

PLUM GROVE, BRAINERD, WHITEWATER, AND POTWIN  
FROM 1870-1900

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897

A Thesis Study Presented to the  
Faculty of the  
Division of Social Sciences  
The Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science

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by

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1970  
E

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R. H. E.

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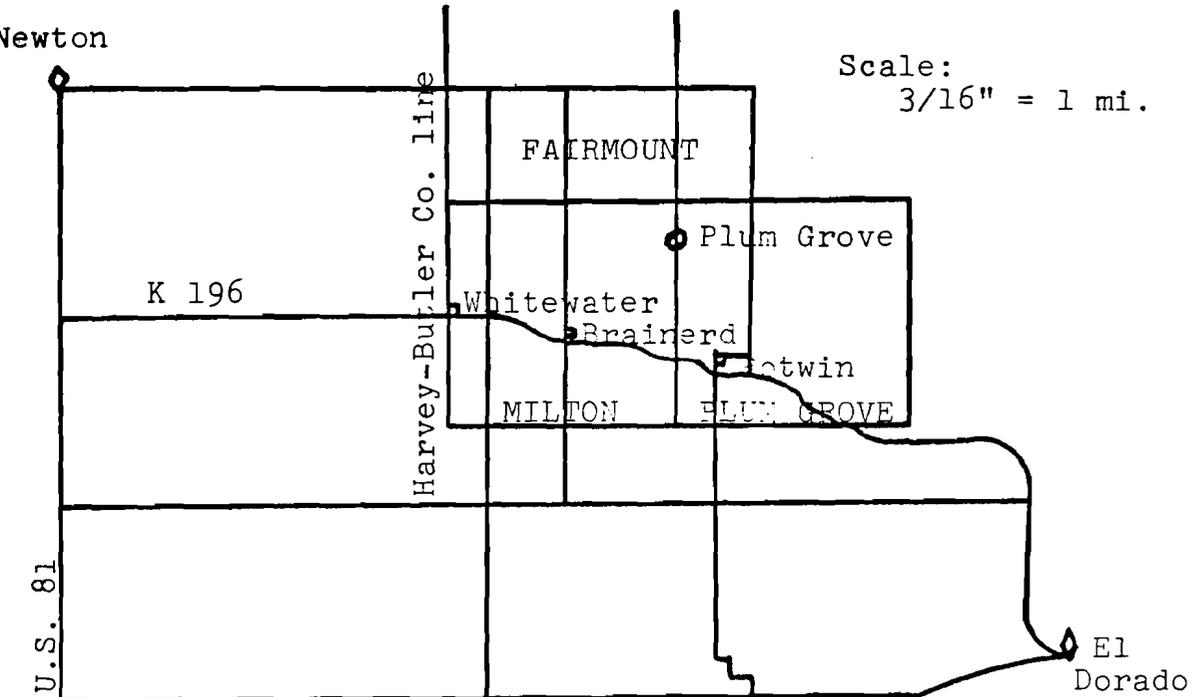
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The study of Plum Grove, Brainerd, Whitewater, and Potwin during the 1870-1900 era was suggested by a research project on Plum Grove, which was undertaken for a course in Urban Geography. Out of this preliminary research, findings indicated that the settlers of Plum Grove did not remain for an extended period of time on that town site. A question which remained unanswered was "Why and where did the majority of the residents move?" The question suggested a broader research topic: Did the residents move into the towns near Plum Grove or completely out of the area? Preliminary research also pointed toward the arrival of railroads as having an influence on the settlement patterns of early pioneers of the area and the people of Plum Grove.

In order to resolve the unanswered questions raised in the research on Plum Grove, necessity demanded the expansion of the research of the Plum Grove study in northwestern Butler County to include the nearby towns of Brainerd, Whitewater, and Potwin, which are located on an east-west axis along an eight mile stretch of Kansas Highway 196. Map 1 indicates the relationship of these four town sites with each other and with El Dorado, Newton, and Wichita. The data obtained in the research provided a key to under-



Map 1 - Location Map. Whitewater, Brainerd, Potwin, and Plum Grove town sites are located in the north-west corner of Butler County, Kansas. The first three are located on an east-west axis along an eight mile stretch of K 196. Whitewater, the western most, is seventeen miles by road southeast of Newton (six south and eleven east); twenty-three miles northeast of Wichita; twenty miles northwest of El Dorado.

Brainerd is located a short three miles east of Whitewater. Potwin is located four miles east of Brainerd. One other paved road lies beside each of these three towns, giving them north and south access. Other roads near the towns are unpaved.

The Plum Grove town site was located three miles north and one mile west of Potwin, on unpaved roads (note circle).

standing the development of this area of Butler County.

### Statement of Problem

The development of this study centered on the hypothesis that the people moved to the town which had the most to offer in regard to business and economic opportunities which were enhanced by transportation facilities almost wholly dominated by the advancing railroad systems.

### Plan of Study

In order to gather data to research the topic, various sources were used. Research of the early day maps of the area during the 1870-1900 era from both the Butler County Engineering Office and maps drawn by individuals offered greater enlightenment to the study. Mrs. J. J. Kopper had drawn a map of the town of Plum Grove with the homes, school, and business locations prior to her death. Other relevant maps were found in record books in the Butler County Court House and at the Butler County Historical Society Museum.

The study of documents, such as the Potwin Town Charter, preserved and given to the Butler County Historical Society, offered further insight into the question of the movement of people. The Wichita Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society had in their materials artifacts such as railroad passes and way bills from this area provid-

ing empirical evidence of commercial development. With the closing of the office of the Butler County Superintendent of Schools, school records held by the Butler County Clerk, although incomplete, made available evidence of social development in the area. The Bethel College Mennonite Historical Library proved to be a source of both pictures and biographical information on early Mennonite settlers of the area.

Numerous personal interviews with contemporary residents in northwestern Butler County, whose parents had settled during the era under study, provided much detailed information, and pictures, which became the nucleus of evidence for the study. The Reverend B. W. Harder, Albert Claassen, Mrs. Ted Roth, Sr., Arthur Penner, Mrs. Sara Richert, Merton E. King, and others all contributed as they remembered their childhood in the respective areas of their former homes.

Some biographical material was researched in El Dorado, Kansas, with Mrs. Cordy Jones of the Butler County Historical Society Museum assisting. This museum was also the source of burial records.

The Kansas Historical Society in Topeka, Kansas, gave access to some extant newspapers from the geographic area under study. Old issues of *The Walnut Valley News* newspaper were the most helpful.

On site inspection of hiking through the former town site of Plum Grove, and the present communities of Brainerd, Whitewater, and Potwin provided further insights to the platting of the towns. Aerial photography was helpful to ascertain the natural setting of the towns.

With repeated interviews it has been possible to trace the movement of some individuals from Plum Grove to Brainerd--then to follow these same people to Whitewater or Potwin. From research of these various sources, some conclusions can be compiled into a meaningful relationship to the hypothesis set forth earlier as to the reasons for the rise and decline of Plum Grove and Brainerd, and the continued existence of Whitewater and Potwin.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY BUTLER COUNTY

Butler County, Kansas, named after Andrew P. Butler, a United States Senator from South Carolina from 1846 to 1857, was organized in 1855, and was one of the original thirty-three counties created by the first legislature of the Territory of Kansas. The county boundaries were changed several times before the final boundary adoption of February 26, 1867.<sup>1</sup>

The present county has an area larger than the state of Rhode Island, an elevation of over thirteen hundred feet, an average annual rainfall of between thirty and forty inches, and a mean annual temperature of fifty-one degrees. Fertile farmland made up of western residual soil in the valley of the Whitewater River comprises most of the western portion of the county. The land is flat or gently rolling in that part. Sand is found in the bed of the Whitewater River, and magnesium limestone underlies the surface of the ground in every township of the county.

The area known as Plum Grove Township was first settled in the spring of 1857, when a colony from Douglas County, Kansas, settled along the east branch of the White-

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<sup>1</sup>Volney P. Mooney, History of Butler County, Kansas (Lawrence, Kansas: Standard Publishing Co., 1916), pp. 33-35.

water River: The original settlers left Plum Grove during the drought of 1860; and when new settlers moved into the area, the log houses built by the earlier settlers were torn down and moved to other claims along the river and its tributaries.<sup>2</sup>

At this time other areas of Butler County were being settled by new arrivals. Much of the land in the county during the 1850's and 1860's was platted but not filed since no filing office was established at this time. One group located on the south edge of what became El Dorado in the spring of 1857. Another settlement, from Emporia, moved to the Chelsea area. By 1863, sufficient numbers of settlers were on the Towanda site to require the building of a school for their children. Rosalia, likewise, had established a school for its students. Thus, several settlements had taken root in the new county by the end of the Civil War.<sup>3-4</sup> However, some land in the southern portion of the county was not opened for settlement.

The southern half of present Butler County included Osage Indian Land to which the Indians had been given fed-

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<sup>2</sup>Jessie Perry Stratford, Butler County's Eighty Years--1855-1935 (El Dorado [Kansas]: Butler County News, 1934), p. 44.

<sup>3</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup>Stratford, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-16.

eral government title (Map 2). In the summer of 1870, the North Osage Lands were opened for public entry and were known and deeded as Speculator's Land, including what was first known as Peck, and afterwards as Potwin Land or Lawrence Land. This land was formerly known as Railroad Land.<sup>5</sup> This railroad land was given by the United States government to the state for educational purposes, but, the local tradition contends, the dishonest legislators gave it to the railroad promoters.<sup>6</sup> The Osage Land was sold to the settlers for \$1.25 an acre.<sup>7</sup>

Though there was sporadic settlement in Butler County from 1868 to 1874, the period of true and permanent settlement in the western portion was from 1875 to 1884. Most of these new settlers built their homes of logs hauled from creek bottoms, or sod cut from the prairie, or rock picked up and hauled ten or more miles. These houses sat on bleak prairie or isolated creek bottoms, and many measured less than twenty feet square and contained one or two rooms.

The area acquired sufficient population that Plum Grove Township was organized out of Towanda Township by

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<sup>5</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, pp. 64 and 174.

<sup>6</sup>This information was alluded to by several interviewees; however, they requested that their names not be associated with this comment.

<sup>7</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

# BUTLER COUNTY

Compiled from the Field Notes of the United States Survey.

PUBLISHED BY

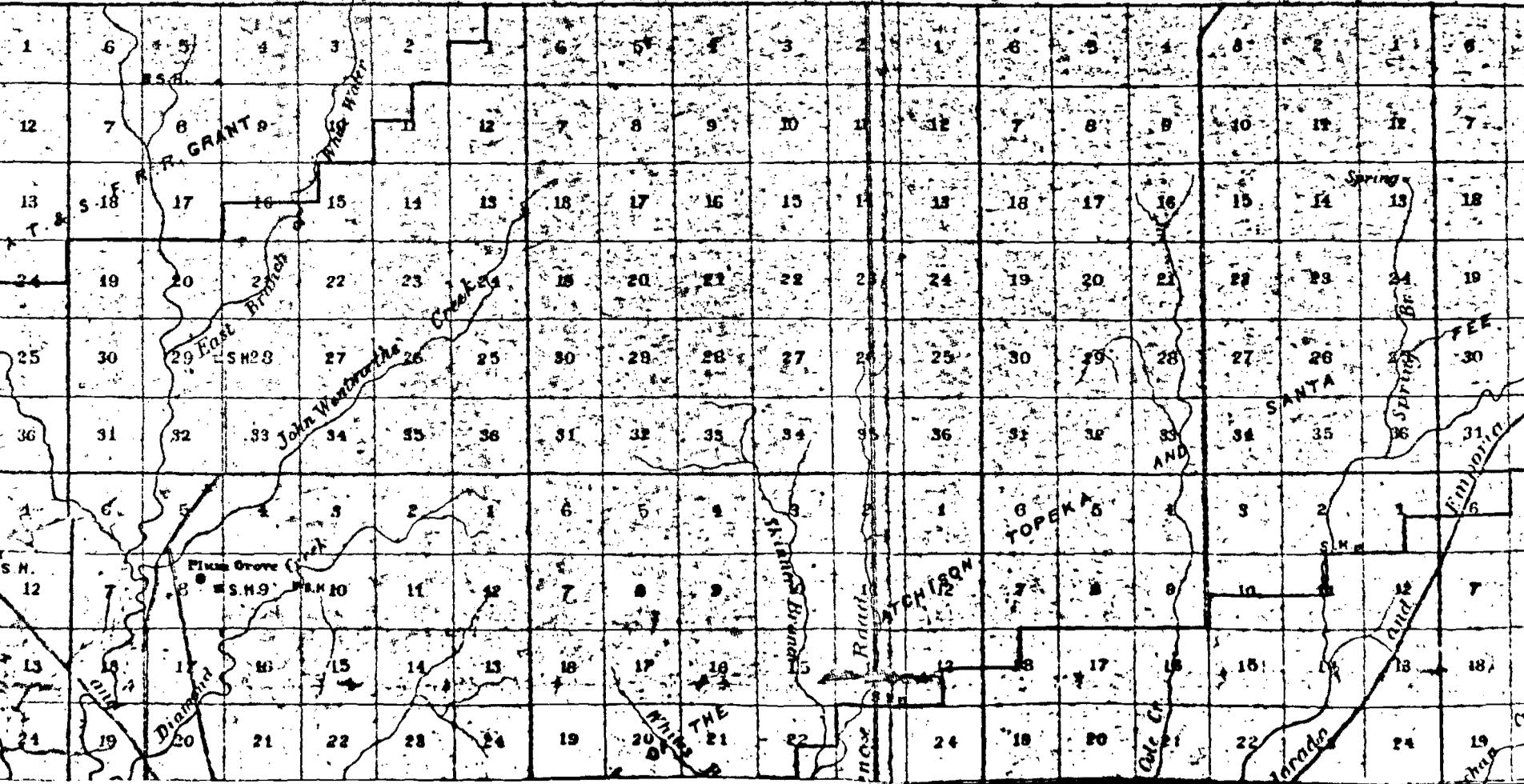
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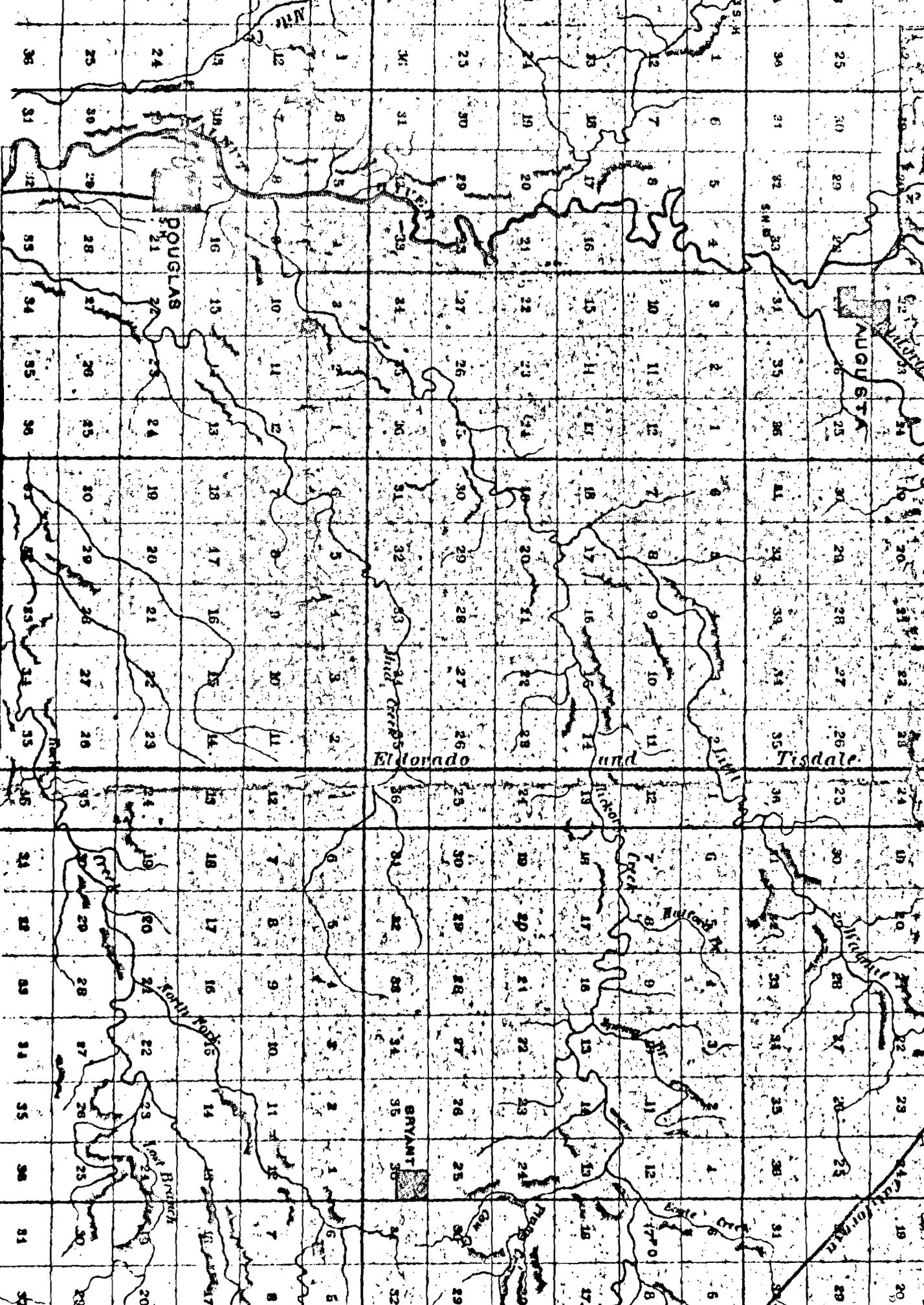
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action of the County Commission on May 15, 1871 (Map 3).



