultivating, weed hoeing, digging, picking, hauling, grading and sacking. A lot of money was made and lost as it was a high cost crop. The 1930s again were the downfall of this crop with dry years and hot weather. The potatoes spoiled in transit and soon acquired an adverse reputation with the trade. Some farmers even received fright bills back from a car of spuds as they did not bring enough to pay freight to Chicago. The last commercial potatoes grown in the township were by Northwood Farms (Kelsey family) in 1951 and were another victim of the flood.

The livelihood of many families depended on these two crops and lots of children worked weeding seedlings and picking potatoes. Either working with potatoes or nursery stock was a good education in hard work and appreciating a drink of cool water, creek kind at times. The passing of the grading sheds on the railroad siding and farmsteads was part of the change in the agricultural way of life.

The large barn of the Oliver nursery stood where the Cedar Drive Inn is located and the grading shed was across the highway from the barn.

In the 1930s Henry Martin raised a crop of cotton which was picked and stored in the building now housing DeVader Floor Covering. U.R. Zeller raised turkeys for many years west of Kingsville on the south side of Highway 24. Harold Reser who lives west on the Maple Hill Road has the largest egg producing operation in the township.



Griswold's Golden Belt Tomato Cannery

In the 1920s, E.G. Griswold raised tomatoes just east of town directly north of the railroad tracks. Mrs. Griswold supervised the canning of these tomatoes and they were marketed under the "Golden Belt" label. Several local persons were employed in this cannery.

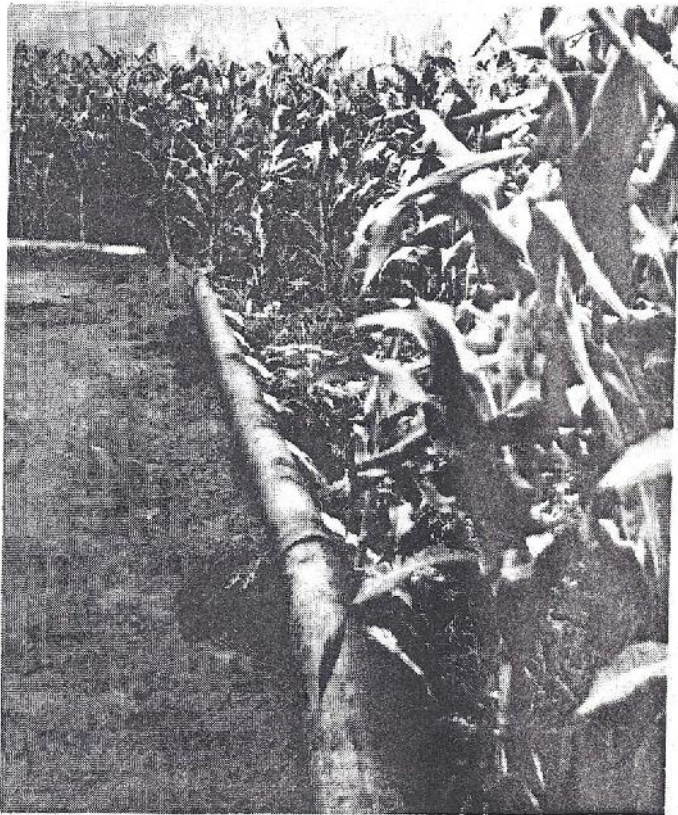
From the Rossville Reporter July 22, 1937 – "Peter Navarre and Everett Pelfrey started irrigating on a big scale; after a week's trial with a small pump on the Navarre farm adjoining Rossville on the west. The new equipment started today is a 6-inch centrifugal pump operated by a belt from a Deere tractor. The suction pipe takes the water from the creek and the six inch stream nearly swamped three men. More men were secured to help handle the water. Inadequate ditches and an incomplete survey locating the low places in the field made the work strenuous. About 20 acres have been wetted as we go to press and the field looks good for a generous yield."

Frank Dannefer in July of 1936 irrigated corn on his farm north of town on the east side of Cross Creek. He used the same method as Mr. Navarre. The Oliver Nursery also irrigated seedlings on the Howard farm south of Town in the 1930s by the same methods.

Earl Stovall put down the first irrigation well in the township for Northwood Farms where Scott W. Kelsey lives. This was utilized to irrigate both corn and potatoes.



Leo Berry and "Doc" Rupin unloading first carload irrigation pipe shipped into Kansas



}  
 Irrigating corn

The dry years of the 1950s renewed interest in irrigation. In 1953 Joe Campbell drilled a well and installed a sprinkler irrigation system. The foresight of Leo Berry and Carl Rupin recognized the potential of irrigation and the benefits it would have to their grain business. In 1953 they formed the Berry Irrigation Company and shipped the first carload of aluminum pipe to Kansas. In 1954 land leveling, well drilling, use of gated pipe, siphon tubes, ditches and sprinkler systems started on many farms.

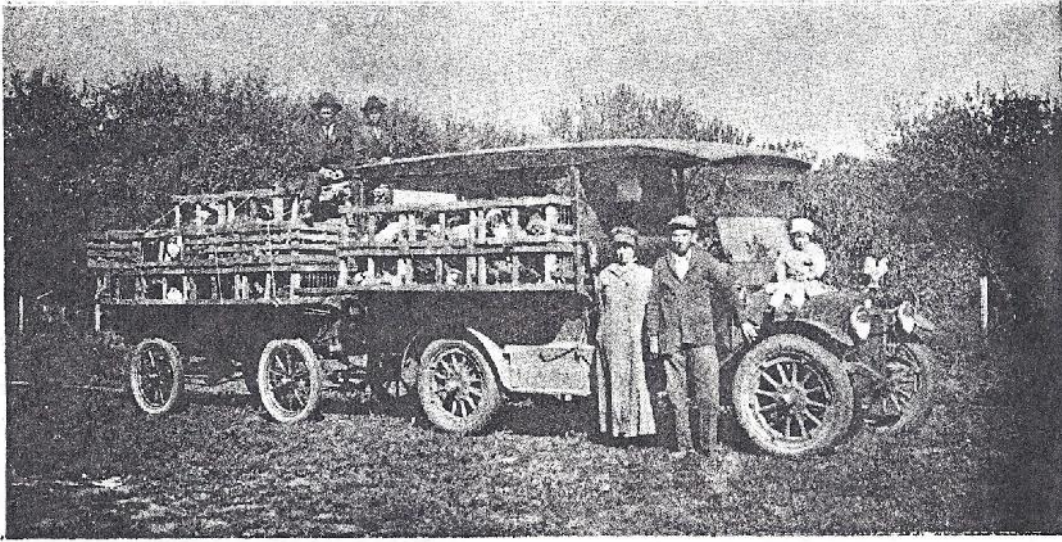
This was the start of irrigation as we know it today with many acres being watered and it is still increasing. Most acres are devoted to white corn and irrigation has helped ensure good yields of over 100 bushels. This has helped stabilize the agricultural economy of this area; especially during the dry years as experienced in 1970. The Kansas River Valley area is fortunate to have a good supply of water not too deep and with a good recharge rate from the river.

Drainage ditches play a major role in agriculture and particularly in this area. Many are in existence, but two large ones should be mentioned. The Stone Creek watershed was a cooperative effort of the farmers affected and the Rossville drainage district is a taxing unit contrasted to the first. Mr. F.P. McCollough was instrumental in promoting the Stone Creek unit with enthusiasm rare for a man of his advanced age. The ditches are but an example of the soil conservation work done by many of our farmers giving proof of their progressive nature and fine stewardship of our soil over the years.

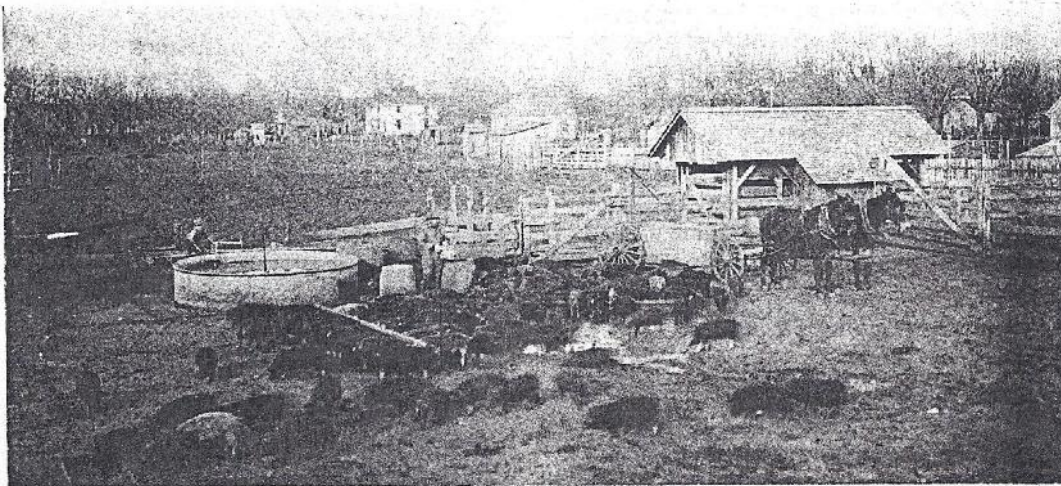
The Tri-County drainage district was started in 1944 and completed in 1945 with dikes designed to protect the lower valley land along the river from high water up to the equal of the 1935 flood. It has



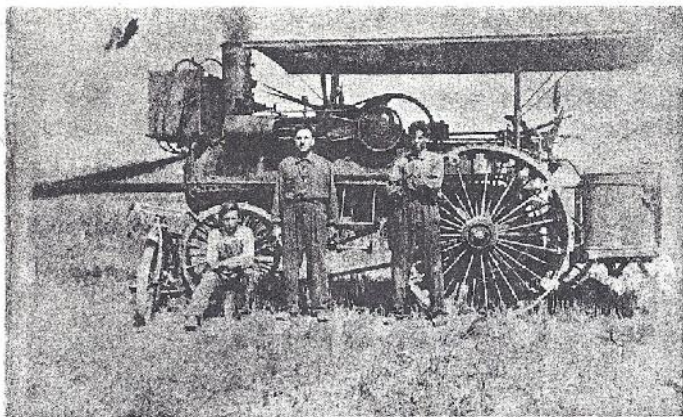
proved very beneficial protecting the low lands except when the 1951 flood topped the dikes and they had to be rebuilt.



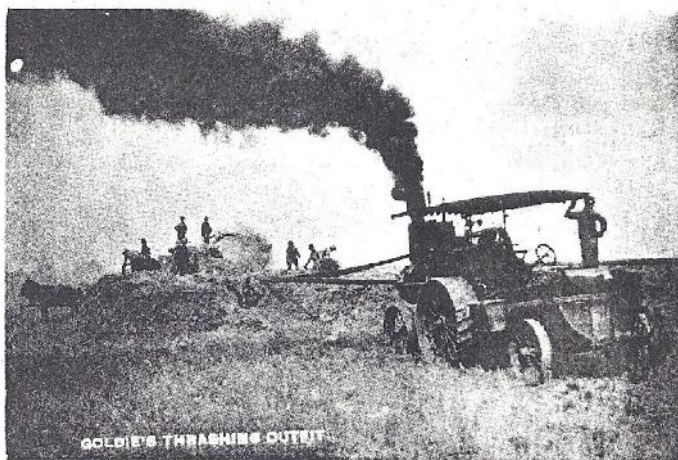
Ernest and Mollie Hartzell hauling chickens



Hog in area of present Catholic Church on former Andrews land

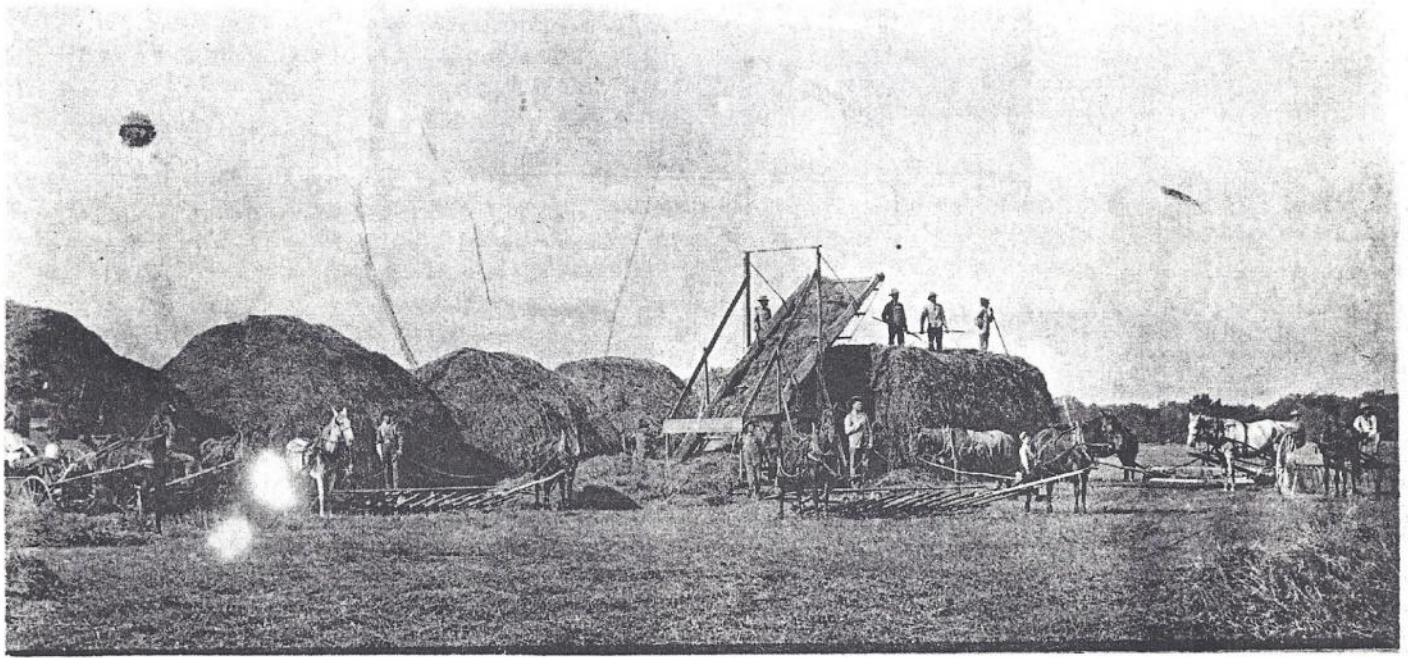


Martinek threshing crew: l to r Bill Martinek, Frank Kratina, Steven Martinek

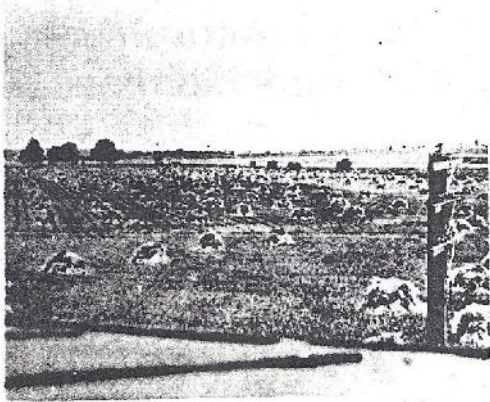


Frank Diehl and crew – called “Goldie” because of front, gold teeth





McPherson's hay gang



Shocks of wheat

### **THIS AND THAT**

The Farmers Institute for Rossville Township was formed March 6, 1908, T.H. Emert, Pres.; J.A. Parr, Treas.; E.G. Griswold, Sec. About 40 farmers signed the membership roll and Prof. Miller from the College talked on "more corn from fewer acres."

From the Rossville paper November 8, 1901 – "H.L. Miller purchased one of the finest young milk cows in the state this week. She gives four gallons of milk per day. Of course, this yield could be increased to eight gallons by the usual town method. You know some folks milk two gallons from the cow and then two from the rainwater barrel. Harry prefers his straight, hence this purchase."

September 5, 1902 – "The Flescher threshing crew to North Dakota includes Charles Bunce, Charles Bixby, Grant Ropp, Charlie Patton, Lon Carr, and Louie Burns."

Last fall we mentioned a shipment of cattle from here that topped the Chicago market. Last week D.M. Howard shipped 5 cars of cattle, half-brothers to those shipped last year and again topped the Chicago market.

The first grasshopper raid was in 1860 when they arrived September 15<sup>th</sup> entirely destroying crops and vegetation. The second and worst violation of this plague occurred in the summer of 1874.

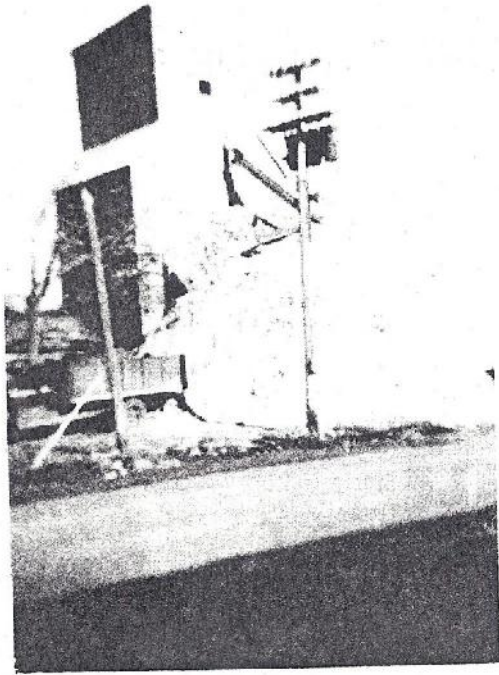
In 1879 Mr. P.W. Boyles of Stewart, Athens Co., Ohio, with four sons, purchased 529 acres from Eli G. Nadeau just west of Rossville.

October 3, 1902 The County News: "T.A. Keigley of Rossville was awarded the ten dollars offered by the Topeka Commercial Club for the best ten ears of corn. The weight of these ten ears of white corn was 18 lbs. 4 ½ oz., their aggregate length 120 inches, aggregate circumference 88 inches. The largest ear was 13 inches in length, weighed 2 lbs. 1 ½ ozs. and measured around the middle, 9 ½ inches. It had 20 rows and 1200 grains. Rossville has been rightly termed the "Corn Center of Kansas." The wonderful productiveness of her soil has astounded outsiders and even startled the natives. This was the only lot of corn exhibited from Rossville Township. It will be taken to the Kansas exhibit at Washington, D.C. to be held next week during the national encampment of the G.A.R. In this connection we desire to state that Rossville township furnished the largest yield of wheat per acre that has been reported this year – that of 561 bushels from ten acres grown by Frank Stach on his farm six miles north of this city."

From the December 1901 Rossville newspaper the following record of wheat yields in Rossville Township for the harvest were:

	acres	yield
James DeVinney	80	35
Frank Dolezilek	25	30
Wm. Howerton	30	33
James Conley	24	33
Tim Emert	160	34
Zack Reser	35	42
Gus Stanley	80	36
Morris Bond	84	34
Dr. H.F. Pratt	110	32
Charles Smith	85	31
M.F. Tatman	18	40
E.T. James	35	24
Francis DeGraff	40	25
Ernest Hartzell	59	30
John Heslet	23	37
Albert Reser	18	37
Marcelus Reser	28	31
John Kovar	38	35
Bood Reser	35	37
Henry Lipp	29	37
Ira Sebring	16	22
Austin Sebring	12	37





Pile of cobs at side of Berry Grain

## **FLOODS**

The fertility and productivity of the Kansas River Valley and Cross Creek bottoms, which have paid great dividends to our people over the years has had its penalties in the way of frequent floods. Floods of water from Cross Creek take their toll every few years by the destruction of crops, damage to roads, and inconveniences to its people.

There have also been those floods imposed by the "Kaw," which is now diked for the prevention of those frequent disasters which plagued the farmers years ago.

The earliest river flood of record was that of 1844. Paul Patell, one of our earliest settlers, witnessed this great flood when he was but 12 years old in Westport (now Kansas City). It was described as being from "bluff to bluff." The spring of 1844 was warm and dry until May, when it commenced to rain, and continued for six weeks – rain falling every day. The Pottawatomie Indians had not yet moved to this area and it was the Kanza Indians who had their houses and grain swept away. They were very much afraid and fled to the hills. The Papans, the Frenchmen who ran a ferry near Topeka, had all their houses and boats washed away. During the flood, Major Cummings, a paymaster of the United States Army, wishing to cross from the south to the north side of the Kaw River (at Topeka), stepped into a canoe at about the corner of Topeka Avenue and Second Street, and was rowed by an Indian from there to the bluffs, the water being twenty feet deep over the ground where North Topeka now stands. That flood was probably an equal to the 1951 flood. The story is told that when the late Vince Martinek came to this area to purchase land in 1880 an Indian pointed to a piece of wood lodged high in a tree and told him that a flood had deposited it there and that the water would again be bluff to bluff.



Early Settlers taken July 13, 1899. L to R Dr. Gabbey, C.W. Higginbotham, Tom Cox, Richard Binns, Bennett Swearingen, Josh Harding, Paul Patell, Gregg Navarre, Clark McPherson, Harlow Kline, Len Hollenbeck, Richard Mason, Perry Wyatt, Venice Doud, Dave Hartzell, Dr. Henry H. Miller, Will Startup, Mel McElvain, Bill Marney, John Fritz, Mr. Montgomery, Oscar Young, M.T. Tatman, Mark Cless, Bill Rankin, Ike Larrance.





Marney Brothers. L to R Bill, Jonathan and James – 1911

The next gigantic flood occurred in 1903. The following is from D.M. Howard's diary covering the storms and flood period.

May 20 – Heavy thunder storm at night

May 21 – Some cloudy through the day; thunder storm at night

May 22 – Bright through the day; a heavy thunder storm at 6 p.m.; a strong wind with rain at 10 p.m. so much wind that the Masonic building trembled. The building is of stone and heavily built.

May 23 – A light thunder storm today.

May 24 – A pleasant day.

May 25 – Light storms through the day.

May 26 – Very changeable through the day; at dark and later a very heavy fall of rain.

May 27 – The ground is packed hard on account of so heavy a fall of rain last night. The river and creek rising rapidly. The creek ten inches higher than it has been for thirty years. A heavy rain tonight.

May 28 – Showers through the day. River and creek rising rapidly. Creek rising two inches per hour from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.; from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 2 ½ inches per hour. Cross Creek over-flowed its banks in the afternoon and commenced to flood the city of Rossville; so much so that boats were rowed about the streets. The highest point was reached at 4 o'clock p.m. when it was within one inch of the top of the foundation of John Fritz's house (the present home of John Duley). Hogs and other stock were swimming for higher ground. Reported that one horse

swam two and half miles. Willard and Valencia bridges went down at 5 o'clock p.m. People are moving rapidly to the hills north of town. Houses on the river bottom are surrounded with water. One of Mrs. Wagner's houses went off at 7 p.m. The water on the flat north of town nearly reached the bed of the wagons as the people are moving out. At 4:?? p.m. the water commenced to fall north of town owing to its making a break through the railroad east of town, but water is rapidly rising south of railroad. South of J.K. Conley's the water is up to the wagonbed and Mr. Conley opened his fence so people could move their stock to the hills and not have to swim it through the water.

May 30 – I moved my cattle to the hills. Water still rising. Two feet more will reach the road bed at my house. At 12 o'clock water at a standstill and I conclude not to go to the hills. At 4 p.m. water begins to fall a little. A shower occasionally through the day. During the night the creek fell about 18 inches.

May 31 – A cold rain and wind from the north. Creek fell about three inches during the day. Boats are sailing west across the farms to farm houses to see if any one wishes to leave their homes. They decline to leave although the water is over the lower floors.

June 1 – The water did not fall during the night. At 8 o'clock a.m. it commenced to recede and continued to go down the remainder of the day, making a fall of 18 inches from that time till 7 p.m. People are moving back from the hills to their homes. No sunshine the past five days.

June 2 – Rains and drizzles most of the time since high twelve til twelve midnight. Sun has not shown any today. Water gradually going down so we can see the bridge planks.

U.G. Stewart, the editor of the Shawnee Count News, wrote the following accounts concerning 1903 waters.

Friday, May 29, 3:30 p.m. – Cross Creek broke over its banks northwest of town and has flooded the bottom between the railroad and the north bluffs. Tatman's farm is three feet under water. A score of men are at work trying to save his stock. Men and boys are swimming the fat hogs from Mr. Tatman's pens to the high ground in the town.

4 p.m. – The town north of the track is inundated. Water standing a foot deep in Jamieson's dry goods store. A raging torrent is pouring through town. The main current is coming down through Tatman's place, the school house grounds across Stratton's through Miles' house and down Pearl Street and across Main Street by Larrance's store. Water running two feet deep through Miles' house. People are moving household goods to places of safety. The Cross Creek wagon and railroad bridges are still standing although the water is two feet over the flooring. The flood is occasioned by the heavy rains of Thursday night augmenting the already swollen streams. At 6 o'clock the water began to recede. Paul Patell is cruising around the streets in his gasoline launch. Business is suspended and people are wondering where it will all end.

**RIVER BRIDGE GONE** – Friday May 29, 4 p.m. Two sections of the new Rossville-Willard bridge have been swept away in the flood. Three sections of the Lake Bridge reported out. The approaches to the Maple Hill bridge are washed away. The Belvue bridge is out.

Saturday morning, May 30 **FLEEING TO HILLS** – The greatest excitement prevails in town this morning. The entire Kaw Valley is a sea of water. Reports of a five foot rise in the river at Belvue and Wamego has frightened the citizens and they are leaving the town for the hills. Rescue parties in boats have gone to the assistance of the farmers near the river. No fatalities have been reported up to the time of going to press (Sat. noon).



The news is compelled to use wrapping paper this week on account of suspended railroad traffic. The track is washed out on both sides of the town and it will be several days before trains are running into Rossville.

June 5, 1903 **HOW IT HAPPENED** – The water that flooded Rossville came from Cross Creek. Thursday the banks were full. Thursday night a tremendous rain fell and at the head waters of the creek a cloud burst occurred. The only outlet for all this water was under the railroad bridge in town. About noon Friday the pressure became too great and a break in the banks occurred north of town and the water thus released rushed over the level bottom lands and came on down through town. The railroad penned it up and until it finally broke over the grade east of town the situation was indeed critical. After the grade was washed away the water began to recede and left the city dry. At four o'clock Friday the town resembled a modern Venice. Boats were running on nearly every street north of the railroad. On Pearl Street the water was four and five feet deep in many places.

**TWO DEAD** It is generally believed that two persons, John McGuire and Mack McAfee, an old colored gentleman, were drowned in the flood. They lived on the Mulvane island and nothing has been heard or no trace found of them since Friday last. All that day the two men with Jim McGuire worked incessantly to save their stock. In the evening Jim and John succeeded in landing a few things at the Mulvane ranch, leaving the old darky to watch the stock. Against the advice of all, John took the small boat and went back to the island to bring away McAfee. That was the last seen of him. It is presumed that McGuire reached his home and with the colored man started back but in their exhausted condition they were unable to cope with the high waves and strong current and were wrecked in the trees. Friday night cries for help were heard by people at the Mulvane ranch but there was none to venture out in the darkness and possible destruction for their relief. The river and island have since been searched for traces of them but nothing has been discovered.

Later: Yesterday (Thursday) John Lillard and Nick Bush found the boat used by McGuire in the timber, southwest of the Mulvane ranch. It was bottom side up and had lodged between two trees. Searching parties have gone out today to look for the bodies.

**HOPKINS BOYS SAFE** The report published in the News last week that the Hopkins boys and Ed Patterson were drowned while trying to rescue the people on the Parr farm was untrue. It was a narrow escape, however. They reached the Parr farm all right and it was decided to try and bring some of the people to the land. They started in three small boats and two of the vessels made it as far as the old Higginbotham place. The other boat, with Mr. and Mrs. Ford, failed to stem the strong current. The young man who was rowing gave out and the boat drifted with the wind and current and passed through a gap in a hedge fence. As the boat went through the opening Mr. Ford grasped a hedge tree and pulled the craft up under the shelter of the fence. This is what fooled the watchers on shore. Not seeing them emerge from the hedge it was concluded the boat had upset and the occupants drowned. The Hopkins boys were in the other boats which had sought shelter in the orchard on the Higginbotham farm (across road from David Stadler's present home). Seeing the predicament of Mr. Ford, one of the boys came to the rescue and Mr. Ford and wife were taken back to the Parr house. The other boys stayed in the orchard waiting for the wind to go down but it kept blowing a gale and raining. Late in the evening it was decided to make it back to Parr's which they did without serious mishap. The waves were running high and the current swift as a mill race. It is a great wonder that no lives were lost.

**CRUISE OF THE “SALLY ANN”** Last Sunday, the people of town decided to build a boat with which to bring the flood victims to places of safety. The J. Thomas Lumber Co. donated the lumber and Mills Hardware the nails and Rossville carpenters, J. Lillard, F. Binns, P. Patell, and A.J. Parr, did the rest. The boat was built on the depot platform and was thirty-two feet long and twelve feet wide. Monday noon the job was completed and the craft loaded onto two push cars and taken to the second crossing west of town. From there it was hauled to Patterson’s (the present Charles Keller home) by four teams and launched into the raging waters.

