

THE HISTORY OF KANSAS, OKLAHOMA

Kansas, Indian Territory, was an up and coming town before statehood, a sort of boom town. On December 2, 1902, the U.S. government had appointed Tom Caywood and A.K. Wright to plot out a town site and cemetery with the stipulation that the town have a post office. The government paid the Cherokees \$25.00 for the forty-five acre site and an additional five acres for a cemetery. W.C. Rogers was Chief of the Cherokees at this time. Not until after statehood, with the establishment and naming of counties, was a formal deed made for the cemetery. It was signed by Secretary of the Interior, James Rudolph Garfield in 1908.

According to my father-in-law, John Williams, who had come into Indian Territory in 1900 and settled between Dripping Springs, and the state line, moving to Kansas in 1902, the town was named Kansas for the following reason:

There was a man of small stature who came to Siloam Springs, Arkansas, by train from Kansas City, Kansas. He rented a hack and stocked it with light household goods, pots and pans, bolts of cloth, sewing machine parts and needles, etc. He drove out into Indian Territory, stopping at the farm homes along the way. When in this area he always camped at the spring on Spring Creek just under the hill south and west of the present town site and south of the present Highway 33. Because the Indians couldn't pronounce his name, everyone just called him Little Kansas City. The town was named for this unknown but well-remembered man. I suppose he could be given the honor of being the first merchant of the Kansas area, and the town is still called Little Kansas by many of its residents.

The town boomed immediately. The first store run by white people was a general store owned by John and Joe Buchanan. The first store built and run by an Indian was also a general store operated by Still Jackson. These stores had their merchandise brought to them in wagons from Siloam Springs and Tahlequah. John Williams and a Mr. Poe were among the first freighters. There were other general stores, a hardware store, a drug store, gristmill, flour mill, pool hall, hotel, rooming house, a doctor, a dentist, and The Cherokee Land Company. By 1906 a printing shop located east of

the present Community Church, published *The Cherokee Hummer*, a sizeable local paper. A block west, the hotel, called The Kansas House with rates of one dollar per day, stood on the corner of Main and Wood Avenue. The ads in the *Hummer* listed telephone numbers for a surprising number of businesses in Kansas in 1906.

The telephone office was at Leach, one mile north of the present Leach school. Marguerite Potts Stilley tells me she well remembers her mother calling the Pifer store in Kansas for some article, then riding in a buggy to Pifer's store and Mr. Pifer setting her up on a high stack of goods.

There were no liquor stores or saloons in Kansas as it was Indian Territory. The Bob Flat Still House, east of Siloam Springs, was the nearest federally licensed still.

The first hardware store was owned by a Mr. Warren Barnes; Dr. Todd was the town's first doctor; and Ulysses Reeves was the first dentist. Later hardware stores were run by John Rosell and the Carltons. Mr. Carlton's hardware store sold caskets, and it is told by several that in the casket was where liquor was hidden at times.

One of the first drug stores was owned and operated by J. O. Wise. Ulysses Reeves and his wife also had a drug store. The town dentist was a Mr. Walters, but I'm not sure that he had a degree. Perhaps he didn't need one.

The blacksmith shop was operated by Mr. Cathcart. In the early days this was a busy spot—shoeing horses, replacing wagon and buggy wheel rims, and repairing farm equipment. The pool hall, called the Pike Room and Billard Hall, also boasting a bowling alley and a shooting gallery, was run by Faith Hughes, a brother of Zeke Hughes, whose descendants still live in this area. Neal Cayce ran the first barber shop. A cotton gin was also located here.

Having read an issue of the September 1906 *Cherokee Hummer*, I was interested and surprised at how many businesses were in operation at that time. Many descendants of the owners of those establishments are living in and around town today even to the fifth and sixth generations.

The Odd Fellow Lodge was located above the drug store on Main Street. The Anti-Horse Thief Association met there also. This association had

been organized in 1900 in Indian Territory by Red Cloud Duncan in his home south of Rose. He was assisted by Webb Vann of Pryor who had been delegated by the state of Kansas Anti-Horse Thief Association (AHTA) to organize associations in Indian Territory.

The Masonic Lodge had been brought to Kansas from Bloomfield, Arkansas, where all of the Masons of this area had previously attended prior to statehood. It also met in the Odd Fellow Hall.



Sawmill owned by Joe Winfield at Kansas, Oklahoma



James Thomas Pifer



John Pifer in front of his store in Kansas, Oklahoma, in 1903.

The sawmill, owned by Benjamin Winfield, was located on the creek just east of town. Nearby was a gristmill owned and run by Joseph Winfield and his brother Lisha and a son, Ben. People from miles around came to have their corn ground, and often the pay was in meal. Mr. Winfield learned to speak Cherokee for he had a large trade with the Cherokees. A steam-engine operated flour mill nearby was owned by Dee Jones, father-in-law to a present resident, Josie Abbott Tinker. Shod Dickson, apparently a fine craftsman, maintained all of the races and jack planes, and did the precision work. He was also the carpenter who built many of the better homes here.