Fig. 1 - Early Home - This picture was taken in the mid-1890's south of Potwin, Kansas.

Joseph H. Adams, the first permanent resident of Plum Grove Township, came from Dwight County, Illinois. Mr. Adams settled one mile southwest of the present city of Potwin in the spring of 1860. He lived there until fall and moved on to the northeast quarter of Section 7, Township 24, Range 4 East. After his wife's death in 1868, he married Mrs. Margaret Pitzer of Chase County. After the death of Mr. Adams in October of 1875, his widow married M. S. Bond in 1879.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-188.

# PLUM GROVE TOWNSHIP

6 PLUM GROVE TOWN SITE	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

Map 3 - Plum Grove Township

Other new arrivals included Henry Comstock, a Civil War veteran from Illinois, after whom Henry Creek was named, T. L. Ferrier, Jake L. Green, Walter Gilman, and Horace H. Wilcox--all of whom settled in Plum Grove Township during the year 1867. Mr. Wilcox lived with his family in a log cabin and engaged in raising about two hundred Texas cattle. By contrast, Mr. Comstock had thirty head and Stark M. Spencer had twenty head. Other settlers in the area were M. S. Eddy, his brother-in-law Will Power, Ed and Hoyt Ketchum, William Dennis, Ben Ogden, L. B. Cain, Charles V. Cain, Jacob Holderman, Stephen Wentworth and his son John R. Wentworth. Waitman F. Joseph and four sons--William I., James, Moses N., and Sidney S.--came from West Virginia and bought large tracts of the best land in the Whitewater valley. M. D. L. Kimberlin came from Kentucky and bought land on the east branch of the Whitewater River, building a home for his four sons and four daughters.<sup>9-10</sup>

Two years later the land adjoining Plum Grove Township on the west petitioned the County Commissioners on January 6, 1873, that a new political township be formed out of the territory comprising Congressional Township 24, Range 3 East. The petition was granted, and Milton Township

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<sup>9</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-190.

<sup>10</sup>Stratford, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46.

was created from part of Towanda Township. The new township consisted of thirty-six square sections (Map 4). An election was ordered to take place in November--the regular time of holding elections for township officers. The following were elected: George H. Sanders, Treasurer; C. P. Strong, Trustee; G. W. Carter, Clerk; B. Clouce and H. H. Storms, Justices of the Peace; and E. J. Powell and Charles Barker, Constables.<sup>11</sup>

Milton Township was named after Milton C. Snorf, its first settler, who located on the northeast quarter of Section 36 in 1868. Other settlers arrived in approximately the following chronological order: W. G. McGramer, Stark M. Spencer, Levi Spencer, George Cornelius, Sylvester Foster, George Sanders, W. B. Mordough, Charles Barker, L. C. White, George Ogden, E. J. Powell, Sam Thomas, Thomas H. Storms, John Harder, and the Neiman, Hoss, Spark, DeTalent, and Hershley families.<sup>12</sup>

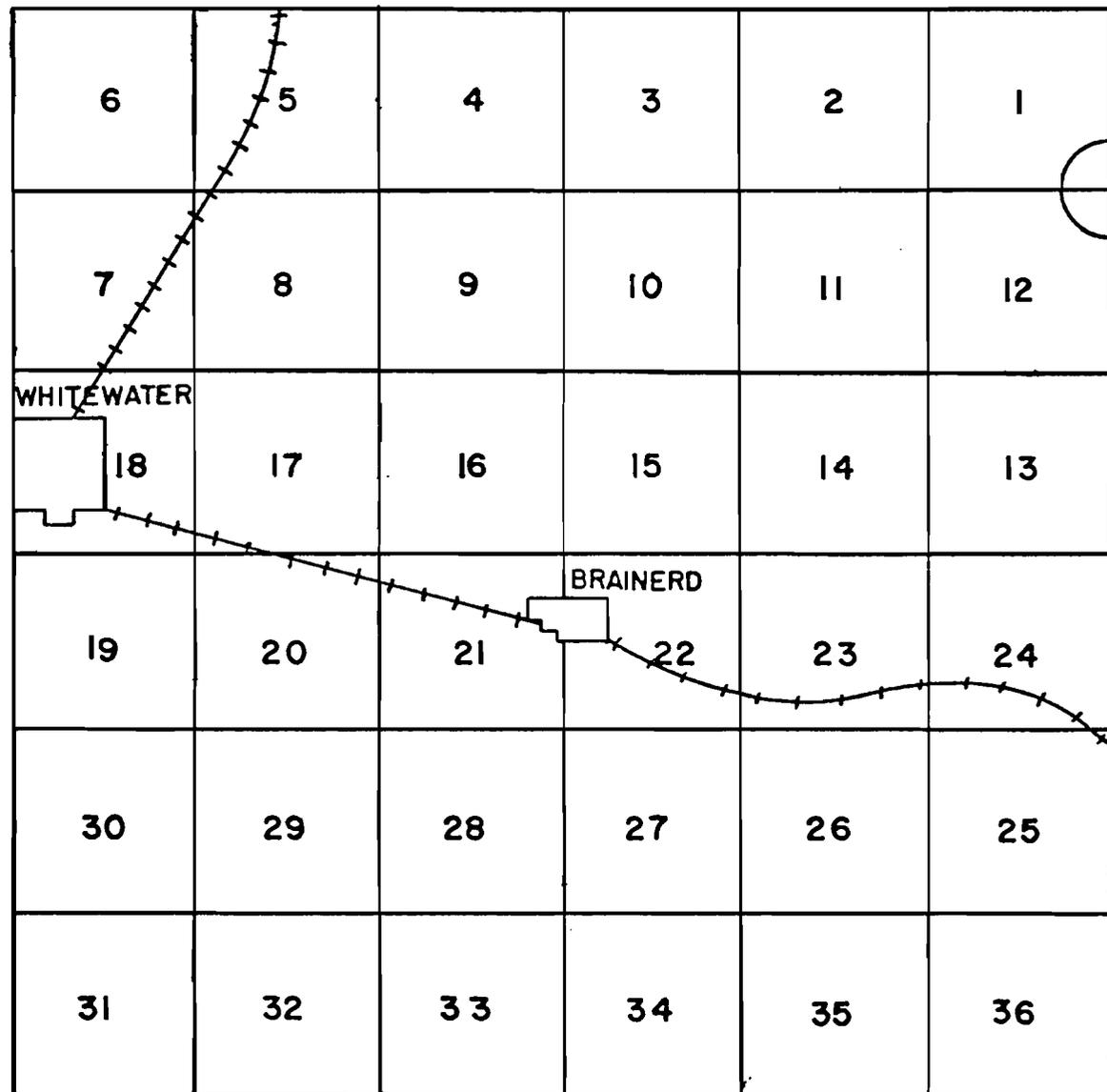
These pioneers did not find their life on the Kansas plains easy. An event worth noting during this period of time is the summer of 1874, a period when there was no rain. The grasses, forest, and fruit trees withered, and by August the grasshoppers came like "the arrow that flieth by day"

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<sup>11</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>12</sup>Mooney, *loc. cit.*

# MILTON TOWNSHIP



Map 4 - Milton Township

and "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," the terror by night and the destruction "that wasteth at noonday."<sup>13</sup> When everything was consumed and the land was barren, the grasshoppers left. But the true spirit of the pioneer Kansan asserted itself, and calamity and misfortune were overcome.

These were the days of earnest purpose, days of good will to all, days of the fullness of life, days without social striving and days without class distinction, but a loyal people from many lands, met together on a common ground, with common ends and common pleasures.<sup>14</sup>

The common ground, and common ends, and common pleasures centered around the pursuit of farming, worshipping as Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, and enjoying the visits of nearby neighbors as well as of new settlers travelling through the area.

Thus, through the initial populating of the land, overcoming the hardships that were a part of the westward settlement, and the attempt to organize a responsible political, social, and business community, the scene was set for further development through the years that followed immediately after the development of the townships. It is in the above context of area, people, settlement geography, and natural catastrophes, that the study now focuses on the four towns found in Plum Grove and Milton Townships--Plum Grove, Brainerd, Whitewater, and Potwin.

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<sup>13</sup>Psalms 91:5.

<sup>14</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

## CHAPTER III

### PLUM GROVE, KANSAS

The first settlers came into the Plum Grove area in 1866. In the course of two years a town was platted to serve the surrounding community. Some of the first landowners, whose land made up part of the town of Plum Grove, are found in the County Court Land Transfer Records. Joseph H. Adams is listed as the owner of the SW 1/4 6 24 4E 6 P.M. in 1866;<sup>1</sup> Start M. Spencer owned the adjoining NW 1/4 6 24 4E. The United States Government on April 2, 1866, sold the NE 1/4 6 24 4E to Amos A. Lawrence. He apparently sold the land to two men since the record listed the following information: C. Farni owned the N 1/2 of the NE 1/4 6 24 4E and F. McClusky owned the S 1/2 of the NE 1/4 6 24 4E. Charles Lyon, Joseph A. Adams' son-in-law, homesteaded the SE 1/4 6 24 4E for which no date has been found by the author. Upon Lyon's death, his wife married John R. Wentworth, who continued the development of the Lyon quarter.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The legal map notations given in abbreviated form would read as follows: Southwest one-fourth of Section 6, Township 24, Range 4 East, 6 Principal Meridian. The 1/4 would indicate 160 acres of land. The sixth Principal Meridian was located by the Federal Government by riding on horseback three days west of the Missouri River on the 40th parallel. This meridian is a north and south line imposed upon Kansas and found on the west edge of Newton.

<sup>2</sup>Butler Co. Register of Deeds Office, Book 5, 1865-1881.

Part of Plum Grove lay in Section 7 of Plum Grove Township and in Section 1 of Milton Township (Maps 3 and 4, pages 13 and 16). The Land Transfer Record Book of 1866 stated that Cornelius Cirbin bought from the United States Government the NW 1/4 7 24 4E about 1866, containing the southwest corner of Plum Grove. In the same year, Levi B. Spencer was the original buyer from the United States Government of the SE 1/4 1 24 3E, containing the northwest corner of Plum Grove and lying in Milton Township. His brother Stark M. Spencer was another original purchaser from the United States Government--receiving a "patent" on the NE 1/4 1 24 3E.<sup>3</sup>

The town itself was first platted on May 21, 1868, by a Mr. Smith. His map was entered in book A 233 of the Butler County Engineer's Office. The name of C. W. Babcock, Surveyor General at Lawrence, Kansas, is signed on the map of 1871. A second and final map, with the dimensions of three parcels of land, was drawn by J. H. Austin, County Surveyor, on August 16 and 17, 1877.<sup>4</sup> Line entries were made on February 26, 1878, in book B 129,<sup>5</sup> and on April 28,

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<sup>3</sup>Butler County Register of Deeds Office, Land Transfer Book, 1866.