Volunteers were called for to man the boat and the following named persons promptly responded: Jack Parr, Ab Startup, Walter Bourbonie, John Lillard, Mort Short, Mr. Wilmot, Jim Patten, Clarence Wells, John Quirk, Al Gibbs, Nick Bush, Prof. Moore, Will Shidler, J.T. Short, Chas. Patten, Guy Startup and U.G. Stewart.

The first landing place was at the Mulvane ranch where Fred McCollough, wife and children, Mrs. J.D. Ross of Topeka, Miss Marney and Chas. Markham were taken aboard.

Before reaching the ranch, however, it was discovered that the telephone poles that were used as a skid taking the boat from the railroad to the water were still under the bottom. After this load of poles was removed, the boat made fairly good time.

Weighing anchor the helm was turned hard about and a course southeast by sou’ was taken which soon brought us to J.M. Parr’s place. Here more than forty victims were waiting the glad tidings of great joy. Jim Parr and family, Joe Parr and family, Spencer’s family, Ford’s family and M.J. Bragg were taken aboard and the return trip commenced. Across the raging current, over fences and fields glided the “Sally Ann” with its precious cargo and at five o’clock p.m. all were safely landed at the Young farm where teams were in waiting to drive the ship’s passengers to town. Forty-two people besides the crew of eighteen were on the boat the return trip.”

Some interesting notes are added here concerning the plight of those people living southwest of town who were trapped in the middle of what must have seemed a sea of water.

The Joe Parr home sat a little higher than the surrounding farm homes so that about 30 people were eventually marooned there in what was then a three room house (where David Stadler now lives). Water crept into the house to about 3 inches when it was decided to move by boat while they could yet make it to the corn crib where they stayed for 3 days and nights, high on top of the corn. Mrs. Emma Davis was one of those who was marooned and remembers it well. Mrs. Davis, her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford, Ben Ford and his expectant wife, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Parr and family, Mr. and Mrs. Bragg and family, Will Hopkins and his brother, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Thomas are some of those she remembers.

The townspeople, fearing the plight of these people, attempted several times their rescue but the current was too great. By the time the Sally Ann was launched, the water had receded enough to allow these people to make it to the J.M. Parr home, where they were picked up.

The following day the boat was taken out to the Higginbotham place and nine head of horses were brought safely to land.

The first day out John Lillard and Nick Bush left the "Sally Ann" in a small row boat and after a hard struggle succeeded in saving one of Mr. Johnson's horses. The animal was towed to the McCollough place and put in the barn. Three horses were also brought to shore from the Mills place, last Monday. Two of them belonging to Mr. Bert Heslet died.

### **We Saw Snakes**

While the "Sally Ann" was moored at J.M. Parr's Monday, two miles from the mainland, waiting for the ladies to primp a little and adjust their hats properly before coming aboard, we cast off in a small row boat and leisurely paddled around to Joe Parr's orchard. There the boat drifted with the current while we ruminated and bailed water. Suddenly the bough of an apple tree raked our hat off and as we stooped to pick it up from the bottom of the boat we glanced up into the tree to see how the fruit was getting along and, good Lord! The tree was full of snakes! Big snakes and little snakes. Their slimy bodies wrapped around the branches, heads erect, eyes gleaming and tongues darting out in savage fury. Shades of Sam Patch! How we grabbed the oars and hiked out of that! As the stern of the boat shot out from under the tree a large bull snake dropped down and caught on a piece of fence board that was used for a rudder. He coiled his body around the board and poked his nasty head into the boat. Jumpin' bullfrogs! The way we bent those oars in our anxiety to get out of that orchard was a fright! Once in the open our courage returned. We loosed an oar and gave battle. We dumped that board into the water and raising the oar struck a mighty blow. The wave of water from that fierce stroke mightily near upset the frail craft. It killed the snake too dead to skin. Had it not been so we would now be wearing a snakeskin hat-band. We're not nearly so much afraid of a dead snake as a live one so we hauled it up with an oar and stretched it across the boat. We didn't measure it from "tip to tip" but judged that it was six feet long. As we neared the "Sally Ann" the women cried "Ugh." And the men winked, cast insinuation and trifled with our reputation for sobriety. We still think, and do at the time, that it was a poor time and place to introduce their shallow levity.

June 12, 1903 **THE BODIES RECOVERED** The dead bodies of John McGuire and Mack McAfee were found this week in the water on the island southeast of town near the capsized boat. McAfee's body was found Monday and was immediately prepared and buried in the Rossville cemetery. It was not until Wednesday afternoon that McGuire's corpse was found. Both bodies were not far from where the over-turned boat was discovered. The remains of John McGuire were buried in the city cemetery yesterday morning. The burial service was conducted at the grave by Rev. Clyde L. Kuhn of the M.E. Church.

John McGuire was about sixty years of age and leaves a wife, several children and four brothers, Jim, Henry, Robert and William. Mack McAfee was an old colored gentleman well known to everyone in this vicinity.

**NO TRAIN SERVICE YET** The only train that has reached Rossville for more than two weeks is the local freight that was caught at St. Marys by the flood. Every day this train gathers up a force of men at St. Marys, Rossville and Silver Lake who put in their time repairing the track between this place and Topeka. It is thought by tomorrow (Sat.) they will be able to reach the depot in North Topeka. Reports say that it will be more than three weeks before the Union Pacific will be able to run trains into Kansas City over its own tracks. Postmaster Cox has been able to secure a sack of mail each day from Topeka by going or sending a deputy down on the work train in the morning as far as Menoken and walking from there into Topeka, returning the same way in the evening. The News has been without ready-prints for three weeks. All the wrapping paper in town of the required size has been used up in publishing the last two editions.

June 19, 1903 **CROSS CREEK BRIDGE COLLAPSES** Last Sunday morning the west approach to the Cross Creek bridge in the west part of town began to sink and the wing walls to crack and crumble. Work was begun at once to stay in the impending danger. Chains and cables were tied to the iron frames and securely fastened to the large trees near by. By night the approach had sunk fully two feet and the bridge had settled until the chains and other fastenings were drawn taut. Monday, John Fritz set his derrick near the west end and the arm was fastened to the bridge relieving the strain from the pier. Commissioner Haynes came up in the evening and after an investigation decided to begin work to repair at once. Iron piers like those of the new bridge at Howards will be used and a new span will be added to the west end thirty-two feet in length. The county will do this work and the township will fix the approach. Work will begin at the earliest possible moment.

### **FLOOD CURIOSITIES**

Found after the flood in the SW corner of Shawnee County between the old outlet of Bourbonie Creek and bulge on the Kaw-TWP 11s Range 13 E, Section 6, were remains of graves. Six skulls, 3 adult and 3 children with other bones, a small plaque or medallion of copper one side of which was a bust picture of Napoleon and on the reverse Pairs 1844. There were also squire nails. It was supposed that the grave perhaps was of immigrants on the old California and Oregon trails. Cholera was the big killer of many in the years around 1855.

Cassius Smith says that the late flood uncovered the old buffalo trails in the Wagner farm. These trails were made in the gumbo soil and were buried under from two to four feet of earth. They are very distinct and in some places the imprint of buffalo hoofs are plainly discernible in the gumbo. At another place on this farm near the bank of the new channel cut by the overflow in the wreck of an old-time bake oven, that was uncovered by the flood. It is circular in shape and the sides have been burned and are the color the burnt gumbo on the railroad grade, while the bottom of the oven is covered with flat rock that show the effects of heat.

The worse creek flood on record occurred in 1904. The following is from the Shawnee County News, Friday, July 8, 1904.



Paul Patell, standing in his boat

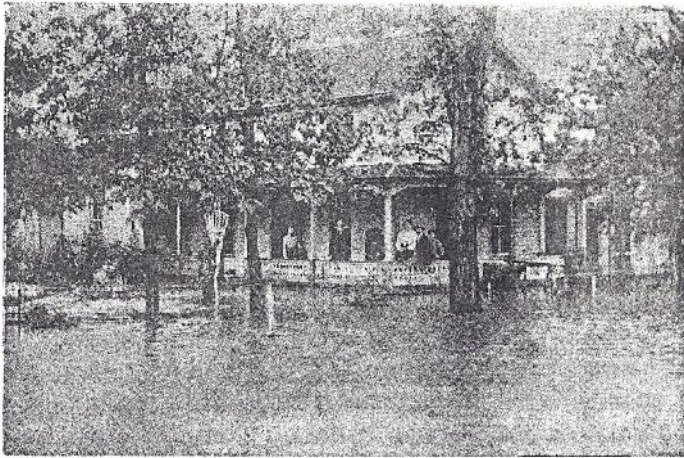




East Side Main Street, Flood



Stratton Home, flood (located on present site of Bill Smith's home. Later moved one door south)



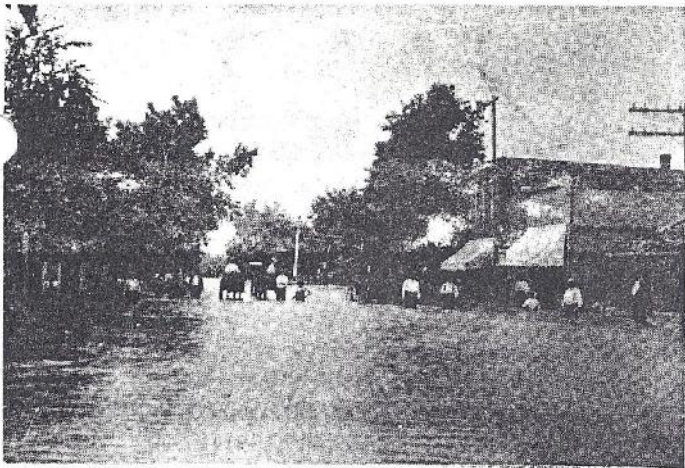
Dr. R.S. Gabbey home (present home of Mamie Marney)



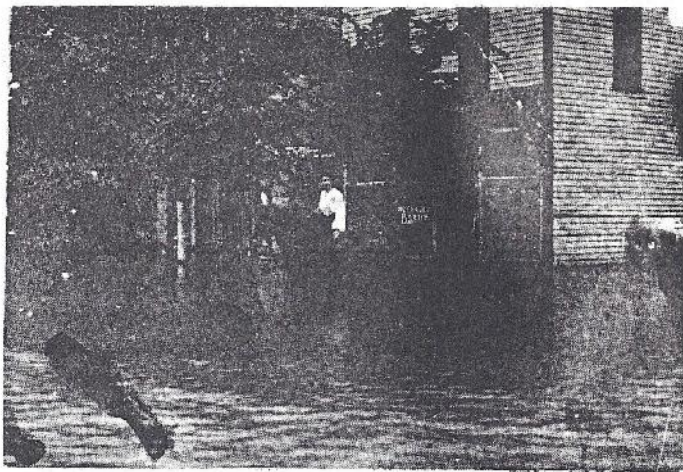
John Wilt home (present home of Esther Sebring)



Flood South end Main)



Flood Main street looking south



Flood Main street

**ROSSVILLE FLOODED** For the second time within a few months the city is at the mercy of raging torrents.

Again Rossville is encompassed, flooded, deluged, inundated and water-soaked to a degree beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

Wednesday morning the early risers gave the alarm that water was coming into the town. In less than one-half hour the flood had enveloped everything. Scarcely a foot of dry land was visible anywhere in the bottoms east of Cross Creek and north of the railroad. The rush of the waters was so sudden and overwhelming that many families were unable to move their furniture from the floor before the flood rushed into the house. Merchants hurried to their places of business to save the goods likely to be inundated. Every store in town with the exception of Mile's, Miller's, Harzell & Tatman's and Stratton's was flooded. In Kirk's general store the water stood two feet deep. In the News office it reached a height of 18 inches. Mr. Kirk suffered considerable loss of goods in the warehouse and cellar. J.H. Mill's Hardware stock was damaged. Many other merchants suffered slight losses.

On South Main Street near the railroad the water was five foot deep and on many of the streets it would swim a horse.

The loss to the farmers of Cross Creek, and portions of the Kaw Valley will reach into the thousands of dollars. Most all of the wheat was made – ripened, cut and in the shock. The yield promised the greatest in years. From the reports gathered from the farmers the entire crop is a total loss. The corn is also greatly damaged. The loss will be the more keenly felt by reason of the fact that this is the second crop loss in succession. These same farmers suffered the loss of crops in the June flood of last year.

Among the heaviest losers near town are: S.J. Oliver, Dr. Pratt, Morris Bond, J.C. Bradley, W.M. Mitchner. Oliver's wheat – 70 acres – was all in the shock. The entire field was swept clean, save several shocks in one corner. The water reached 22 in. above the high water mark of last year's flood.

The rain began to fall about six or half past six o'clock Tuesday evening and throughout the length of the Cross Creek valley it kept up a continued downpour all night. Shortly after the break of day water

was seen coming across the fields north of town and in an incredible short time the water had flooded the town and the entire bottom north of the track to a depth of from one to ten feet as far as the eye could see to the east as well as the west. The water reached its highest point at about 10 o'clock a.m. and then gradually began to subside. At 3 p.m. the merchants on North Main street began to clean out the mud and silt left in the store by the receding waters and by 10 o'clock at night Mr. Kirk, in whose store the water was the deepest, was able to begin the work of cleaning up.

On the railroad track, from the tool house east, the water sped down the right-of-way like a mill race. At the east end of the cut near Morris Bond's house it tore out the road bed and left the ties and rail suspended in the air for a distance of a hundred and fifty feet or more. Beyond the little culvert the fill was washed out and the track was moved several feet out of line. At the fill just this side of Kingsville a strip of roadbed 60 feet in length was washed out to a depth of 20 feet. Near Menoken the track is reported washed away and wrecked worse than it was in the great flood of last year. Three trains are "bottled up" in Rossville, two freights and one passenger. The passenger is the morning "plug" which came feeling its way into town about 10 o'clock a.m. Wednesday and went in on the siding. The east bound stock train pulled back to St. Marys where the stock was unloaded. A large force of men are at work on wash-outs east of town but it is not expected that trains will be running until the first of next week.

West of town the water came up to the porch on Henry Bond's house. Charley Boyles' entire farm was three feet under water. Walter Worthington's were under water, the murky fluid running three feet deep with a swift current toward town.

## **FLOOD NOTES**

In Dr. Scritchfield's house on South Spruce street the water was six foot deep.

The flood dug a good portion of Dick McCoy's potatoes. He gathered up 2 barrels full Thursday washed and ready for the pot.

B.C. Brown says he will probably get over it but he will never look like anything anymore. The water was two feet deep in his house. Nearly everybody took a foot bath Wednesday. No doubt it was the first opportunity embraced by a good many since last year's flood.

Chas. Navarre caught a fish on Main Street yesterday which he presented to the **NEWS** man. It was of the Buffalo type and tipped the scales at one-16<sup>th</sup> of an ounce.

In trying to save the M.W.A. desk in the front of the clothing store by putting it up on the window seat, Sam McAdams, the manager, accidentally broke the large glass in the front window.

The crew of the marooned freight train saw two men leading a hog down the track about a half mile west of town. The engineer pulled the throttle open and steamed out to meet them and the porker, which had been found swimming for life in the fields, was placed in a stock car and brought to town.

Bert Moore living 8 or 9 miles north of town says the storm of Tuesday evening developed into a regular hurricane in that neighborhood, blowing down cribs, windmills, out houses and laying the wheat flat on the ground.

There is no great loss without some small gain. As a result of the flood, the News office has received a thorough scrubbing and presents a cleanly appearance indeed. Curiosity callers are requested to



clean their feet on the curb. Subscribers with a dollar to deposit on subscription may clean their feet on the office desk.

Bob Owens, of Kingsville, started for Rossville Wednesday, horseback. Coming through the swale east of Bond's his horse floundered around in the mud and deep water and threw him off and he was all but drowned. He managed to reach and climb a telephone pole from where he was rescued by the section men.

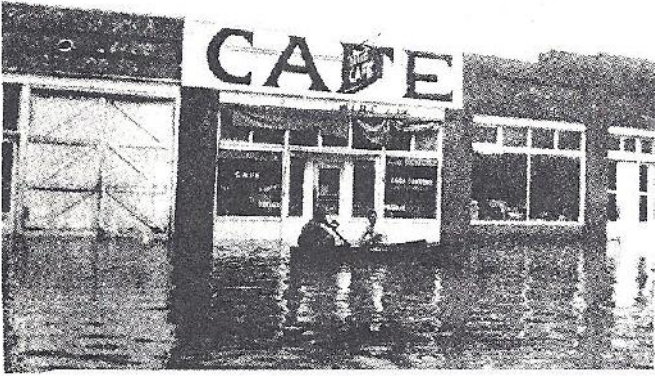
The News scribe was standing waist deep in water in the yard back of Dick McCoy's house waiting to get a picture of the train on the bridge when a hen coop with a big fat rooster came floating by. The rooster looked appealingly at us as we reached out with a stick and drew his frail craft within reach. He made no resistance when we picked him up and waded out and placed his feet on the dry boards of the porch. After shaking the dripping water from his feathers he proceeded to show his gratitude by strutting around and telling us how it happened in rooster talk in the same glad, animated way he calls a hen when he captures a bug. Presently he flopped his wings and let out a lusty crow, mayhap for our especial benefit, and as we turned to go we tipped our hat in acknowledgement.

Dr. Pratt received an impromptu baptism in the flood Wednesday. He had a call to the Heslet home and when crossing the current on Pearl Street near Vorhies' the team floundered around in the water, got tangled in the parking fence and the Doctor, with medicine case in hand, was thrown from the buggy. For a moment he disappeared neath the flood but presently he was up and heeding not the rolling billows manfully pulled for the shore – or sidewalk – where he stood gazing wistfully after his broad brimmed hat speeding away on the swift current. The team was rescued as well as the hat and the Doctor is suffering no inconvenience from the mishap.

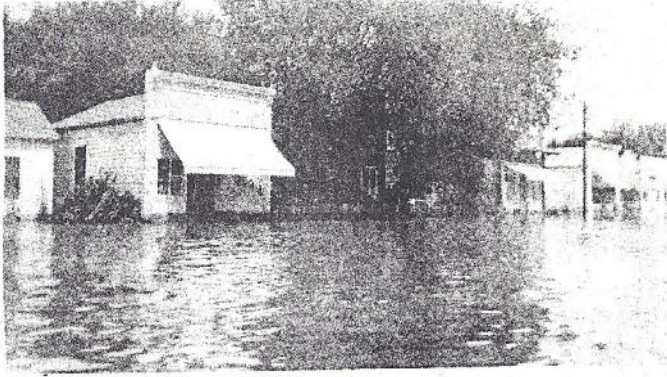
Thursday after the water had subsided somewhat, Ab Startup discovered a monster fish sunning itself on the banks of a pond near Tatman's. He slipped up and hurled his gig into the whale-like specimen. As the cold steel pierced its hide the fist bounded into deep water and away it went like a flash casting a spray in its wake ten feet high. Before Ab could let go of the gig he was jerked through a hedge fence with frightful velocity tearing his shirt into shreds and rending his trousers shamefully. When he regained consciousness he found himself in a cornfield 9 miles up the Kaw valley.

Later – The editor hunted up Mr. Startup last evening for a verification of the story. He says he saw the fish all right, and as he slipped up to pat him on the back the fish bounded away so swiftly that it piled up the water high on each side of its course and appeared to be traveling on dry land. The balance of the story he says is all bosh.

The News man in making the rounds Wednesday taking views of the flood came sauntering along the sidewalk on Main Street in water boot top deep, carrying camera and tripod on shoulder and merrily whistling "On Jordon's Stormy Banks." Just opposite the Racket building he thoughtlessly stepped into a deep hole where the sidewalk had caved into the cellar and the whistle with which he was whistling as well as the entire person disappeared with a loud splash into the muddy depths. He came up spouting water like a whale and just in time to see Postmaster Cox slap his thigh in high glee and laugh immoderately at his predicament. Later on, Mayor Howerton, with nice high boots and clean dry clothes came plodding along the fatal path and confidently stepped into the same hole with no better results than the news man experienced. In a short time Jim Wade wobbled up to the hole and slid in with a loud kerplunk. As he laboriously pulled himself out the look of bewildered astonishment on his countenance was worth going miles to see. A large board was placed across the hole and the fun stopped.



East side Main, 1951 flood



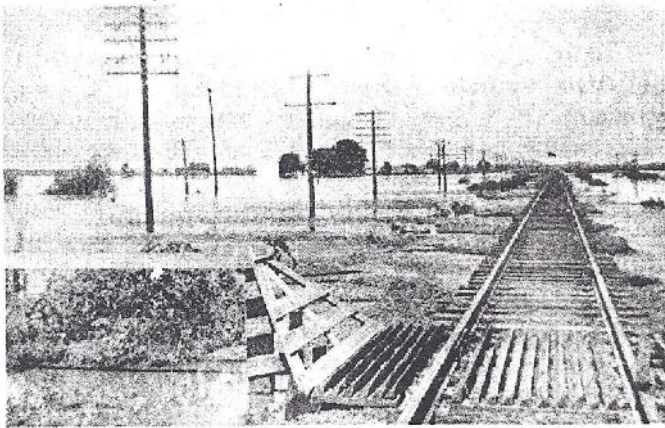
West side Main, 1951 flood



Aftermath, 1951. Maple Hill Road in front of Scott Kelsey's



Harold Reser Farm, 1951 flood



Kingsville Crossing looking west, 1951

A big sow took refuge on Charley Vorhies' (Tom Lacock's) porch Wednesday night. The next morning she was caring for nine little piggies.

The 1951 flood was disastrous to many of our people, the enormity of which could not be calculated prior to its crest. The memory of the great 1903 flood, the belief that its coverage and depth could not be topped, resulted in an inability to conceive the greater flood which was to be the greatest in civilized history of this area.

The stage for the 1951 flood was set by heavy rainfall the last half of the preceding year and in June of 1951, there were 13 inches of rain and in the first eleven days of July another thirteen inches for a total of 26 inches in 40 days.

From the Rossville Reporter July 5, 1951: The river flood crested late Sunday, July 1, but not before it covered a large new acreage in West Rossville Township after a break in the dike near the Maple Hill bridge, Friday. This volume of additional water broke through the Bourbannais Creek dikes and swelled the torrent already many feet deep on the second bottom farms southwest and west of Rossville. The river dike near the Cross Creek mouth was blown out to let this water return to the river as the Kaw dropped."

There was much more to come, though. Tremendous rains that week brought the waters of the Kaw to greater depths. From the Rossville Reporter July 12, "Rossville and all the Kaw Valley from

Junction City to Kansas City is covered with water that approaches the mark set in 1844. It is higher than the 1903 flood by far. Main Street business block was under water from the railroad, north to about its center. The crest of the Cross Creek overflow in Rossville occurred on Friday, July 13, at 3:00 a.m. It held there until 7:30 when it started dropping. For the first time in the knowledge of present inhabitants, Main Street south of the U.P. tracks and the highway was covered with water. While none of the homes was entered, basements were filled by seepage. Business houses on the east side of Main Street were more vulnerable to the overflow than the west side.

Electricity came from a connection made to the REA lines north of Rossville. Electric users were given notice that voltage was limited to refrigeration only besides a few lamps during the emergency.

The high school building and community center were opened for shelter for residents forced to leave their homes.

Train service was discontinued for 3 weeks. Mail was brought in once a day each direction by trucks. The Rock Island ran trains on the UP tracks also, queer whistles and all.

The Willard Bridge went out and the approach to the Maple Hill bridge washed out as in the 1903 flood.

Extensive damage to crops, livestock, homes, and farmland left a mess for many to clean. It was weeks before many returned to normal living in their homes. The weather was hot, humid, sweltering, the vast areas of mud, drowned vegetation, the flies all made the cleanup a very disagreeable task.

In September, Cross Creek went out for the third time, and many basements were flooded again...

The general plan of the Cross Creek Watershed Joint District No. 42, when completed, can greatly benefit those farmers and residents who have been so adversely affected by creek floods.

## **FIRES**

Our Main Street of today might look much different had it not been for the many fires of years past. In the early years of Main Street the buildings were of wood frame construction and once a fire started a building was quickly consumed. On our 1873 map of Rossville, there is shown a large two story frame building owned by A.N. Freeborn. On Sunday night, April 13, 1877, citizens of Rossville fought a fire at this building. The north room was occupied by David Hartzell's drug store whose loss was about \$1000.00. The south room was used as a wagon shop and run by R.W. Spencer whose loss was about \$300.00. A.N. Freeborn, living upstairs, lost everything, the furniture and building totaling \$2500.00. It was expected that the stores of C.W. Higginbotham, Joseph F. Cannon and others would be burned as the wind was blowing a perfect gale from the north but fortunately every other building was saved. The fire was the work of some person unknown.

For years there was to be the problem of one or more arsonists in the vicinity. The March 31, 1882 paper gives this account of a fire on the east side of the south end of Main Street. Friday night at ten o'clock a fire was under way at the northeast corner of the old Kline post office No. 91 Main Street, just at the opening between it and the Kassebaum building occupied as Dr. Gabbey's office. There had been on fire within either building and was evidently the work of an incinerary kindled from the outside. The fire enveloped both buildings in great masses of seething flames, bringing showers of fiery cinders across the street directly over the Sedgwick residence, and outbuildings in such a way as to threaten the destruction of the shingled roof. The Eclipse windmill and garden hose attachment



put into this barn the summer before at a cost of \$150.00 came into play. The mill was turned on, the hose carried to the roof and a continuous stream of water was turned on the shingles. Citizens ran ladders to the roof and pails of water were thrown on it in a continuous stream despite the heat and falling embers. The same was done with each of the other buildings and never could a well drilled fire department have worked with greater effect.

It was felt there was a need for a volunteer fire department and attempts were made from time to time to organize one but at any fire there was such a great response from the citizens of the community to help, the need was questioned.

The only alarm system in town was the bell in the Methodist Church. Because of the attempts by arsonists, the citizens were fearful of any fires and were quick to respond. Such was the case at a very early hour one Sunday morning in 1892 when a very vigorous ringing of the Methodist Church bell was heard, hastily calling out many of our citizens supposing there was a burning building somewhere in town. Men with buckets were seen running from every direction. It was soon learned, however, that some people had decided to hold a religious service at this church at that unreasonable hour.

July 26, 1901, U.G. Stewart, the editor wrote: the City of Rossville had a narrow escape from devastation by fire shortly before 9:00 o'clock last night. A gasoline explosion occurred in the rear of Wilt Hardware store and the blaze was only extinguished by prompt and heroic work. The flames enveloped a 50-gallon tank of the fluid and that a second and disastrous explosion did not follow is regarded as providential. Irvin Wilt sustained painful though not serious burns on his left arm. Is another warning necessary to awaken our citizens to the necessity of making immediate provision for fire protection? The Wilt Hardware Company has expressed a desire to contribute \$100.00 to a fund for that purpose. Now is the time to do something!

And so it was in 1901 that our fire department was formed and a chemical engine purchased. J.C. Bradley was mayor at the time and U.G. Stewart, clerk. Stewart worked hard through his newspaper to get this accomplished and after the department was formed he organized the Fireman's Band which became quite popular.

Rossville was proud of its new fire engine and the firemen put on many demonstrations with it at public meetings. However, in 1908, there appeared this account of a fire. "A small barn on the alley of Mr. Berkey's place in the east part of town containing some hay caught on fire or was set on fire. The hoarse, startling cry of fire rent the air. There was the usual mad rush, the usual wild and woolly drive from the city building with the chemical engine and other things too numerous to mention. Well, when the chemical engine arrived at the scene the fire was in its infancy but the said engine was decidedly on the bum – there was nothing in it. It hadn't been charged since the last fire. By the time it had been put into shape to shoot its little streamlet, the barn was gone beyond recall. The city probably keeps that engine around for its moral effect—this is a dry town, you know."

In the very early days, prairie fires were a real menace. In November of 1879, large prairie fires raged all around during a dry spell. One fire started on the county line north of Rossville, east of Cross Creek. It swept every vestige of prairie grass not protected by fire guards as far east as Menoken. On the south side of the river, the prairies were burned off for many miles. The bright lights illuminated the night with a lurid glare.

In December of 1885, during an extreme high wind, some Indians on the Reserve set fire which swept over the country north of Rossville for miles in an incredible short time. Ezra Countryman, James Leeper, and Warren Berry, three young men who were attempting to burn a counter fire on John Hornbeck's farm were caught by the flames and severely burned. Ezra Countryman died from the burns he received. The damage to property in the burned district was considerable and large quantities of grain and hay were destroyed.

Many fires were caused by the explosion of kerosene lamps, overheated stoves and flues catching fire and spreading to the framework of houses. About the first account of a residence fire was in January of 1882 when the home of J.K. Conley burned. A lamp was placed too near the edge of a table and upon toppling to the floor, exploded, shooting flames upward with terrific fury. The townspeople were quick to respond by the house build of wood burned to the ground.