The town had a public dipping vat located back of the present fire station to which people from Leach and Oaks as well as Kansas drove their cattle.

The Kansas House was operated first by Mr. and Mrs. C. Crouch, later by Mr. and Mrs. Willison. (Crouch was also the town constable and his daughter taught school.) The hotel had the only well in this part of town and the folks building new homes in this area carried water from this well. James T. Pifer, the first mayor and justice of peace, built a new two-story clapboard house just north of the hotel on Wood Avenue. His son, Claude Pifer, presently living in California, tells me he remembers hauling water from the well to his home in his little red wagon. One Monday morning he went after wash water and lingered too long to watch the goings on in town. His mother called Mr. Pifer at

his office by phone. Mr. Pifer found Claude, and Claude says to this day he well remembers the end of that story.



North side of Main Street of Kansas, Indian Territory.

Left to right: Porch of bank building, Neal Cayce Barber Shop, and McGowan's Cafe, Post Office [sign above porch roof], and Pitts Store.

The Pifer family had moved to Kansas in 1902 from three miles east of Dripping Springs. In Kansas James had built a small store on the south side of Main Street. Later he bought the Pitts store, now the Community Church, and moved his business there. He held court as Justice of the Peace on the second floor of the post office.

Among the other early notables was the town marshal, George Hill, Ed Hill's father. Dee Jones was the first county commissioner from this district. Skid Pitts, owner of Pitts store, should be mentioned too. His daughter, Laura, married the man who ran the business school. His son, Bud Pitts, has a grocery store on Highway 33 near the junction of Highway 10 east of town.

As the post office had been one of the first establishments of the new town, its history must be included. The first postmaster was a Mr. Thompson, followed by Dr. Todd; Mr. Ulysses Reeves; Mrs. McGowan who later married Dr. Prowell, the town's second doctor; Nancy Dildine Hyde; Joe Carnes,; after World War II, his son, Joe Ed



North side of Main Street in Kansas, Oklahoma—1913 Reading left to right: Bank, Neal Cayce's Barber Shop [white front], McGowan's Cafe, Post Office [sign above porch roof], Pitts Store [later Jim Pifer and now Community Church.

On horses: Johnnie Jackson, Roscoe Carnes, Will Mounce, Bob Carrick, Lawrence Gregory, Clyde Buchanan on white horse [called his courting horse], Earl Carnes [brother of Joe Carnes], Earl Wilson, Walter Jackson, and Bryan Roberts. and Bryan Roberts.

Carnes; and after Joe Ed's death, Blanche Graves O'Leary.

The first mail was run by horseback and hack, leaving Leach, picking up mail at Kansas and Flint, and on to Siloam Springs. The return trip left Siloam Springs, went to Tahlequah and back to Kansas, where the mailman from Leach took it on. The delivery men changed teams at Caywood's livery stable in Kansas. Later the mail came directly from Siloam Springs to Kansas and back. If anyone wanted anything from Siloam Springs, the mailman would bring it. He also carried passengers. This practice wasn't stopped until some time around World War II.

Another important part of early life in Kansas was the boarding house owned and run by Tom and Rose Caywood. Rose served meals to salesmen, called drummers in those days, and rented rooms to the teachers. The boarding house was a two-story structure located on Tahlequah Street one block north of Main Street. After World War II, Rose's son-in-law took the top story off and made other improvements, and the house stands today just north of the Community Church.

Before statehood, outlaws had the habit of coming into Indian Territory to hide from the law. There were three brothers by the name of Wycliffe who killed a U. S. Marshal named Henry Veer near Lone Prairie Indian Mission. Another U. S. Marshall named Gillstrap came to look for them and he boarded at the Caywoods. The outlaws killed him about six or seven miles from Kansas on the Illinois River. Then Dick Terry was sent here to capture them. They shot him and left him in the woods, but he was found still alive and taken to the Caywood Boarding House where he was cared for. His wife was sent for and stayed with him until he was able to be taken home. Later one of the outlaws was killed and the other two gave up.

In 1907 a fire broke out in a store. The wind was from the south and almost all of the town on the north side of Main Street burned. A Mr. Lamb, boarding with the Caywoods, got on the roof. Rose drew water from the well, handed it up to him and they kept the sparks from igniting the roof, thus saving the boarding house. But the Pitts' home, Charlie Riggins' home, the hardware store, a barber shop, and the printing office were destroyed. The Pitts' store and the drug store were badly damaged. Tom Caywood couldn't help at the boarding house because he was fighting to save the livery stable.

The fire was by no means the end of the town.

Stores were rebuilt. In fact in 1910, the Pratt brothers and Dr. Todd established a bank in which Wade Denton, Dr. Todd's son-in-law, was the teller. This busy doctor also built one of the most imposing homes just east of the edge of town, the only concrete sculptured block structure in the area. It had plate glass doors, large windows and an open stairway. Gale Carrick owned a general store and his home was located where the Baptist parsonage is now. Mr. and Mrs. McGowan operated a cafe in a one-story building next to the post office. McGowan was also a well driller and a carpenter. A later fire in the early 1930's wiped out most of the south side of Main Street.