<sup>4</sup>Butler County Register of Deeds Office, Book A 233.

<sup>5</sup>Butler County Register of Deeds Office, Book B 129.

1879, in book B 213.<sup>6</sup> There were no other entries after this date on the Plum Grove town site; but in 1965, Mrs. John J. Kopper, who died on April 23, 1968, made a map which located homes and businesses as she remembered them, and gave it to her nephew Albert Claassen.<sup>7</sup>

The first post office in the township opened on July 1, 1870, and closed on October 31, 1888. John R. Wentworth was the first appointee as postmaster, and later Stark M. Spencer became postmaster.<sup>8</sup> One envelope has been found

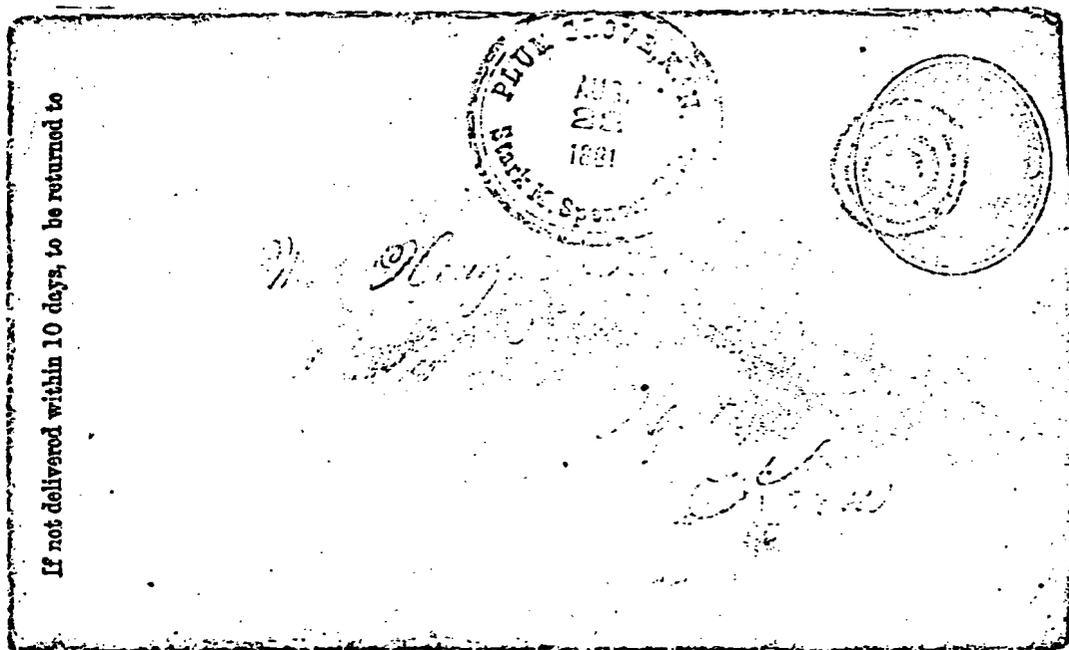


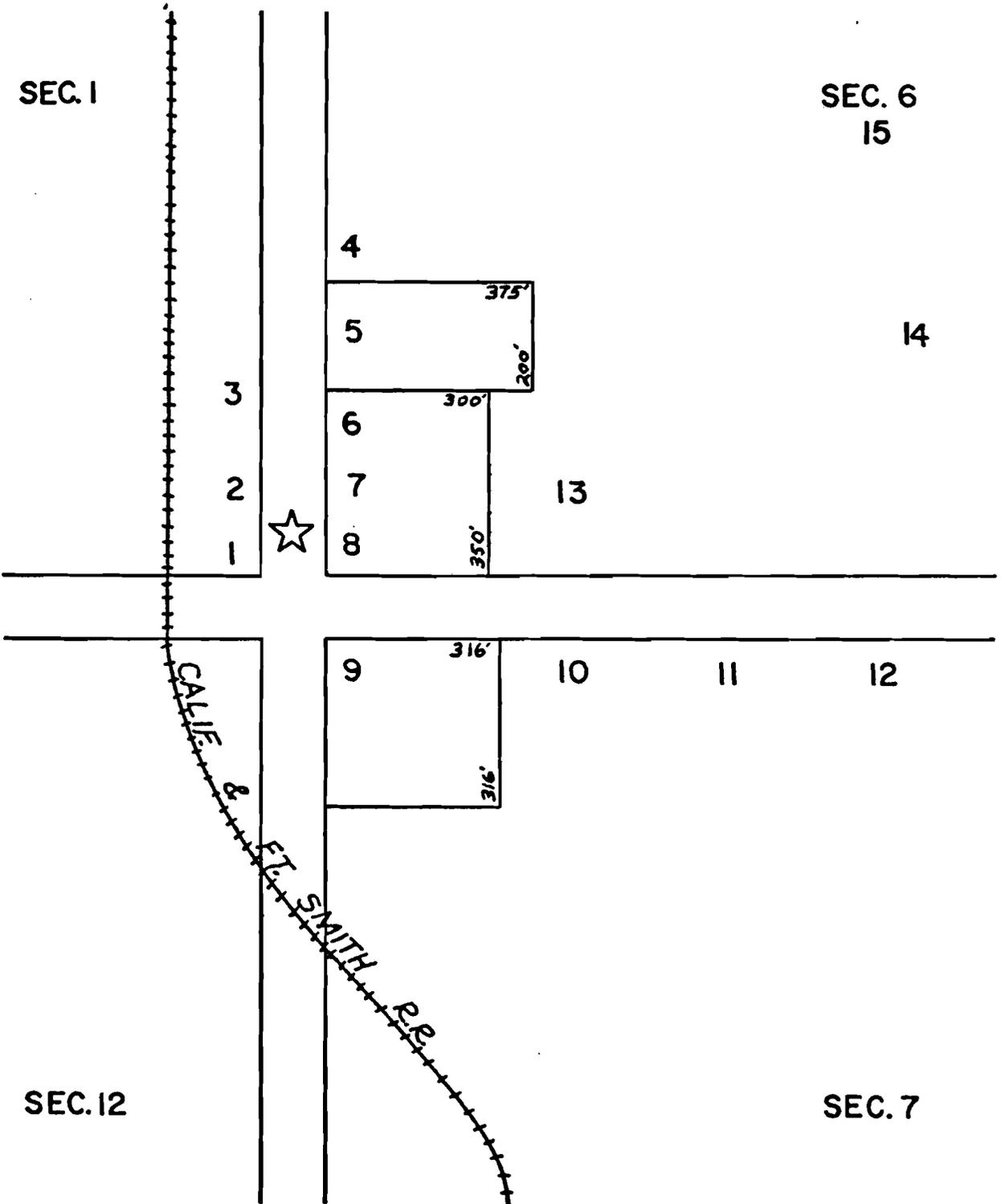
Fig. 2 - Plum Grove Cancel

<sup>6</sup>Butler County Register of Deeds Office, Book B 213.

<sup>7</sup>Mrs. John J. Kopper was born October 21, 1878, and was 90 at the time of her death.

<sup>8</sup>Robert W. Baughman, Kansas Post Offices (Wichita, Kansas: McCormick-Armstrong Comp., 1961) p. 103.

# PLUM GROVE TOWN SITE



SCALE: 3/16" = 60'

1. Stark M. Spencer Mercantile
  2. Hotel
  3. W. W. Kemper Blacksmith Shop
  4. Deftern's General Store
  5. Kinsey Home and Livery Barn
  6. A Home
  7. Dr. Siemen Home and Drug Store
  8. Abraham Claassen Home
  9. Hoyt's General Store
  10. Mrs. Worline's Boarding House
  11. Mr. Star's Hog Pens
  12. Kemper Home
  13. Plum Grove School District 126
  14. Old School Building Site
  15. Spear's Nursery
-  Water Well

Map 5, cont. - Plum Grove Town Site Legend

in the Bethel College Historical Library by the author and is now in his possession, with Mr. Spencer's name, date, and post office on the cancellation mark. A letter establishing the existence of the Plum Grove office was addressed to Leonard Suderman (Fig. 3). Mail arrived from Towanda once a week in 1870, and in later years, twice a week.<sup>9</sup>

Of equal importance with the founding of the post office was the necessity of having a school. School records for those early years were very incomplete; those that are available are currently found in the Butler County Clerk's Office. The first Plum Grove School was built and opened in 1872. Further organization of the school district boundaries was executed on January 14, 1876. John Knowles was listed as the teacher in 1887. By 1895, the Plum Grove School had changed its original District No. 53 to No. 126, and school attendance reached an all-time high of 45 students; but the year of this peak is not recorded.<sup>10</sup> The picture (Fig. 4) shows the building with students and teacher. The door faced the south, and the picture shows the four windows on the west side.

With the growing school population, the community's future seemed established. Previously, however, in 1871,

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<sup>9</sup>Jessie Perry Stratford, Butler County, 80 Years--1855-1935, (El Dorado, [Kansas]; Butler Co. News, 1934), p. 44.

<sup>10</sup>Butler Co. School Records, Plum Grove Dist. 126.

# Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company

Department of Immigration for  
Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California and Mexico.

Smith, Commissioner of Immigration

Topeka, Kansas, U.S.A. 5. 19. Jan. 1885

Leonhard Ledermann

P.O. River Grove

Butler Co. Kas.

Respected Friend:

Geben Sie herzlichem Dank für Ihre, mir durch den Mann bei Glogau bei der Jagdgesellschaft gemachten Mitteilung und herzlichem Dank für die empfangene Briefe. Ich bin sehr dankbar für die empfangene Briefe.

Es liegt mir sehr daran meine freundlichen Begrüßungen zu Ihnen und überzeuge zu der bestimmten Überzeugung dass Sie die Kraft zu erhalten und deshalb bedauern ist dass ich nicht, dass mir so wenig Zeit und so wenig Aufenthalt und Butler County zu besuchen.

Ich glaube zu wissen dass ich dort jederzeit willkommen bin. Ich herzlich begrüßen Sie und den Mann sehr gewarmer ist liegt mir sehr daran. Mein Pflichten der Frau bei Carey. gegenüber und meine Arbeit in dem Lande abzuweisen aber meine Zeit vollständig, dass es mir gar nicht mehr mit Pflicht meine gesündlichen Angelegenheiten

the California and Fort Smith Railroad surveyed the west side of Plum Grove, but for some reason the railroad was never built.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the temporary disappointment that must have occurred for the residents at that time became a foreboding image of the town's future demise.



Fig. 4 - Plum Grove School, Fall, 1897

Although information is available to trace the ownership of the quarter sections of land from which Plum Grove was created, there are no available records that confirm deeded land held by proprietors in the newly established

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<sup>11</sup>Volney P. Mooney, History of Butler County, Kansas, (Lawrence, Kansas: Standard Publishing Co., 1916), p. 190.

town. Some of the proprietors who did hold business interests in 1872 were a Mr. Drake and Darius J. Lobdell, who established themselves as businessmen by erecting a building and acquiring a stock of general merchandise. This was the first store in the town and township.<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Lobdell seemed to reflect some of the typical aspects of many of the new arrivals to the town. He was born in Clinton County, New York, on October 20, 1840. In the fall of 1857, he came to Kansas and settled in Miami County. During the Civil War, he served with the Fifteenth Kansas Unit having been mustered in as an Orderly. Then he held all positions up to the rank of First Lieutenant, in which he continued to serve until the close of the war. In 1870, Mr. Lobdell came to Butler County, locating at Plum Grove. He married Miss Roxanna Gooding, and from this union came four children: Charles E., Ada Francis, Fred, and Myrtle. He engaged in mercantile pursuits with Mr. Drake for more than four years. Suffering a stroke of paralysis in 1876, from which he never recovered, he lingered until 1888.<sup>13</sup>

Another industry influential in the new town was a saw mill located a half mile south of town on the Whitewater

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<sup>12</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>13</sup>Mooney, *loc. cit.*

River. The mill was brought from El Dorado by Daniel M. Elder in 1871. From the plentiful lumber available locally, Mr. Elder sawed a large amount of lumber to meet the demand for houses and stables. After sawing much of the timber which was brought to him at Plum Grove, he left Plum Grove and moved his mill farther south on the Whitewater River. An additional activity which enhanced the town's possible growth was that later he engaged in buying and selling Butler County land and operating a stone quarry east of El Dorado, which gave employment to a number of men. In 1888, he was elected to the Kansas Legislature on the Republican ticket.<sup>14</sup>

Another man who influenced the development of Plum Grove also reflected the transient nature of the citizens of the town. Involved in a minor business role in Plum Grove was Milton C. Snorf. He was born in 1830 in Darke County, Ohio, and spent some of his youth in Vigo County, Indiana, working as a farm hand and as a carpenter. When the Civil War broke out, he enlisted and served with General Sherman in the battle of Atlanta and the march to the sea. Following four years of service, he was discharged at the end of the war. During the war he had married Mary Elizabeth Patterson, and from this union they had seven children. With his family he settled on Section 36 of what later became

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<sup>14</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

Milton Township on April 9, 1868. Since they were the first settlers in this area, the township was given Mr. Snorf's first name. He farmed for some eight to ten years, then moved to Plum Grove, where he clerked in Stark M. Spencer's general store. Mrs. Snorf passed away on November 15, 1880, and in 1881, Mr. Snorf moved his family to Oregon for nearly a year--only to return and resume clerking in Spencer's store. When the new town of Brainerd was started, he moved there and established his own grocery and "Queensware Store." At this time he became a Notary Public.<sup>15</sup> About three years later, he and his youngest son went to New Mexico where they remained almost two years on a United States claim. Returning to Butler County, he again engaged in the grocery business, but this time at Whitewater until his death. Mr. Snorf was a life-long Republican.<sup>16</sup>

Rounding out the town's roster of business proprietors was Worth W. Kemper. He was the son of John Robert and Elizabeth Simons Kemper and was born in Lewis County, West Virginia, on May 18, 1860. In growing up on his family farm he learned his father's trade, blacksmithing, which he practiced for a number of years. In March of 1882, he married Tama B. Joseph who spent part of her childhood in Butler County but returned to West Virginia in 1874 with her par-

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<sup>15</sup>Walnut Valley Times, January 7, 1887, p. 258.