Barns, corn cribs, and brooder houses frequently burned. In July 1901, there was a big hay fire on the T.W. Andrews farm southwest of Rossville, resulting in the complete destruction of Mr. Andrews' large hay shed when they observed the fire leaping over the north end of the building. In an incredibly short time over \$5000.00 worth of property had been licked up by the hungry flames. This fire was attributed to spontaneous combustion.

In 1902, there was a bad fire at the Mulvane Ranch caused by an overheated bearing on a corn sheller. It burned a barn, two cribs and other material. The newly formed Rossville Fire Department responded and their efforts were successful in saving some other buildings.

Main Street was again the victim of fires. In 1910, the office of Dr. Pratt and a bakery-restaurant operated by Charley Griffin burned. It was near the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and the stock of fireworks in Griffin's Bakery provided an early firecracker and fireworks display. In 1912, a fire destroyed a large portion of Charley Cless' hardware stock. The burned structure, now the Rossville Truck and Tractor showrooms, was soon rebuilt and Mr. Cless restocked and moved back. In 1913, in very dry, hot weather, the Skaggs Hardware store burned. This building was located on the corner now occupied byader's Floor Covering. It was a large frame building, constructed of white pine throughout, and burned so quickly that all efforts were given toward saving adjoining buildings. The residence of Phelps Lewis was in the main path of the fire fanned by a stiff breeze from the southwest. A bucket brigade kept this building from firing until the heat became unbearable. The whole crowd then concentrated their efforts on the residence of Dr. Pratt on the corner. The house caught on the roof and several streams beat the blaze down until the heat from the Skaggs building had died down sufficiently that the whole crowd could join the fight. There were many acts of courage performed by different members of the fire company and Seth Cormack several times went into places and directed a stream of water where it was almost beyond human endurance to stand the terrible heat. Billy Wilt and a bunch of boys hung onto the Pratt residence when it looked like a vain effort to try to save the building. Fred Worsley stood by his post at the engine when at one time the heat was so intense the engine had to be pulled back from the cistern for fear it would catch fire. The Binn's carpenter shop and barn were just across the alley from the hardware store and the heat prevented any concentrated efforts to save them. The crowd was a little timid about getting too close to the building when cartridges began to explode. One explosion sent burning brands a hundred feet into the air.

This was probably the worst fire Main Street experienced. When it was all over, Skaggs Hardware and stock, loss \$13,000.00; Binns carpenter shop and barn, loss \$650.00; Smith heirs and DeVinney residence, loss \$1500.00; Dr. Pratt residence, \$1000.00 and twenty beautiful shade trees burned.

For a second time, Dave Hartzell's drug store was burned. Also lost were E.D. Hartzell's Poultry and Fee Store, Hower's Shop, and Wm. Aye's Harness Shop. Again the fire department fought courageously and hard to save adjoining buildings.

In 1918, the old Shearer Opera House and Phelps Lewis' Grocery store was burned. This building was on the northwest corner of Main and Pottawatomie.

In October 1936, the Empire Elevator located on Main Street and Highway 40 was destroyed by fire. The elevator building was erected in the middle 90's and was first run by the late A.C. Sherman.



Aftermath of Skaggs Hardware Fire

## **TORNADOS**

The citizens of Rossville have suffered from many disasters of one kind or another. Droughts, insects, fires, tornados and floods have visited upon these hardy people, but they have returned to rebuild their shattered homes and businesses.

There are many records of tornados but these were generally the smaller hit and miss variety; however, we have very good accounts of two of these terrible storms that have hit this area.

On May 16, 1941, a "high-flying" tornado whipped over the town, causing property damage of around \$10,000.00 as it passed through Rossville. It never did quite touch the ground. The commencement exercises in the new high school building were held that evening, and at 1:55 a.m. the storm struck. Before hitting Rossville, the wind slightly damaged the Stumbaugh home west of town, blowing down a large elm and several catalpa trees.

Joe Parr's barn just west of the creek was a complete loss, and the house was littered with dirt. Mr. Parr, who suffered a badly cut leg from flying glass, was the only person injured during the night. The storm veered slightly eastward from this point ripping through the center section of blocks to the east edge of town. In the business block most damage was done in a swath about 400 feet wide northward from Perry Street. North of the Henderson Drug Store on the west side, no damage was done. The front windows of the Baylis building were blown in, and the north wall collapsed. The hotel building sustained considerable damage. The most damage was done to the Stovall plumbing shop

which was a total loss. The front was blown in, the walls bulged out and the roof caved in. The cement block storage room in back of the main building had its roof caved in by heavy tree limbs.

Window and roof damage was done to the Bahner Brothers building. Plate glass windows in the Robason Café, Hopkins Store, Lambotte Shoe Shop, and the Reporter Office were broken. All windows in the east end of the Reporter Office were blown out. The roof of the Masonic building was blown off and its tin covering strewn over town and wrapped about tree limbs. Corrugated iron was found all over the east part of town from a large barn and sheds formerly used by the Oliver Brothers Nursery.

A porch on the A.A. Cless home was blown on top of the house. Mrs. Irene Cleveland's front porch was taken into the back yard. A window was broken in the post office lobby and the Buchmeier Grocery front was shattered. East of the business block nearly every house suffered some damage either to roof or porch columns. The west windows of the Presbyterian Church were blown in and the roof damaged.

South of the railroad a few houses suffered minor damage. The beautiful tress damaged were the worst loss.

Clay Mason lost six head of stock in the storm when his barn was blown off its foundation and set about 20 feet away.

The tornado which hit near Willard in 1942 crossed the southeast corner of Rossville Township destroying a barn on the farm occupied by Nick Stadler, tearing down a part of the rock barn on the Ted Fields farm, driving a tree into the Immenschuh farm home, and damaging a stucco house just east of Kingsville.

Some people saw as many as five tornados hanging from the clouds during the storm. The storm that struck near Willard appeared to form south of Paxico and went in a northeasterly direction. The Ralph Page home seemed to lift in the air and then explode.



1960 Tornado





Joe Campbell Home after 1960 tornado

Late in the afternoon of May 19, 1960, a tornado was sighted forming south of Wamego and did not touch ground until it was near Turkey Creek, south of the Kaw River. It crossed the river and was observed by many in the area—an indescribable black mass, a half mile wide, rolling, boiling, churning, with small twisters appearing and jutting out from the sides, great clouds of dust appearing all around the base. Only at one time did it show the funnel shape; apparently, when it crossed the river, there appeared to be a whitish form of the funnel inside this great black cloud.

It was about 6:00 p.m. when it hit the Tony Lenherr farm, Phil DeDonder farm, Henry Schoeman farm, then F.P. Stockman, Jim Pearl, Robert Hoferer, Fred Heiland (the Otto Place), Joe Campbell, Robert Harden, R.J. Cantillon, Harry Rees, Lawrence Reser, Clifford Reser, John Fauerback, Marion Starkey, Clayton Carrell, Floyd New, Donald Christensen, Fred McCollough, Lloyd Rosencutter, D.S. Rickel and on east as far as Oskaloosa, hitting Meriden.

In Rossville the fire siren blew at 5:45 p.m. and Marshall Horace Holder raced the police car through town, with its siren screaming, to warn people. It appeared to be headed straight for Rossville, but actually passed about two miles northwest.

Irene Campbell voiced the thoughts of others “We were too stunned to do anything ourselves. We had to depend on friends to get the clean-up work organized and plan what was to be done.”

This was the largest tornado that anyone in this area had ever seen. It destroyed the J.C. Campbell farm, the Robert Harden home and the R.J. Cantillon home, it also destroyed outbuildings on the old John Bond place where John Fry lived, on the south and the Marion Starkey home in the old Stone School House on the north. This is a distance of at least a mile and a half.

There was either partial or total destruction to 75 farms and homes from this storm. Fortunately there were no deaths in this area. William Taggart escaped with a broken arm and suffered shock when caught by the tornado. He sought shelter in a culvert while the storm blew his car away.

## **OTHER DISASTERS**

During 1858, immigration to Kansas was large and the newcomers could produce little more than enough to supply their present needs, their time and labor being employed in providing shelter for the winter. The drought commenced in June of 1859. From the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, 1859, until November of 1860, over 16 months, not a shower of rain fell to wet the earth 2 inches in depth.

As news of the situation reached the east, elaborate plans were made for relief so that in the spring of 1861, contributions were sent to Atchison from where they were to be distributed. What settlers were left around Rossville and the Pottawatomie Indians in the vicinity drove wagons with teams of oxen to Atchison to pick up their quotas. The greatest needs in the Rossville area were staple foods and seed. Those settlers remaining and the Pottawatomie Indians suffered privation well-nigh bordering on starvation.

Rossville's progress was going well until the financial panic of 1873-4, one of the worst winters in history in the year 1874, and in the summer of 1874, the greatest grasshopper invasion. Many new settlers in the area trying to establish their homes, break the sod, and harvest crops—living under difficult pioneer conditions were fighting drought and hot winds. There was enough subsoil moisture in our area to pull the crops through and in July a bountiful harvest was forecast. But, on a day late in July, farmers saw a strange cloud in the northwest moving like the wind. It was the grasshopper horde. Corn fields melted, leaving merely the woody stalks, trees were left stripped as for winter, grass disappeared. The settlers stood helpless with slowly starving livestock about them.

The East sought to help with shipments of supplies but the grasshoppers on the tracks created a greasy cushion which stopped trains.

The grasshoppers got into wells and cisterns, they settled down in dying masses in the open springs. For days their movement dimmed the sun.

Another grasshopper invasion occurred in 1936, but the damage was not nearly so severe nor the duration as long.

The severe drought and depression of the 1930's was by far the worst in our civilized history. W.P. Lambertson, in 1935, wrote: "our depression is five years old. The remedies tried have been: tax reduction, budget balancing, R.F.C., loans to big business, guarantee of deposits, dollar devaluation, public works, NRA codes, curtailment of production, and a five billion bill and now social security. Some say yet that all we need is a little calomel of confidence."

Confidence and perseverance have seen our people through the disasters and hard times.

Disease, many times of epidemic proportions, was prevalent in the early days. In 1849 and 1850, cholera killed hundreds of Indians and many white settlers. There were many who died of cholera along the Oregon trail and buried at various sites. Many of our early settlers contracted malaria which plagued them all their lives. Diphtheria was a common cause of death among infants and children. In the early 1900's, there were nearly 500 cases of smallpox in the Rossville area treated by Dr. H.H. Miller and Dr. H.F. Pratt.

Although there was no damage, it is interesting to note the following item which appeared in the Rossville paper Nov. 8, 1895. "The earthquake shock of Thursday was plainly felt in Rossville. It awakened a great many sleepers and treated them to a somewhat sharp vibration." Some of our older citizens remember another quake which occurred in the early 1900s.

### **DR. ROBERT S. GABBEY 1833-1900**

Dr. Gabbey was a remarkable man who lived an interesting and eventful life. He accomplished much during his lifetime. Not only was he a doctor who practiced medicine over forty years, but his fertile brain fathered many useful inventions, some for which he held patents. He was a man of literature

whose keen wit and ability to express himself provides his readers with many amusing moments. He was a broad-minded liberal, and one has the feeling that if he were living in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he would be most comfortable.

Dr. Gabbey was of Scotch descent, and he was born May 4, 1833, in Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania. After attending the local schools, he attended Jefferson College and graduated in 1852. Annie Welton of Columbus, Ohio became his bride in 1854. After his marriage, he returned to Jefferson Medical College where he received his medical degree in 1855.

In 1857, President Buchanan appointed him Government Physician to serve the Pottawatomi Indians. The Gabbey's journeyed to Leavenworth, Kansas on the steamboat "William Campbell." From Leavenworth they traveled by Overland Stage to St. Marys, the Agency headquarters. The young Dr. Gabbey attended to the medical needs of the tribe and this must have been quite a challenge. The Pottawatomi were a peaceful lot but their primitive health habits and poor living standards left much to be desired. The next seven years surely had to be an interesting and educational period in the doctor's life.

Stories related by passing travelers of the discovery of gold in Montana aroused all the spirit of adventure in Dr. Gabbey's soul, and in 1864, he joined a caravan headed west. It is assumed he did not "strike it rich," for shortly after his arrival he became a Star route mail contractor and later established the first important stage coach line in the territory. The stories of his adventures in this untamed wilderness were published in weekly installments in the Rossville Critic in 1892 and read like the plot of a wild west movie.

Dr. Gabbey remained in Montana about two years, then returned to Rossville. He purchased a farm east of the city and also resumed the practice of medicine. The farm is presently owned by Mrs. Ruth Hesse. After Rossville Township was formed, he served as the first Justice of the Peace. He often related that his services for the four terms he served only cost the taxpayers "one cent." In 1879, Dr. Gabbey was one of the first persons in this area to have a telephone connecting his residence and office on Main Street.

Dr. Gabbey often applied himself to problems other than those associated with the practice of medicine. He solved the problem of cultivating small corn to get ahead of the weeds by investing and implement that successfully accomplished this purpose. His "Gabbey-Go-Devil" was an immediate success. He was granted a patent but probably received very little money from his invention because any good blacksmith could copy the machine. The "Gabbey-Go-Devil" consisted of a sled cut from 2" x 12" planks bound with heavy iron to prevent wear. The sled straddled a single row of corn and was pulled by a team of horses. Two adjustable knives extended from each side. These knives sliced through the sides of the ridge and cut off the pesky weeds. The first model required the farmer to walk alongside, however, later models had a seat for the comfort of the driver. A later improvement included a two-row model.

In 1886, he patented an automatic grain weighing and registering machine.

From 1890 on until his death in 1900, Dr. Gabbey experimented with the theories of aerial flight. He designed and received a patent on an airplane. Men of science accepted his advanced theories on aviation, and he received favorable notice from the "Scientific American" and other technical journals throughout the country. Some of our senior citizens remember the model of the airplane that hung in

Dr. Gabbey's office. They also remember the town's reaction...one of disbelief! They thought the good doctor had truly overdone himself this time!



Dr. H.H. Miller

**DR. HENRY H. MILLER 1850-1916**

Dr. H.H. Miller was born in Alliance, Ohio, May 4, 1850, one of eight children born to Rev. John and Sarah (Shaffer) Miller, natives of New York and Switzerland, respectively.

He attended public schools in Alliance, later he entered Mount Union College and eventually attended the University of Pennsylvania where he received his degree in medicine.

Six of Dr. Miller's brothers had come to Kansas, and immediately after graduation the young physician headed west.

The young doctor chose to settle in Rossville and set up his practice in June 1872. Until his death, May 1, 1916, Dr. Henry Miller devoted his life to medicine.

Roads were poor and often impassable and Dr. Miller often rode horseback to reach his patients. His first professional call was to see Mrs. Eli Nadeau who lived west of town. The first office of Dr. Miller's was on Main Street in the upstairs of the old Divine Café building.

Dr. Miller readily won the confidence and respect of his fellow citizens and was entrusted with varied positions in the community. He served 18 years as clerk of the township school board, was a city councilman, and in the first city election was elected Mayor of Rossville. He readily assisted in any enterprise which would aid the schools or churches. His membership was in the Presbyterian Church and he served for years as an elder.

He was a thirty-second degree Scottish Rite Mason, a Shriner, a Knight Templar, and was Master of the Rossville Lodge for 13 years. He was a member of the first class to take the consistory degrees at Topeka. Dr. Miller was one of the organizers of Peoples State Bank and the Rossville State Bank.

In April 1876, Henry Miller married Ella M. Wyatt. Mrs. Miller surprised her husband and the townspeople when she ran for Mayor in 1889 on an all woman ticket and was elected. Mrs. Miller died in 1894 after a long illness. Dr. Miller was married to Gertrude Partelow in 1897.



In 1908, Dr. Miller purchased the first automobile in Rossville, It was a 20 hp. red "Aurora" runabout and was a "fine appearing machine." He also had an interesting collection of stuffed animals which he displayed in his office window.

Dr. and Mrs. (Ella) Miller had three children: Emma E., Earl and Henry B. Miller.

In 1968, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Miller gave the building site for the Rossville Community Library in memory of his grandfather, Dr. H.H. Miller, and his uncle, Dr. Henry B. Miller.



Young Dr. Henry B. Miller

#### **DR. HENRY B. MILLER 1881-1957**

Dr. Henry B. Miller, who is remembered well by many in the community, followed in the footsteps of his father, Dr. H.H. Miller, carrying on the duties of a family physician. As a small boy he would accompany his father when he made calls in the horse and buggy days. He loved to ford the river when they went on calls south of Rossville. As he grew older he spent much time with his father, watching and learning.

Dr. Henry, as he was affectionately called, was born in Rossville, January 1, 1881. He attended school here and later attended Bethany Academy and Baker College.

He worked and studied and eventually received his B.A. Degree from Baker College. After one year of teaching school at Overbrook, he was offered the position of assistant instructor in the chemical laboratory at the University of Kansas. He continued to teach and work on his Master's Degree. The desire for more advanced education took him to the University of Pennsylvania, and in 1908 received his degree as Doctor of Medicine. After a year of interning at the University Hospital, the Methodist Hospital and the Philadelphia Hospital for contagious diseases, he returned to Rossville and became associated with his father.

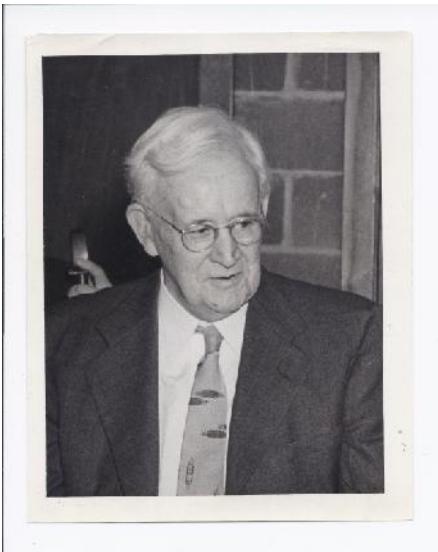
The father and son association continued until the death of Dr. H.H. Miller in May 1916. He left his son a very fine medical library.

Dr. Henry, as his father before him, was active in many professional and fraternal organizations. For 50 years he was a member of the Rossville Hesperian Lodge, serving as Master for several years.

Dr. Henry moved to Topeka in 1929 and set up a practice. However in 1933 he returned to Rossville to be "with the people he knew and loved and who needed him." As was true of many family doctors, the hours were long and usually the pay was small. "That will be one dollar please" in the friendly drawl of Dr. Miller will long be remembered in the minds of his patients. His reward was the good health of those who depended upon him.

Dr. and Mrs. Miller loved their summer home northwest of Rossville. It was here that he became interested in farming and raising prize winning farm animals.

Dr. Henry B. Miller died September 8, 1957. The whole town mourned the passing of a true friend. His jolly smile, his white hair, and his comforting presence in time of trouble will long be remembered in our town.



Dr. H.B. Miller in later life



Dr. Henry B. Miller Holding Shelley McClain



Dr. H.B. Miller in later life

#### **DR. HENRY FULLER PRATT 1861-1935**

Four years after his birth in 1861 in the town of Kossuth, Ohio, Dr. Pratt's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Pratt, moved to Topeka and settled on a farm at the southwest edge of the city. He attended schools in Topeka and after graduation returned to Ohio to enter the Ohio Medical College (University of Cincinnati) where he received his degree in 1884. That same year Bishop Thomas H. Vail appointed him as the first intern in the New Christs Hospital (Stormont Vail) built by the Episcopalian Church.

The following year he came to Rossville and was associated in practice with Dr. H.H. Miller. In 1887, Dr. Pratt moved to Beverly, Kansas, a small town badly in need of a doctor.

Dr. Pratt married Jennie DeVinney, a Rossville girl and a teacher in the city schools of 1888. They returned to Rossville in the fall of 1895 with their small son, Dudley. They built a home on the corner of Pottawatomie and Main Streets (now the Guyle residence), and Dr. Pratt opened an office in the middle of the block on the west side of Main Street. Like all doctors of this era he depended upon the horse and buggy for making calls, and in the winter he used a sleigh. Mrs. Esther Parr, his daughter, recalls the time he was called to go to the river bank with his lantern and black bag. There a man in a boat met him and took him to a home on an island in the river where he delivered a baby. Chickens roosting on the foot of the bed were disinterested attendants. When the man was rowing him back to shore, the boat gave a lurch and his black bag was thrown into the river. Experiences of this nature were very commonplace for the early doctors.

A very colorful description of Dr. Pratt appeared in a newspaper in 1898. It states, "Dr. Pratt sits in his new office and smokes his 10c Havanca cigars with his feet buried in a fine Brussels carpet, reading the latest war news with the greatest comfort imaginable. The Doctor is a progressive sort of duck and has an eye open towards the financial."

Dr. Pratt always went to his office in the evening, and his friends would drop in to read and discuss the papers which had come in on the evening train, referred to as the "Plug." Some of the men who joined him were Frank Binns, J.C. Bradley, E.G. Griswold, Frank Stumbaugh and Charles York.

Despite his busy practice, Dr. Pratt was active in fraternal circles. He was a member of the Rossville Hesperian Lodge No. 111, A.F. and A.M., and held the position of treasurer for many years. He was a member of the York Rite and the Scottish Rite and a charter member of the Eastern Star. The Royal Neighbors and the Modern Woodmen employed him as medical examiner, and he also was a member of the organizations.

In 1909, when the Peoples State Bank was founded, Dr. Pratt was its first president, a position he held until 1919 when ill health forced his retirement. He moved to Topeka but continued to serve the bank as vice-president.

Dr. Pratt lived in Topeka until his death in April 1935. He is one of six doctors buried in the Rossville Cemetery.



L to R- Dr. Pratt, Clare Miller, Esther Pratt Parr, and Mabel Binns Bruce





Dr. Pratt and Harry Jamieson

### **DR. JAMES M. AMIS**

Very little is known of Dr. James Madison Amis who practiced medicine in Rossville for about ten years at the turn of the century. He came here from Solomon, Kansas, and married Etta Howerton, daughter of John and Mary Howerton, at the Howerton farm northeast of here. A son, John, was born to them in 1902. In August 1903, Dr. Amis built a fine home west of the grade school, presently owned by Inez Richardson. Dr. Amis moved to Topeka in July of 1908 where he was on the staff at the Santa Fe Hospital.

Other doctors practiced in Rossville for short periods. One was Dr. E.R. McIntyre, a homeopathic physician, who practiced here in the late 1880s. Dr. Clothier, a dentist, practiced in the 1920s. Dr. E.H. Gibson, D.D.S. had his office in the old hotel building during the 1930s.

### **DR. CLYDE S. SMITH 1881-1959**

After 53 years of active medical practice in Rossville and the surrounding areas, Dr. Clyde S. Smith at the age of 77, announced his retirement. In his quiet and patient way, he had done the work he loved, and in so doing had earned the confidence, respect and friendship of the people he served. Failing health forced his retirement, and it is sad to note that he passed away in June of 1959, only three months later.

Dr. Smith was born November 8, 1881, in Edina, Missouri. By the time he was 24 years of age he had graduated from the Keokuk, Iowa, Medical College of Physicians and Surgeons. He began his practice in Willard, Kansas, shortly after graduation and remained there until 1922 when he moved to Rossville.

Dr. Smith's wife, Rose (Humphrey), whom he married in February 1906, devoted her entire life to her husband, his career, and their two children. His patients always knew that if the doctor was out, Rose would be there to receive calls and see that they were delivered.

One of Dr. Smith's proudest possessions was a team of high-spirited horses. Rose loved to tell the story of how she used the horses to time her biscuits. When she hear their hooves hitting the old Post Creek bridge, she would put the biscuits in the oven and they would be ready for dinner when he arrived. The doctor replaced the team in 1912 with his first automobile, a K-R-I-T.

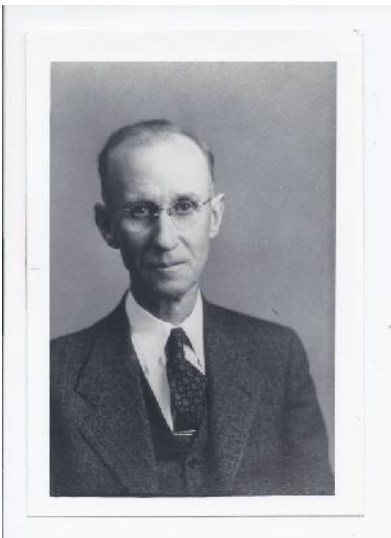
Dr. Smith's first office, which he occupied until 1924, was in the rear of the building now occupied by Bahner's garage. In 1924 he moved his office into what is now the building housing Wanda's Beauty Shop. In August 1946, Dr. Smith purchased the northwest corner lot on Main Street from Earl Stovall and began building a new office.

The first baby Dr. Smith delivered was Bernice Herron. She will be remembered as a longtime Rossville High School English teacher.

Delivering triplets was one of the highlights of Dr. Smith's career. The three little girls were born to Mr. and Mrs. Tom Logan of Dover in April 1933. Since he did not have an incubator into which he could place the babies, he turned one room into a nursery and carefully regulated the heat. The infants responded quickly to the makeshift conditions and were soon gaining weight and doing very well. The girls were named Margaret (Mrs. James Phillips of Americus, Kansas), Mary (Mrs. Maurice Gleason of Dover), and Margery (Mrs. Gail Blythe of Dover). Dr. Smith was very proud of these girls and always had a special fondness for them.

An interesting headline appearing in the paper stated, "Baby Born in Doctor's Office." Mr. Hubert Bond of Emmett was rushing his expectant wife to the hospital in Topeka. He stopped in Rossville to pick up Dr. Smith but it became apparent that she could not go further. Lorene Harth, R.N. and Mrs. Smith were called in to assist and the baby was born in the office.

Dr. Smith's daughter, Anita, lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and his son, Dr. Orval Smith, is a physician in St. Marys, Kansas.



Dr. C.S. Smith



Mrs. Rose (Humphrey) Smith



Interior of Dr. Smith's first office



Logan Triplets Delivered by Dr. Smith

## **SCHOOLS**

The history of our earliest schools is limited, however, we do know that the first school was taught by Mrs. Gibson Metty in 1863, and the first term was held in a small log cabin near the creek on the west side. There were about 15 scholars in attendance, both white and Indian. It was a subscription school. Mrs. Metty was succeeded by Mrs. Guernsey and she in turn by Miss Jane Woodward.

In the years 1865 to 1868, a number of citizens formed an association and established a private school which most of the children attended. They built a small one-story frame building on the corner of North Main and Marion Streets.

The population by the year 1870 had increased sufficiently to allow the formation of District No. 34. A two-room frame building 14x23 was built near the corner of Navarre and Marion Streets with a daily attendance of about 14 and in the winter season about 20. This was the first public school in Rossville. In the spring of 1871 this school building was moved from its site and purchased by C.W. Higginbotham for use as part of his home (which stood near the S.M. Thompson residence). A large, two-story frame building was constructed on the same site as the former school. In the fall the building was completed, and school was taken up by a Mr. Grant with an attendance of about 30 pupils.

In 1882, a meeting was held at the Rossville school to discuss the necessity for enlarging the school facilities. Many felt the existing school should have an addition added to secure more room, and a high fence built around the school yard. Others favored moving the two-story frame house off to a suburban site such as back of the Baptist Church on Mulvane's farm or some similar location. The complaint of noise, and the children playing in the creek because of lack of adequate playground area were reasons given for moving the school.





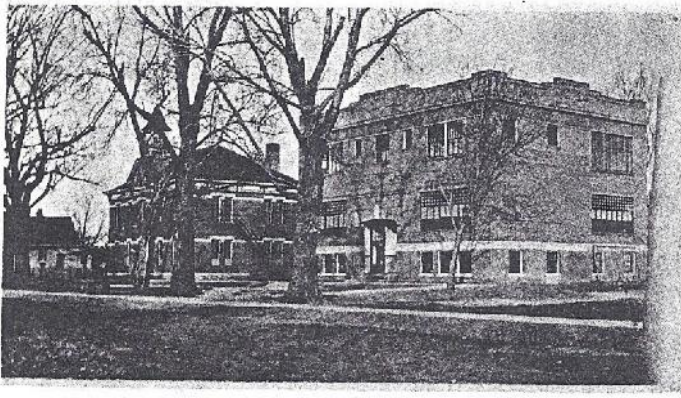
Rossville School, 1880s

In the year 1884, it was decided that a new school should be built and the contract was let to William Binns. It was built of red brick and furnished inside with all the latest improvements of the time. There were four spacious rooms, two on the first floor and two on the upper, in the back of these rooms were wardrobes. In the front and center of the building, on the upper floor, was recitation room opening into either of the two rooms. This school house was located on the present Rossville Grade School grounds. Both grade and two years of high school were taught for several years in this school building, until a four year high school could be established. From the Topeka Daily Capital, December 22, 1940:

“Rossville’s new District No. 34 Grade School was dedicated. It was built at a cost of approximately \$42,000.00 and contains four classrooms, one combination classroom and library, an auditorium, kitchen, bathrooms and a boiler room.”

From the Rossville paper June 15, 1952, “patrons of District No. 34 and consolidated districts voted 64 yes and 3 no on a proposal to issue \$68,000 in bonds for enlarging the grade school building, now greatly overcrowded.”

The new addition to the grade school was started September 1952.