Gravestone of daughter of Gale and Liddy Carrick

By 1924 Kansas had a park with a small gazebo. It was located on Main Street east of the Kansas House Hotel and the old bank building where the J. O. Jones' residence is now located. Many remember old Captain Tilley who came to town and put up a tent there for shows and movies. But the big attraction was the dance floor where the local girls danced the Charleston to "Yes Sir, That's My Baby." The contests for these dances on a Saturday night was a highlight of the social life. I remember my youngest sister-in-law, Nina Williams Reed, being in these contests.

The first school in Kansas was built by the Lutherans just north of the old John Neal place which was then Dr. Todd's property. It was called the Lutheran Mission School. A Mr. Rice taught there for three weeks and quit. Nola Mahan finished the term. Mr. Emil Hansen, who boarded with the Caywoods, also taught there in 1903 until the school building burned. A house was built to finish the term in, but by 1906, when Susye Buchanan began her first year in school, this Lutheran Church School was taught in the Lutheran Church (later the Methodist) building down in town on Wood Street across from the old Carnes home. Mr. Niels L. Nielsen, the Lutheran missionary at the time, and Lee Crouch taught there. School was also being held at the Indian Mission. Susye remembers walking for three terms to the Indian Mission School. Among other students who attended the Indian Mission were her brothers, Walter and Johnny Jackson, Bill Odle, the Deldine children, and Claude Pifer.

was built in 1924 at the present school location. This stone structure is still being used in the school complex.



Tom Swimmer

In 1909-10 Milan Wren, an uncle of Eva Winfield Hudson, taught one term in the upstairs room of the mill building. Later a school building was built on the corner of Silas Deldine's wife's allotment east of town. This was a white clapboard building and consequently was called the White School by those who remember it. During some of the school terms there, it was apparently a subscription school, and it served until a new school



Tom Swimmer and daughter Grace



Charlott [Turtle] Swimmer children Sam and Grace.



Cusie, Sam, Anna Sand holding baby Louanna and Grace Swimmer.

Louanna Swimmer Oliver remembers the last day of the last subscription school. The last-day-of-school dinner was held in front of the new school building.

Of the early teachers, Alvin Teague became an attorney in Jay. His sister, Lillie Teague, now in her eighties, still lives in Jay. Roscoe Ellis, often mentioned by the old timers as a strict disciplinarian, later became country superintendent and every year came back to Kansas to give the eighth grade examination and hold the graduation ceremonies. Marguerite Potts Stilley, who lived and attended school in Leach, remembers being the only eighth grade student in her school in 1927, and Superintendent Ellis invited her to participate in the Kansas school graduation.

The high school was fully accredited in 1931 when it graduated its first class of eight girls and one boy from the forty-two who had started as freshmen. Of that class, Lee Barnett, now retired from teaching, still lives in Flint. Grace Barnett Bailey lives presently in West Siloam. Ola Bailey is in Jay. Mable Inbody McClendon retired in Jay after teaching in Kansas for years. Frieda Inbody

lives in Owasso, and Gladys Inbody Weaver now lives in Sand Springs. Ruby Barnett Helton moved to California, and Lennie Kirk moved to New Mexico.

Interestingly enough, Kansas once had a business school. In 1912, it met over the bank building and was taught by W. R. Gregg. Among the students were Susye and Johnny Jackson, Walter Carnes, Edith and Birdie Gammon, and Lee Thompson.

Joanna Roberts, Susye Buchanan's daughter, tells of the first hot lunch program at the school. "The first hot lunches were started at Kansas School the year of 1933-34. The seventh and eighth grade girls fixed the soup which was cooked outside in a fifty-pound lard stand over an open fire. The Indian children brought their own bowls and spoons. Their soup was free. Joanna helped fix the meals." The program was still operated much the same way in 1937 although they had moved inside and cooked on a stove. I sent potatoes and onions to school with my daughter.

I came to this town with my husband, Howard L. Williams, in 1927. The street light poles from a lighting system operated by a Kalor plant were still standing. The street was lined with stores made of native lumber. The town was a busy place. The post office was on the first floor of a two-story building, the door of which had bullet holes put there in earlier years. There were signs of bullet holes in other stores also. The walnut legs of the old pool table can still be seen withstanding the sun and rain surviving the building that had once been the Pike Room. The jail, called the Little Red Onion, eight by eight in size made of 2x4 oak lumber, stood just south of Joe Ed Carnes' home on the alley. It was not as secure a place as its construction would indicate, for more than one of the old timers tell of two young men who were awaiting trial there for having indulged in too much fruit-jar liquor. Every night after the town was dark, a friend would come and unlock the door and let them out. Then before daybreak, they would return, relock the door and wait for their trial. These two men are living in the area today and laugh over the caper.