<sup>16</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 626.

ents. In 1883, Mr. Kemper and his family moved to Plum Grove where he bought a small two-room home, a set of blacksmith tools, and a shop for \$300 (this amount, including interest, was to be paid when the note became due). Blacksmith work was plentiful in the thriving little town of Plum Grove; however, when the Missouri Pacific Railroad line was built through Brainerd in 1885, he moved to that town and established a blacksmith and wagon shop. The shop at Plum Grove was later razed. Mr. Kemper worked three years at Brainerd, then moved to Potwin where he established a blacksmith shop and worked for approximately a year. Finally the Kempers took up the operation of the farm of her grandfather, Waitman Joseph. Upon the death of Mr. Joseph, the Kempers bought a quarter section of the land, NE 1/4 7 24 4E, and later the adjoining southeast quarter. After twenty years of farming and raising a great many cattle, Mr. and Mrs. Kemper moved to a beautiful, modern residence in White-water after 1900.<sup>17</sup>

During these early growth years, religious services in Plum Grove were minimal; but Sabbath School classes were organized and held in the school house. These schools were often conducted by non-denominational circuit riders, but some residents of the community, such as John R. Wentworth

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<sup>17</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, pp. 845-847.

and Jacob Holderman, taught Sunday School classes for a period of years. Following the death of Mr. Holderman, Daniel M. Elder and Joseph Morton took up the work. In 1878, the Mennonites of the area dedicated their new church building three miles west of Plum Grove; this was the Emmaus Church.<sup>18</sup>



Fig. 5 - Emmaus Mennonite Church, Spring, 1896

In 1883, another factor improved the town's outlook for development: the Missouri Pacific Railroad entered El Dorado, an event that developed a rivalry as to the projected

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<sup>18</sup>Leonard Suderman and John H. Classen, History of the Emmaus Church [written in German], (unpublished, Mennonite Historical Library, Bethel College).

route of the main line from St. Louis. Of the railroad's five directors, three favored the extension of the railroad northwest to Newton; the other two voted for its going west to Wichita. Wichita has been imputed to have purchased the odd vote with a price of \$7,000.<sup>19</sup> The upshot was that Wichita was awarded the main line.

Shortly after this decision on the route of the main line, the Ellsworth, McPherson, Newton and Southeastern Railroad Company was organized. Two years later, in 1885, a branch line from El Dorado was proposed to extend the Missouri Pacific to Newton, but bypassing Plum Grove.<sup>20</sup> Bonds were voted to total \$40,000 for Newton City and \$19,000 for the Newton Township. Butler County swelled the account considerably, although the specific amount is not known. These bonds were voted in the summer of 1884, and the construction was begun in the spring of 1885. The road was completed into Newton on Sunday, June 28, 1885; and the first train arrived that night.<sup>21</sup>

With this event, Brainerd, which had been staked out

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<sup>19</sup>*Newton Kansan*, August 22, 1922.

<sup>20</sup>The Missouri Pacific Railroad has been referred to as the Ellsworth, McPherson, Newton and Southeastern Railroad Company. This same line on pages 26 and 27 of McGinnis & Thomas Atlas of Butler County, Kansas, 1885, is called the El Dorado, Newton and Northwestern Railroad. The E McP N & SE R R is found on page 37 of this same Atlas.

<sup>21</sup>*Newton Kansan*, August 22, 1922.

nearly a month before the completion of the railroad to Newton, organized itself into a town.<sup>22</sup> The demise of Plum Grove was fast approaching since the town had now been bypassed by two railroads.

The proprietors who were listed with the map of the Plum Grove town site began to move away to more prosperous towns. Some moved to Brainerd, others to Potwin and White-water, and several people could not be traced by the author. After 1886, Dr. I. V. Davis and Dr. Seimans moved to Peabody.<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Worline opened a millinery shop in Brainerd. The post office was closed in October of 1888.<sup>24</sup> At the town's peak, the population was about sixty persons,<sup>25</sup> but with the passing of time, only traces of buildings and records of the people remain of the town (page 34, Figs. 6-8). Remaining evidence of a human community were the school building and the Joseph Adams grave site a half mile east of the town (page 36, Figs. 11 and 12).

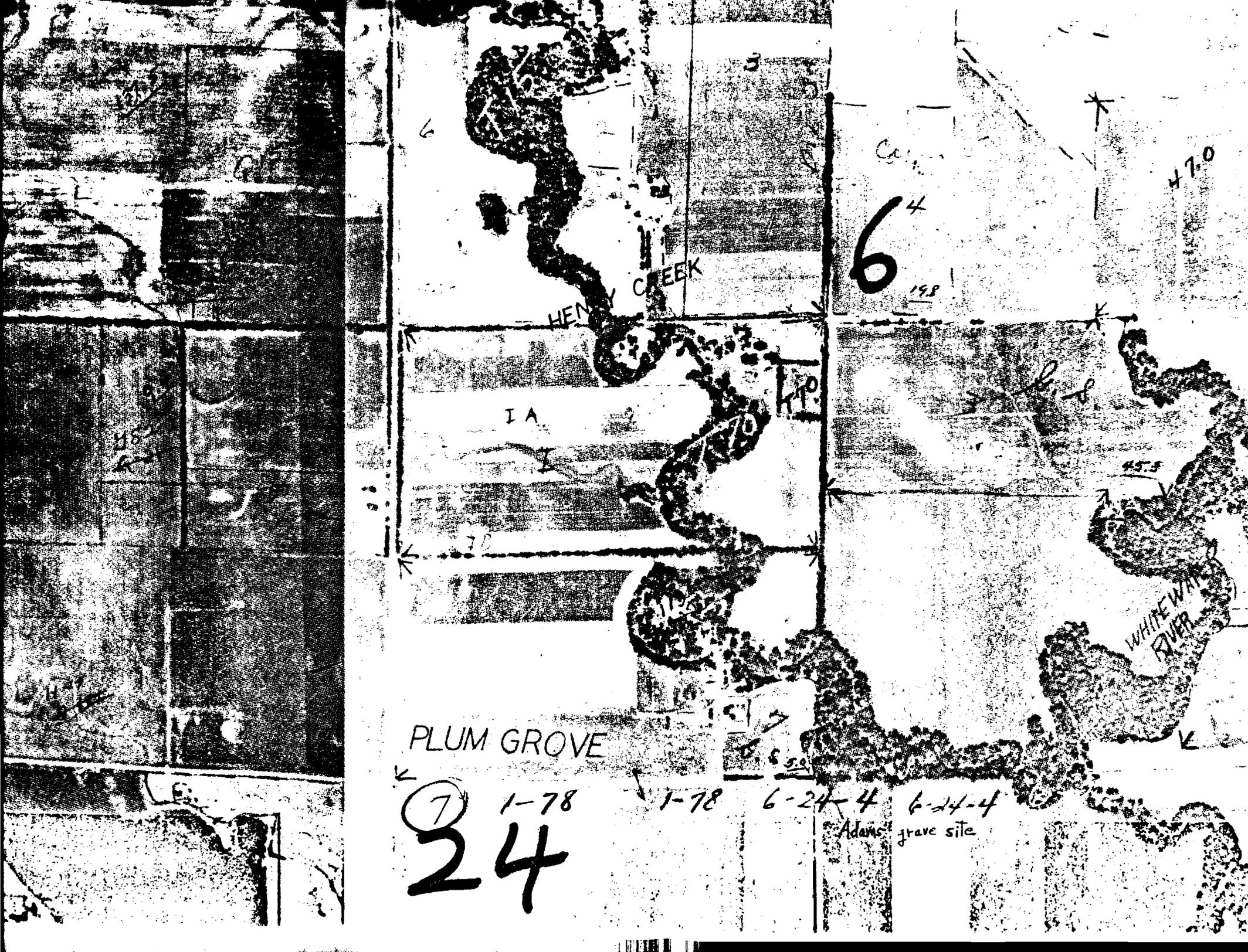
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<sup>22</sup> *Newton Kansan*, August 22, 1922.

<sup>23</sup> Statement by Esther Davis, personal interview.

<sup>24</sup> Baughman, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>25</sup> Statement by Albert Claassen, personal interview.



6

6<sup>4</sup>  
198

47.0

HENRY CREEK

IA

70

50

WHITENAY RIVER

PLUM GROVE

⑦ 1-78  
24

1-78 6-24-4 6-24-4

Adams grave site



Fig. 6 - Plum Grove Intersection. The Plum Grove town site showing Henry Creek in the background with the east-west road in the foreground and the north road on the left. January, 1970.

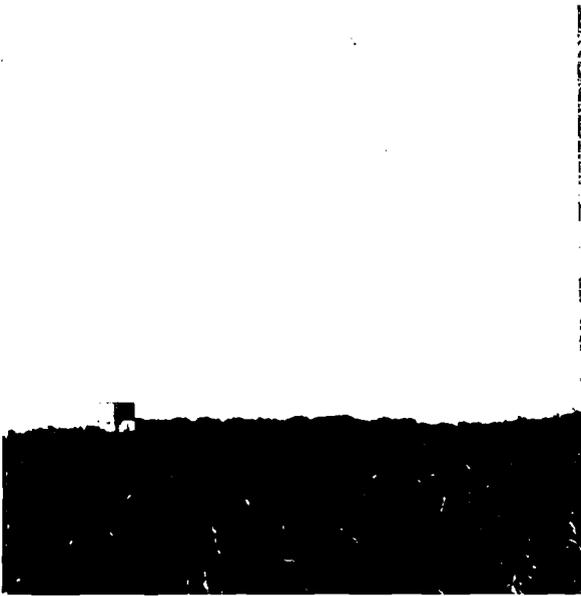


Fig. 7 - Town Site. Looking east from the well site. August, 1969.



Fig. 8 - Southwest of Town Site. Looking northeast. August, 1969

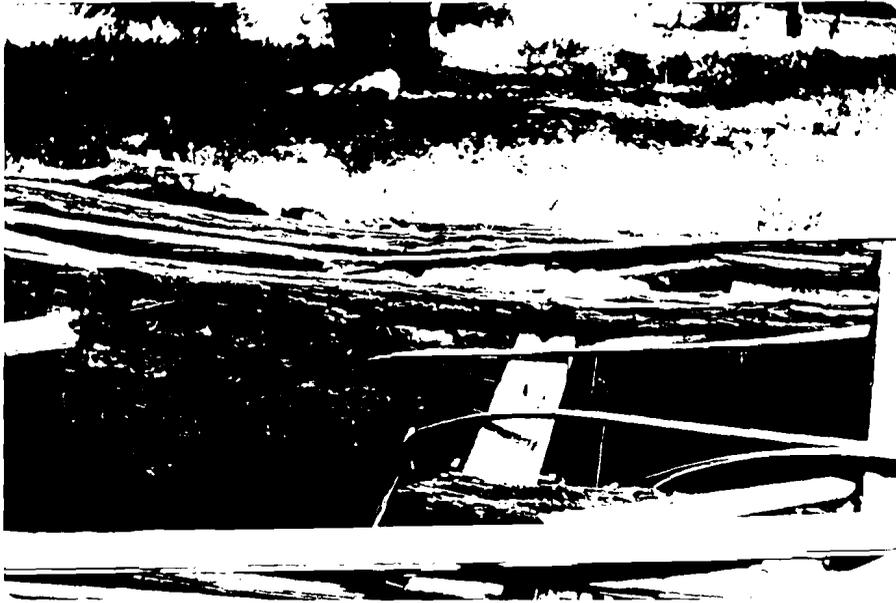


Fig. 9 - Early Basement. This stone basement wall is located in the center of the NE 1/2 of Sec. 12, Milton Township on a knoll overlooking the Plum Grove town site. It is to the left of the trees in Fig. 8. August, 1969.



Fig. 10 - Dug Well. Capped with one large stone, this well is on the north side of the basement. The hole and top recessed area appears to have been chiseled out. To the right is a clay tile which was used as a drain. August, 1969.

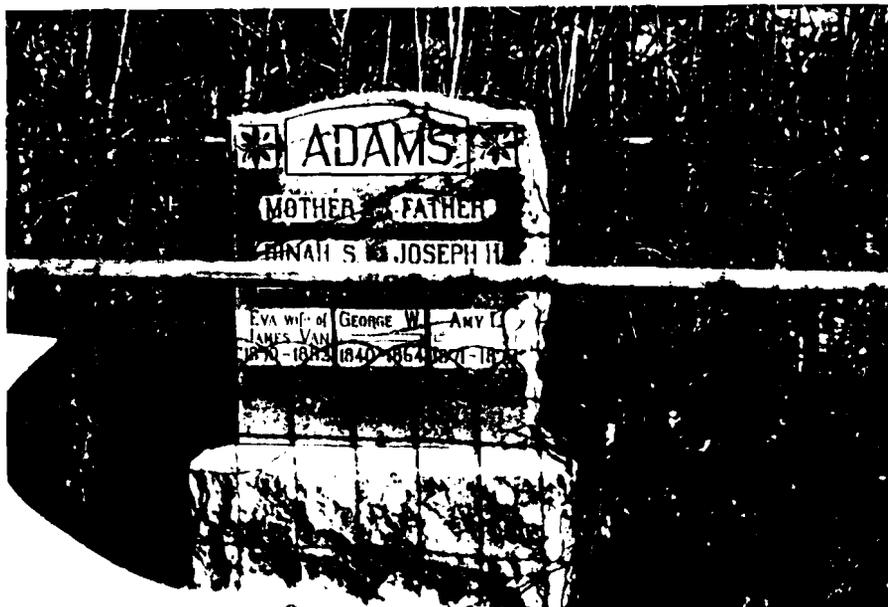


Fig. 11 - Adams' Tombstone. The J. H. Adams family cemetery is located one-half mile east of Plum Grove. Behind this fenced-in site are two other grave stones--neither legible. January, 1970.