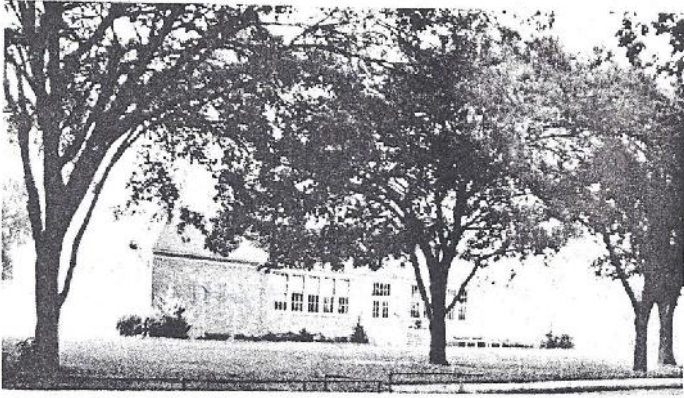


Rossville Grade School and High School



Rossville Teachers, 1888. Jennie DeVinney, Bertha Johnson, Fannie George, Mr. Barber, Prin.

The last addition to the grade school was in 1963. From the Topeka Daily Capital, April 17, 1949:  
 "Five rural school districts voted to consolidate with the Rossville District. They are Parr District No. 77, which closed April 1910; Cedar Bluff District No. 52, closed since April 1937; Lipp School which closed in 1938; and James and Twin Rose schools which closed in 1946."



Rossville Grade School, 1940



Rossville High School

In about the year 1910, it was voted by the citizens of Rossville to build a high school. Until the high school was completed, the students, because of overcrowding, attended classes in the old Fritz hall, which is now identified by location above the present Rossville Truck and Tractor building. During this time, part of the primary department was taught in the old Baptist church. The high school, which was named "The City School, " was built just east of the existing grade school on Pottawatomie Street. Due to weather conditions, the school was not completed until the second semester started in January 1913. School continued to be held in this building until 1937 with an average enrollment of eighty.

The Rossville Reporter published on March 12, 1936, that among the public works projects was Rossville's proposed new high school building, with an outright gift of \$38,000.00 towards its cost. In May petitions were circulated in the district, which were later presented to the Board of Education requesting an election to vote bonds for Rossville's share of 55 percent towards the new building. On July 11<sup>th</sup> the district voted five to one to approve the issuance of \$46,480.00 in bonds. The 4.5 acres of ground, located on the south side of Highway 24 was purchased from J.K. Conley at \$500.00 per acre. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1936, the school board advertised for bids for the new school. In 1966, due to an act of the Legislature, Grade School District No. 34 and High School District No. 7 were unified with St. Marys, Delia and Emmett and became known as Kaw Valley Unified District No. 321. The Delia High School was closed and the students came to Rossville.

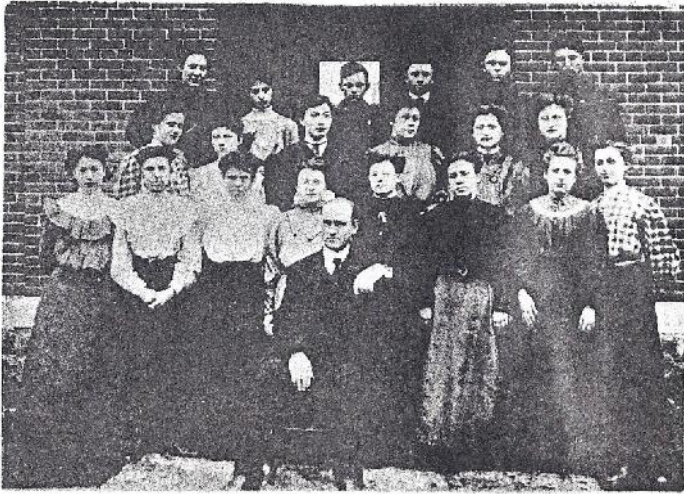


L to R Top Row: Mildred Zickefoose, Helen McPherson, Tabby Watkins, Ruth Marney, Loma Landis, Ethel Ropp, Ethel Craig, Alma Short, Miss Emma Robinson, teacher. Second Row: Neva Brady, Leslie Griswold, Jimmie Grooms, Joe Dean, Harold Nelson, Bennie Marney, Harry Gutshall. Bottom Row: Marguerite Stewart, Irene Howard, Mabel Howerton, Emma Dean, Clara Lambotte, Dudley Marney, Roy Coleman, Edwin Stamp.

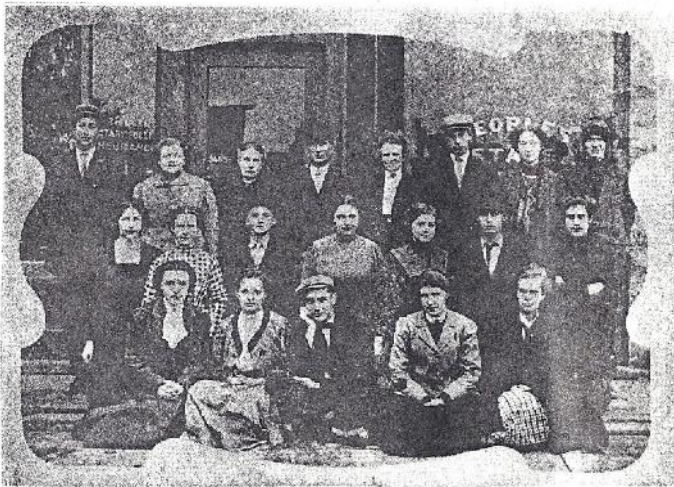


Girls Basketball. L to R Maude White, Daisy Kiegley, Mabel Stewart, Edith Burns, Ida Zickefoose, Ethel Binns





Top Row L to R- Mabel Stewart, Mae Sneller, Earl Stovall, Ben Franklin, Sam Bond, Mel Hartzell. Second Row: Ida Zickefoose, Bessie Navarre, Daisy Keigley, Maud White, Ethel McElvain, Nettie Startup. First Row: Edith Stratton, Mabel Hinshaw, Golda Hook, Ethel Reid, Anna Silvers, Violet Moseley, Agnes Howard, E.G. Griswold, teacher



Top Row L to R- Vernon Bond, Faye Worthington, Miss Hiat, teacher, Principal Evans, Mrs. Thomson, teacher, Perry Stumbaugh, Eunice Ward, Gus Parr. Second Row: Mary Van Vleck, May Sebring, A. Jacobs, Laura Trostle, Clare Miller, Tim Emert, Margaret DeBarrows, Martha Rezac, Emma Stovall, Lowell Hook, Virgil McPherson, Winona Van Vleck



Top Row L to R: Hazel James, Golda Wilson, Pauline Rezac, Bea Miller, Emma Trostle, Ethel James, Joe Parr. Second Row: Claude Sneller, Elizabeth Jackson, Mildred McCollough, Doris Jamieson, Unidentified, Unidentified, Grace Sneller, Eunice Ward, Edna Burns, Thurlow Neiswender, Unidentified, Mabel Moses, Blanche Kesler. Third Row: Ora Parr, Ed Doud, Pauline Baylis, Helen McPherson, Irene Howard, Mabel Howerton, May Seeley, Emma Stovall, Gladys Hartzell, Gladys Eversold, Lettie Page, Ludmilla Dolezilek, Edna Sanders. Bottom Row: Howard Bixby, Earl Barney, Edwin Stamp, Unidentified, Unidentified, Unidentified, Glenn Page, Clyde Strimple, Leslie Griswold.

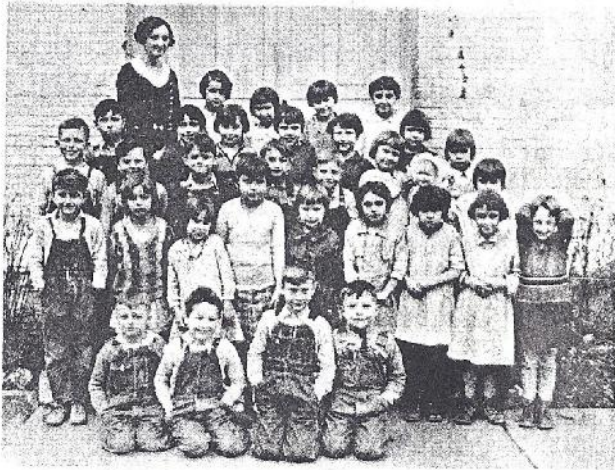


Top Row, L to R: Doughty Strimple, Mildred Gutshall, Unidentified, Bill McGrew, Ralph Hackler, George McGrew, Miss Cuddy, teacher. Second Row: Unidentified, Sarah Strimple, Vida Reser, Clara Wilt, Henry Wade, Ruby Wilt, Unidentified, Sherwin Griswold. Third Row: Allen Enos, Bill Rankin, Gladys Hopkins. Fourth Row: Goergia Stewart, Nora Stamp, Arlene Ward, Evelyn Fritz, [ ] Bixby, Olive Myers, Fern Lacock. Bottom Row: Clyde Cless, Allyn Hartzell, John Lewis, Harold Marney.

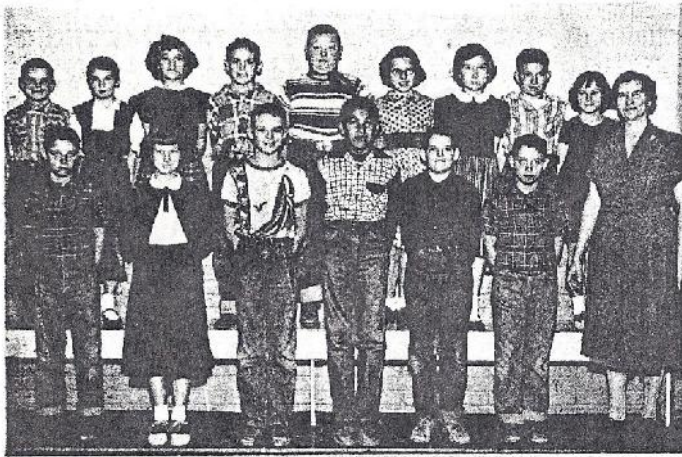




Top Row, L to R: Teacher, Fern Pendleton, Cleo Patton, Herbert Whitehead. Second Row: Lloyd Lister, Thornton McClain, Tom O'Donnell, Charles Meade, Billy Marney, Henry O'Donnell, Stanley Parr. Third Row: Hope Mead, Fleta James, Maxine Parr, Gladis Hahn, Fern Yocum, Gladys Trimble, Martha Oldfield. Fourth Row: Bernita Hayes, Billy Gibson, Clyde Hartzell, Dale Davis, Herbert Trimble, Merwin Startup, Leroy Parr. Fifth Row: Luella Olson, Ruby Countryman, Marie Whitehead, Opal Meade, Noradell Patton, Gladys Martin, Eva Davis. Bottom Row: Ora McClain, Ronald Howard, Gerald Binney, Edward Nuhn, Chester Patton, Donald DeGraff, Joe Kirkpatrick, Duane Parr.



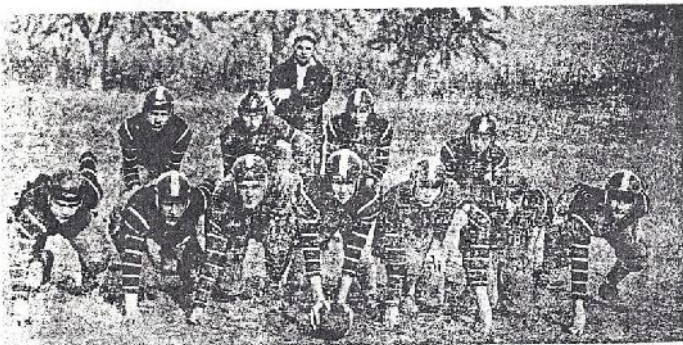
Top Row: L to R: Mrs. Herb Syring, Doris James, Unidentified, Grace Bixby, Frances Eversole. Second Row: Eugene Lister, Eunice Reed, Norma Jean Fawl, Betty Davis, Helen Gager, [ ] Lister. Third Row: Oliver Marney, Grant Meade, Jr., Floyd Trahoon, Ernest Oldfield, Glen Hawks, Marjorie Gideon, Eileen Patton. Fourth Row: Roscoe Gibson, Maizie McClain, Alieen Allen, Margaret Reding, Donis Cottle, Mae Kovar, Becky Patton, Vena Mae Countryman, Josephine Barney. Front Row: Gaylord Nitchie, Charles Bixby, Rolland Parr, Donald Hartzell.



Top Row L to R: Timothy Lynde, Dorothy Jacobson, Janice Johnson, Tom Lacock, Don Rogers, Charlotte Decker, Sally Nadeau, Bill Foresman, Joleen Parr. Front Row: Dean Davis, Jane Zickefoose, James Stadler, James Wamego, J.W. Adams, Gene Davis, Esther Sebring, teacher.



Top Row: Laird French, Kenneth Marney, Frank Woods, David Stadler, Leondar Mesmer, Darrel Rezac, Kenneth Smith, Henry Badura. Front Row: Teacher, Dana Simpson, Betty Bixby, Linda Hudson, Phyllis Coffey, Linda Rezac, Jane Rogers Judy Atchison.



Top Row: Charles Sneller, Orville Strimple, Vernon Baird, Lathel Johnson. Front Row: John Sawyer, Clyde Rogers, Richard Verhage, Streight Louck, Leroy Lambotte, Chris Viergever, Marvin Billings, Victor Hiatt, coach.





1915 Football Team. Top Row: Mr. Hanger, Archie Cless, Carl Hopkins, Jim Wade, Lowell Hook, Lance Jamieson, Ross McCollough. Front Row: Ray Parr, Carl Parr, Joe Parr, Robert McCauley, Bill Miller, Unidentified, Jim White.



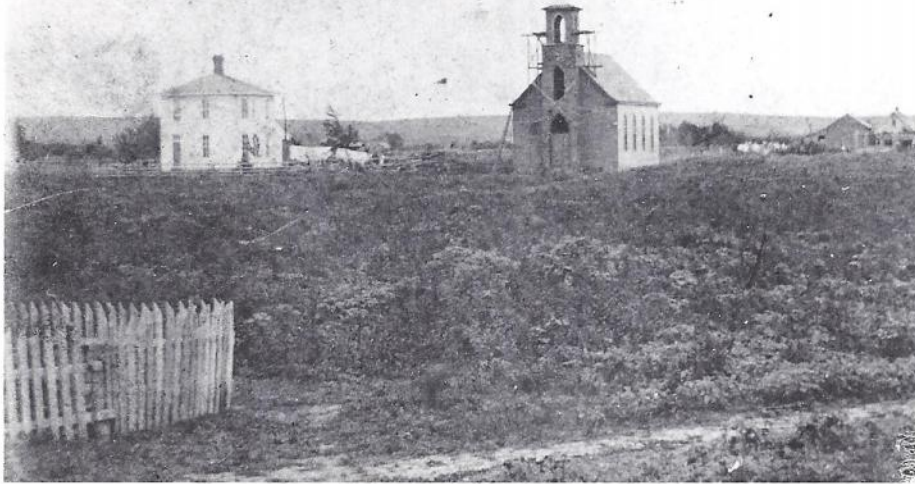
L to R: Clinton Stalker, Rhoda Marion, Vida Reser, Allen Enos, Vivian James, Mildred James, Sherwin Griswold, Nora Stamp, Clara Wood, Elsie Brooks, Allyn Hartzell, Georgia Stewart, John Lewis.



Mr. E.G. Griswold came to Rossville as a teacher and was an active church and civic leader for many years.

### **CHURCHES**

Among the various cultural developments in Rossville none was more important than the establishment and growth of organized religions. Shortly after the village of Rossville was started in 1871, some of the settlers felt the need for a church. The first known organized church was the Baptist Church started in August 1871 with nine members. A newspaper account, dated May 1879, about the school house in town says, "...at this time the building is used on Sunday by various church denominations as they are not supplied with church buildings. Six denominations have organized: The Baptist, Presbyterian, Christian, Methodist, Episcopal, Methodist Southern and Advent. The Baptist have begun to erect a neat frame church building." The Baptists built a small church on the approximate site of the Joe Navarre home on Spruce Street and dedicated this church on February 29, 1880. For a few years after that the Baptist, Christian, Presbyterian and Methodist shared this building—each having the use of it one Sunday a month, morning and evening. The Baptist church disbanded in 1910 and was torn down soon afterwards.



BAPTIST CHURCH UNDER CONTRUCTION, 1879-  
site of Joe Navarre residence

Baptist Church under construction, 1879 (site of Joe Navarre Residence)

### **United Brethren**

Organization of the United Brethren was soon followed by the United Brethren Church. The first church building in the community was built by its members in about 1877. The old landmark, five miles north of Rossville, was torn down about 1952. The church, also known as the Olive Branch Church, was an inspiration to all the neighborhood families. Some of the farm folk responsible for its organization and erection were Mr. and Mrs. Joe Franklin, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Franklin, Mr. and Mrs. Marion Lasswell, Mr. and Mrs. Lambert James and their sons, Robert and James, Mr. and Mrs. W.V. Hook, who donated land for the church.

It was truly picturesque on Sunday mornings and evenings to see the stone hitching posts all being used by the fine driving horses and buggies.

The congregation worshipped around the huge pot-bellied stove that stood in the middle of the church. The social life of the community was centered around the church, and even now former members and friends enjoy an annul picnic on the third Sunday in September at the Rossville Community Center. Mrs. Frank Page is the only living member of the original families. She lives in Rossville and although she is in her 90s, she is still interested in Christian leadership.

A decline in membership prompted the church officials to sell the building to the Czech Christian organization and it served as a worship center for many years.



United Brethren Church

### **Colored Baptist**

Other denominations organized early, which have little recorded history, including the Colored Baptist, also called Second Baptist.

A news clipping shows the Colored Baptist Church was in existence in 1885 and meetings were held at the old school house. At that time they were endeavoring to raise funds for a structure of their own. It was later erected in the southeast part of town on Orange Street. Their building was repaired in December 1904, but soon after the church disbanded.

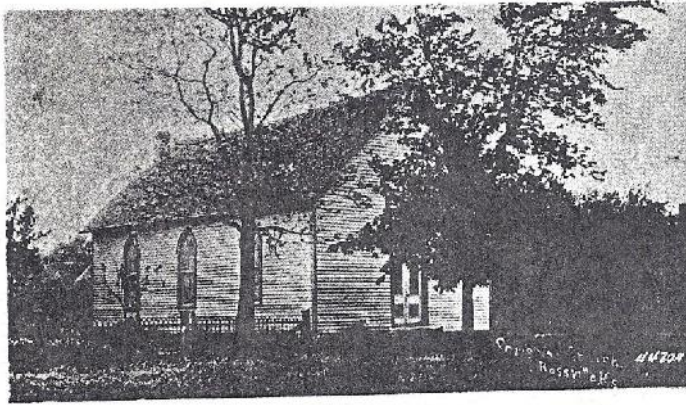
### **Christian Church**

The only information available about the Cambellites, followers of Alexander Cambell, shows that they gathered regularly early in the city's history. The Cambellites here and in other localities were the forerunners of the early Christian Church.

A church was organized with the name Church of Christ in 1872 with Bennet Swearingen, an elder. In 1879 a group was meeting in the school.

An early day preacher, Reverend Alex Montgomery came to Rossville and lived in the present Ed Kovar home. This minister, assisted by Reverend Jap Greer, held a revival meeting for several weeks in the Stone School. Between 1880 and when it was decided to build a church, it is believed the members met in the Baptist Church. A deed was recorded on June 29, 1887, for three lots for which they paid \$50.00.





### Christian Church

The exact date of the erection of the present church is not known. Revered Montgomery was a stone mason and laid the church foundation. The stone was quarried on the Bixby farm near the Stone School. Charles Bixby, father of the late Albert Bixby, was a carpenter and supervised the building of the church.

Lumber was hauled from Topeka by Alex Nadeau and others. The supplies were purchased from the Thomas Lumber Company at Topeka. The first funeral held in the church was for Wm. Lacock, grandfather of the late Albert Bixby.

The oldest Sunday School record is dated September 7, 1884, with May Parker its first secretary.

Under the leadership of Mrs. C.E. Cless, the ladies of the church entered a contest and won a piano which is still in use in the Junior Department.

Brother George Horne, who served the church for most of the decade of the 20s, made the lighted cross, which hangs in the church. Through the advice of Brother Horne, young men from the Bible College at Manhattan have filled the pulpit.

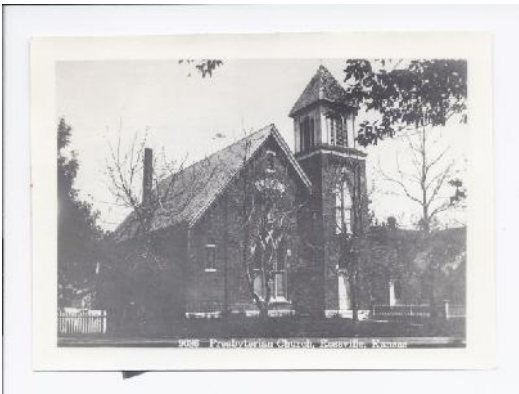
Due to an increase in membership, in 1949, a large room was added to the north side of the building. Other improvements included new colored glass in the windows, and pews from the old U.B. Church. In December 1960, another addition to the building was completed.

There has been an active Missionary Society supported by the ladies of the church for many years. The women have always been most active in their fund-raising activities.

### Presbyterian Church

As more settlers moved to this community, those who were of the Presbyterian faith organized their group in 1878 and met in the school in town.

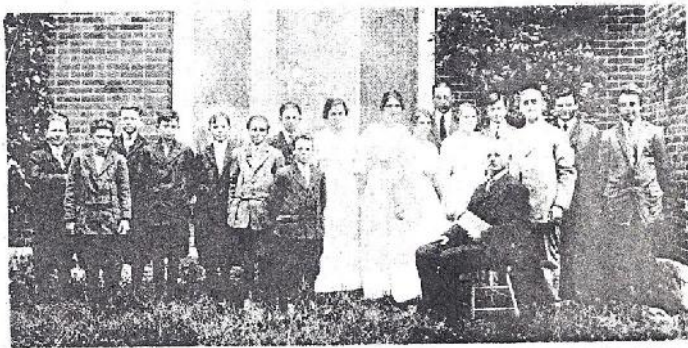
Reverend E.P. Sempel was the first pastor. A.C. Sherman, Richard Binns, Daniel Wilt, J.C. Bradley, William Bond, Henry Kassebaum, W.M. Mitchner, Sam Kerr, Dr. H.H. Miller and Isaac Trostle were the founders of the church.



Original Presbyterian Church

Later the Presbyterians met in the Baptist Church. In 1883, the Presbyterian group purchased the land on which the present church stands and began to build. The first church was built of red bricks which were made at a brick kiln located at the east edge of town.

As the years passed a crack appeared between the bricks in the east end of the building. This fault was used as the reason for tearing down the old building. The present structure was constructed in 1917.



Presbyterian Church Group. L to R: Glenn Page, James Conley, Homer Lasswell, David Stiles, Abe Patterson, Riley Mitchell, Phin Ross, Ralph Page, Grace Sneller, [ ] Trostle, Jennie Kesler, Claude Sneller, Blanche Kesler, Homer Reid, John Wilt, Roy Trostle, Harry Gutshall, Teacher, William Hawks.

From a clipping dated August 23, 1917, taken from the Rossville Reporter, we read, "In a brief ceremony at the setting of the corner stone, a Bible and several documents were placed under the stone. Richard Binns and Daniel Wilt, two of the oldest members of the church, had the honor of setting the stone." These men were the grandfathers of Mabel Binns Bruce.

The Reverend J.H. Naismith, the originator of the game of basketball, served as pastor in 1922 and 1923.

Mr. Gus Kassebaum served as a Trustee for 39 years, from 1915 to 1954. His wife, Mrs. Lula Kassebaum served most of these years as president of the Ladies Missionary Society.

## United Methodist Church

The Rossville Charge was organized in the James School House, three miles west of Rossville in the year 1872 under the leadership of Mr. Paul Strimple, a local lay preacher. Shortly afterwards, another group of Methodists (Southern Methodists) met in Rossville and had services at the school in town. These two groups joined in planning construction of a church.

Since the Baptists were the first to build a church, the two Methodist groups shared the building.

The Methodist Church was chartered and registered with the Secretary of State, June 13, 1881. The first trustees and signers of the charter were: W.G. Gilbert, Isaac Larrance, Joseph Andrews, J.W. Miller, A.E. Strimple, J.T. Heslet, and T.M. Attebury.

Building of the new church began in 1884, and it was dedicated on March 1, 1885. Nine years later the south room was added, and it was used as a dining room and meeting room. The Sunday School addition was added in 1960.



M.E. Church

The name was changed from Methodist Episcopal to Methodist, October 11, 1939. It was again changed in 1968 to United Methodist when the United Brethren and Methodist merged.

The Ladies Aid, later called Women's Society of Christian Service, has assisted greatly in the efforts of the Church. The Election Day dinner was first served in 1882 and has become an established tradition. Dinner and supper were served to over 175 persons at a cost of 25 cents per person.

For the past forty-five years the "Friendly Circle Class" has been an important part of the Church organization.

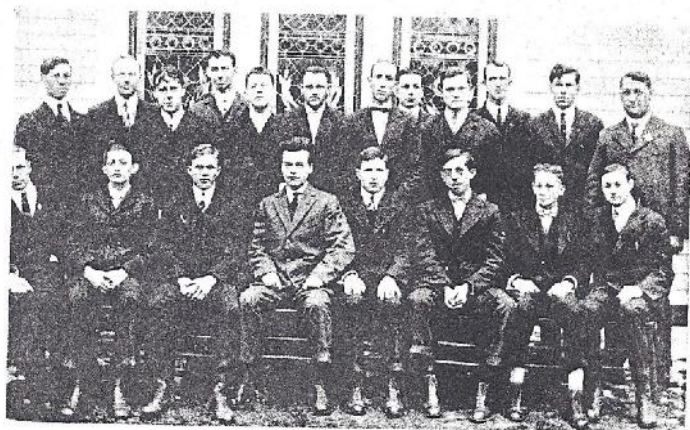
In 1949, Don Jones came to serve as minister. He served 16 years as part time minister, but he gave full time service.

Some of the men who took an active part in the life of the church were C.E. Gresser, E.G. Griswold and Frank Strimple.





Older Women's Sunday School Class of Methodist Church. L to R: Mary Eversole, May Stiles, unidentified, Rebecca Parr, Elizabeth Mitchner (teacher), Belinda Barney, Anna Van Vleck, Charity James, Ellen Berkey. Seated: Matilda Hartzell, Mary Ford, Betty Leeper, Ada Crow, Chettie Howard, Margaret Enos.



1916 Men's Sunday School Class of Methodist Church. Back Row: Lyle Myers, Harry Livingood, Lester Parr, C.E. Gresser, George Vawter, Earl Stovall, Press White, George Eversole, Joe Parr, Tom Attebury, Arthur Sneller, teacher Charlie Fritz. Front Row: Marlin Evans, Edwin Stamp, Orbie Binney, Clyde Strimple, Same Cottle, Orval Hartzell, unidentified, Thurlow Neiswender.

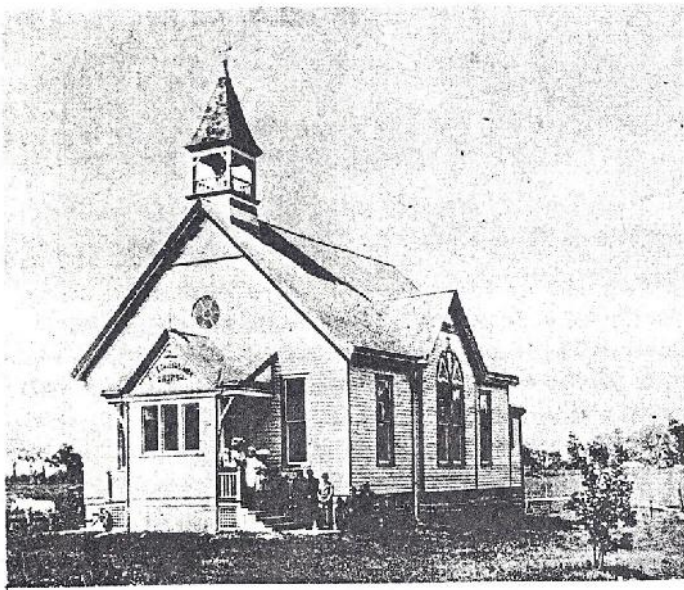
### **St. Stanislaus Church**

Before St. Stanislaus became a reality, according to Ellen Leonhardt of St. Marys, Kansas, Mass was held monthly sometime before 1894 in the Fritz Hall. She remembers accompanying Father Krier, a Jesuit priest, from St. Marys to Rossville along with other girls to sing in the choir.





Catholic Church under construction: Joe DeGraff, Charles Bixby, Mr. Roberts, Ben Mileham, Jerome Navarre



Catholic Church, 1912

The present St. Stanislaus Church was built under the auspices of Father John B. Kokenge, S.J., who collected about eleven hundred dollars to procure the ground and put up the structure. It measures 42 x 30 feet with a sanctuary that adds twelve feet to its length.