Another story that Bill Odle tells about local justice happened in 1912 when Hugh Thron was constable and Jim Pifer the justice of the peace. Thron arrested an Indian who had come to town with an axe over one shoulder and a jug of liquor on the other. He took the man to Pifer who was just walking out of his office to go to lunch. "Take the

Indian and feed him his lunch and take the jug to my office," Pifer said. "I'll have the trial after lunch." While the Indian was eating, William Odle (Bill's father), Ezra Holbrook and Price Hughes, who knew the Indian wasn't supposed to have liquor, emptied the liquor into their jug and filled his with water. When Pifer returned and started the trial, Thron tested the Indian's jug. Surprised, he asked Pifer to taste the jug. "That's just water," Pifer uttered in disgust, "Case dismissed." The rather puzzled Indian walked out of the courtroom. Odle, Holbrook, and Hughes gave him a good swig from their jug which contained his liquor, and sent him on his way. Then they finished off the jug. Times haven't changed much. The law still gets the liquor.

Shooting was common in the town. Susye Buchanan tells that when she was very small the family lived just north of the hotel. One day a bunch of rowdy boys rode in shooting up the town and frightening a young boy. Susye's mother told the children to get into the house quickly and she ran down to get the frightened lad, who was her husband's cousin. When she came back with the riders just ahead of her still shooting recklessly, she almost fainted with fright when she saw Susye. The other children had dashed into the house leaving Susye sitting on the gate post. And there she was, giggling and enjoying the whole ruckus.

Town ruckuses were not always so innocent. H. L. Williams tells of Barker Drye killing Holly and Slim Anderson's father with a knife in one of them, leaving the boys orphans. Governor Bellew took Holly to raise and Mrs. McGowan's father, Mr. Parsons, took Slim into his family.

Although rough and wild, the early town was

not without religion. The Long Prairie Indian Baptist Church was the first church in this area. The old timers speak of it as the Indian Mission, and it is known as the mother church of the forty-two Baptist Indian churches in Delaware County started by the Missionary Baptist Church.

Just when the church was built is difficult to determine because most of the records were destroyed by fire when lightning struck a storehouse belonging to the son of Samuel O'Field, pastor there for many years. But Lou O'Field Postoak tells me that a Baptist Missionary named Isaac Watt and four teachers came here from Chicago, Illinois, to build a school and church for the Cherokees sometime between 1824 and 1828. The church was built on Spring Creek between Oaks and Kansas in the Goingsnake District, where it is located today.

The building was clapboard with a belfry cradling a large brass bell that could be heard for miles, especially when it tolled for a death in the still of night or unexpected hours of the day. The old fenced cemetery a few yards from the church has names and dates in Cherokee from the early 1800's. Mrs. Sam O'Field explained to me that the cemetery was never enlarged because when the burials had extended to the east fence, they started burying at the front again and were presently on the third round.

When I first visited this church, I was impressed with the handmade pews, the coal oil lights of real beauty, the chandeliers of milk glass trimmed with brass and cut glass prisms. There was a pump organ beside the pulpit unit made of walnut with turned spindles on top. When the brass bell in the belfry rang, the whole building vibrated.

Samuel O'Field preached the day of my first visit and the singing was like the harmony of a pipe organ, with voices joining the leader one by one until all were singing in Cherokee as was the custom. Then Lou Postoak's beautiful high soprano soared over it all, singing the words in English.

Many years later a newly appointed missionary persuaded the members to rebuild the old building because of the bell vibration. Actually it only needed a new cradle for the bell, but he had his way and the building was torn down. Many living today were hurt to see the lovely old church come down. During the rebuilding it was a sad day to see the organ, the chandeliers, and the pulpit furniture standing out in the weather and children carelessly picking up the handmade square nails.



Long Prairie Church

The new church building, completed in the early 1940's, has electric lights and new pews, but the old bell still rings. Swimmer Snell tolled it faithfully day or night for every death in the community as long as he lived. He told me that his father had ordered the bell and his grandfather had helped make the nails for the old church.

The church is well attended today with the pastors preaching in both English and Cherokee.

One of the old families whose descendants are still in the area is the O'Fields. Joe O'Field, now in his late 70's, pastored the church for some years; his father, Samuel, was ordained there and pastored it for fifteen years before becoming a traveling missionary to the other churches. His grandfather, Abe O'Field, was the pastor there before Samuel. More recent ministers were Samuel Comings and Ross Boulin.

Other old families of the church are the Fields, the Russells, Boulins, Parchcorns, Snells, Glasses, Cochrans, and the Davises.

Another of the early churches was the Methodist. The building that eventually became the Methodist Church in Kansas was either built by the Moravians before they settled at Oaks in 1842, or as another source tells the story, it was built by the Moravians who fled the Oaks area after the Pinn Indians killed several missionaries, including Mr. James Ward.

The building must have been acquired by the Danish Lutherans from the Moravians. These missionaries, who had also built a church in Oaks, held church both at Oaks and Kansas. A preacher, Mr. Emil Neilsen, rode horseback between the two areas following the trail down Spring Creek. He was shot at often. In one close call, the saddle horn was shot off of his saddle.