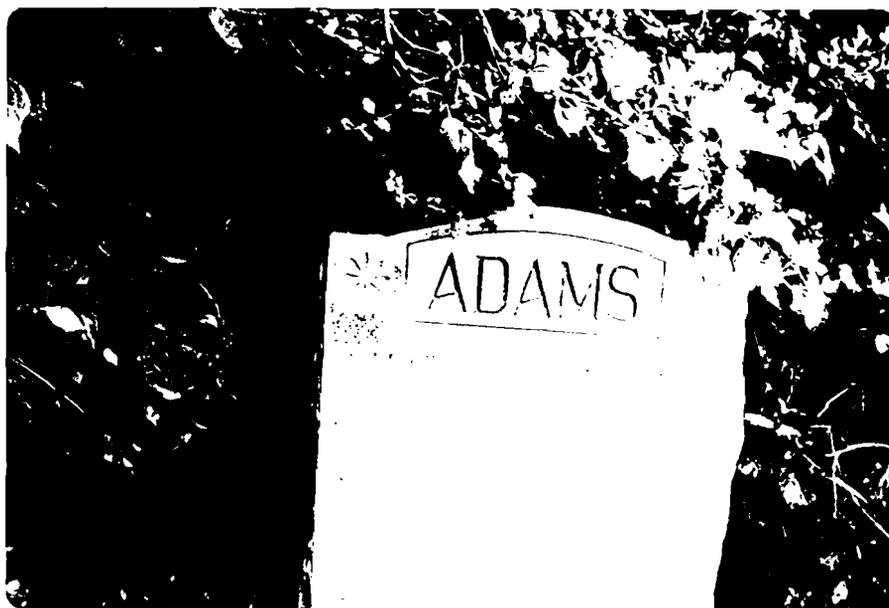


Fig. 12 - Adams' Tombstone - close up. August, 1969.

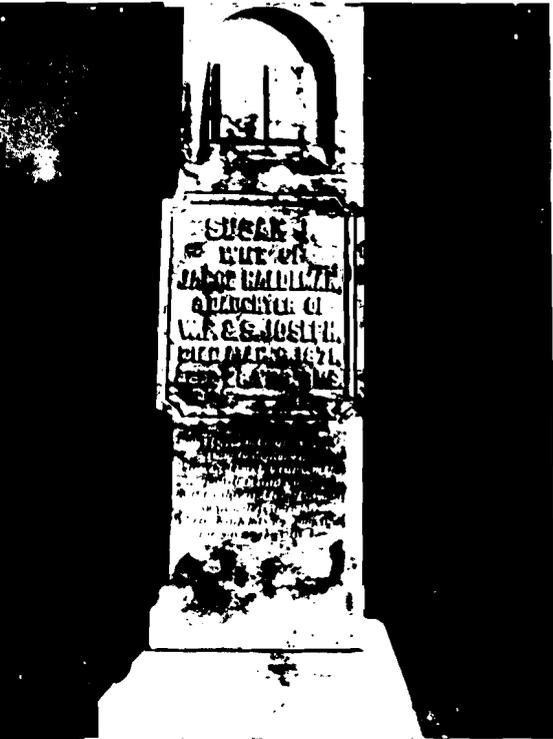


Fig. 13 - Grave Marker -  
Haldeman. August, 1969.

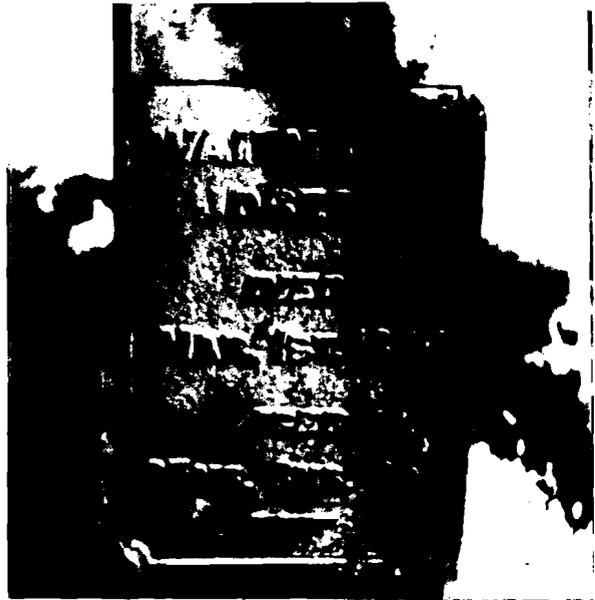


Fig. 14 - Grave Marker -  
Joseph. August, 1969.



Fig. 15 - Grave Marker -  
Kemper. August, 1969.

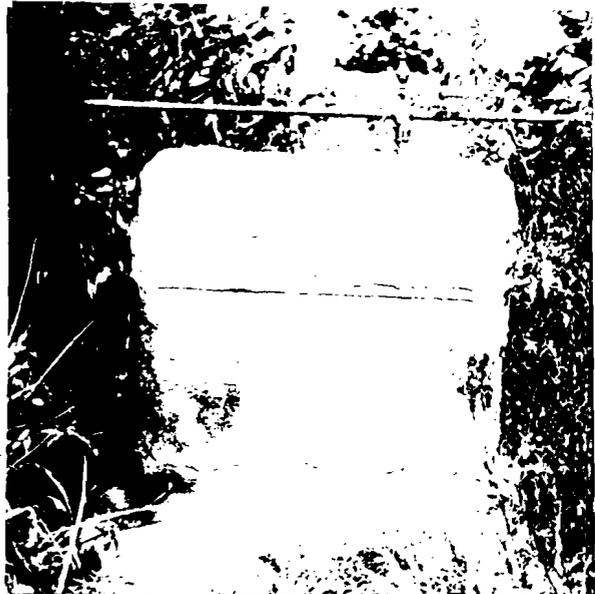


Fig. 16 - Grave Marker -  
Wentworth. August, 1969.

These grave sites are located in the Haldeman cemetery one mile north and one and one-half miles east of Plum Grove.



Fig. 13 - Grave Marker -  
Haldeman. August, 1969.

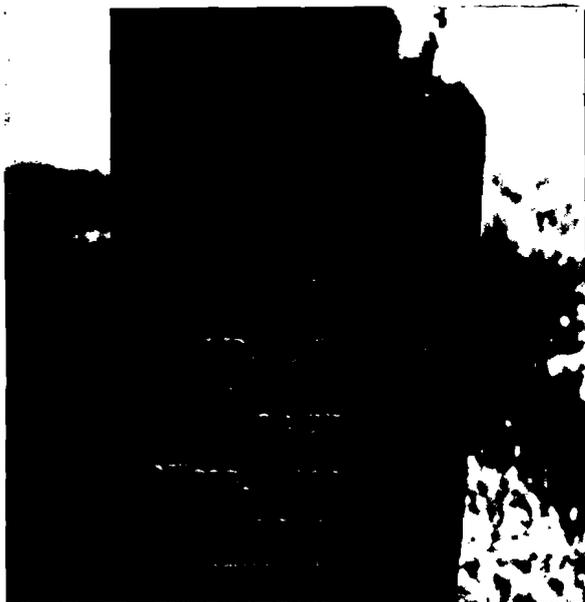


Fig. 14 - Grave Marker -  
Joseph. August, 1969.



Fig. 15 - Grave Marker -  
Kemper. August, 1969.



Fig. 16 - Grave Marker -  
Wentworth. August, 1969.

These grave sites are located in the Haldeman cemetery one mile north and one and one-half miles east of Plum Grove.



Fig. 17 - Drug Store - close up. The word "drugs" can be distinguished on the gable end. August, 1969.



Fig. 18 - Drug Store. August, 1969.



Fig. 19 - Doctor's Office - full view. January, 1970.



Fig. 20 - Doctor's Office - front view. August, 1969.

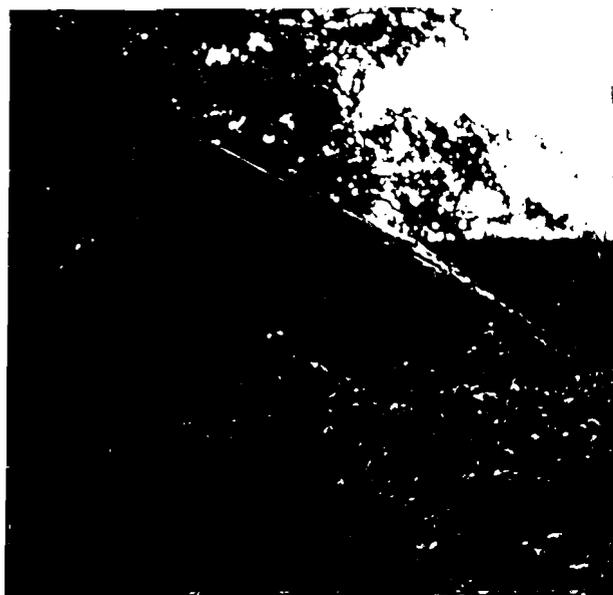


Fig. 21 - Doctor's Office - back view. August, 1969.

Three views of a 12' x 14' building with a window and door on the front, one window on the right side and back side, with a door and window on the left side as one faces it.

## SECTION 22

GRANTEES	GRANTORS	DATE OF TRANSFER
M. A. White	Butler County	Sept. 15, 1881
E. B. Brainerd	M. A. White	Sept. 6, 1881
E. H. Detabute	C. P. Starey & Wife	Oct. 27, 1881
N. S. Frazier	C. P. Starey & Wife	Aug. 30, 1883
Jerome S. Neuman	N. S. Frazier	Dec. 19, 1883
Samuel Thierstein	E. Dedablant & Wife	June 23, 1884 <sup>3</sup>
Samuel Thierstein	Andrew Staler, Jr.	Dec. 17, 1884 <sup>3</sup>

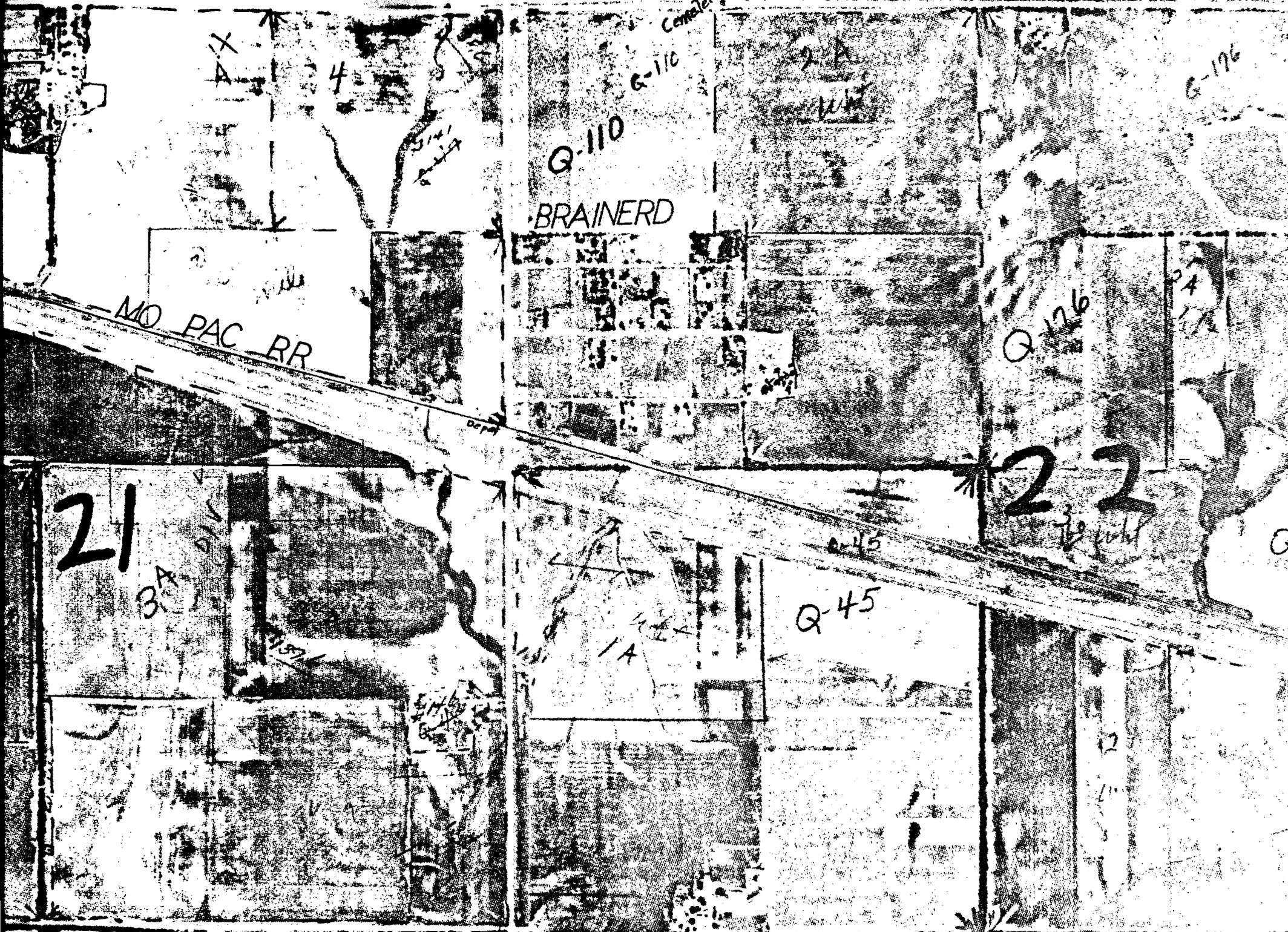


Fig. 22 - Brainerd - contemporary aerial view. Schools are in lower left and upper right, with the north portion of the town in the center. The green field in background is part of the NE 1/4 of Section 21. April, 1970.

Elisha B. Brainerd and his wife, Sarah A. Brainerd, for whom the town was named, owned the N 1/2 of Section 22,

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<sup>3</sup>Butler County Register of Deeds Office, Book 5, 1865-1881, Book 6, 1881-1885.