Joe Navarre says he remembers Miss Frances DeGraff and Mrs. Charles Greene driving all through the parish in their buggy soliciting funds for the new church. The stone for the foundation was donated by Miss DeGraff.

The corner stone of this mission church was laid by Bishop Fink on June 18, 1899. Many notables from the St. Marys College were present as well as Reverend H.A. Schapman, S.J., former president of Detroit College.

The document placed in the stone contained the following: "Leo XIII being Pope, William McKinley being President of the United States, W.E. Stanley being the Governor of Kansas, Joseph Calvin Bradley being Mayor of the city of Rossville, this church to be erected to the honor of God under the invocation of St. Stanislaus Kastka was begun today when the corner stone was laid this the eighteenth day of June in the year of our Lord Eighteen hundred and ninety-nine."

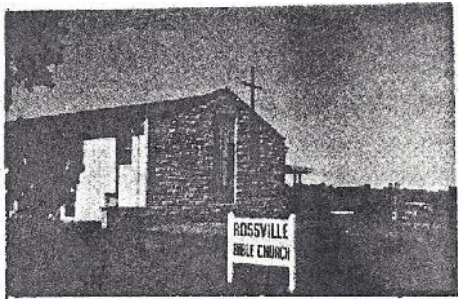
The dedication of the completed church took place on October 29, 1899.

In 1967, the parish purchased the Anna Lemon home across the street from the church, so that the expanding catechetical classes would have a better place to meet. By this time the parish had grown from about twenty-five to over one hundred families. About eighty children attend classes on Sundays. It is necessary to hold two masses on Sundays and Holy Days. The parish encompasses Silver Lake, Willard, Maple Hill and Rossville, and is presently served by Father Edward Thro.

St. Anthony's Altar Society in Rossville has been very active since 1927. Through the efforts of the ladies new lighting was installed, carpeting was laid in the sanctuary, and a new organ was purchased for the church.

### **Rossville Bible Church**

In the early 1950s a group of believers who met together for weekly Bible Study grew in number so that they were encouraged to secure a property, call a pastor and organize a church. The Stewart property on the corner of Main and Pottawatomie was purchased in June 1952. After renovation, the first services of the Rossville Bible Church were held on September 7, 1952, with Reverend Clarence Swihart as pastor. Reverend Floyd Gee became the second pastor in June 1954.



Rossville Bible Church

The church purchased a building site from the Hesse family, that adjoins the Grade School, in August 1960. Reverend Hugh Gardner, Wichita, superintended the construction of a basement to be used for an auditorium. A building was moved from Forbes Air Force Base and set on the basement. This provided a parsonage for the pastor plus several classrooms.

June 7, 1970, was a day of rejoicing for the congregation as they had a mortgage-burning service with Reverend Joe Arnedd, Des Moines, Iowa, evangelist, as speaker.

The late Arthur D. Walters, who served as board chairman, took the lead in moving to the new location. The building on East Pottawatomie is truly a memorial to his vision.

Four young people from the church are presently enrolled or have completed training in a Bible College and look forward to Christian service.

Thus, is the history of the early churches which no longer exist in the community, and the churches which continue to function—though in somewhat different roles than in the early years. Once the church, as well as the school, was the center of most family activities.

An Easter Cantata made up of members of all churches of Rossville and directed by Inez Richardson and assisted by Irene Campbell has for many years been an established tradition.

## ORGANIZATIONS

Clubs organized in the Rossville Community the past 100 years have been numerous and varied in purpose: a Pig and Calf Club, Cribbage Club, Bridge Clubs, Square Dance Club, Birthday Club, Poultry Club, the Pocahontas Club, the Lyceum and Literary Club (1877), the Blue Ribbon Society, the Mandolin and Guitar Club, the Ku Klux Klan, the Twentieth Century Club, Stamp Club, and Rossville Chamber of Commerce.

Very little is known about the early clubs with the exception that the Pocahontas Club was formed on March 23, 1894, as a charity organization. Ice cream socials and various other projects were held to raise money for their relief work in this vicinity. They endeavored to financially help the poor.

The following information has been compiled about the existing clubs. Though it was impossible to uncover or record all the facts or activities, the history would be incomplete without an account.

In the year 1901, a few women of Rossville organized the Literary and Music Circle. There were seven charter members, namely, Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchner, Mrs. Laura Miller, Mrs. Mattie Attebury, Mrs. Margaret Enos, Mrs. Agnes Bagwell, Mrs. Katie Oliver and Mrs. Jennie Pratt. Only a few meetings were held the first year. In September 1902, thirty members were enrolled. The subjects for the programs were searching and varied, in line with their aim, social and intellectual betterment.



Ladies Literary and Music Club 1912- Seated on ground r to l: Clyde Cless in front of his mother, Katie Cless, Ella Williams in front of Lulu Kassabaum, the two Ballou boys, Paul and Wallace in front of their mother, Mrs. Ballou, and Gertrude Miller. Neil Owens standing at left. Standing l to r: Laurana Conley, Chettie Howard, May Howerton, Elizabeth Sebring, Laura Miller, Violet McCoy, Zora

(Tatman) Thomas, and Hazel Andrews. Second row standing: Mattie Attebury, Margaret Enos, Corneliz Owens, Clare Miller, (unknown), Ethel Howerton, Jennie Pratt, Matilda Hartzell, (unknown), May Bradley, and Jennie Griffin looking around Hazel Andrews.

From the minutes of those early meetings, it appears that for a lighter vein there were spelling and game contests. Mrs. Mitchner, the first president of the club, served for sixteen years.

Later, the word Ladies was added to the club name making it Ladies Literary and Music Circle which is the present name. Membership is limited to twenty-five members.

Meetings are held now only once a month with two or more ladies giving papers on events of interest or book reviews. There are a few meetings each year when the whole afternoon is devoted to music.

Rossville, an agricultural community, has provided the opportunity for the growth of a strong 4-H Club. In 1925, three clubs were organized in Shawnee County and were known as 4-H Community Clubs. The Rossville 4-H Community Club was one of the three. Mr. A.S. "Gus" Parr, the Vocational Agriculture teacher, was the first leader.

During the first year, Earl Miller and Glenn Stalker were on the county livestock judging team. Harrison Shenk, Glenn Stalker and Earl Miller showed hogs and placed at the Topeka Fair. There was a poultry club organized and all breeds were raised by the local boys and girls.

Throughout the years outstanding 4-H members have developed in this community. The Union Pacific Scholarship has been won by Gertrude Hartzell, Glenn Stalker, Earl Miller, Marvin Davis, Frederick Zickefoose and Edward Zickefoose. Some others who have won trips and state and national honors include: Richard Hartzell, William Bond, Barbara Jones, Bill Hesse, Everett Hoobler, Bob Gentry, James McCoid, Joe Conley, Linda Kelsey, Fred Coffey, and Robert Reid.

Several Rossville members belonged to the Shawnee County 4-H Band. This was an honor and some of the members who have participated in the band at the National 4-H Congress were Clyde McKenzie, Betty Davis, Gerald Lister and James McCoid.

Reorganization of the club took place in 1938 when Joe Campbell and Vina McCoid became the first leaders. The new club selected the name of Rustlers and members chose projects. The boys and girls of the Rossville 4-H Club throughout the years have used the 4-H motto well and become welcome members of the Community in which they live.

An outstanding civic club of the community, the Rossville Lions Club, was organized and chartered January 4, 1951. The charter members included: J.A. Babicki, Leo C. Bennett, Henry Cerny, L.B. Crow, William Farley, Geo. E. Fawl, Joe M. Gresser, Marlin L. Harth, William Hill, Rev. Don Jones, B.J. Larkin, Clyde McCollough, Joe Navarre, Peter Navarre, Francis Pardee, W.W. Pendleton, Alvin Perry, Dr. D.L. Pile, Robert R. Rawlings, H.D. Richardson, Howard Stiles, W.H. Swenson, Seth A. Weeks, Clarence Wehner, Ira Williams, Roy R. Wilt, Dee Young, and George Young.

Among the numerous civic projects endeavored by the club is the sponsoring of an annual athletic banquet. The first banquet was held in April 1952.



The Club decorated the streets for Christmas in 1952 and has performed this task each season. Also started in 1953 was the annual sponsoring of a Christmas party for the children of Rossville and vicinity.

The Lion's Club rebuilt the grandstand at the City Park in April 1955, at a cost of \$500 plus labor. They also helped the city and other organizations install lights for the ball diamond at a total cost of \$5,500.00.

The Club sponsored the Delia Lions Club in September 1956 and the Belvue Lions Club in September 1957.

The Lions Club sponsors the Babe Ruth Ball Team and the Pony League Team and the Cub Scouts. A local boy has been sent to the Boys' State each year. The past several years a Rossville High School band member has been sent to the Kansas State Lions Band. This Band performs at both the State and International Conventions.

Each year in February the Lions have a Pancake Feed. The proceeds of this event as well as other fundraising events go to pay the cost of numerous civic projects.

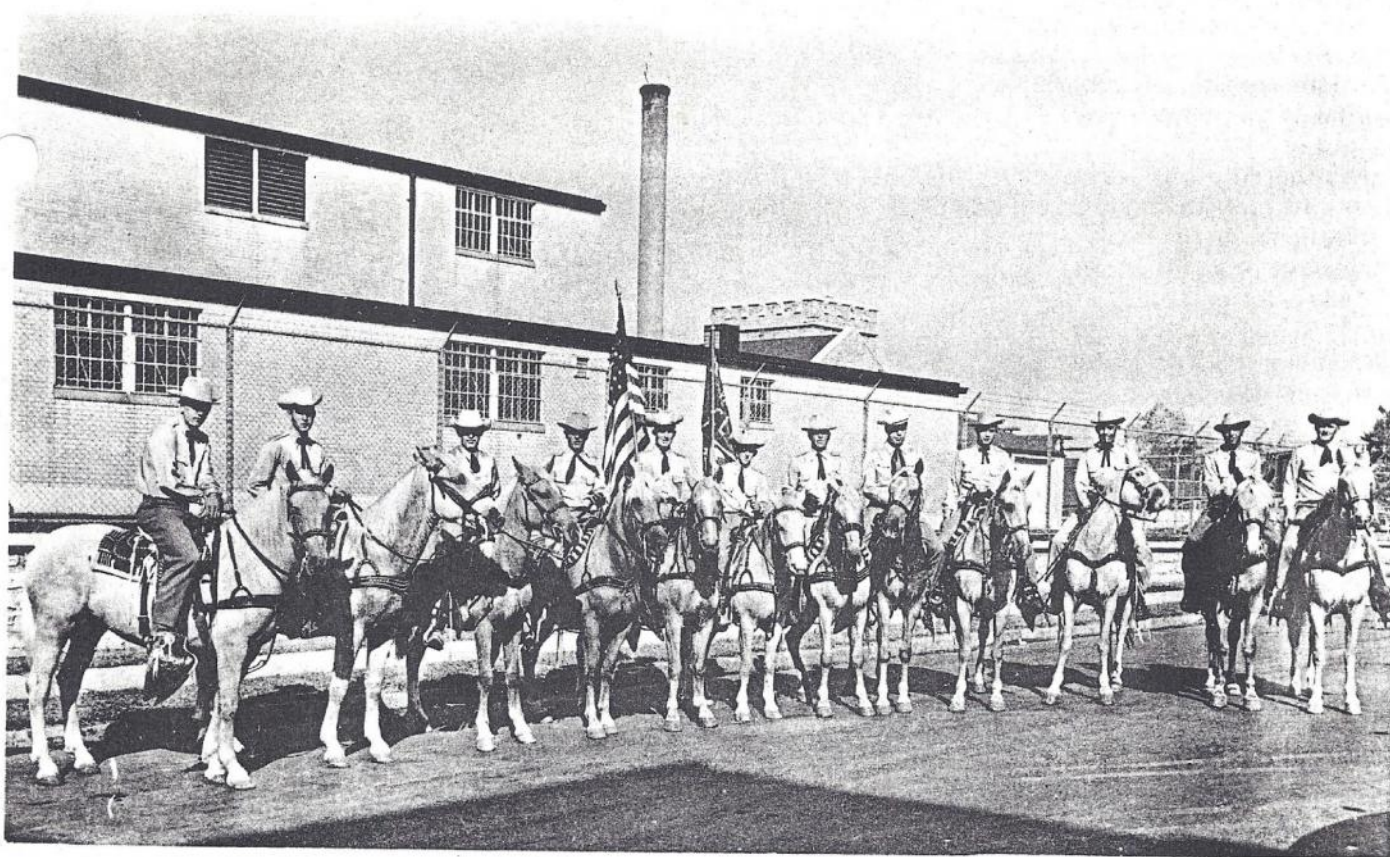
The local Lions Club is affiliated with Lions International. It is a worldwide organization consisting of over 750,000 members in more than 20,000 clubs in every country outside the Iron Curtain. The Club's motto is "We Serve" which is interpreted as not only service within the community, but also serving those in need all over the world.

The Rossville Palomino Saddle Club was organized in 1950. In 1952, the club incorporated with Roy Gentry, Ralph Page and Roy F. Perry elected as officers for the ensuing year.

The Charter members were: Ralph Page, Charles Keller, Dr. S.F. Zickefoose, H.G. Fairbanks, Roy Gentry, Junior Dick, Wayne Dick, Roy Perry, Max Williams, Roy Tabor, Max Olson, Bob Gentry, Bob Mitchell, Joe Stauffer and Charles Meade.

The Palomino Saddle Club had hardly been organized when they received an invitation to ride in the Inaugural Parade of the late Pres. Eisenhower in Washington, D.C., but were unable to go.

The Club has participated in many parades throughout the years in Abilene, Beloit, Salina, Junction City, Wichita, Manhattan, Topeka, Strong City, the American Royal in Kansas City and others. The Club has received the trophy six out of seven years at the Annual Rodeo in Strong City.



Rossville Saddle Club- l to r: Clinton Stalker, Jr., Henderson, Joe Stauffer, Ralph Page, Bob Gentry, Wayne Dick, Roy Gentry, Maxell Williams, Charles Keller, Ole Olson, Harry Moyer, Bennie Dick, Jr.

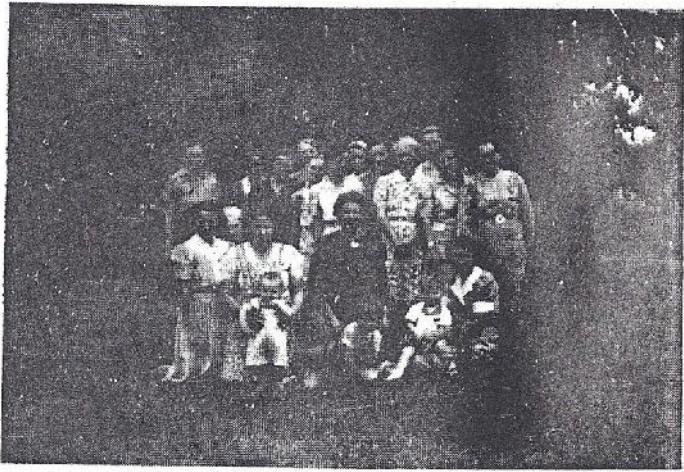
One of the outstanding participations in the memory of the members was the wedding performed on horses at the Mayetta Rodeo when the daughter of Ken Roberts, manager of the rodeo, was married.

The Annual horse show is a local event and many members from other clubs take part in this show. Throughout the year, the club has trail rides, dinners, etc. The riders dressed in their gold colored shirts and black trousers riding their Palomino horses makes a sight to behold.

The Countryside Club was organized in 1939 by Ruby Rezac. The first meeting was held on Oct. 12, at the home of Carrie Kovar.

Fifteen ladies, known as the charter members, attended this meeting. They voted to name the club "Countryside Club." This name was submitted by Selma Kovar.

The following offers were elected: President Ruby Rezac; Vice-President, Ella Kovar; Secretary-Treasurer, Selma Kovar. The charter members included the officers and Katie Cerny, Evelyn Rezac, Rena Clark, Carrie Whitney, Thora Young, Vida Whitney, Mary Wood, Halcia Cerny, Elsie McCollough, Mabel Fauerbach and Mary Decker.



Countryside Club- 1942: Back row: l to r Wilma Krasny, Delia Sebring, Ella Kovar, Thora Young, Katie Cerny, Elise McCollough, Florence Kesler, Evelyn Rezac, Carrie Kovar, Vida Whitney, Mary Decker, Catherine Wehner. Front row: Halcai Cerny, Eva Davis, Regina Simecka, Carl and Donald, Irene David, Roy D., Ruby Rezac, Darrel.

The Club voted to meet every two weeks for all day meetings to work for the hostess. Their work consisted mostly of making quilts. Many times a quilt was completed in one day, but that was a very long day.

Membership was set at twenty-five, but through the years the club has reached out and disregarded the limitation until the membership has grown so large they have to meet at the Community Center.

Today, the present club is very much the same as it has always been except they do not have a work day. They meet once each month with a covered dish dinner, have their business meeting, a recreation period and adjourn.

During the history of the club, there have been one hundred eleven members. Two present active members, Carrie Kovar and Ruby Rezac, were charter members. In June 1970, the first reunion was held. All the officers of the first meeting were present and presided at the business meeting. This reunion is to become an annual affair.

Grace Hartzell was the first president and organizer of a group known as the Home Demonstration Unit in 1931. Meetings were held once a month in the homes with lessons on all phases of homemaking.

There were eight charter members, Grace Hartzell, Amy Meade, Molly Hartzell, Lyda Zickefoose, Arlene Reid, Edna Parr, Anna Lemon and Edna Spears. Bernice French and Louise Miller joined in 1932.

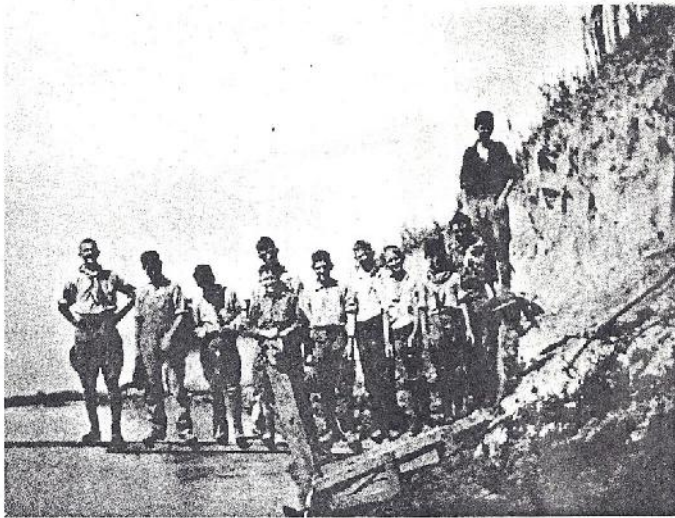
After the Rossville unit was formed the Twin Rose District organized a unit which later joined the Rossville ladies. The unit disbanded and reorganized under the name of the Extension Homemakers Unit.

The Girl Scouts were first organized in 1930 by Fern Pendleton Rogers and Grace Sanders Rogers. There were approximately 15 girls in the group which was formed for the purpose of developing



citizenship, fellowship and service to others. Camping for two weeks in the summer time at Camp Daisy Hindman near Dover was the highlight of the year. Since that time the group has disbanded and reorganized a number of times with the last troop being organized in 1969. Girl Scout leaders were Patty Perry, Romona Richardson, Jo McLain, and Beverly Wright. The addition of Brownies to the Girl Scout Troop No. 323 has provided the opportunity for younger girls to share the experience of group activities and community service. Camping is still enjoyed by the Girl Scouts and the Brownies now join in the tradition of selling Girl Scout cookies. The first Brownie leaders were Genevieve Jacobson and Kaye Wild.

The Boy Scouts has been organized numerous times with the last reorganization being by Michael Cormack, July 1970. The Topeka affiliated Troop No. 98 consists of Boy Scouts, Webelos, and Cub Scouts. Michael Cormack is the present Master and Bud Taylor is the Cub Scout and Webelos' leader. Activities of the club include service projects and camping.



Boy Scouts, Joe Parr leader, Marvin Hopkins, Orville Hartzell, Clyde Cless, James Conley, Vernon Conley, Howard Stiles, Dave Stiles, Dobbie Strimple.

Numerous lodges sprang up in Rossville the first years. Some have endured the years while others have gradually faded away. The Hesperian Lodge, Eastern Star, the Moravian Lodge and the Royal Neighbors still exist. The Knights and Ladies of Security, Col. Fulton's Post of the G.A.R., the A.O.U.W., Eagle Lodge, Modern Forties and the Modern Woodmen have disappeared from our community.

While many of these lodges were for the purpose of fraternal insurance, their social aspects were their most important attribute.

The Rossville Lodge of the Ancient Order of United Workmen was incorporated on June 2, 1880, with twelve charter members and among those were H.H. Miller, W.L. Huntington, Peter Shearer, R.M. Henderson, S.B. Maxwell, C.W. Talmadge, and H.A. Kassabaum. By 1901, all the charter members were deceased except H.H. Miller. The Workmen, a fraternal lodge, were known for their sponsoring of picnics, parades and other social activities.

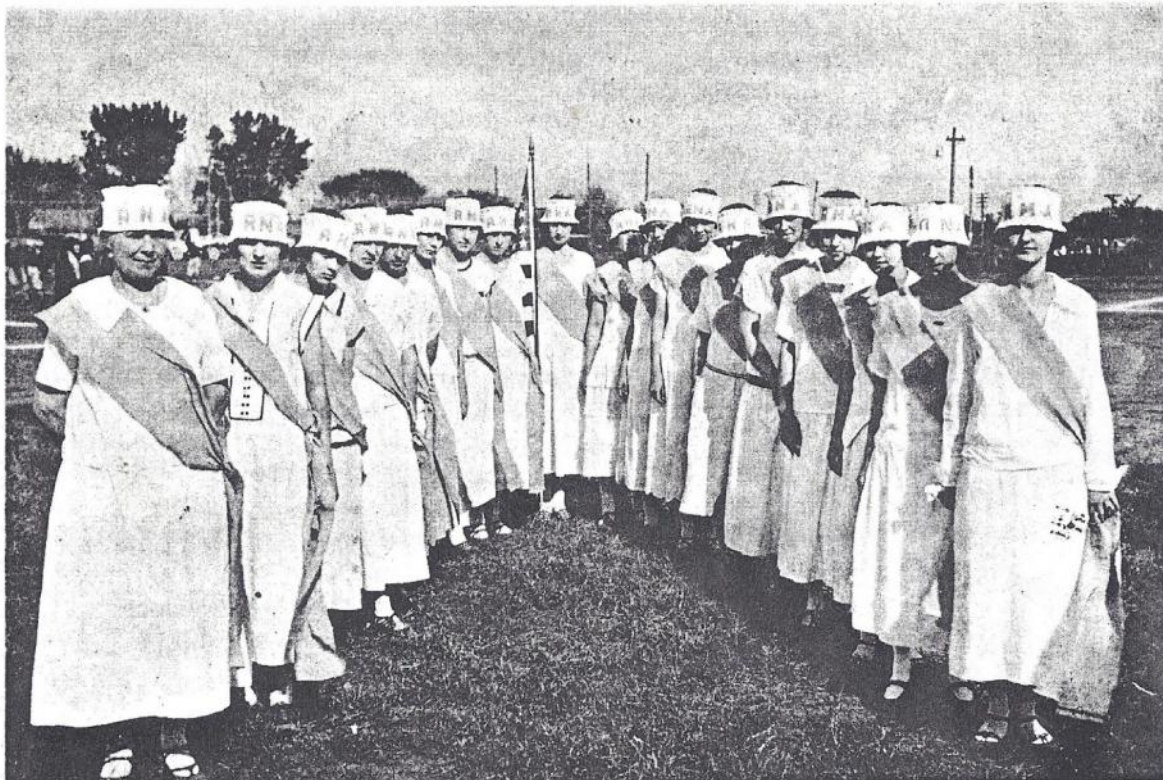
Organized later, but believed to have existed until 1947, was a fraternal lodge known as the Modern Woodmen of America, remembered for their annual entertainment of an oyster supper and dance at



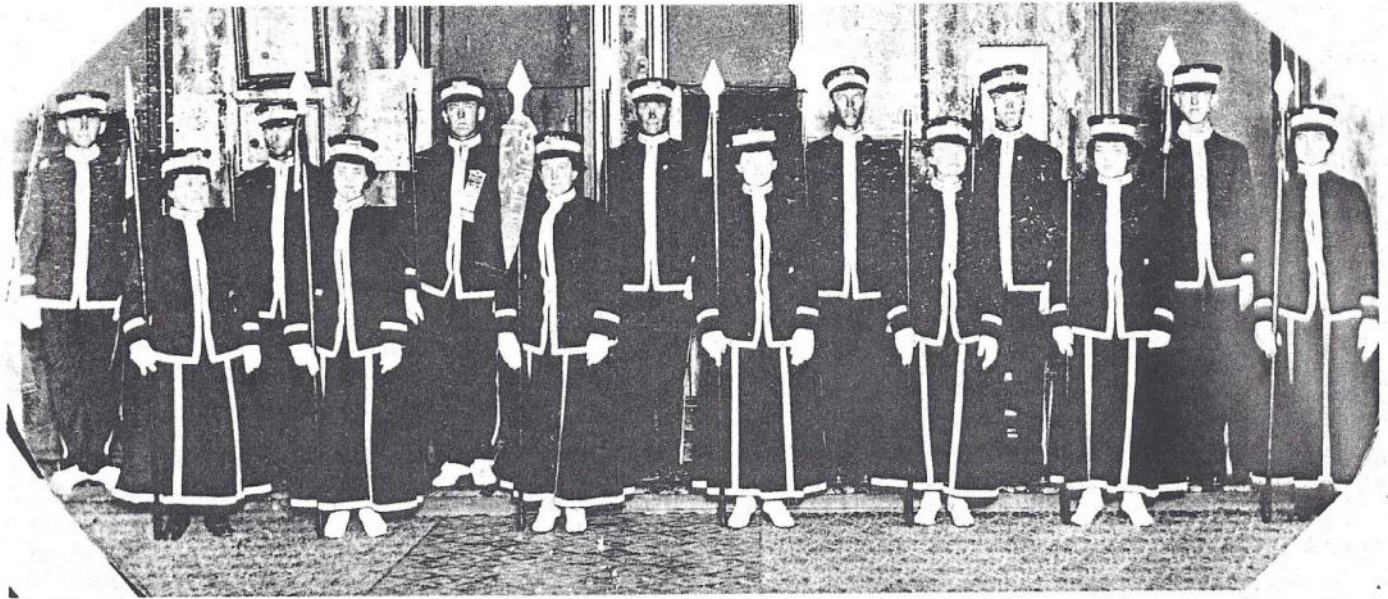
New Years and at Picnic Day. The Woodmen also sponsored a precision drill team complete with uniforms. The drill team was directed by Chief Forrester McPherson.

The Royal Neighbors Lodge was organized nationally in 1888 and soon came to Rossville. The Royal Neighbors became Purity Camp No. 1761 in 1890 as a Ladies Auxiliary of the Modern Woodmen. Meetings were held once a month for social and business purposes. Because it is a fraternal beneficial society, it has drawn hundreds of members. Amy Meade has been a continuous member and has served as recorder the past 26 years.

The organization sponsored a drill team for many years and their uniforms were white and purple. The drill team functioned up until 1951, when most of their regalia and records were destroyed.



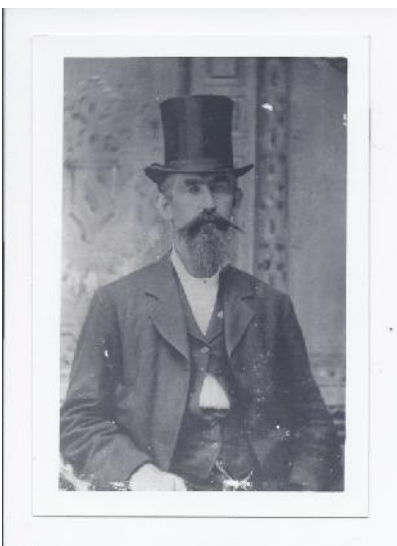
Modern Woodmen



Knights and Ladies of Security

During the same era, the Knights and Ladies of Security, also a fraternal lodge, organized and was the forerunner to the Security Benefit Association. Like the others, it provided the protection of life insurance. Meetings were held in the hall above the present Wehner IGA Store. Their drill team was one of the finest in the area and was directed by Mr. Schuyler Conley, Captain.

One of the first lodges, the Hesperian Lodge, No. 111, originated in 1871, and in 1872 a charter was granted by the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Kansas. The Charter officers were Brother C.W. Higginbotham, Master; Brother A.B. Gilman, Senior Warden; Brother Walter Spencer, Junior Warden.



Cyrus Higginbotham, Charter Master

District Deputies from Hesperian Lodge for the Grand AF & AM Lodge of Kansas were: Bro. Aaron E. , 72<sup>nd</sup> District; Bro. Frank E. Zickefoose, 72<sup>nd</sup> District; Bro. Leroy C. Parr, 72<sup>nd</sup> District, 1951; Bro.