The dates are uncertain, but the building was a Lutheran Church by 1906 when local residents still living attended school there. The building was located on what is now Wood Avenue facing east across the street from the old Carnes home. After Governor Bellew, and Monroe and Cora Bellew started a Sunday school in the old White schoolhouse, those attending who had Methodist background pulled away and started a Methodist Church. Apparently they acquired the church building from the Lutherans. This must have been sometime between 1906 and 1913, as Josie Tinker has a Methodist cradle roll certificate for her sister, Stella Abbott, age two, signed by Mrs. Bessie Snell, teacher, and dated June 20, 1913.

Some of the early families of this Methodist Church were Mrs. Charles Tye and her mother, the McGowans, the Parsons, the Prowells, and possibly Dr. Todd. The circuit preachers or pastors preached at Kansas, then rode on to Kenwood. In the 1920's while at Kansas, Pastor Leatherwood stayed with Mrs. Clyde Odle's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Burges, who ran a cafe on Highway 33 across from the Travis store. When in Kenwood he stayed with Clyde Odle. There was also a Pastor Moore in 1924 and a man named Josh Cloud who rode the circuit. Other pastors stayed with the Prowells from time to time.

When the Methodists pulled away from the Sunday school at the White School, Mrs. Carlton gave ground for a Christian Church. This church was built in 1916-17. Shod Dickson of the Oaks area built the building. In 1922 a traveling preacher by the name of Bodine held a revival there for two weeks. Susye Buchanan tells me that she was converted during his revival. She also remembers that this preacher was rotten-egged out of town.

Many who were young people at that time say that the churches were the only social life of the town. It didn't matter whether they were Methodists or Christian, everyone went to whichever church was having a social or a young people's service.

The old Christian Church building burned and the Methodist building practically blew over. Then it was sold to a man for the windows. The lot was sold by Mrs. Prowell. It changed hands several times. Then Clyde Luper bought it for sentimental reasons. He moved the old steps, which had stood there for many years, to his home north of town.

When I moved here in 1937, there was no church at all. I understand that a few people met at the schoolhouse, and C G. (Poppy) Reed had built a brush arbor where he held services. Later he built a frame building which still houses the Holiness Church. He is now ninety-three and still preaches. I also understand that the present Church of Christ was formed from the group that met at the schoolhouse. They met at the old Rosell store before they built their present building.

In 1939 or 1940, a Community Church was organized, meeting in the remodeled Pitts and Pifer store building. The Baptists pulled out of this group and organized a Southern Baptist Church, holding their first meetings in a tent pitched on Howard Williams' property on the old picnic grounds. During cold weather they met in the garage there

while they were building a frame building in town.

Less than fifty years ago one had to ford the creek coming in to Kansas from the west. After the road was straightened out and a bridge built over the creek, the highway by-passed the town. Businesses popped-up along the highway. Just south and west of town there was a large garage on the north side of the road and a grocery store, cream station, and ice house across from it built by the Travis Brothers in 1928. Two hand-operated gas pumps were on each side of the road. The Rankin Rapid Transportation jitney, a seven-passenger Studebaker, ran between Tulsa and Fayetteville and gassed up on the south side of the road going to Fayetteville and on the north side coming back. A handle mill operated by Charlie Gorman and Roy O'Dell was located here also from the early 30's until the late 40's.

When the road changed, the annual Fourth of July picnic site was changed from south of this site to the old roadbed between the Travis garage and the creek in a grove of trees, an ideal spot. Howard Williams continued these picnics after he bought the Travis garage and store from Tallefero in 1938. Many people living today remember the thrill of the carnival—stands selling hamburgers, lemonade and ice cream; the old dance floor made of rough lumber with local talent fiddling, and a tent for movies. Gallons of blackberries had been picked to buy new dresses especially for this picnic. I'm sure a few seventy-year-olds will remember the old merry-go-round pulled by a mule with a fiddler riding on one of the seats providing the music.

People came by horseback, wagons, and cars. They camped on the land all around the store for three days. They brought cream in to sell for extra money.

The area was lighted by a Kalor system with a gasoline motor in the garage and strings of lights across the highway from the store and out to the dance floor. Later, during World War II when REA service became available, H. L. Williams lighted the whole grove area.

Even with all of the concessions at the picnic, the store did an outlandish business selling sardines and crackers, the crackers at five cents a box, sardines and salmon at ten cents a can, and of course, soda pop at five cents a bottle. Baloney sold by the slice and by the pound. Peanut butter was still sold in the bulk, and the dill pickles were fished out of the fifty-gallon barrel. The ice house furnished the 100-pound blocks of ice sold to the conces-

sions. In fact, the store furnished almost everything for the picnic, including coal oil at five cents a gallon and light, medium, and heavy motor oil from the old three-compartment oil pump.

These picnics continued until after World War II. One year the members of the American Legion moved the picnic site up into town on a treeless lot with the only water coming from a July downpour. The ferris wheel got stuck in the mud; the movie tent and several other concessions continued down on the old picnic site. That particular carnival company refused to come the next year, and the picnic was then returned to the old site and continued for several years, finally ending its near-fifty-year existence in the 1940's.