X  
A

4

Comales

G-110

Q-110

BRAINERD

2 A

WH

G-176

MO PAC RR

Q-176

34

21

3 A

Q-45

22

22

1 A

12

11

10

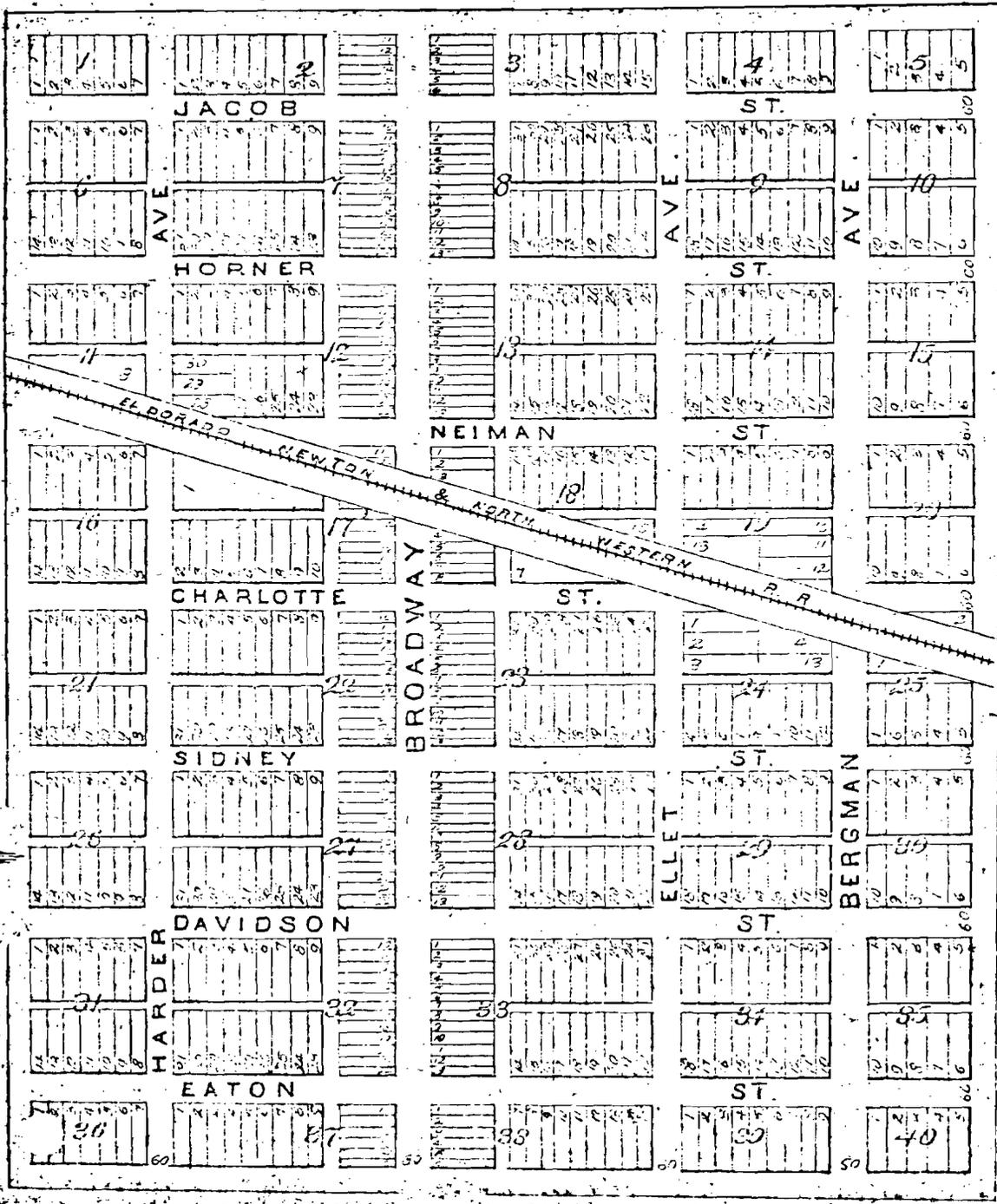
9

8

1885

# BRAINE RD.

Scale 400ft. = 1 inch.



Map 8 - Brainerd - plat map - 1885.

# BRAINERD

MILTON TWP.

Scale 300 feet to an inch

E. Liska B. Brainerd

John Harder

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42

JACOB

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42

HORNER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42

John Harder

S. N. Kellogg

Johanna Harder

John Harder

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42

ST.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42

ST.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42

ST.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42

ST.



B. W. Harder

B. W. Harder

making them owners of one of the largest parcels of land. Johannes Harder and his wife, Marie, owned all of Section 21, bought at \$5.00 an acre; and Samuel Thierstein and his wife, Catharine, held the SW 1/4 of Section 22.<sup>4</sup>

Elisha B. Brainerd came to Butler County in 1871, engaging in farming until 1874, when he was elected County Commissioner. As a Democrat, he served as County Treasurer from 1876 to 1879. Born in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, in 1840, he enlisted in 1862 in the 141st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, was mustered as a Second Lieutenant of Company F, served in the general battles of the Potomac, and was three times wounded. He came to Kansas and settled in Bourbon County before coming to Butler County.<sup>5</sup>

In June of 1885, the Missouri Pacific Railroad was built through the future town site, and within six months the first buildings at Brainerd were begun (Fig. 23). It was at this time that Levi H. Mellor arrived. Since much building was in progress or in the planning stage for Brainerd and vicinity, he had no trouble getting plenty of work at good wages at his trade of constructing and building. In 1886, his wife and child joined him.

Mr. Mellor was born in Wheeling, Virginia (now West

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<sup>4</sup>Statement by B. W. Harder, personal interview.

<sup>5</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 56.



Fig. 23 - Missouri Pacific Depot, April, 1954

Virginia), on September 14, 1858, the son of Levi and Elizabeth Lambing Mellor. He was the only child born to his parents; his father passed away before his birth. He and his widowed mother moved to Somerset, Perry County, Ohio, where he grew to manhood and was educated. Mr. Mellor was married on May 20, 1884, to Miss Laura Leach, a native of Perry County, Ohio, the daughter of A. B. and Matilda Holiday Leach. The following children were born: Harry, Mabel, Edwin, Herbert, Hazel, Fred, and Ruth. In early life he learned the carpenter's trade which he followed in Perry County until 1885. He first arrived in Towanda, Kansas, and, after spending several days there, moved to the new town of

Brainerd.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Mellor's success resulted from his high productivity and quality of construction. Most of the buildings in northwestern Butler County as well as a great deal of work in eastern Harvey County resulted from his able craftsmanship. He built every school in Murdock Township and several in the Milton and Fairview Townships. His work extended through more than thirty years for some of his patrons. Mr. Mellor was a Republican who felt that, as a carpenter, he should not hold public office since it would interfere with his work. He did, however, serve on the Brainerd School Board, and he was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.<sup>7</sup>

The first post office in Milton Township was at Holden, a site on Section 18, with Postmaster B. C. Leveridge having the post office in his home. Later (date unknown) Thomas H. Storms had the Holden post office at his home on Section 8. Then Edward T. Eaton had the Holden post office at his home on Section 20, a mile west of Brainerd. On the twenty-fifth of January, 1886, the Brainerd post office was opened with Eaton as Postmaster (Fig. 24).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Statement by Mrs. Ted Roth, Sr., personal interview.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>Baughman, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

ater, O. P. Bromback was awarded the position of Postmaster at Brainerd.<sup>9</sup> The Missouri Pacific Railroad passenger train provided mail transportation (Fig. 25).

Postmaster Eaton, born in Hancock County, Illinois, on March 14, 1841, was the son of David and Agnes Avise Eaton. The oldest of six children, Edward worked with his father in early life as a carpenter. During the Civil War he enlisted with the Illinois Infantry, Company C, Fiftieth Regiment, and served until the close of the war. He married Rebecca Welsh of Fulton County, Illinois, and from this union they had four children: Curtiss, Minnie, Edith, and William. In the spring of 1870, Mr. Eaton came to Kansas and then to Butler County, leaving his family in Illinois. After a season of carpenter work, he brought his family from Quincy to his claim on Section 20, Milton Township. Mrs. Eaton taught school for three or four years and bears the distinction of having taught the first school in Milton Township. Mr. Eaton was a member of the Masonic Lodge, Grand Army of the Republic, and the family were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Whitewater.<sup>10</sup>

An early businessman in Brainerd, G. W. Neal, engaged in the grain, coal, and lumber business at Coneburg (later

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<sup>9</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-172.

<sup>10</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, pp. 757-758.

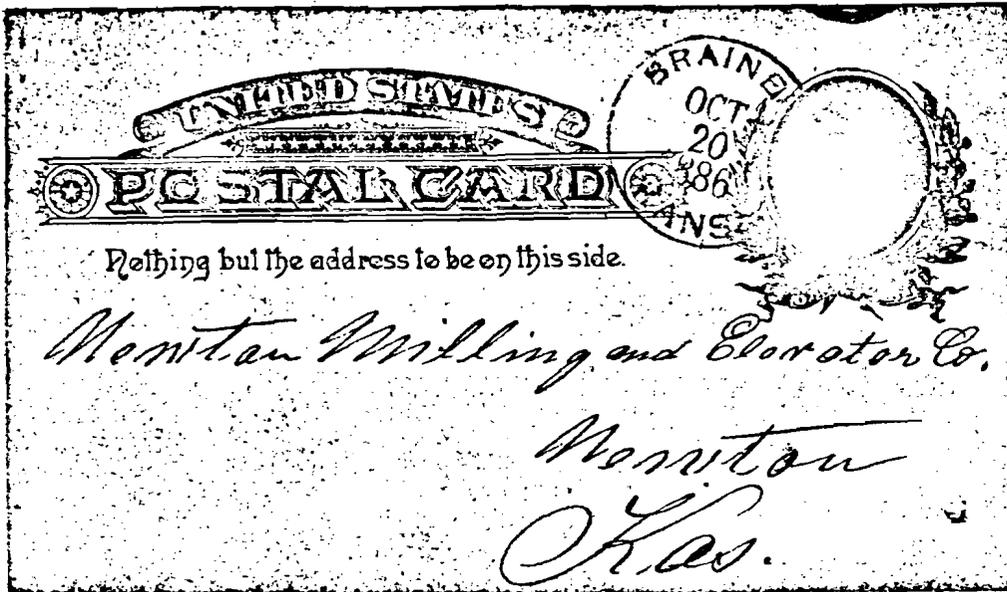


Fig. 24 - Post Card - Brainerd Cancel, 1886.

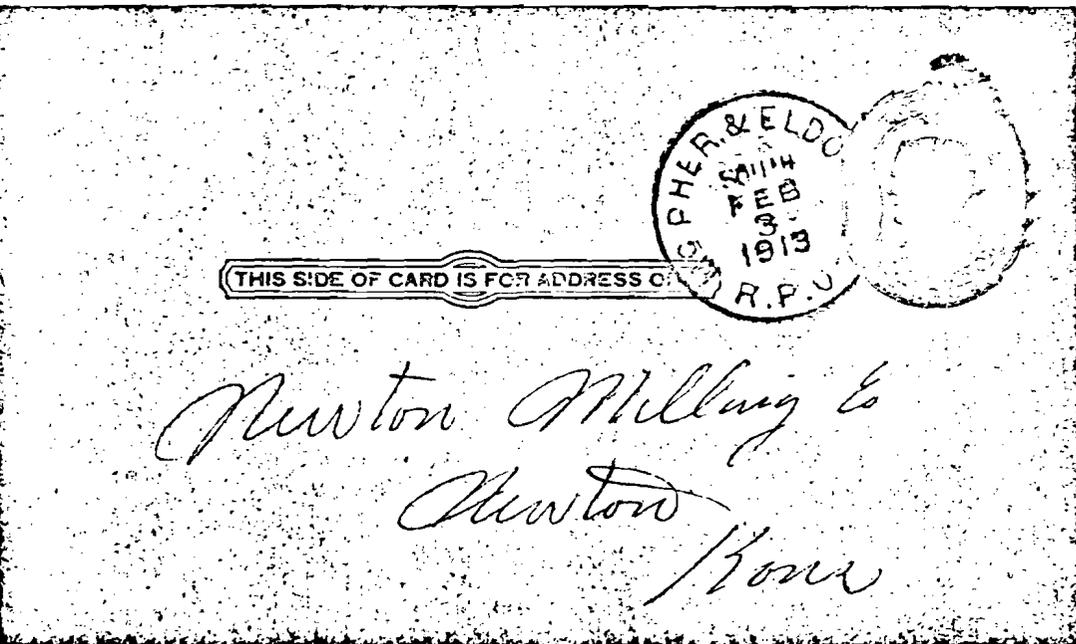


Fig. 25 - Post Card - RPO  
(Railroad Post Office) Cancel, 1913.

named Peabody after the President of the A T & S F R R Co.) about the time that the Santa Fe Railroad was ready for operation. He received the first carload of lumber to be shipped by rail and was one of the first to buy grain and other produce from the early settlers and ship it from that section. He continued in the business in Peabody until 1884. In June of 1885, he moved to the new town of Brainerd, where he established a lumber yard and also engaged in the hardware business. In 1889, he moved his stock of goods to Whitewater where he and his son conducted the business.<sup>11</sup>

In the early part of 1886, a few Masons living at Brainerd and vicinity, lacking a place to meet and wanting to do Masonic work, petitioned the Grand Lodge of Kansas for a dispensation to open and form a lodge according to ancient usages. On June 25, 1886, they were authorized to work under dispensation, which they did until February 17, 1887, when the Grand Lodge granted a charter to Brainerd Lodge No. 280 with the following officers: E. T. Eaton, Worthy Master; W. H. Stewart, Treasurer; M. C. Snorf, Secretary; G. W. Neal, S. W.; J. C. Jewett, J.W.; A. M. Brumback, J.D.; J. M. Foy, S.D.; B. V. Squire, S.S.; L. J. Turner, J.S.; H. Dohren, Tyler. Charter members included Issac N. Carson, Daniel M. Green, William G. McCramer, John Stuart, Benjamin D. Squires,

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<sup>11</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, pp. 602, 605, 454, 790.