Alfred L. Hause, 24<sup>th</sup> District, 1959; Bro. LaVerne H. Spears, 24<sup>th</sup> District, 1962; Bro. Bennie Dick, Jr., 20<sup>th</sup> District, 1965; and Bro. Marvin Davis, 24<sup>th</sup> District, 1971.

One of the most active members was Henry H. Miller who served as Master eleven times during the years between 1879 and 1908. At present there are 104 active members of the lodge.

The history of the organization of the Order of the Eastern Star in Rossville begins with a meeting held April 8, 1908. It was by the suggestion of Mrs. Daniel Wilt that the name chosen for the chapter was Amaryllis Chapter, U.D. Mrs. Mattie Attebury was the first Worthy Matron and C.E. Van Vleck was the first Worthy Patron. Other charter members were Mrs. Mazie Cox, Mrs. Anna Van Vleck, Mrs. Fannie Wilt, Mrs. Grace Meade, Mrs. Bertha Cless, Mrs. Julia Howard, Mrs. Gertrude Miller, Mrs. Martha Wilt, Mrs. Elma Binns, Mrs. Ida Bradley, Mrs. Anna King, William Attebury, Dr. H.H. Miller, Abner A. Cless, Mrs. Elizabeth Parr, Patrick King, Dr. H. Fuller Pratt and Jim Parr.

Brother LaVerne Spears is the only member to serve in the capacity of Worthy Grand Patron of Kansas, 1962-63 and was appointed for Committee in General Grand Chapter, 1970-73.

The Rossville Moravian Lodge was organized in 1903 with the first meeting being held on February 7, 1903, in the 101 Victory School House. Meetings were held there until 1909 when the members were able to finance their own building. Since then it has been remodeled and enlarged. Later the Moravian Band was organized with 14 members. Their music was enjoyed by all on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, picnics and other special occasions.

On January 18, 1953, the Lodge celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Two charter members, Frank Stach, Sr. and Charles Hladky, were presented 50-year pins.

## **VETERANS IN ROSSVILLE**

Many of the prominent early settlers in Rossville and the surrounding area were veterans of the War Between the States. These young men returned to their homes and families but the opportunities in the newly opened Kansas lands lured them westward. Good land was selling very cheap and it was a great opportunity for a young man willing to work hard.

Nearly all the Civil War veterans who settled here had worn the blue uniform of the Union forces. They came from Pennsylvania, New York, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois and other Northern states. These were a fierce, proud group of young men in a new land. Often they did not have much formal schooling but were endowed with ambition and a great deal of "horse sense." They were builders of schools, churches, farms, and businesses.

## **The Battle of the Blue**

Soon after Quantrill's raid on Lawrence, a battalion of home guards were organized for the special defense of the city of Topeka against the threat of calamity similar to the one that had befallen the city of Lawrence. This battalion was commanded by Major Stark and consisted of six companies. Topeka soon assumed a warlike appearance. Trenches were cut at the intersection of Sixth and Jefferson, and at Eighth and Madison to intercept the enemy's approach. At the intersection of Sixth and Kansas Avenue, a circular stockade was constructed of cottonwood timbers standing ten feet above the ground. The drilling, marching and anxiety continued for two weeks but the expected attack was not made so the battalion soon disbanded.





Front Row L to R: Frank Matyak, Alice Cerny, Carrie Cerny, Mrs. Anton Macha (Frances), Mrs. Thomas Cerny (Katherine), Mrs. John Kovar (Anna), Mrs. Frank Stach Sr. (Frances), Mrs. Paul Kovar (Frances), Frank Hromada Sr., John Kratina Jr., Thomas Cerny, John Kratina Sr., Frank Dolezilek, Anton Macha, Mrs. Joseph Cerny (Henrietta), Mrs. Martin Stach (Anna), Mrs. Vince Probislo (Marie), Mrs. Thoma Smatla (Marie), Mrs. Matt Rezac (Mary).

Second Row; Frank Kratina, August Stach, Henry Cerny, Emial Kovar, Mrs. James Koci (Frances), Mrs. Frank Matyak (Frances), Tony Dolezilek, Lydia Dolezilek, Anna Dolezilek, Sophia Hromada, Mrs. Fred Koci (Pauline), Blanch Martinek (child), Mrs. Albert Martinek (Frances), Mrs. Joseph Badura (Marie), Mrs. Frank Hromada (Tressie), Mrs. James Rezac (Victoria), Joseph Badura, James Koci with child.

Third Row: Albert Martinek, Henry Badura, George Olejnik Jr., Frank Stach Sr., Henry Galicheck, Matt Rezac, John Kovar, Vince Probislo, Steven Martinek, Joseph Krasney, Paul Kovar, Thomas Smatla, Joseph Cerny, Ignac Horak, George Olejnik Sr., James Rezac, Anton Zemek, John Bravence with child, Frank Cerny. Not pictured: Mr. and Mrs. Vince Martinek.

Martial law was declared in Kansas on October 10, 1864, in anticipation of a raid by the Confederates under the command of General Sterling Price.

The second regiment of the Kansas State Militia was organized in Shawnee County on October 12. George W. Veale was made Colonel of the regiment which contained 561 men. (Col. Geo. W. Veale was one of the founders of Rossville in 1870.) Most of the men were mounted on their own horses and the ponies, wagons and supplies were largely their own property. Accompanying the regiment was a battery of brass howitzer and 22 men commanded by Capt. Ross Burns. The regiment was ordered into immediate service at Olathe, joining the command of Gen. M.S. Grant.

Ten days after Colonel Veale's Regiment had been mustered in, it was called upon to engage in battle with a brigade of Price's Army. This was the famous battle of the Big Blue. It was fought on the



afternoon of the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 1864, at the MacAbee farm at a crossing of the Big Blue known as Bryon's Ford.

Colonel Veale's command was outnumbered six to one by the enemy and the latter had the added advantage of seasoned troops and modern equipment. Against fearful odds, Colonel Veale's men fought desperately for three-fourths of an hour but they were finally overcome and driven from the field at great loss. The short engagement and losses inflicted on the enemy by the raw and untrained recruits had the effect of checking General Price's advance and he was ultimately repulsed.

The dominant feature of the Battle of the Blue which will live in song and story, was the wonder work of the little battery handled by Captain Ross Burns and the gunners.

Colonel Veale's losses totaled 24 killed, 20 wounded and 68 taken prisoner. He also lost 100 horses and his only piece of artillery. (Ben Mileham, Rossville artist, painted a large oil painting of the "Battle of the Blue" which now hangs in the State Historical Museum in Topeka.)

Albert G. Miller, J.W. Shipley, D.W. Ross, W.W. Ross, J.S. Cook, S.A. Hopkins, Joseph F. Hopkins, Jacob Rankin, J.M. Kuykendall, H. Kline, W.H. Fitzpatrick, Chas. Engler, H.L. Shumway belonged to Colonel Veale's Regiment but were not necessarily present in the battle.

The Civil War veterans formed a GAR Post and many were active for many years. They often went to the National Encampments and helped form the nation's policies.

In 1898, the Spanish-American War was declared and again men went to war. James Lillard volunteered his services and saw duty in the Philippines.

In 1914, war clouds again looked on the horizon and in 1917, the United States was finally lured into the conflict. The local paper reports that 131 men in Rossville and Rossville Township registered for the draft. On February 2, 1918, George Vawter, Lester Parr, Frank Wood and Ernest Tschantz were the first called for examination and all were inducted.

Two men paid the supreme sacrifice in World War I. Eventous Doud, Jr. and Carl Lasswell were killed in action. Several others received wounds.

On Armistice Day, November 11, 1919, Rossville turned out a huge crowd to honor the returned veterans. There were 58 of the young men in the parade. The townspeople prepared a bountiful dinner in the Motor Inn Garage (Bahner's Garage). Seated with the World War veterans were the veterans of two others. The vets of '61 were Wm. Baylis, John Howerton, Jonathan Marney, J.W. Miller, and Daniel Wilt. J.M. Lillard was the representative of '98. Captain W.P. MacLean gave a short talk followed by an address by Major A.M. Harvey. Following the speeches, a tug-of-war was held. IN the evening the men were served an oyster supper and the festivities were concluded with a dance in the Woodman Hall.

Honoring those veterans who have passed away is an old custom across the nation. Memorial Day in Rossville has usually been celebrated in fine style with flowers and flags being placed on the graves.

A week or so prior to Memorial Day would be the date for everyone to go to the cemetery for a general clean-up. The past year's accumulation of grass, weeds, and other debris was removed and everything made ready for the celebration of Memorial Day.

In earlier days, the whole community joined in the celebration. At the appointed time, the veterans in uniform would march to the cemetery, followed by the entire community. School girls in white dresses would carry flowers to decorate the veterans' graves. When they arrived at the cemetery, the band played, the flag was raised and a salute to the dead was fired. Usually there was a speaker for the occasion. Some of these customs are no longer carried out, however, Jimmie Lillard Post No. 31 of the American Legion faithfully sends a firing squad and color guard to the Rossville Cemetery, the Moravian Cemetery, and sometimes to the Silver Lake Cemetery.



Memorial Day

### **American Legion Auxiliary Jimmie Lillard Unit 31**

Rossville's American Legion Auxiliary Unit was organized October 14, 1958 as the Jimmie Lillard Unit 31. These officers were elected October 22, 1958 at the Post Home, our regular meeting place: President- Jennie Coleman; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President- Velda O'Donnell; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President- Winnie Stach; Secretary- Honora Mitchell; Treasurer- Esther Young; Chaplain- Myrtle Lillard; Sgt. at Arms- Doris Viergever; Historian- Rowena Gannon. There were 61 charter members.

Their purpose is to uphold the Constitution of the United States and always be true Americans, and show respect and honor for our Veterans.

The Post and Auxiliary is called Jimmie Lillard in honor of one who gave his life for his country. His mother, Mrs. Myrtle Lillard, is a charter member and a Gold Star Mother.

Each year a girl or alternate is selected, by vote, to attend Girls State. Girls who have attended are 1959, Janet Harth; 1960, Jane Zickefoose; 1961, Lois McCoy; 1962, Jean Stiles; 1963, Donna Lee Reser; 1964, Virginia Stach; 1965, Jane Parr and Joyce Olejnik; 1966, Jeanette Wilt and Mary Burgett; 1967, Marilyn Stach and Dorothy Matyak; 1968, Vickie Barnes and Cheryl Reser; 1969, Catherine Parr and Donna Sommers; 1970, Bonnie Gardner and Chris Dugan.

The selling of poppies is taken care of by the younger group. The poppies are sold here in Rossville and surrounding territory. The poppies are made by Veterans, and it gives the girls great satisfaction knowing that they are helping our hospitalized men.

They have donated Flag Manuals to the schools and lapel flag pins. It is one way of teaching love and respect for Old Glory and its proper use and display.



Auxiliary at Veterans Hospital. L to R: Theresa Trahoon, Fern Rogers, Ruby Rezac, Ruth Hesse, Velda O'Donnell, Nora Mitchell, Mary Decker, Hope Meade, Amy Meade, Jenny Coleman, Roxie Banta, Anna Lemon, Melba Gentry.

## SPORTS AND RECREATION

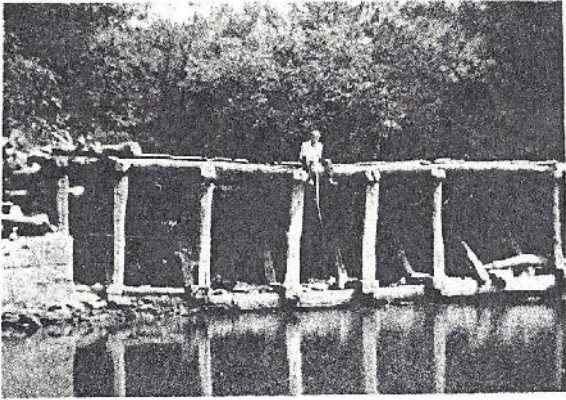
Rossville has always had many and varied interests in sports and recreation. From a January paper in 1885, "Skating rink will be open for general skating Wednesday and Saturday nights and possibly more, gentleman 25c and ladies 15c. February 7, "the Rossville Cornet band will be engaged to furnish the music, 22 members in the band."

Whenever it has been cold enough, ice skating has been a popular sport around Rossville.

From a paper in 1886—"Over a dozen boats are anchored in the creek and it is a pleasant row of only three miles to the river. We would advise our readers after they get their croquet sets planted to engage in this recreation."

In 1889—"Main Street is crowded every evening from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. by the spectators enjoying the circus like performances of the bicycle riders. A.C. Mitchner has an acrobatic way of riding a bicycle. He took particular pains to roll about ten feet after striking the ground. J.C. Bradley has a 52 inch wheel, which, owing to the shortness of his pedal working appendages, he cannot ride; but Schuyler Conley can ride it. It creates lots of amusement for the spectators particularly so when a green hand tries it."

Fishing has been a favorite pastime of many. The following account of U.G. Stewart written August 8, 1902, entitled "The Fun in Fishing" probably tells best.



Fishing—Cedar Bluff Mill Dam

"We dug a sardine can full of fishworms and slipped away to the shady banks of Cross Creek. Our object was to secure mental relaxation and a string of channel cats.

There is considerable fun in fishing when one goes at it right, and we pride ourselves on knowing just how to proceed in such matters. We were accompanied on the trip by Mr. A.E. Moore, who occasionally writes weighty editorials for the News. Some of his recent articles were so heavy that we preserved them for use as paper weights. Mr. Moore can tell by the motion of the bobber just what sort of fish is biting at the hook. For instance, if the bobber goes under with such force as to cause a bead of water to fly upward about four feet into the air, it's a sunfish. On the other hand, should you attempt to withdraw the hook without any visible alarm at the bobber and the pole bends almost double with no immediate relief, he will tell you that a submerged log has become attached to the hook. It is well to know these things. It saves the worry and excitement of trying to land a water-soaked fence rail under the delusion that it's a mammoth bass.

We sought out a quiet spot where the bank, which showed signs of the recent overflow, sloped gently to the creek. In attempting to gain a friendly chunk near the water's edge, we momentarily lost control of our feet and sat down rather prematurely without the formality of raising our coattails as is our usual custom. We arose and gazed fondly at the lifelike mould that we had formed in the yielding mud while we made a few rambling remarks that were so earnest and expressive that a large bullfrog got so nervous and excited that he thoughtlessly jumped into the creek.

We managed to gain the chunk without further mishap and selecting a fishworm we proceeded to adjust it on the hook. We started in with a worm about two inches in length but after we had jabbed him a few times with the hook, he looked to be 13 inches long and as fine as a No. 8 thread. After stringing what appeared to be about three yards of fishworm on the hook and getting our fingers balled up with mud till they looked like a druggist's pestle we cast our line and awaited a bit. It came! See the bobber goes under! We pull on the line, not lightly, but with all the energy and force at our command. The hook flies skyward and becomes entangled with a water elm twig 30 feet above our head. We endeavor to jerk it loose, but it only serves to tighten its grip on the twig. For tenacity and strength of purpose, there is nothing to equal a wet elm twig with a fish line fastened to it. By hanging our weight on the pole we succeeded in breaking the line and after a half hour's delay we repaired the damage and cast our line again.

While waiting for an alarm at the bobber we detected a new and peculiar fragrance that filled the air. We love flowers and usually kept a nosegay nestling in an empty ink bottle on our office desk and can always name the flower by the smell. This odor, however, was unfamiliar, and we stuck the end of our



fish pole in the mud and started to investigate. Approaching a bunch of vegetation about ten feet to windward we parted the leaves and were rewarded by finding a dead cat in an exceeding bad state of preservation. We were shocked and hurriedly gathered up the bait and fishing tackle and went away sorrowing.

We wandered further down the creek and coming to a pretty little grassy knoll we spit on the hook and tossed the line into the water and carefully raising our coat tail sat down on the grass. We also sat down on something besides grass. Straightaway and with some abruptness, we arose. The gable of our trousers, instead of wearing the usual downcast and hangdog expression, clung to our person in a manner that surprised and grieved us. Cautiously reaching around we found numerous full grown sandburs bristling with exclamation points and glad surprises scattered at regular intervals over the rear breadths of our pants. It was with a feeling of keen regret and lingering sorrow that we separated ourself from these burrs.

Persons who have never tried it will find that parting from a sandbur that they have formed an attachment for is attended with sad and distressing sensations that will linger in your memory for hours.

We did the remainder of our fishing in a standing posture. We became quite proficient in throwing our fish line. At first the hook would catch in our collar or under the shoulder blades and several times we came near throwing ourself into the creek in this manner.

We caught eleven fish in all. As near as we could judge the would tip the scales at a fraction less than an ounce each. We are not positive in this matter, however, as they fell off the hook and into the water before we had time to make a careful estimate of their size and weight. Mr. Moore stoutly asserts that we caught one fish eleven times.”

All day celebrations on the Fourth of July were anticipated by young and old alike during the early 1900s. These were held at various locations including Higginbotham’s grove adjoining the city and the D.M. Howard grove south of town (west of the present Clyde Roger’s place). Many meetings were held in preparation for these events and various committees appointed. One particular event in 1902 which was written up by U.G. Stewart:

“The eagle will screech,  
And the orator’s preach  
The horses will dance;  
O, won’t we be fly.

The girls will promenade,  
Drink pop and lemonade.  
The rockets will fix, and we’ll all do biz.  
The brass band will play,  
And we’ll stay all day  
At Rossville’s 4<sup>th</sup> of July.”

## **THE PROGRAM**

Sunrise—Salute of thirteen guns.

9:00 a.m. – Horse races

10:00 a.m. – Parade (\$5 for best decorated carriage or buggy)

11:00 a.m. – Gun Club Shoot

Noon – Dinner

1:00 p.m. – Speaking by Captain Joe Waters

The Rossville Firemen's Band and the 101 Bohemian Band will stir your hearts with thrilling and patriotic music.

2:00 p.m. – Colored cake-walkers, singing and vaudeville specialties

3:00 p.m. – Sports and Games \$125.00 in prizes for rural sports and games, footrace, potato race, sack race, greased pole, greased pig, etc.

4:30 p.m. – Baseball Topeka vs. Rossville

8:00 p.m. – Fire Department in grand race to burning tower

9:00 p.m. – Exhibition drill by M.W.A. drill team. The drill will take place on Main Street which will be brilliantly lighted by numerous arc lamps.

9:30 p.m. – Grand Ball in the Fritz Opera House

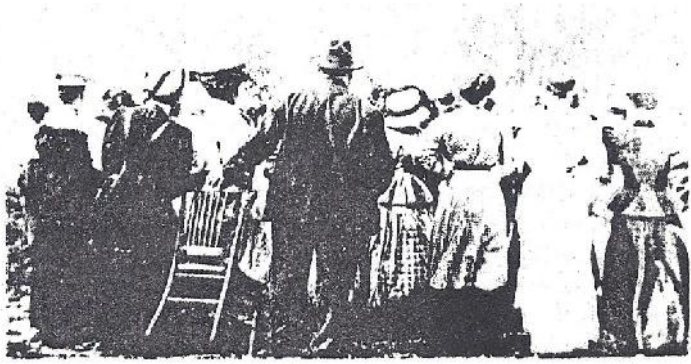
9:30 p.m. – Band Concert and miscellaneous program in the Shearer Hall.



4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade



4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade



Spectators?

Many can recall the popularity of boxing and wrestling in our town. According to the newspaper accounts, these events were well attended.

Interest in baseball has never waned in Rossville. Throughout the years many of our citizens have been on either or both town and school ball teams. In a paper of 1904, U.G. Stewart wrote this account of the 11 to 5 victory over St. George.

"Poor little George up from the Kaw  
Came down to eat "big Injun" raw!  
But the redskin caught with a great big mit,  
And set 'em agog with the hits that he hit.  
When the bases were full he'd swat 'er a welt  
And the first thing they knew had their caps at his belt.

The rooters did root, and the tooters did toot  
While the pretty maids chided "Well! Well!" to boot  
High up in the air the "Injun" did kick.  
Like a government mule at a freckle faced "Mick"  
The fans whooped 'er up with an unearthly yell,  
Scaring poor Georgie till he groaned "ain't it hell!"  
"I'll hike back home to me pen on the Kaw"  
"An you'll not ketch me out agin' thought me Maw-Maw"  
Oh Haw! Haw! Haw!  
+ (Horse laugh)



Last Friday afternoon the St. George ball team were run through the Rossville baseball sausage mill on the home diamond in a most reckless and unsympathizing manner.

St. George had licked every team in the district prior to their pilgrimage to this town and naturally carried their heads high and felt proud of their escutcheon. Little did they wot as they gallantly escorted their best girls, who came along to witness them dust off the diamond with the meek and lowly remains of the Rossvillians that their nice clean pedigree would be trailed in the dust and ruthlessly tramped upon by their host. When the Saintly crowd entertained the home boys not long ago they heaped ignominy and three base hits and thing like that upon them until life was a burden. The boys said nothing but when together and spoke unto them saying "Remember the kibosh that was so freely distributed unto us by our brothers from the Kaw come though and do likewise."

Then quoting a little gem from the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter which read thus, "He that smiteth on the gob shall on the gob be smith" they put on their armour and proceeded with the slaughter. Priddy was in the box for Rossville and pitched as priddy a ball as ever shot over the home plate. Bourbonia, the "Indian Wizzard" was behind the bat and gathered in those curves with unfailing accuracy. Incidentally he would point out the holes in the stick to the bewildered and astonished batter as he fiercely fanned the air.

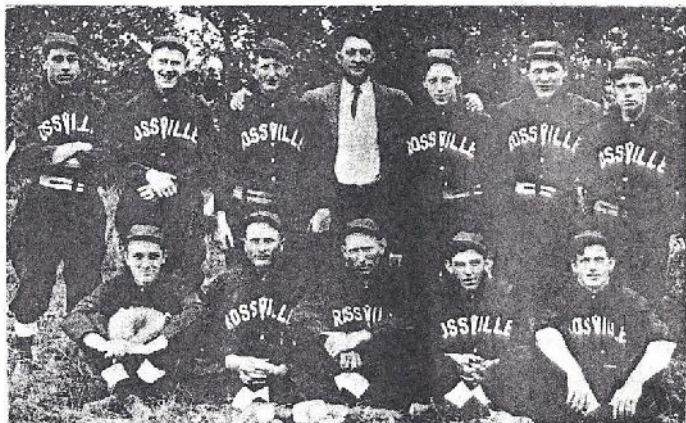
During the third, fourth and fifth innings the home team ran the bases so frequently that the diamond resembled a big merry-go-round. After this they contented themselves with shutting the visitors out and keeping the score down so that ordinary mathematicians might have no difficulty in figuring it out.

This is the first great sorrow that has come into the life of George this year and little gobs of sympathy are feelingly extended with the assurance that time heals all wounds.

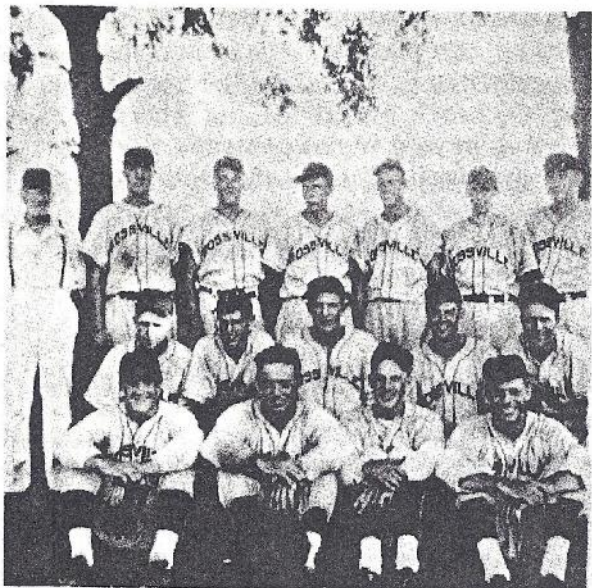


Blest be the ball that twines  
And fools the vis'ting nines."

Many of our local people followed the career of Jess Willard. He was born at St. Clere and was a horse-trader and livery stable operator at Delia and Emmett. He was a step-brother of Fred Stalker. A group of local sport enthusiasts went to Havana, Cuba in 1915, to watch his fight with Jack Johnson. Willard knocked him out in the 26<sup>th</sup> round to win the championship on April 5, when the temperature was 115.



L to R- Joe Navarre, Gus Parr, Clint Cless, Charles Fritz (Manager), Jack (Lester) Parr, Frank Parr, Clarence Emert; Front Row: Lowell Hook, George Lesline, LeRoy Hartzell, Charles Berkey, Clarence McPherson.

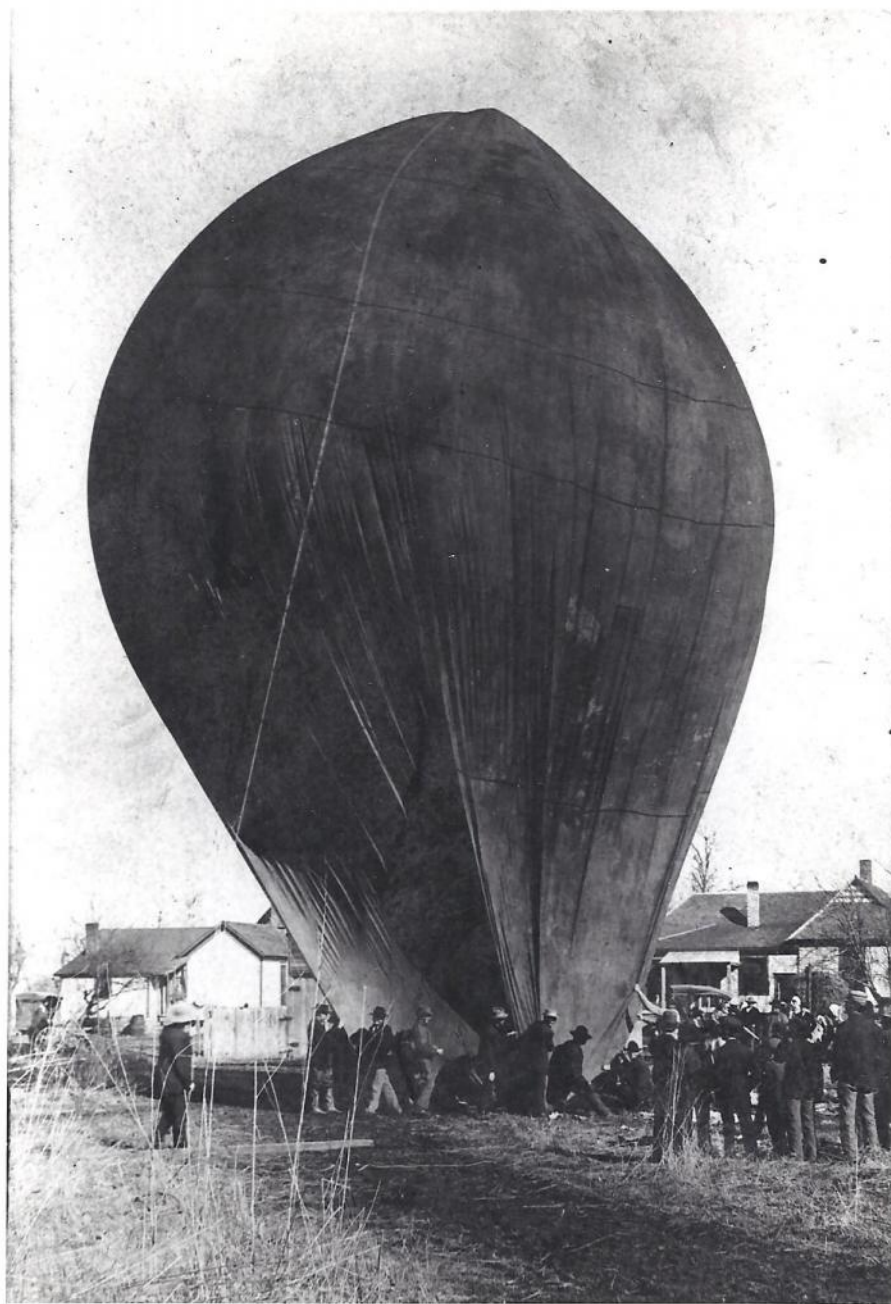


L to R (Back Row): Bud Johnson, Manager, Dobbie Strimple, Billy Hesse, Earl Kovar, Max Nightingale, Bernie Stewart, Johnie Simecka, Everett Hoobler, Leo Berry, Bob Martin, Buck McClain, Pete Darting, Ray Martin, Ivan Britt, Shorty McClain.



L to R: First two Willard's Trainers, Bob Willard, Fred Stalker. Sitting in front Jess Willard. Fred was a step-brother Bob and Jess.

## SETH CORMACK AND HIS BALLOON



Filling the Balloon

The Balloon went up!

That was the headline in an article in the Rossville Reporter on March 5, 1909. The article continues as follows:

“Mr. Cormack, the balloonist, made a most successfully ascension with his balloon last Saturday evening. The feat was viewed by many and all said it was one of the best they had ever seen.