In 1943, H. L. Williams, Jim Herndon, Jim Slack, Loy Paige, and Rufus Reed organized the Kansas Round-up Club with rodeo grounds on the Williams' property just west of the picnic grounds. This group, with thirty-seven charter members, sponsored an annual rodeo and almost weekly calf roping for several years.

There were several "firsts" around the Howard Williams store. He had the first electric meat box in town, the first electric ice cream box, and the first electric Coca-Cola box also.

Mr. Carlton had the first gasoline pump in Kansas at the hardware store.

The first club house in the county for the American Legion Auxiliary and the Home Extension Club was located across from the Williams store. He moved an old cafe building to join a one-room house next to the old well house with the sign on top "Stop and Have a Drink," which was kind of a local landmark. The club room was pine paneled with 1x12's scrubbed and cleaned, and the two clubs sponsored a maternity and children's clinic once a month and an adult clinic once a month. The doctors came from Tahlequah and the nurses from Tulsa. This was a great help to the community as there was no doctor in the area at this time and the depression was in full bloom.

Howard Williams had been so civic minded in his aid to the school and his other activities that many people were saddened when he retired from business and the old store fell into despair.

There were other firsts around Kansas. The first canning plant was a community affair at the Pesha home on Highway 33 which later became the Jose's Tea Room. The canning plant hired several young people. Louanna Oliver tells me she worked there one summer and made twelve dollars and

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thought she was rich. The only other canning factory was owned by Clint Smith and located east of town on Spring Creek.

One of the most interesting firsts was the unique telephone service set up by Mr. and Mrs. Dave Oung, who bought the Little Kansas Telephone Company in 1941. Although telephone service had been in operation for more than forty years prior to that time, by which the five communities—Kansas, Oaks, Leach, Kenwood, and Twin Oaks—had been linked by a rural line between Kansas and Locust Grove, the service was as undependable as the Oklahoma weather. In 1953, Mr. Oung set up a unique direct radio circuit between Kansas and Pryor. This "wireless" phone service was the first of its type in Oklahoma.

The story would not be complete without mentioning some of the other businesses that moved into the area in the 1930's. At the top of the hill east of Howard Williams' store, the McClendons had a service station, and across the road was Jose's Tea Room and Dance Parlor. This was run by Mr. and Mrs. Jose Herrera whose daughter, Anita (now Mrs. Virgil Reed) lives in the area. Their grandson, Wayman Reed, is in business here.

Further east several blocks, Ambrose (Red) Williams had a store. During the 30's, J. O. Jones also opened a grocery store on the south side of Main Street in the town, later moving across the street into the Slick Brewer building. His is the only store that remains in the town proper.

Many of the families that moved into the Kansas area in Indian Territory had come from the South, especially Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and the Carolinas, migrating into Arkansas and on over into Indian Territory and the Cherokee Nation after the Civil War.

They came here because the area was similar to their old homes or because of the restlessness and hard times that followed the war. Many of the Indians had come before the "Trail of Tears." Some came with money and others came with nothing. A good many had previously settled in Flint, Siloam, or Weddington. While some came as missionaries, others came to flee the law. There are many families that should be recorded in this history, but it has been difficult to arouse their interest.

I am Anita Sue Hudson of Kansas, Oklahoma, where I have spent most of my life. My grandparents came here before Oklahoma became a state. It was then called Kansas, Indian Territory. The first store run by white people was owned by John and Joe Buchanan. The first store run by an Indian was owned by Still Jackson. These stores were general stores which handled feed, groceries, clothing, and tools. These merchants had their merchandise brought to them in wagons and hacks from Siloam Springs and other places.

The first postmaster was Mr. Thompson in 1895. Following him were Dr. Todd, then Ulysses Reeves, Mrs. Prowell who still lives in the area, Nancy Hide, and Joe Carnes, the father of Joe Carnes, our present postmaster.

The first hardware store was owned by Mr. Burns. Dr. Todd and Ulysses Reeves owned the drugstore at different times. The first blacksmith shop was run by Cathcart. In the early days the blacksmiths were kept as busy as are the garages today. They had to shoe the horses, put on wagon tires, and repair farming equipment.

The hotel was first run by Mr. and Mrs. Crouch. The last people to operate a hotel in Kansas were Mr. and Mrs. Willison, and it was located in what is now the Gene Winfield residence.

At one time Kansas was an incorporated town with its mayor and other city officials. There was a jail, pool hall, cotton gin, barber shop, printing office, Odd Fellow Lodge and Anit-Horse Thief Lodge.