Thomas T. Stansbury, and James V. Seaman. The Lodge had a steady and healthy growth until 1892, when the membership decided to move to Whitewater.<sup>12</sup>

The Masons were preceded by approximately one year by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The Odd Fellows established themselves in Brainerd on October 14, 1885, and became known as the Milton Lodge 268. The Lodge was later moved to Whitewater, but there is no record of the date or under what authority the move was made. A new brick structure was built in Whitewater for the Lodge Hall.<sup>13</sup>

The school for the town of Brainerd was known as District No. 33 and was first organized on April 8, 1871. The original building was a frame structure, but during the latter part of the 1880's a two-story building was built (Figs. 26 and 27). This school had not been completed when the movement began in 1889 to move houses and businesses to Whitewater due to the arrival of the Rock Island Railroad through that town. Early day teachers at Brainerd were Hattie Snyder, Bertha Wentworth, Celia Dodge, and Mrs. Peffney.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>14</sup>Statement by Mrs. Ted Roth, Sr., personal interview.



Fig. 26 - Brainerd Grade School. Built out of native stone and contained grades 1-8. May, 1915.

An early note of optimism was sounded in various parts of the area:

The Omaha, Abilene and Wichita Railroad, when built, will pass this new city. At least if it does not, it will be because the town's contiguous townships of Harvey County furnish sufficient extra inducements to diverge westerly, which is scarcely likely, as the two townships of Butler County interested will probably do what may be required of them in the premises.<sup>15</sup>

This and other opinions were being expressed during the years of 1885 and 1886. T. B. Murdock of Wichita wrote in his paper that the Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska Railway was building from Topeka to Wichita and that this road would

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<sup>15</sup>*The Commonwealth, loc. cit.*

To The Parents of Butler County.

DEAR FRIENDS: From this report you will learn the work done by your boy or girl each month. Please read it carefully. If the grades are low or the attendance imperfect, the teacher will be glad to talk the matter over with you and help find a remedy. Teachers and parents will get the best results by sympathetic co-operation. Visit the school often, and help foster a healthy school sentiment in your community.

After signing below, please return at once to the teacher. Yours respectfully,  
C. W. THOMAS, Co. Supt.

*B. Brooks*  
 2 *B. Brooks*  
 3 *B. Brooks*  
 4 *B. Brooks*  
 5  
 6 *B. Brooks*  
 7  
 8

\* \* \* \* \*



## Butler County Public Schools

District No. 33

Brainerd School

MONTHLY REPORT OF

Lessie Brooks

For School Year Ending March 27, 1906

Margaret Hawes Teacher

\* \* \* \* \*

El Dorado Republican Press

Writing	90	90	91	90	91	91	91
Grammar							
Geography							
Arithmetic							
U. S. History							
Hist. of Kan.							
Physiology							
Language							
Numbers	99	98	99	85	95	95	95
Algebra							
Department	100	100	97	49	97	100	100
Monthly Av.							
Days Absent	3	13	4	5	11	7	14
Times Tardy	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Times Truant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

THIS REPORT should be in the hands of parent within four days of close of school month. 95 per cent. is excellent; 85 per cent. good; 75 per cent. fair; less than 75 per cent. is unsatisfactory.

Standing for The Term

Orthography \_\_\_\_\_ Grammar \_\_\_\_\_ U. S. History \_\_\_\_\_

Reading \_\_\_\_\_ Geography \_\_\_\_\_ Kansas History \_\_\_\_\_

Writing \_\_\_\_\_ Arithmetic \_\_\_\_\_ Physiology \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_ Numbers \_\_\_\_\_ Algebra \_\_\_\_\_

Given this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 190

\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher.

SIR GALAHAD, the pure and noble youth, in taking the oath of Knighthood, said, "I will be faithful to God and loyal to the King. I will reverence all women. I will ever prove kind and helpful. I will never engage in an unholy war, I will never seek to exalt myself to the injury of others. I will speak the truth and deal justly with all men."

Fig. 27 - Butler Co. Report Card.

pass through the townships of Fairmont and Milton, touching the town of Brainerd.<sup>16</sup> In the *Walnut Valley Times* issue of January 7, 1887, several words were written about the expansion of railroads in the vicinity of Brainerd: "Work has begun on the Kansas, Colorado and Texas Railroad line which will cross the Missouri Pacific at Brainerd."<sup>17</sup> With these three different sources making comments on another railroad passing through Brainerd, it was obvious that the future of the town looked very good.

Proof of the optimism is shown by the number of businesses which came to Brainerd. Stores were bought and sold; some kept open for six months, others for a year or several years. The population peaked at over 500, and there were stone street crossings, a city jail, and 60 dwelling houses. Business establishments ranged four blocks north of the depot site.<sup>18</sup> Some of the businessmen and their establishments were as follows:

Ed H. Detalente, billiards and pool  
 Lillie Detalente, millinery (daughter of Dr. John Horner, wife of Ed H.)  
 W. H. Fitch, real estate loans and insurance

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<sup>16</sup>T. B. Murdock, An Illustrated Handbook Compiled from the Official Statistics, Descriptive of Butler Co., Kansas. January, 1887 (El Dorado, [Kansas]: El Dorado Republican, 1887).

<sup>17</sup>*Walnut Valley Times*, January 7, 1887.

<sup>18</sup>Statement by B. W. Harder, personal interview.

Dr. John Horner, M.D. (lived two miles west of the town site)

C. E. Blackwell, boarding house and meals at \$3 a week

J. P. Miller, blacksmith

M. C. Snorf, notary public, groceries, and queens-ware

J. E. Frampton, furniture and undertaking

G. A. Watson, livery

Penner Brothers Livery (Henry and Gerhard W.)

Mrs. M. E. Thompson, proprietor of Frost House (Board and room)

Hudnell and Reed, dray and express (Wells-Fargo)

Markee and Monfort, dray and express (to Whitewater)

*Brainerd Sun*, newspaper of 1885-86, Austin M. Brumback and H. McCann, publishers

*Brainerd Express*, newspaper of 1887-88, R. P. Morrison, publisher

A. Brumback, Republican, County Supt. of Schools from 1878-90

J. T. Anderson, dealer in lumber, doors, sash blinds; Robert Long, manager

S. S. Thomas, hotel

Harry Thompson, grain and coal

Strupp and Kauffman, meat market

O. J. Shinnery, coal, grain, and stock

Kelly and Dolman, general merchandise

W. W. Kemper, blacksmith and wagon shop

Jos. Ropp, grain and coal

T. M. Curtis, barber

R. Reitz, bootmaker and cobbler

Peter Elmer Ashenfelter, drugs and books; also advised in matters of law

Roach Brothers General Merchandise

J. T. Welch, contractor and builder

Irwin Brothers Hardware

Fred Schroke, dry goods, clothing, and lumber ("a very good man, became rich, loaned money to many people, was a German Jew")

E. S. Raymond and John Stigner, drugs and books (brothers-in-law)

Gerhard Penner and Arthur Claasen, general merchandise (brothers-in-law)

O. P. Brumback, general merchandise and post office (son-in-law of Schroke)

G. W. Neal, lumber and hardware

D. L. Gardner, hardware and implements

J. Warren McLain and Norace McLain, harness shop (brothers)

Allen Brothers, harness and saddles

Bale and Tomlinson, general merchandise  
 Thos. Bamford, art gallery  
 Whitewater Bank of Brainerd (John Harder, owner of  
 building, A. H. McLain was President, and C. F.  
 Claasen, Clerk)  
 Rev. Finch of Presbyterian Church ("A wild man, mar-  
 ried everyone, legal or otherwise")<sup>19</sup>

Another leading businessman was August Schmidt, who hauled lumber into Brainerd from Emporia and built his blacksmith shop on the north edge of town where he worked on wagons and shod horses and acted as the dealer for Buckeye Implements. After his first wife died, he married Mary Worline from Plum Grove, a widow with eight children. Mr. Schmidt maintained his shop in Brainerd until 1908, when he moved to a farm northeast of the town. Since he could not write the English language, he had the teacher Mrs. Peffney keep his account books. He was a strong Democrat but never ran for nor held elective office.<sup>20</sup>

One of the last businessmen to locate in Brainerd before the exodus to Whitewater began in 1889, was Thomas J. Whiteside, who opened a livery stable and general store. Mr. Whitewide was born in Coshocton County, Ohio, on May 22, 1844, the fourth of nine children of Jenkin and Elizabeth Whiteside. He grew to manhood on the farm and attended the

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<sup>19</sup> *Walnut Valley Times*, January 7, 1887, p. 258.  
 Statement by Mrs. Ted Roth, Sr., personal interview.  
 Statement by B. W. Harder, personal interview.

<sup>20</sup> Statement by Bill Schmidt, personal interview.

district schools. On August 22, 1862, he enlisted in Company A, Eighty-eighth Regiment, Ohio Infantry, a home guard unit. He was discharged July 1, 1865. After his marriage to Miss Amanda Jane Roach, they farmed for several years in Coshocton County, then moved to Iowa in the fall of 1869. In 1871, they moved to Murdock Township in Butler County, Kansas, living there until the fall of 1874. After securing his deed, he moved his family to Illinois and Ohio for short periods. In 1879, they returned to their farm in Murdock Township until moving to Brainerd, opening a livery stable and general store. After the C K & N R R was built through Whitewater, the business moved there. Shortly, thereafter, Mr. Whiteside traded his store for land in Missouri; and the family moved to Maries County, Missouri, where Mr. Whiteside died on March 8, 1893.<sup>21</sup>

The first burial in the Brainerd cemetery, located on Section 15 north of the town site, was that of Margaret L. Stuart, wife of John Stuart. She was born on November 13, 1816, and passed away on February 28, 1887. The cemetery land was bought from John Epp, and the lots were sold to individuals for \$7 a lot.<sup>22</sup>

The year 1887 found Brainerd a thriving town. How-

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<sup>21</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 773.

<sup>22</sup>Statement by John Epp, Jr., personal interview.

ever, with this year came an event which was to cause the community to lose population and businesses to another town which was yet to be incorporated. During this year, after some hard and fast dealing, the Rock Island Railroad built through Whitewater instead of through Brainerd.<sup>23</sup> Plum Grove had been bypassed by two railroads, and now Brainerd had been bypassed by one. The results created a similar condition: perhaps people moved from site to another site because two railroads promised more for the future than one railroad.

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<sup>23</sup>Opinion expressed by a Whitewater resident at a personal interview. Name withheld as per request.

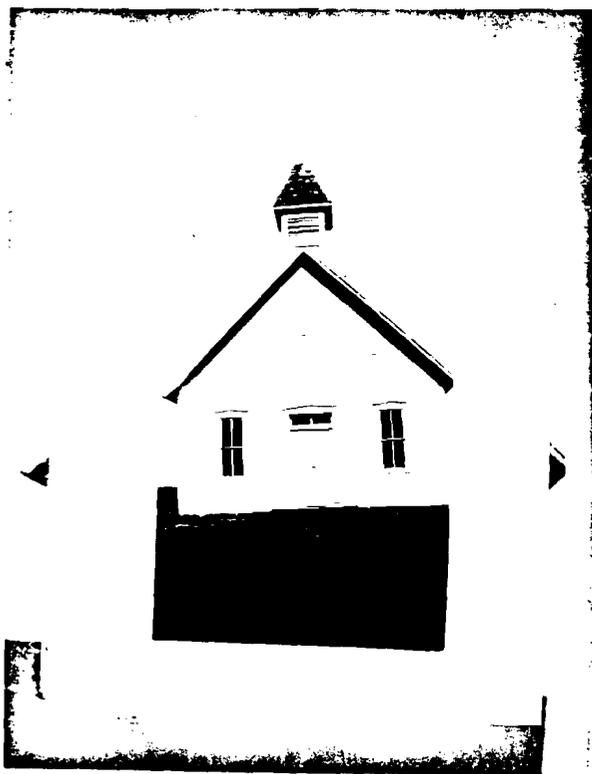


Fig. 28 - Brainerd Presbyterian Church. This, the only church in town, was located in the block west of the school. Spring, 1908.



Fig. 29 - Charles Barker Home. Mr. Barker in front of his sod house located east of town.

## CHAPTER V

### WHITEWATER, KANSAS

Whitewater is located on the west edge of Milton Township in Section 18 with an elevation of 1,386 feet. The town was established in 1878 and received its name from the west branch of the Whitewater River (Map 10, page 61). The Golden Belt Town Company laid out the town site on land owned and homesteaded by George P. Neiman. The original town site was from the corner of Seventh and Church Streets south to the corner of First and Church, including the Rudolph Penner place, and from Church Street west to the Rock Island Railroad, totaling four blocks. Later, additions were made to the original town site by attaching land owned by A. L. Neiman on the east and S. R. Neiman on the north.<sup>1</sup>