In the early part of the afternoon an attempt was made to fill the balloon with gas but without success owing to the wind. It was just about sundown after most of the crowd had gone home that another effort was made and shortly after the big bag sailed away to the clouds with Cormack hanging to the parachute.

It reached a height of nearly 2,000 feet before he cut the rope and dropped with the parachute and alighted gently in Conley's corn field.”

Mrs. William Lambert, Seth's sister-in-law, remembers that Seth made the balloon out of unbleached muslin and sewed it on her mother's sewing machine. She says, “He just about ruined Mamma's sewing machine.”

Mr. Perry Stumbaugh recalls that the first attempt to make a flight was unsuccessful because the balloon split just before it was filled to capacity.

This was a hot-air balloon. They dug a pit in the direction of the wind and stretched the balloon out on the ground on the windward side of the pit. They built a fire using wood, kerosene, rags, anything that would burn and create a dense, gaseous smoke.

The proposed balloon flight brought a large crowd to town to watch Seth Cormack “break his neck.” Mr. Ralph Page remembers that his folks brought the family to town and after waiting all afternoon, decided that they had to go home to do chores. As the article indicates, one final attempt to inflate it was made. Ralph said that as they were going up the Oliver Hill north of town, they saw the balloon rise into the air and after Cormack cut his parachute loose the balloon drifted north, almost over them and finally lodged in a tree on the place that Joe Gresser now owns.

Oscar Bixby, who was a small boy at the time, describes the flight, “They decided to make another try at inflating the balloon and this time it filled up. The balloon filled suddenly and the men holding the ground ropes had their hands full keeping the balloon from not leaving too soon. When it was filled, Cormack was ready and said, “turn her loose,” and he rapidly rose toward the sky. The balloon drifted eastward and it reached an altitude of about 2000 feet. Cormack cut his parachute loose and drifted to the ground while the balloon drifted off to the north. Clarence Silvers had been standing by with a team of bay ponies hitched to a buggy with the top laid back and when the balloon went up he followed. After Seth landed in the cornfield, he was picked up by Silvers and brought back to town as fast as the ponies could run. Seth was standing in the buggy waving his hands to indicate that he was not hurt.”

Cormack made one more attempt to fly his balloon. The committee for the Fourth of July celebration in 1909 contracted with him to make an ascension as one of the big events. Again it was windy and all attempts to inflate the balloon were unsuccessful.

The Reporter of July 9 reports a near tragedy in connection with this unsuccessful flight. Overcome with Gas....

“Hallie Startup, who was assisting Mr. Cormack in the effort to fill the balloon with gas the evening of the celebration last Saturday was overcome with gas and came mighty near cashing in his checks.



He worked on the inside of the balloon and when it was found impossible to inflate the bag on account of the wind he was called out. After he gained the outside air, he complained of not feeling well and in a short time collapsed. Dr. Miller was sent for and the people on the grounds worked with him constantly until the Doctor came. He was dead to the world and no heart action could be detected, but restoratives were administered by the doctor and the efforts were finally rewarded by faint signs of returning life. He was removed to the Startup home in town and it was nearly midnight before he was pronounced out of danger. He recovered rapidly from that time on and was able the next day to come up town."

A couple of weeks later, Mr. U.G. Stewart, the firey editor complained bitterly that the Fourth of July committee only allowed the band \$15.00 while paying Cormack \$20.00 for his abortive balloon flight, plus paying his expenses.

After the death of his wife, Seth Cormack left Rossville and at the age of 62 met his death in a fall from a roof in Florida where he was working as a building inspector.

## **ARTS AND MUSIC**

For a town of its size, Rossville has had many very talented people who gained recognition in their chosen fields.

Lotus Robb, an actress, spent part of her childhood in Rossville. She lived with her grandmother and step-grandfather, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Larrance, who owned a grocery store here and in Delia. Her mother, Lorraine Buchanan, was an actress also and traveled with Stock Companies across the United States. Lotus visited with her grandparents many times when she was small.

Miss Robb was born in Springfield, Missouri, and attended Anne Wright's Seminary in Tacoma, Washington. She later went on the stage, appearing first with Stock Companies, then in New York where many of her appearances were in Theater Guild productions.

The late George Jean Nathan called her the "Strawberries and Cream of Broadway" because of her beauty.



Lotus Robb as Lydia Languish in *The School for Scandal*

She was particularly remembered for her role opposite George Arlis in "The Green Goddess." She also had major roles in "The Devil's Disciple," "Why Marry," "Fair and Warmer," "Rollo's Wild Oat," "The Constant Nymph," and "The Rivals." Miss Robb was married to Marvin C. Ross who is an art historian and curator of the art collections of Mrs. Merriweather Post in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Ross assisted him in preparing many publications on art.

Mrs. Ross passed away in 1969 at the age of 76 in Washington, D.C.

There are several people living in Rossville now who remember her being here as a child and of playing together as children. Her grandparents lived in the house now owned by Mrs. Hazel Olson.

Mr. Ben Mileham was an artist of unusual ability. He was born in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1851, and came to Kansas at about the age of 18. He settled in Rossville and was married to Alice DeGraff in 1882. He opened a studio in St. Marys and did the painting and frescoing for the St. Marys Cathedral as well as several paintings for the St. Marys College.

Later, Mr. Mileham had a Studio and Gallery on South Main in Rossville and painted many lifelike portraits of citizens of Rossville as well as a magnificent full-length portrait of General U.S. Grant.

The following appeared in a Rossville newspaper, October 9, 1896:

"We see by the Topeka papers that B.D. Mileham's picture of the "Battle of the Blue" very much interested spectators and brought the artist much renown. This painting is 7' by 12' and clearly depicts the thrilling incidents of the memorable battle. It was on display at 404 Kansas Avenue and on a single evening was visited by 4500 people. Mr. Mileham has been recognized for many years as an

expert landscape painter and his pictures may be destined to secure him national reputation." The above picture now hangs in the Kansas State Historical Society Building.

September 17, 1886, "B.D. Mileham is at work on several fine oil paintings for exhibition at the Topeka State Fair." (He received first in Landscape.)



Mr. and Mrs. Benj. D. Mileham

He was employed by the Santa Fe Railroad as an apprentice instructor in the shops where he designed, decorated and painted passenger coaches. The railroad sent him to the Grand Canyon to sketch the view and colors so that he could return and put it on canvas. It took him two months to complete the picture. The Santa Fe was very pleased with the results and put it on exhibition in Topeka.

Old times in Rossville like to recall a Drum Corps he organized and drilled many years ago. He also put on home talent productions including several Shakespeare Stunts with himself doing the character portrayed. He had great gifts along this line.

Mr. Mileham moved his family to Topeka from Rossville and lived there 27 years. At the time of his death in 1927, he was survived by his widow, two sons and two daughters. His son, B.C. Mileham, now resides in St. Marys.

Mrs. Lina Weeks Baylis came to Rossville in 1898. She was a very fine artist and many women were glad of the opportunity to study under her.

Classes were limited to five or six students at a time as they worked by natural light from the windows and easels took up room. They worked in different homes.

Mrs. Baylis was born and reared in Des Moines, Iowa, but received her art training in Cleveland, Ohio. She received a certificate of membership to the Art Students League in New York on submission of one of her paintings. Being admitted to this League was the top recognition for an artist at that time. Mrs. Baylis painted some lovely portraits of Rossville citizens. Several homes in Rossville and this area have paintings of hers or her pupils.

Mrs. Baylis was liberal with her time and talent and was a kind and patient teacher. She taught in four mediums: pastels, watercolor, charcoal and oils.

The former Baylis home is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Mansfield.

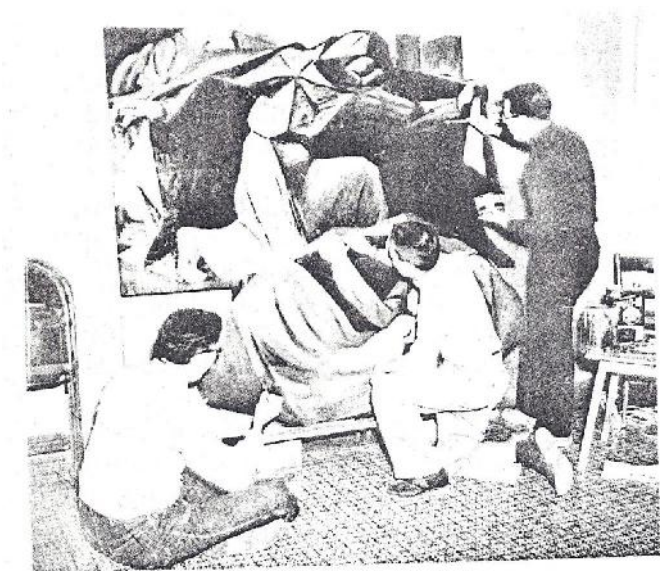


Wm. C. Baylis Home (present home of Lloyd Mansfield's)

The following was taken from Rossville newspapers:

September 2, 1898—"Considerable attention is being drawn to those fine pictures in Pierce's Drug Store window. They are the work of Mrs. Lina Baylis and are done in crayon and pastel. Mrs. Baylis has quite a large class in this vicinity."

December 5, 1903—"S.C. McAdams, manager of the Gilbert Clothing Store, is a pen artist of rare ability. By exercising his talent in this line he could soon equal the best of them in cartoon work."



Don Jones (center)

Don Jones was an outstanding artist here of the more recent times. There are murals of his work in the High School, Community Center, and Methodist Church. Many paintings of his hang in the homes of Rossville as well as the Christian and Methodist Churches. He worked in oils and watercolor. Don painted many landscapes of the Rossville area and won several prizes on paintings submitted to the



Mid-America Fair. He and his family lived in Rossville 16 years and in Topeka six years before moving to Ohio.

Mr. William DeGraff was an artist who made and finished violins. He had a shop on Main Street where he made and refinished furniture, too.

November 6, 1947, newspaper quote:

“Thieves entered the building, the home and shop of the late Wm. DeGraff, and according to Mrs. Vernon Welch, the heir to the property, 15 violins, a clarinet, a fife and many small tools were taken. Mr. DeGraff had about 38 violins. The 15 taken were his own hand work and were beautifully finished.”

Rossville has had many musical groups that have brought much pleasure to the town.

Quotes from Rossville newspapers:

“Rossville’s Brass Band brought fame to the town during the years it existed. It was started in 1879. In the beginning, the Band, sometimes referred to as the Cornet band, numbered only six instruments. The Band played Saturday night concerts and frequently played for the horse races held at St. Marys.”

J.H. Kramer organized and was leader of a Band for awhile. His son, Craig Kramer, was an excellent drummer.



Rossville City Band, 1880s—L to R: Wm. Kirkpatrick, Mr. Orris, Sam Wilt, W. Worthington, Ferg Jamieson, Harry Jamieson, Stewart Jamieson, Walter Jamieson, Joe Franklin, Cal Bradley. Front Row: Frank Gabbey, unidentified, Albert Gabbey, unidentified, John Wilt, Ed McAdams, Frank Binns.



U.G. Stewart, "The Leader of the Band"

In later years, there was a larger band organized by U.G. Stewart. It always played concerts in the Bandstand on Saturday nights during the summer months. It also played at other functions when called upon.

November 9, 1899: "The citizens of Rossville can soon expect some charming music by the Mandolin Club just organized by Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchner. The personnel of the Club now embraces six young women and two young gentlemen."

May 2, 1902: "The young men among the Moravian families have organized a band and are practicing for the celebrations on public holidays and other occasions. U.G. Stewart is their instructor."

In 1918, the Moravian Band broke up as so many of the band members were called to serve in the First World War. Mr. Ed Macha and Mr. John Kratina Sr. were directors of the Band. Only three members of the original band are still alive: John Kratina, Rossville; Frank Kratina, Topeka; and Steve Martinek, Topeka.

In 1925, the Methodist Church had a fine orchestra under the direction of Mrs. Albin. They played for many functions in the community as well as at Church programs. One of its highlights was being asked to Baker University at Baldwin, Kansas, to play concerts for the Epworth League Institute during a week in the summer. The following were members: Irene Bond, Joe Gresser, Winston Johnson, Ayleen Hartzell, Thelma James, Ruth Stanley, Fern Pendleton, Violins; Eli Shenk and Lathel Jonson, Clarinets; Orval Smith and Joe Shenk, Saxophones; Sherwin Griswold, Flute; John Shenk and Marvin Davis, Cornets; Mrs. Albin, Viola; Roy Wilt, Baritone Horn; Don Gresser, Cello; Clark McPherson, Euphonium; Leona Griswold, Piano.

Don and Eleanor Jones and Inez Richardson organized a group to sing in a Cantata at Easter time. There were representatives from all of the churches. Inez directed the group, Mary Jane Berkey was

the Soprano soloist; Eleanor, the Alto soloist; Don, the Baritone soloist; and Irene Campbell, piano accompanist. They made several out of town appearances and were much appreciated in the community.



The Moravian Band early 1900s. Back Row, L to R: Tom Cerny, John Kratina, Sr., George Olejnik, Frank Kratina, Dad Macha, Sam Saia, Joe Penaz. Front Row: Henry Cerny, Frank Matyak, Joe Saia, Anton Macha, Frank Hromada, John Kratina, Jr., Steven Martinek.



front row l-r: GLADYS JAMIESON, CLARE MILLER, MRS. SKAGGS, MAY BRADLEY, MRS. HEDGES, MISS SMITH. middle row l-r: ESTHER PRATT, GRACE HARTZELL, MRS. CLESS, VIRGIL McPHERSON, MARGARET DE BARROWS. back row l-r: MRS. MCCOY, MRS. BOND, MRS. BRADLEY, MRS. PRATT, MRS. ALTER, MRS. JAMIESON, MRS. J. WILT. taken in front of the Christian Church.

Chorale Group. Back Row L to R: Mrs. McCoy, Mrs. Bond, Mrs. Bradley, Mrs. Pratt, Mrs. Alter, Mrs. Jamieson, Mr. John Wilt. Second Row: Esther Pratt, Grace Hartzell, Mrs. Cless, Virgil McPherson, Margaret DeBarrows. Front Row: Gladys Jamieson, Clare Miller, Mrs. Skaggs, May Bradley, Mrs. Hedges, Miss Smith.



Czech Dancing Group. L to R Georgianna (Olejnik) Davis, Millie (Kovar) Badura, Josephine (Olejnik) Pressgrove, Florence (Macha) Tuller, Letha (Kovar) Olejnik, Lydia (Penaz) Scott, Viola (Kovar) Gideon, Jarmilla (Mitcha) Kovar, Mrs. Frank Kratina.

Rossville has always been fortunate in having many outstanding musicians.

The following are some of the manes that have given private lessons during the 100 years that Rossville has been a township.

Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchner-Voice, piano, mandolin, and guitar.

Mrs. Elida Shearer Bond. An interesting note in teaching of piano lessons was that Miss Shearer would drive her horse and buggy to the rural areas to teach in the pupil's home. She would stay over night in her student's home so she would not have to make the long drive back the next day to finish her lessons.

Miss Margaret McAdams-Voice and Piano.

Mrs. Violet McCoy Bradley-Voice.

Miss Edith Higginbotham-Studied at Washburn University. Taught Voice and Piano.

Mr. Charles Priesler. Mr. Priesler came to Nebraska from Prague Czechoslovakia to teach Violin in a college. Later he came to Rossville and gave many lessons to the young people in the area. He was a fine artist on the Violin.

Mr. Neil Owens-Piano. He studied with Miss. Higginbotham and later at St. Marys College. Neil was a great grandson of Dr. Gabbey.

Miss Leona Griswold-Piano.

Miss Lucile Griswold- Violin and Piano.

Mrs. Irene Bond Campbell. Irene studied Violin and Piano at Washburn and Kansas Universities. Newspaper quote in 1925 by Prof. Kolbaba of Washburn University: "If Miss Bond keeps on, and I am



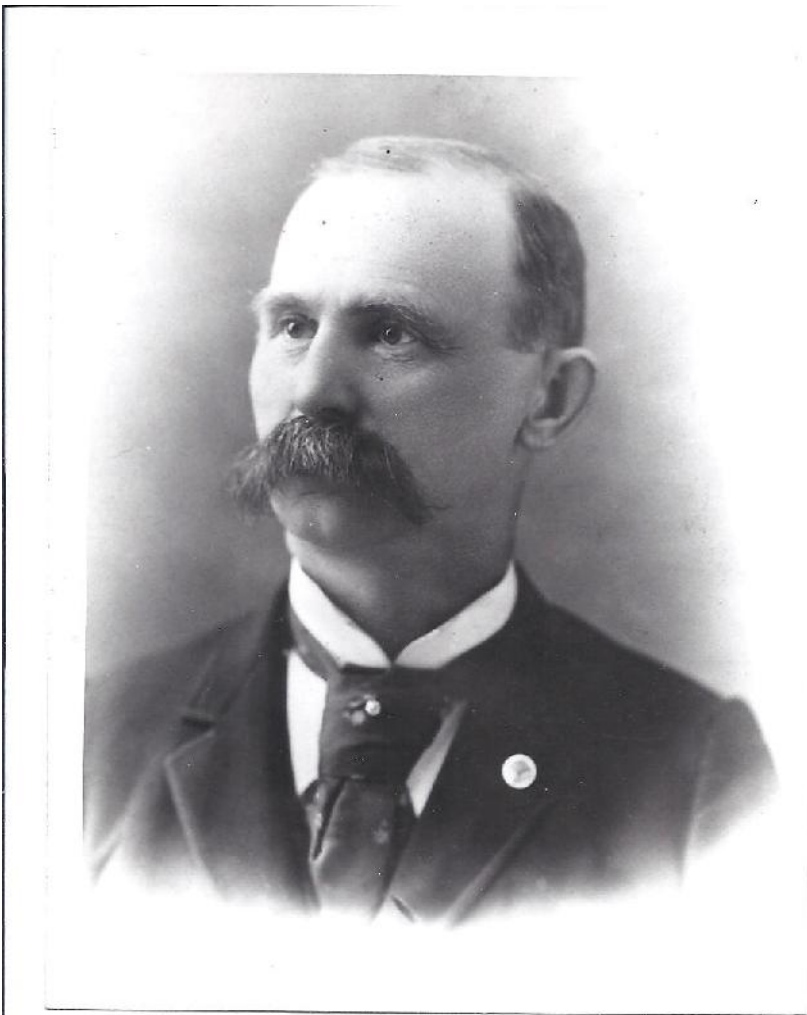
sure she will, her future as a Violinist is assured. She is not only really talented to play the Violin but is a very good worker. While other mothers have trouble making their musical aspirants practice, Mrs. Bond has trouble in stopping Irene, when she starts to work." Irene has been very generous with her time and talent to the community. She never refuses to play when asked for solos, accompanying groups, weddings and funerals.

Miss Velma Lambotte- Piano and Violin.

Mr. Joe Gresser-Cornet. Joe is a talented cornetist having studied at the University of Kansas and played professionally with several band groups. He could play several instruments well and usually played the violin in orchestras.

Marvin Davis- Cornet. Marvin was an outstanding Cornet player and played a good many years in the Rossville Band. He was also active in school and church musical groups.

Mrs. Mary Jane Berkey- Voice and Piano. Mary Jane studied at the Julliard School of Music in New Your City. She has generously given her time and talent to the community musical functions.



A.C. Sherman (Courtesy the Kansas State Historical Society) Topeka.

## LEGISLATORS

Adrian Cyrus Sherman was elected State Representative from the 37<sup>th</sup> district in 1892 and 1894 as a Republican.

He was born in 1847 at Mount Pleasant, Indiana. At the age of 15, he enlisted in Company E, 18<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry, and participated in 23 battles. He was a cousin of General W.T. Sherman and was with him on his march through the South. He became a veteran before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

In 1870, Sherman came to Kansas and speculated in real estate. He purchased from Fielding Johnson and Harvey H. Wilcox, their share in the townsite of Rossville. The next year he constructed the first hotel in Rossville, his first store building on Main Street, and his residence south of town. He was a dealer in grain, hardware and implements, real estate and stock business, and operated a grocery store. He was considered one of the wealthiest men in the county.

A.C. Sherman was appointed postmaster in Rossville in 1880 and served three years as County Commissioner.

He was married to Lou Fisher in 1866 and had three children: Alice M., Adrian F. and Daisy.



David Millington Howard

David Millington Howard was elected to the State Legislature as Representative of the 37<sup>th</sup> District in 1890 and served two additional terms. He was a member of the Progressive Democrat Party.

Mr. Howard, a prominent citizen, successful farmer and stockraiser, was born on a farm, Oct. 15, 1841, in Shaftsbury, Vermont. He completed his education in Vermont, and taught school for 2 years before beginning his farming career. He married Chettie Stanley, of Shaftsbury, Vermont on Sept. 1, 1869. Three years later, in April of 1872, the Howards, accompanied by his parents and his wife's parents, came to Rossville. They settled on a farm South of town, on a tract of 67 acres. Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Rogers presently reside on this original farm site.

Until 1876, Mr. Howard engaged in general farming and then became interested in stock raising, adding large tracts of land and introducing a fine herd of shorthorn cattle. Many still remember when he would move his cattle through town (Main St.) on the way to pasture north of Rossville. Mr. Howard would ride in a spring wagon with his dog, Gunner, in the seat beside him.

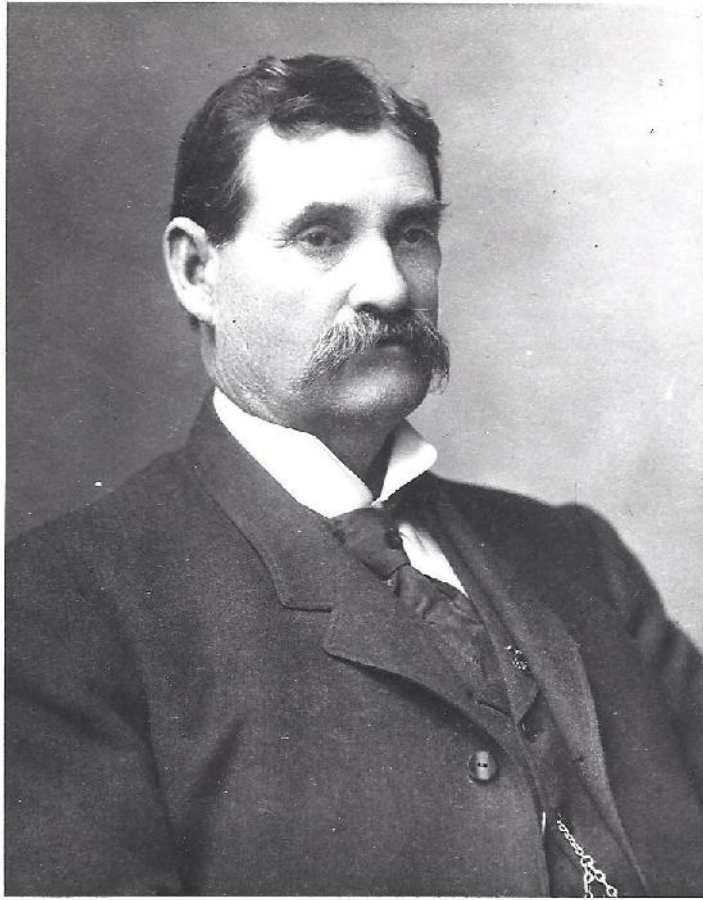
He was affiliated with a number of fraternal orders in Rossville, being a member of the Masonic Order, IOOF, AOUW, Grange and the Knights and Ladies of Security. He was one of the organizers of the Rossville State Bank and served as President.

Mr. Howard had 4 brothers and 3 sisters. The 3 sisters and 1 brother came to Rossville to live. Mary married Cyrus Higginbotham, Lurana to J.K. Conley, Rachel to L.E. Moseley, and Otis was the father of Mrs. E.G. Griswold.

Mr. Howard contracted pneumonia from exposure while engaged in the work of caring for his livestock and was ill several months before passing away on Feb. 11, 1913.



Mrs. D.M. Howard



John Howerton (Courtesy of The Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka)

John Howerton was elected as a Republican to represent the 37<sup>th</sup> district in the State Legislature in 1905. He served one term.

He first settled in Tecumseh in 1868 and later moved to Rossville where he purchased a farm north of town. For years he was a successfully farmer and stock raiser. This farm has remained in the family for over 100 years and is presently farmed by his great-grandsons, Adolphus and Charles Thomas.

Mr. Howerton was born in Morgan County, Kentucky in 1838 and was reared on a Kentucky farm. He had a powerful physical physique which he retained throughout his life. During the Civil War he was a Northern sympathizer. At the opening of the war he was appointed U.S. Marshall and while leading a posse against a band of organized guerillas and bushwhackers in Elliott County, was ambushed and during the fighting that ensued, he and two of his men were shot. Mr. Howerton received a severe saber wound in his left cheek, which left a scar that remained throughout his life.

In 1858, he married Mary Watson, a daughter of a prominent Kentucky farmer. John Howerton was the first person from the West Liberty, Kentucky area to migrate to Rossville, followed by many others whose descendants still reside here.



Of the five children born to Mr. and Mrs. Howerton, four grew to maturity, and three survived their mother, who passed away in June of 1910. The children were: William and Charles, who lived in Rossville, a daughter, Etta, who married Dr. J.M. Amis, and a son James, who died a young man. Mr. Howerton always contributed his share toward the growth and development of Shawnee County and up to his death took a keen interest in civic and national affairs. He was associated with the Rossville State Bank, Silver Lake State Bank and the Delia State Bank.

He remarried in 1914 to Elizabeth Van Anken. He passed away on January 9, 1925, at his home.



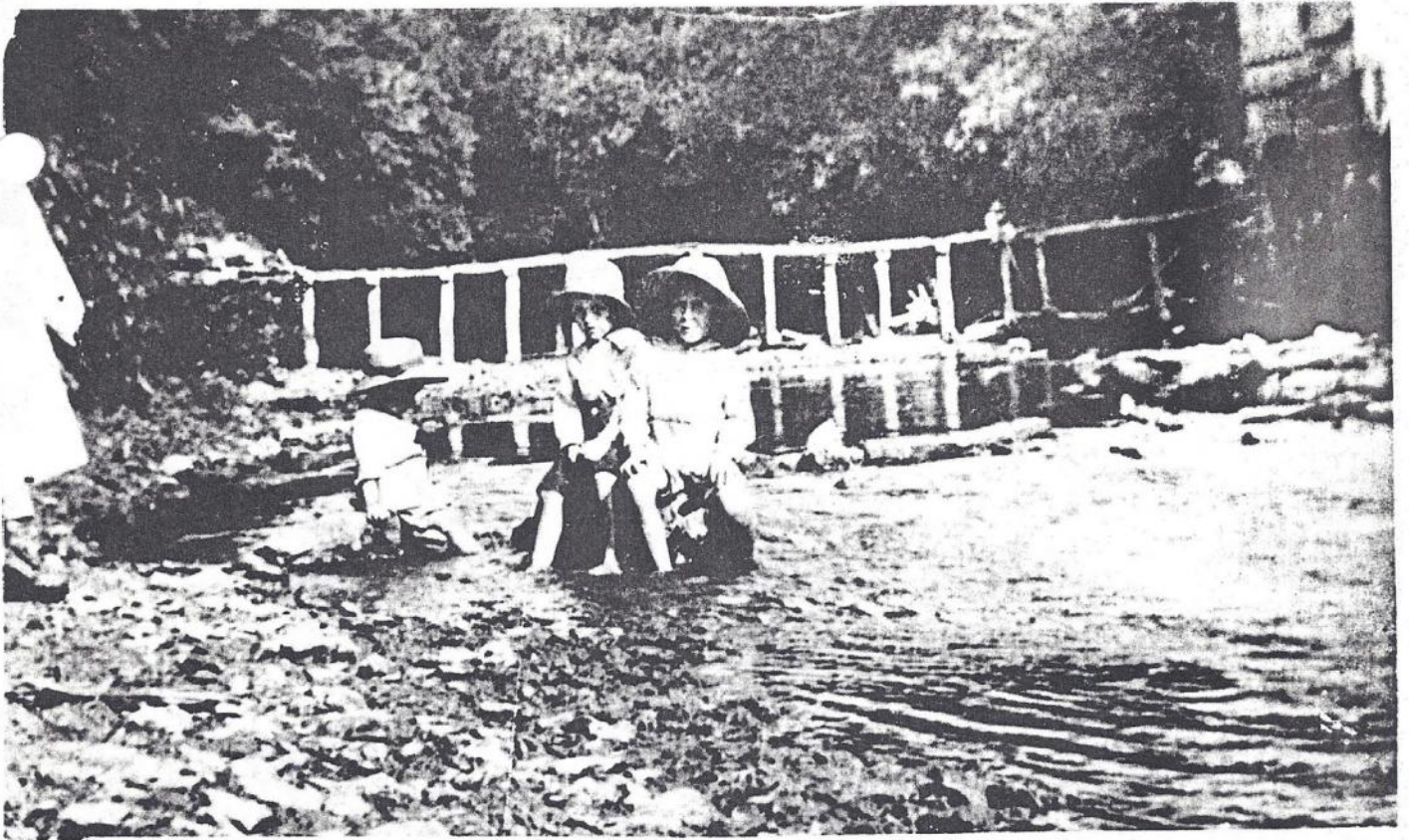
L.H. Spears

L.H. Spears, of Rossville, is presently serving his 4<sup>th</sup> term in the State Legislature. He was first elected in 1964 from the 34<sup>th</sup> District, but after reapportionment in 1966, the District was changed to the 49<sup>th</sup>. He is a member of the Republican Party.