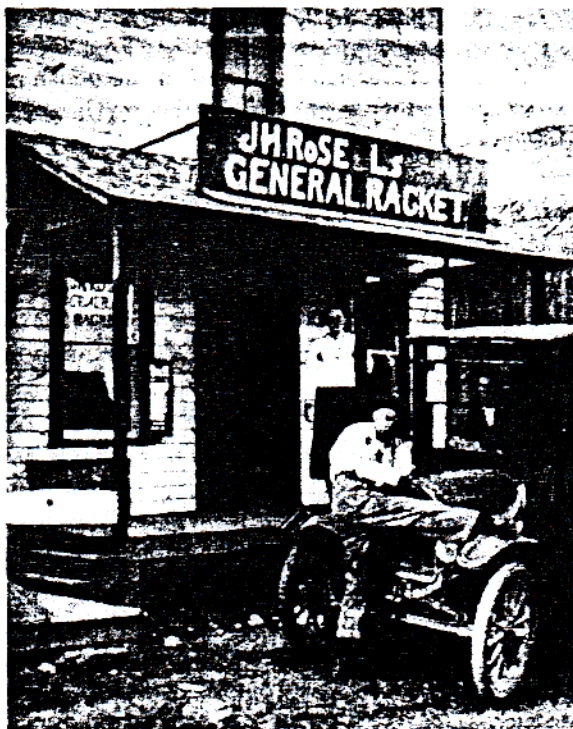
The dentist was Mr. Walters, and the neighborhood doctor was Dr. James Harvey Todd.

The livery barn was owned by Tom Caywood. The sawmill was run by Joe Winfield and his brother, Lisha Winfield. My grandfather, Ben Winfield, owned the corn mill and people for miles around brought their corn for him to grind into meal for bread and chops for feed. He would grind their corn for them for a certain amount of the meal.

When this was Indian Territory and in the early years of statehood, there were plenty of wild turkeys and deer for the people to kill for their food. Mink and other fur bearing animals were plentiful. Good crops were raised as we got more rain, snow and sleet than we do now. The main crops were wheat and corn. The surplus was taken to Watts, Oklahoma, to the elevator and loaded in freight cars. Very little feed was bought since each farmer

grew what he needed. Sometimes they would save old butter and sell to produce companies to be made into soap. One way they had for keeping butter good for table use was to pack it down in a stone jar - layer of butter and a layer of salt. This stone jar was kept in the spring house and as they churned they added more butter and more salt. At last when the time rolled around to go into Siloam Springs, the butter was taken out of the jar and the salt washed out and made into molds. It was sold as fresh butter.

In 1910, the Pratt boys and Dr. Todd started the bank. Mrs. Tom Caywood who still lives in Kansas ran the boarding house and she had quite an experience in fire fighting one night back in 1906 or 1907. One night fire broke out in one of the stores and the wind was from the south. About all the town on the north side of the street burned. Mr. Caywood had to stay at the livery barn and fight fire to keep it from burning, and Mr. Lamb, one of the boarders at the Caywoods, got up on the roof of the house and Mrs. Caywood drew water out of the well and handed it up to him. He kept the fire put out and saved their house. The Pitts home and the Charlie Riggins home burned as did the hardware store, barber shop, and printing office. The Pitts store and the drugstore were badly damaged.



*Log Kennedy in front of Rosell's Racket Store. John is in car and Bessie Rosell is on the porch.
Kansas, Oklahoma - 1917*

The first school in Kansas was located right north of Dee Neel's home. The Lutheran people built a little schoolhouse there and Mr. Hansen boarded with the Caywood's and taught the first school. That schoolhouse burned and they built another schoolhouse. Later it was sold to be the Methodist church. After they closed that school, the next school was taught in Indian Mission. They had school in Indian Mission for awhile then my mother's uncle, Milam Wren, taught one term in the upstairs of the mill building, this was about 1909 or 1910. They then built a schoolhouse across the highway from Slim McAlister's home and had school there until they built the school we have now.

The mail was carried by horseback and by hack. The carrier left Siloam Springs and went to Tahlequah, then to Kanas. He changed teams at Tom Caywood's livery barn then went back to Siloam Springs. Later they just came from Siloam Springs to Kansas and went back to Siloam Springs. If anyone needed anything from Siloam Springs, all he had to do was just tell the mail carrier and he would get it for him. They would have passengers also. In the later years, the government has disallowed this practice.



Samuel B. Rosell; Edith Hardin in high chair fifty years ago at the Rosell home place.

KANSAS, OKLAHOMA

The town of Kansas is located in the south part of Delaware County, a short distance north of State Highway 33. Its official name is Kansas, not "Little Kansas," as often referred to by out-of-town residents. Some old timers at Kansas believe the town was named for a peddler or "drummer" as they were called in frontier days. He would camp down by the spring and peddle his merchandise according to stories recalled by a longtime resident. His one-man trading camp could very well have been the start of the Indian Territory-Day town.

Kansas was a pretty and thriving little town during early statehood days. Business establishments included a bank, a pretty drug store, a hotel, a post office, a hardware store, at least two general stores, a blacksmith shop, and possibly more businesses. It contained several churches and a school. Its first high school was added a year at a time.

Early day churches included the Christian Church, Methodist, and the oldest of all, the Long Prairie Indian Baptist Church southwest of town since 1838. Later the Community Church and the Holiness Church were added, and still later came the First Baptist Church.

The town had a medical doctor for many years who served the entire area. Doc Todd, who was also the banker, was an early day medical doctor at Kansas. Later Dr. J. W. Prowell moved to Kansas and served the area many years. Shortly after moving to Kansas, he married Mrs. Mary McGowan who was then the postmaster.