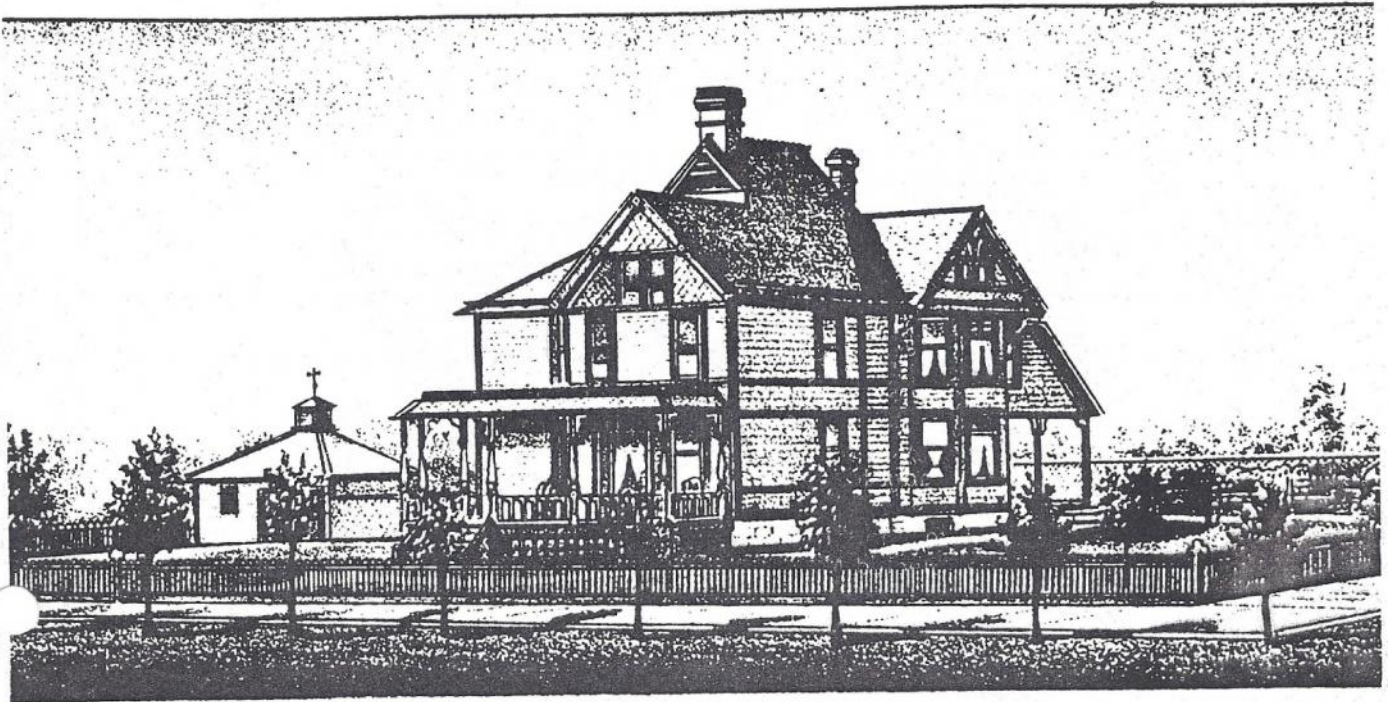
He was born on a farm near Wamego, Kansas, on September 20, 1906. He married Edna Vilven in 1927. They had two children who are now living in Rossville: Mrs. Ruth Larson and Mrs. Helen Siegel. Edna and LaVerne moved to Rossville in 1928. They purchased and operated a farm northeast of town, dealing mainly in livestock and grain. In 1936, Mr. Spears was graduated from Kansas State College at Manhattan.

In 1952, the Spears moved into the city of Rossville. Three years later he was elected Mayor, an office he held for 10 years.

Rep. Spears is a self-made man who lives an active, useful life and is an asset to our community. He is part owner of the Rossville Implement Co. and also has been Agency Manager for the Farm Bureau Insurance Services in Shawnee County for 32 years. He has been a member of the board of directors of the Cross Creek Watershed since 1959 and is a past president of the League of Kansas Municipalities. Also he was a member of the Capitol Area Planning Commission for four years. Fraternally, Mr. Spears is a Mason, being Past Master of the Hesperian Lodge; a member of the Eastern Star, Past Patron and Past Grand Patron, and is a member of the Necrology Committee, General Grand Chapter, a member of Scottish Rite and Shrine Bodies. He has been a director of the Topeka Chamber of Commerce, a trustee of the Kansas State University Endowment Assn.; a member and trustee of Rossville United Methodist Church and a member of the Lions Club.



Clyde, Fred and Neil McCollough at the old mill dam



RESIDENCE OF W.C. SHERMAN.

105

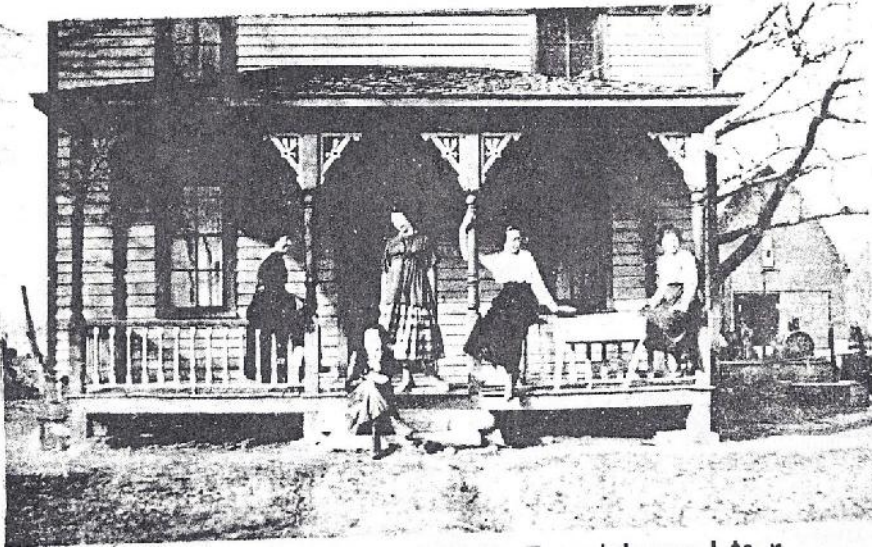
Residence of W.C. Sherman



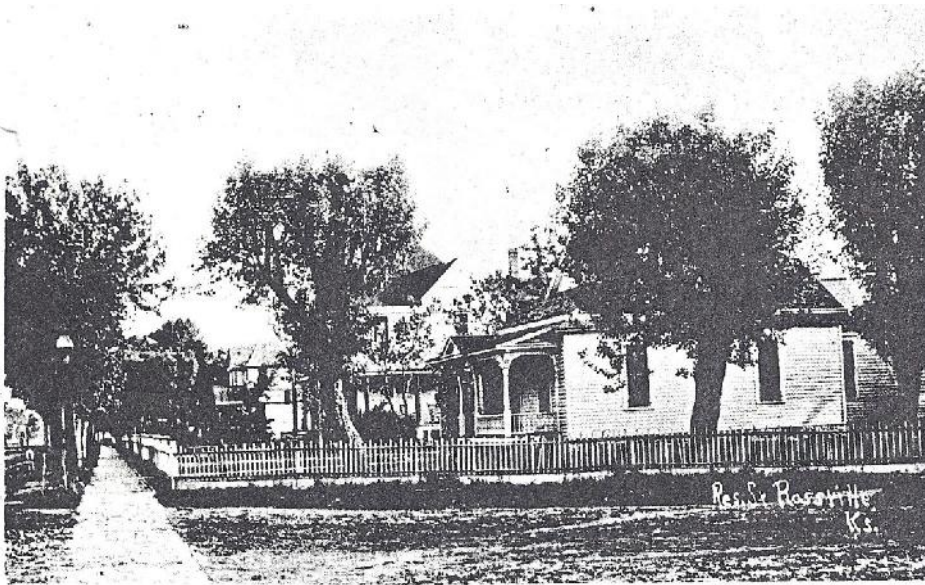


Farmstead of Mr. and Mrs. Lambert James built in 1870s—now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. William Olejnik





Home on site of present C.E. Emert home. L to R: Beulah McIntyre, Grace White, Gwen Kramer, Mable Bruce and Mildred McCollough.



Mitchner home—present Robert Cox home moved because of highway construction

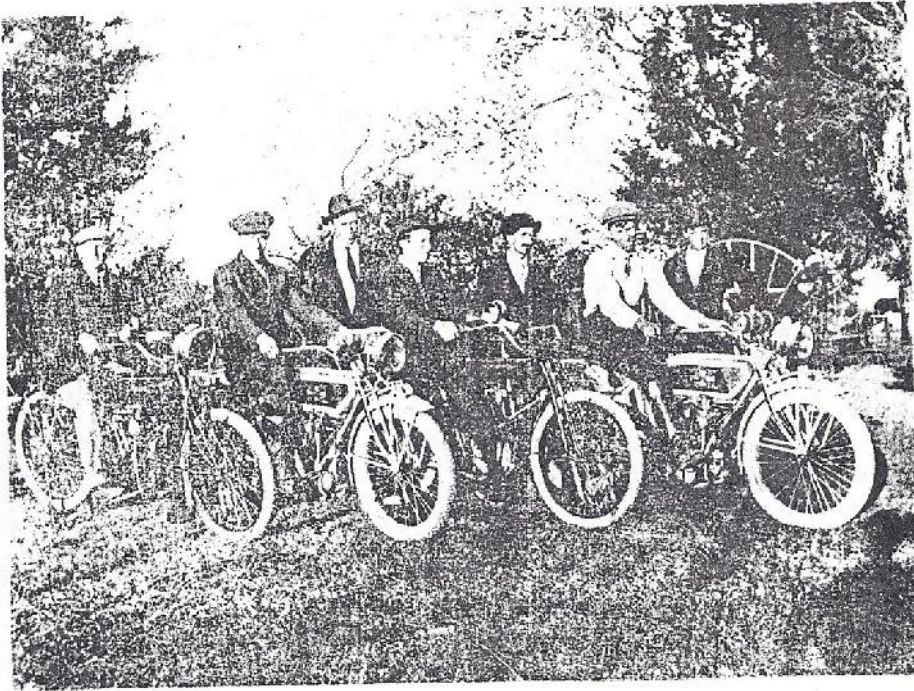


Rossville township's only oil well

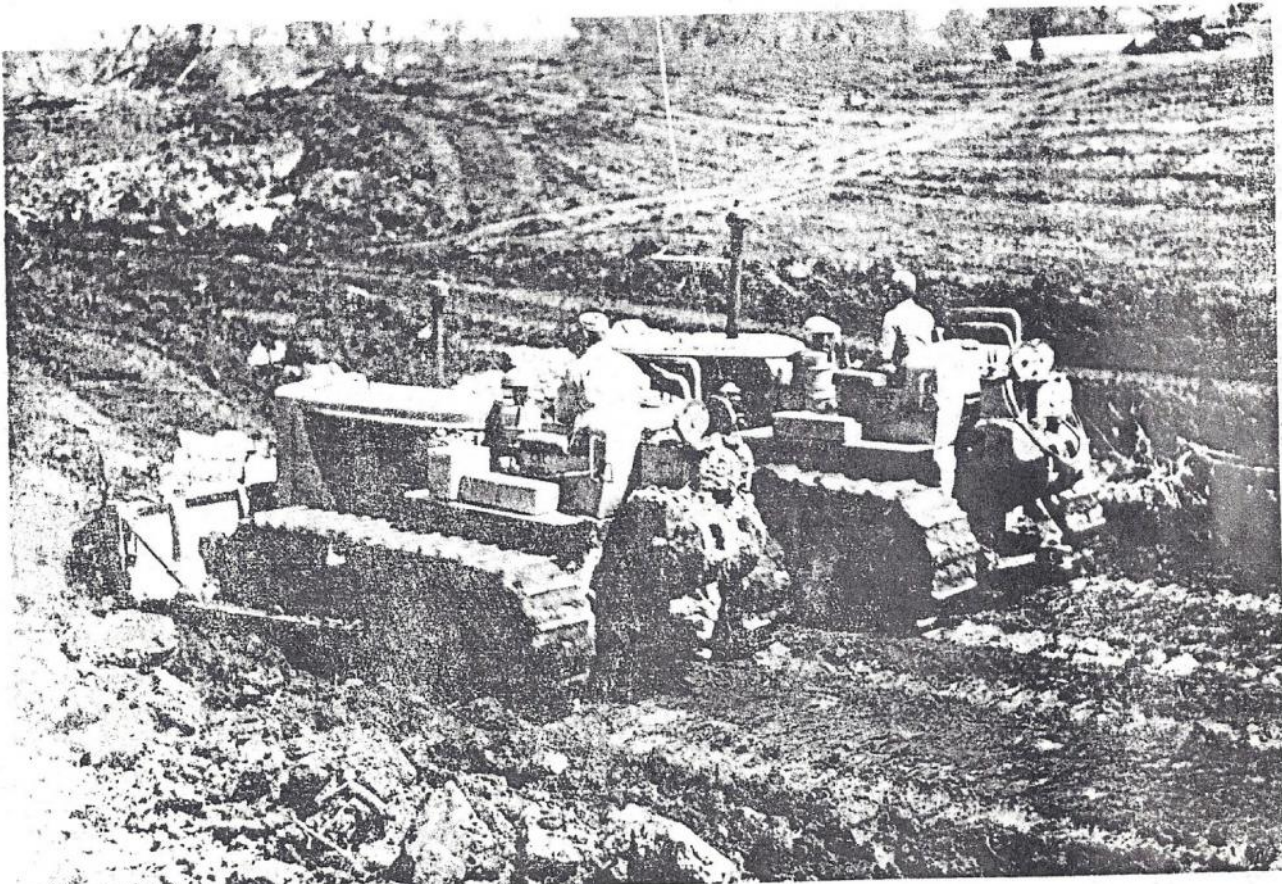


Rossville Corps, Salvation Army. Standing L to R: Capt. Navarre, Corp. Lillard, seated, Maj. Bush, Brig. Gen. Lillard, Lieut. Beard





L to R: John Slansky, Albert Kalcik, Ed. Kalcik, John Kratina, Louis Masopust, John Dolezilek, and Steven Martinek



Jim Rezac and Bob Immenschuh

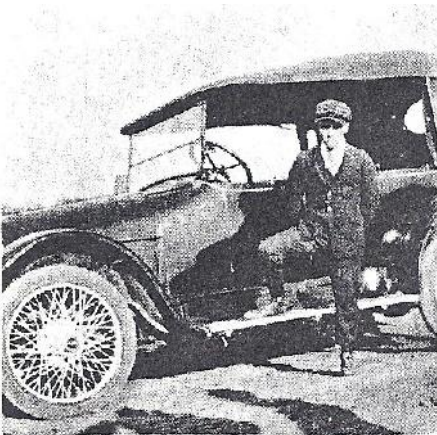




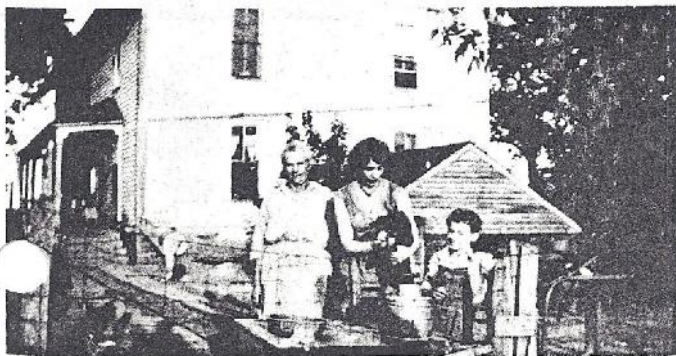
Lydia Zickefoose—1960



Edna Hartzell Salley and Emma Ford Enos Davis



Ralph Page

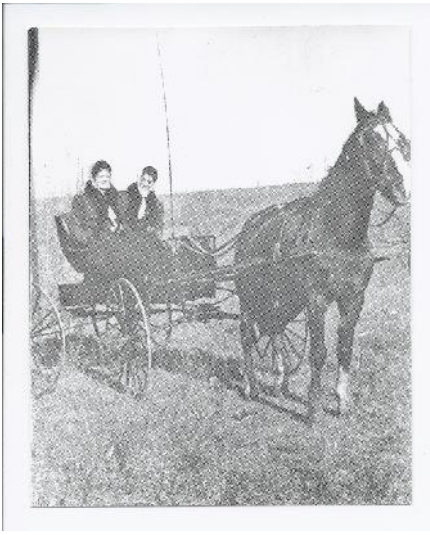


Mrs. Antonia Simecka Dolezilek, Lulu Steele and Wallace Steele by the Cheese Factory.

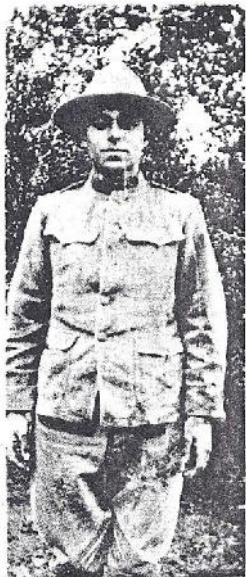




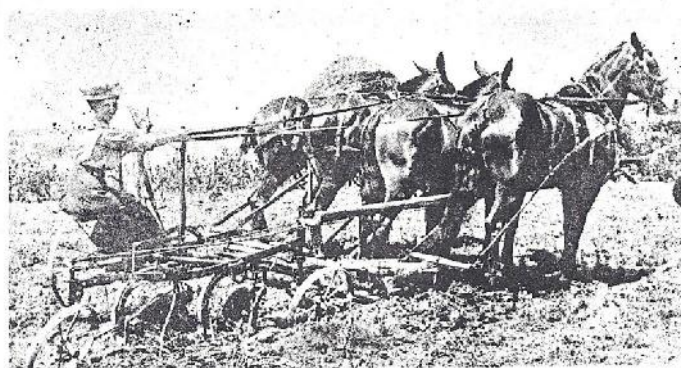
L to R: Kid White, Minnie White, Press White, Agnes Howard, Stella White, Gwenn Myers, Lester Parr, unidentified, Louis Myers



L to R Grace Eversole Hartzell, Edna Hartzell Salley

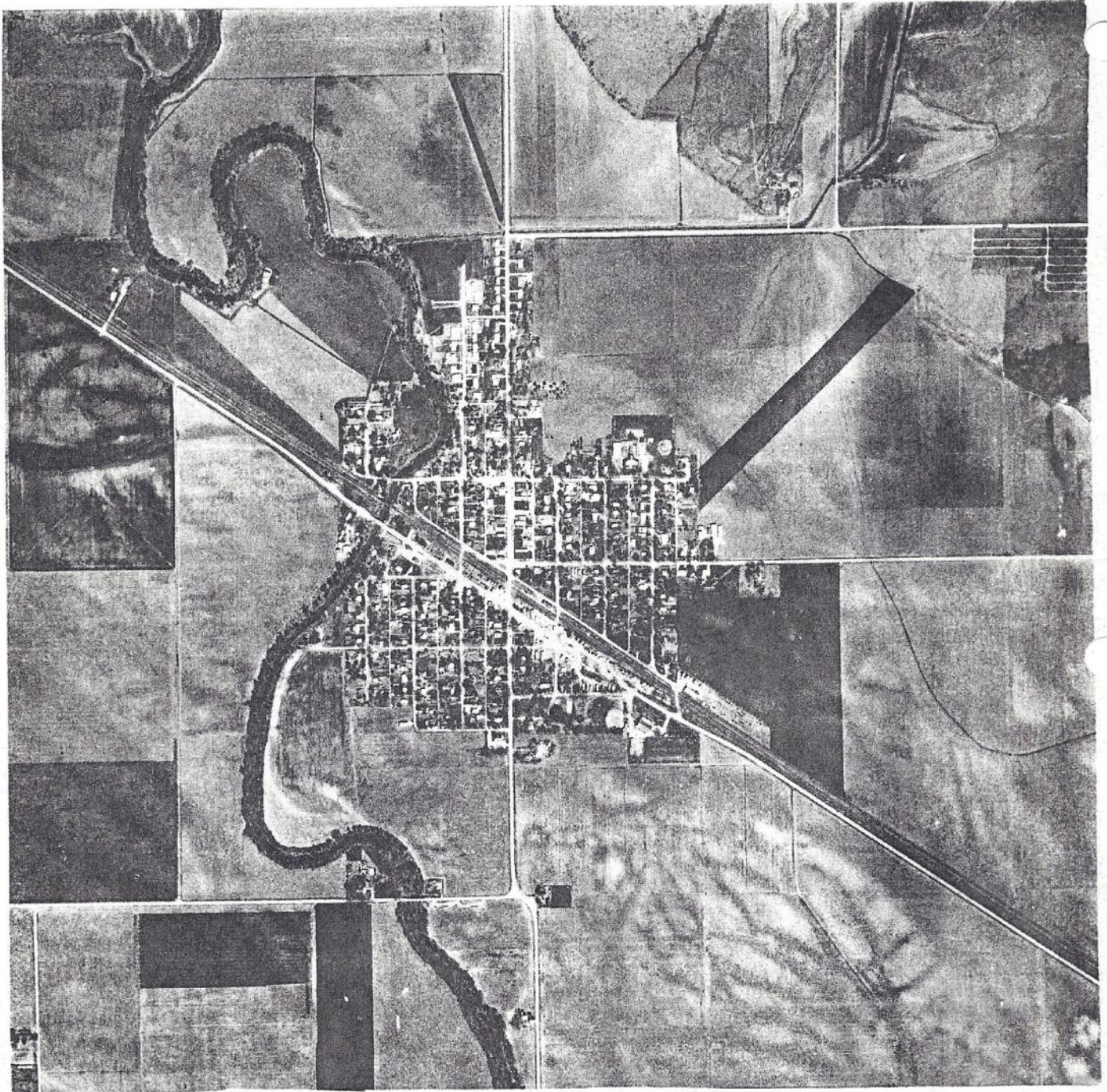


Ernie Tschantz, World War I, Came to Rossville in 1915—and was an early thresherman



Minnie White





## Rossville

### **Rossville Friends**

Elmer Lynde Construction

DeVader Floor Covering

NC + Hybrid Seeds, Scott Kelsey—Dealer

Hesse Real Estate

### **Silver Lake Friends**

C-K Garden Center & Nursery

George Richard Remer  
J. Thomas Lumber  
Martinek Service Station  
Don A. Dain

### **St. Marys Friends**

Bayer Stone Inc.  
D.E. Murphy, DDS  
Mr. & Mrs. D.M. Sparks  
St. Marys Real Estate  
Wehner's Variety Store  
Willis E. Welch Barber Shop  
St. Marys Star  
St. Marys Radio & Television  
D & W Snack Bar  
J.B. Pearl Sales & Service  
Blue Ribbon Cleaners  
Bud's Tire & Supply  
Kenny's Barber Shop  
Verschelden Funeral Home

### **Topeka Friends**

Holliday Tot Shop, Holliday Square  
Holliday Square Barber Shop  
Char's Goodin's Flowers & Cards  
Velda O'Donnell, Rossville Agent  
Auto Parts Co. of Topeka, Inc.  
Wild Willies North & South  
Penwell-Gabel Funeral Home, Inc.  
Mr. & Mrs. Don F. Gresser  
Topeka Auto Supply, Inc.  
Curtis J. Wilkes, Prudential Insurance  
Scott Glass, Inc.  
Culligan Water Conditioning  
Otis Lane Automotive Alignment  
Wentz Equipment Company  
Ohse Meat Products Co.  
Gibbs Clothing Co. of Topeka, Inc.  
Katch & Co.  
Seven-Up Bottling Co. of Topeka  
Topeka Foundry & Iron  
Starbucks Mens Wear White Lakes  
McEntire Bedding Co.  
KTSB TV Channel 27  
Bateman Sales, N. Topeka  
Kansas Farm Machinery, Inc.  
Emery Shimer Feed & Seed  
Kinyon Distributing Co.  
Topeka Mill and Elevator



Toyota of Topeka  
Topeka Skelgas  
Capitol Concrete Products Co., Inc.  
Century Lumber Co., Inc., Highway 24 West  
Rees Fruit Farms  
Exhibitors Film Delivery & Service Co.  
Skinner Nursery & Garden Store

**Friends Here and There**

Raine Lumber & Hardware, Maple Hill  
Wamego Sand Co., Inc. Wamego  
Morton Motor Co., Wamego  
Olejnik Machine Shop, Delia  
Luttig Trailer Co., Emmett  
Guys' Foods Inc.  
Hardman Lumber Co., Inc., Manhattan  
Fitts Dry Goods Co. Kansas City, MO  
Rock Island Millwork, Wichita  
Coronet Aluminum Inc. Kansas City, MO  
Jo's Beauty Salon, Rt. 8, Topeka  
Uhrich Supply Company, Kansas City, MO  
Jet Lumber Company, Wichita  
U.S. Supply Co. Kansas City, MO  
Acme Towel Service, Manhattan  
Gudenkauf Rendering Service, Seneca

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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 1049

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION commending and congratulating the city of Rossville, Kansas, on the occasion of its one hundredth birthday.

WHEREAS, The city of Rossville, Shawnee county, Kansas, is planning to observe its centennial on July 22-23-24-25, 1971; and

WHEREAS, on 16 January, 1871, ordered by the county commissioners of Shawnee county, Kansas at an adjourned term of the regular January term 1871 of said board that a new township be organized and set off from a portion of Silver Lake township, Shawnee county, Kansas to be known and described as follows:

"To Wit" Commencing in the channel of the Kansas River where said road is crossed by the range line between ranges thirteen (13) and fourteen (14) in said Shawnee county, thence northward on the range line to north line of Shawnee county, thence westerly on the county line to the northwest corner of said county thence southerly on the county line to the center of the Kansas river, thence down the channel of said river in the center thereof to the point of commencement.

Said township known and styled as Rossville township, Shawnee county, Kansas. The first election in said township shall be held in the village of Rossville in said township; and

WHEREAS, The original townsite was named Edna and later changed to "Rossville" as a compliment to W. W. Ross, agent for the Pottawatomie Indians; and

WHEREAS, The citizens of the city of Rossville and the surrounding community are proud of their ancestors who so bravely built their homes and churches, tilled the soil of the fertile Kansas river valley and cared for the precious grass land through these past one hundred years; and

WHEREAS, To commemorate and pay tribute to these pioneer ancestors and to the citizens of the city and community of Rossville for their progress through these past one hundred years, Rossville Celebrations, Inc. is planning a centennial celebration on July 22-23-24-25, 1971; and

WHEREAS, All the citizens of this great state of Kansas wish to express due respect and honor to this fine community upon this important and historic occasion: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the state of Kansas, the Senate concurring therein:* That the legislature of the state of Kansas extends congratulations to the city of Rossville, Kansas, for the contribution it has made during these one hundred years to make Kansas the great state that it is today; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the secretary of state be instructed to transmit copies of this resolution to the mayor of the city of Rossville, Kansas, Mr. Chris Viergiver, and to the chairman of Rossville Celebrations, Inc., Mr. Ed Claycamp.

I hereby certify that the above CONCURRENT RESOLUTION originated in the HOUSE, and was adopted by that body

*March 17, 1971*  
*Cahoon A. Shawing*  
Speaker of the House.  
*W. Hagen*  
Chief Clerk of the House.  
Adopted by the SENATE *March 17, 1971*  
*Leopoldo R. Roth*  
President of the Senate.  
*Robert E. Zarrin*  
Secretary of the Senate.

## Conclusion

After traveling the roads of Rossville's past, some rough and some smooth, we reach the crossroads of the future. What direction will this small town take?

The census shows a growth in population beginning in the fifties and there has been a rapid acceleration through the sixties. The percentage increase during the sixties was 28 percent. A long-range outlook for population growth would seem probable.

Whether people are moving to Rossville to escape the insecurities of city life, to recapture a romantic idea, to cut the cost of living, or to get a better place for their children, they are migrating here because Rossville is located within commuting distance of a central city. An age composition study of

Rossville shows that a large number of young couples, age 21-30, are living in this community and as a result the same study shows a large proportion of the population is in the under 10 age bracket.

What will be the prospects and functions of Rossville's business district? The commercial aspects will no doubt continue to supply convenience goods and services limited generally to low-margin operations such as grocery stores, filling stations, taverns, eating places, etc. There will also be those merchants who will draw trade from a large surrounding area as they have in the past. Agriculture will continue to be the basis of the area's economy.

Perhaps Rossville will never become more than a satellite city of Topeka or a suburban residential area for the exurbanites, but there is a basic need for the small town in American society.