One could hardly recall the many old timers of Kansas. Some included the Carnes brothers (Joe who was postmaster several years) Walter and probably others; Nathaniel Martin; Sam Rosell, operator of a general store who lived a short distance west of town; Jim Pifer, operator of a general store; Charley Tye; John Luper; Wash Hudson; John Neal; Ben Winfield; Tom and Rosie Caywood; Tom Welch; a Mr. Carlton who operated a hardware; U. S. Reeves, operator of the drug store; P. K. "Pete" Beam, a cattleman for many years; the Willison family, who operated the hotel, and on and on. One could not list all or recollect all.

Area residents farmed, raising their own food and feed for cattle, hogs and horses. All kept milk cows for their own milk and butter and many raised a few cattle to sell for needed cash. Much grass was available on the open range of Delaware County.

The beautiful wooded country around Kansas contained an abundance of wild blackberries, wild huckleberries in some areas, wild plums, and so on. A considerable amount of wild game, squirrels, etc. was available for the taking. Numerous springs of cold clear water are found in the surrounding area and water in area wells is good and cold.

Early day history, as recalled by old timers by stories handed down, included shooting of U. S. Marshals Veer and Gilstrap reportedly by the Wickliffe brothers.

Other memories are of Roscoe Ellis being the school principal when the two-room white frame building was located on the highway, a short distance southeast of the present school building. The ninth grade was added while school was still being held in that building.

The area has developed in recent years with many nice homes being constructed in the entire surrounding area and in town. J. O. Jones, operator of the town's general store since 1933, is a booster of the Kansas Fire Department. "It has one of the best fire departments in the state," Jones said. Joe Winfield is the present fire chief (1976). The town's city council is composed of Jim Burgess, Alvin Vaughan, and Olen Reed who also serves as mayor. Murphy Moore is the present school superintendent.

Good highways allow numerous workers to commute to Tulsa and Siloam Springs for employment and makes for ease in shopping. But the town itself and its surrounding area radiates a quiet and peaceful atmosphere which is not so easy to find elsewhere in this day and age. One must live at Kansas, absorbing its peaceful tranquility to appreciate its peacefulness.

Little did I realize while growing up on the farm, three miles west of Kansas, that the Kansas area was surrounded by early-day Indian Territory history. My parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. P. K. Beam (called Pete and Mary by neighbors and friends), moved from Catoosa to the Kansas area in 1911. My earliest recollections of the former Indian Territory town are of its pretty and peaceful appearance.

I remember the Long Prairie Indian Baptist Church which is a short distance southwest of town. I remember Sam O'Field and his family, who lived near the church, and were apparently leaders in the church. How well I remember the sad mournful tones of the tolling of the church's bell when a member had died. A Cherokee man once told me it

was the "mother" church of all Cherokee Indian Baptist churches in that part of the old Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory. It continued operating as a church when the Cherokees settled in the area, following the "Trail of Tears." Few churches can equal its long-time continuous operation.

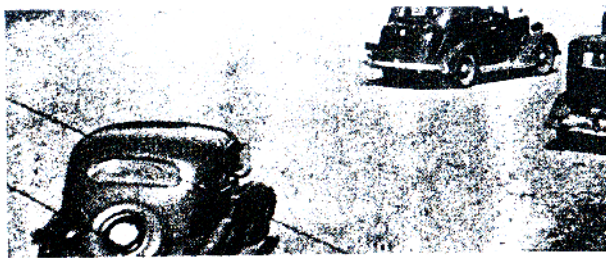
My own father was the main cattleman of the area. He continuously raised his own cattle, the T-Bar brand, yet regularly rode four counties on horseback, buying cattle for future shipment to Kansas City markets. My brother, Joe Beam, my six sisters and I, were raised "on horseback." I well recall riding three miles on horseback to Kansas High School a couple of years. I recall mamm riding side-saddle style, something I never tried.

A complete history of the town would fill good sized book, yet one cannot omit its present-day progress. Even though it doesn't contain the former number of business establishments needed in pioneer days, the Kansas area has developed steadily. It has many, many newly constructed homes, both in town and in the entire surrounding area.

Probably more than half the area's population are part Cherokee Indian as it is a part of the Cherokee Nation. Located in the south part of Delaware County, Kansas offers a quiet, peaceful existence. One can truly say with pride, "It is my home town."

—Submitted by Charlotte Cox, Picher, Oklahoma

Sailboat Bridge prior to filling the lake, 1930's,
from the south end.





North side of Main Street in Kansas, Oklahoma—1913 Reading left to right: Bank, Neal Cayce's Barber Shop [white front], McGowan's Cafe, Post Office [sign above porch roof], Pitts Store [later Jim Pifer and now Community Church.

On horses: Johnnie Jackson, Roscoe Carnes, Will Mounce, Bob Carrick, Lawrence Gregory, Clyde Buchanan on white horse [called his courting horse], Earl Carnes [brother of Joe Carnes], Earl Wilson, Walter Jackson, and Bryan Roberts. and Bryan Roberts.