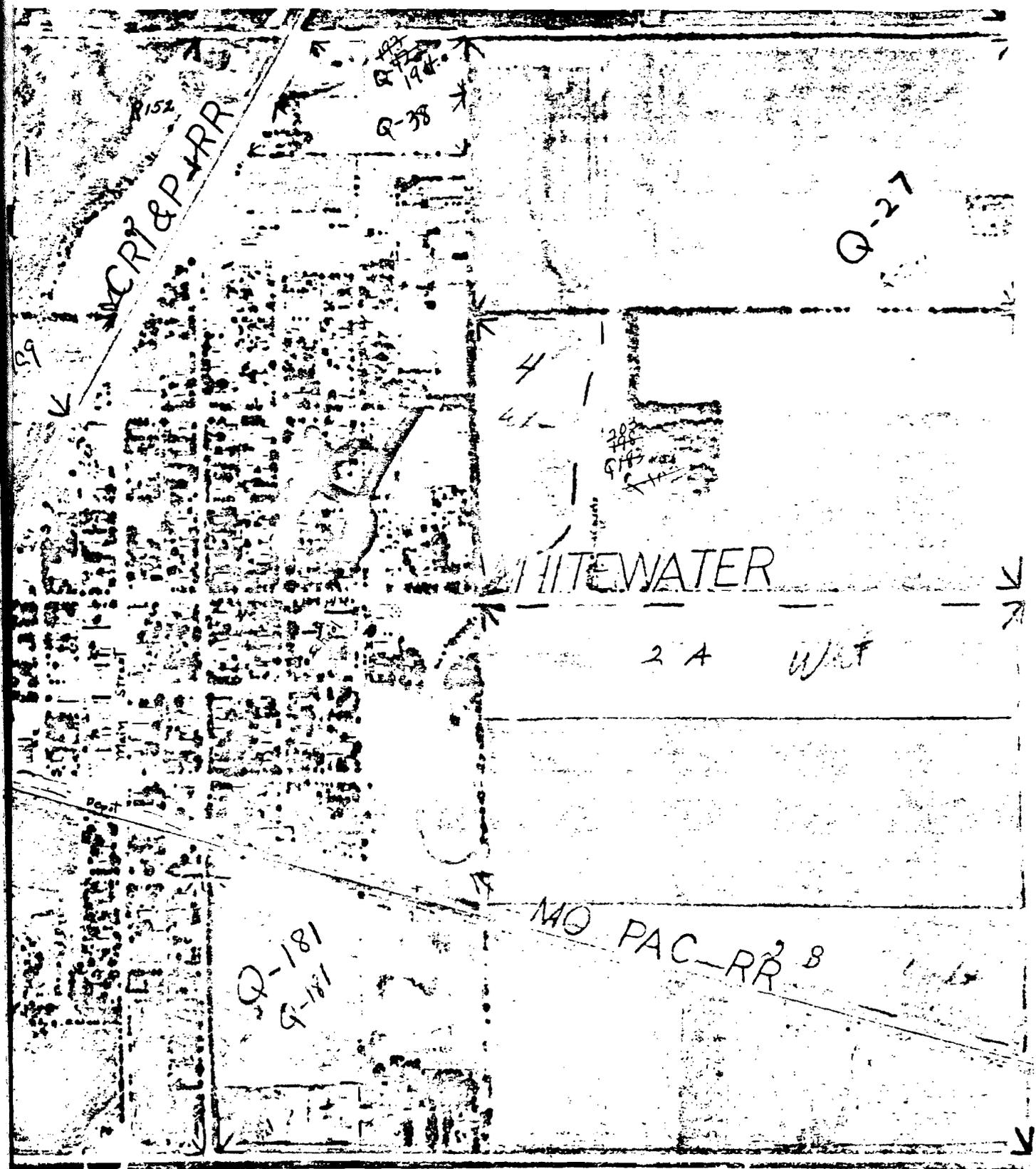
Land records listed in the Register of Deeds Office in El Dorado indicate various parcels of land in Section 18 were deeded to different parties.<sup>2</sup> Early recordings were as follows:

GRANTEES	GRANTORS	DATES OF TRANSFER
Joseph R. Page George P. and Isaac H. Neiman	E. A. Angall  Joseph R. Page	November 24, 1879  September 7, 1882

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<sup>1</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup>Register of Deeds Office, El Dorado, Kansas.



Map 10 - Whitewater - aerial.

Johanu Wurheuih	Henry C. Stinue and Wife	November 6, 1883
Petronelia Leveridge	Benjaminie H. Leveridge	September, 1884 <sup>3</sup>

The Missouri Pacific Railroad had come through Milton Township in 1885, and at that time built a depot at what is now known as Whitewater (Figs. 30-31). P. C. McArthur was the first agent for the Missouri Pacific. In 1887, the Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska Railway, also known as the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, laid track through Whitewater, and commercial operation began with the first train arriving in August of that year (Figs. 32-34). The first Rock Island station agent was Frank Broadstreet (Figs. 35-36).<sup>4</sup> This event caused a movement of people into Whitewater from surrounding towns since they could now receive the services of two railroads instead of one.

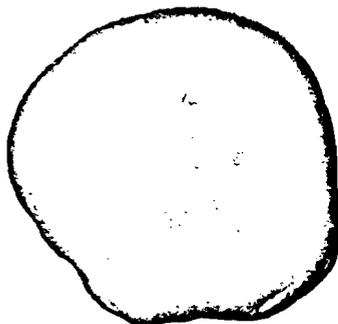


Fig. 32 - Wax Seal Impression.  
C K & N R Y, St Jos & I R R Co, Lessee

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<sup>3</sup>Register of Deeds Office, Book #5.

<sup>4</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 175.



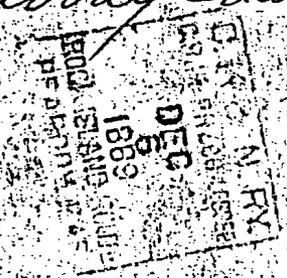
Fig. 30 - Missouri Pacific Depot. Henry Jesson, Agent, 1910.



Fig. 31 - Missouri Pacific Section Crew. 1910.

Pro. No. 104

Received in good order from the CHICAGO, KANSAS & NEBRASKA RAILWAY, St. Joseph & Iowa R. R. Co., Lessee, the following described property

FROM <u>Whitewater</u>	MARKED.	
Date of W. B. <u>11/25</u> 1889		<u>Peabody Creamery 2 Large Cans Cream</u>
W. B. No. <u>34</u>		<u>1 Small " "</u>
No of Car		<u>VR</u>
Initial.		
Transferred from Car		

Consignor: [Signature] \$ 47 Creamery Co.

Fig. 33 - C K & N R Y Way Bill. Dated December 6, 1889, this was sent from Whitewater, Kansas, to Peabody, Kansas.

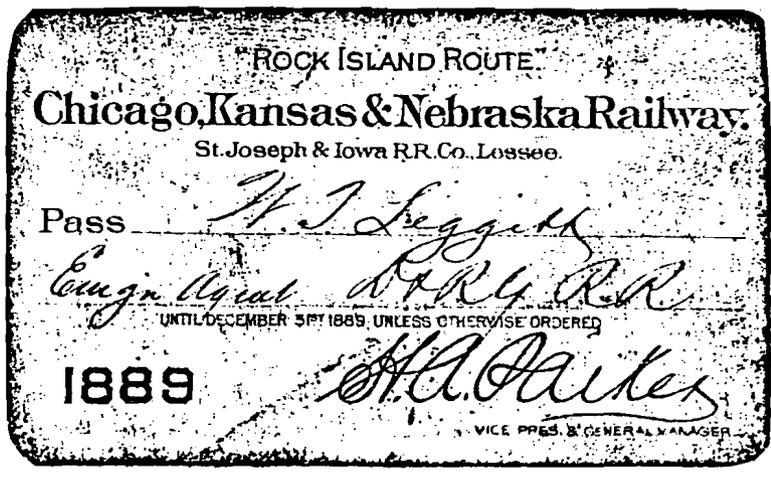


Fig. 34 - C K & N R Y Pass. Good for the year 1889.



Fig. 35 - Rock Island Depot. 1900.



Fig. 36 - Intersection of MP and RI  
Railroads. April, 1970.

By August of 1887, Whitewater had two general stores: one owned and operated by S. L. Motter, and the other by G. H. Otto, who had moved from Annelly, a town three miles west of Whitewater on the Missouri Pacific Railway. In September, Claus Henry Bruhn of Newton, the first blacksmith in town, built his shop with materials which cost \$72. Later his business expansion involved four lots and three brick buildings (Figs. 37-40).<sup>5</sup> John Eilert soon opened a general merchandise store; and in the fall, W. Spencer moved from Annelly to build and operate the Spencer Hotel (Fig. 41). Mr. Spencer was also the town's first photographer. The Bishop Hotel was opened at about the same time by M. M. Bishop (Fig. 42).<sup>6</sup>

The year 1888 was a period of great growth and activity for the new town of Whitewater. In January, Chester Smith moved his house from Annelly. Also, two doctors, Dr. H. H. Morris, also from Annelly, and Dr. H. Henderson, moved into Whitewater. Henderson, along with his practice, operated the Kinney Drug Store, which was the first drug store in town.<sup>7</sup>

The years of 1888 and 1889 found other families

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<sup>5</sup>Statement by Herman F. Bruhn, personal interview.

<sup>6</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.* p. 176.

<sup>7</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

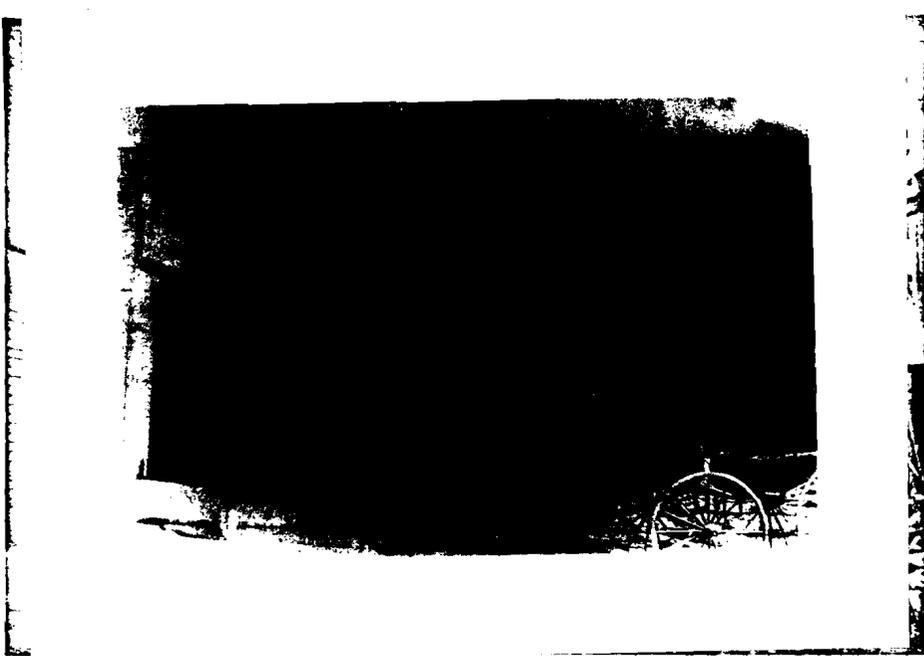


Fig. 37 - Blacksmith Shop - exterior. 1910.



Fig. 38 - Blacksmith Shop - interior. 1910.



Fig. 39 - Street Scene. 1910.



Fig. 40 - Street Scene - close up. 1912.



Fig. 41 - Spencer Hotel. 1910.



Fig. 42 - Bishop Hotel. 1904.

moving into Whitewater from Brainerd and Annelly. The *Topeka Daily Capital* on June 16, 1889, recorded the following:

Whitewater, June 15, 1889

The first of twenty-six buildings that will be moved from Brainerd to this town came in last night. Today is the last issue of the *Brainerd Ensign* the paper having been sold to the Tribune Printing Co. who will issue the first number of the *Whitewater Tribune* June 27, Al Hendee will edit the paper.<sup>8</sup>

A total of 52 buildings was eventually moved from Brainerd to Whitewater.<sup>9</sup> G. W. Penner moved from Brainerd and opened a general store in a frame building. Later, he moved into the first brick building built in the town containing the first gas lighting system. The building was made from Fessler Kiln brick produced on the east bank of the Whitewater River at Whitewater. L. Fessler of Newton owned the brickyard, and George Brazee held the position of foreman.<sup>10</sup>

Additional businesses were operating during the year 1889. John Eilert, T. J. Whiteside, and the Roach Brothers each owned general stores. E. T. Burns built the first elevator east of the Missouri Pacific depot on the railroad siding, but later moved and consolidated with R. H.

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<sup>8</sup>*Topeka Daily Capital*, June 16, 1889.

<sup>9</sup>Statement by Mrs. Ted Roth, Sr., personal interview.

<sup>10</sup>Statement by Arthur Penner. personal interview.

Farr who established the Whitewater Mill and Elevator Company in 1898 (Fig. 43).<sup>11</sup> Mr. Burns was the first grain buyer and coal dealer in the town. On the Rock Island Railroad, C. F. Weber built the first elevator (Fig. 44), and W. A. Sterling became the first grain buyer and coal dealer on the Rock Island side track. C. S. Stuart and C. V. Chaney were early grain and livestock buyers. G. W. Neal of Brainerd opened and operated a hardware store until it was discontinued in 1895 (Fig. 45). J. C. Kirkwood established a lumber yard in 1886 at Annelly; however, when the Rock Island Railroad came through Whitewater, he moved his business to a site next to the Missouri Pacific Railroad on the east side of Main Street. This yard passed on to his son, R. G. Kirkwood. For a time the Kirkwoods also handled farm implements, but this was discontinued after the turn of the century. Also at one time, two warehouses were included in the establishment, one housing buggies, exclusively.<sup>12</sup>

As a mode of local transportation, horses were used until the automobile came into existence. Thus a team or a horse meant much to a man's prospects of making a home and supporting his family. The loss of horses became so fre-

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<sup>11</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>12</sup>Mooney, *loc. cit.*

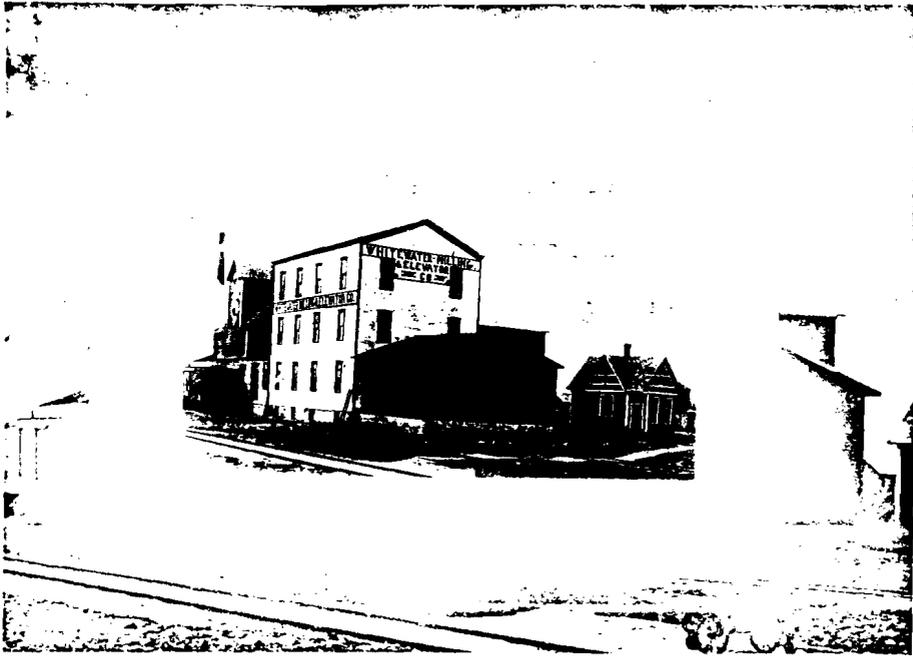


Fig. 43 - Whitewater Mill. 1900.

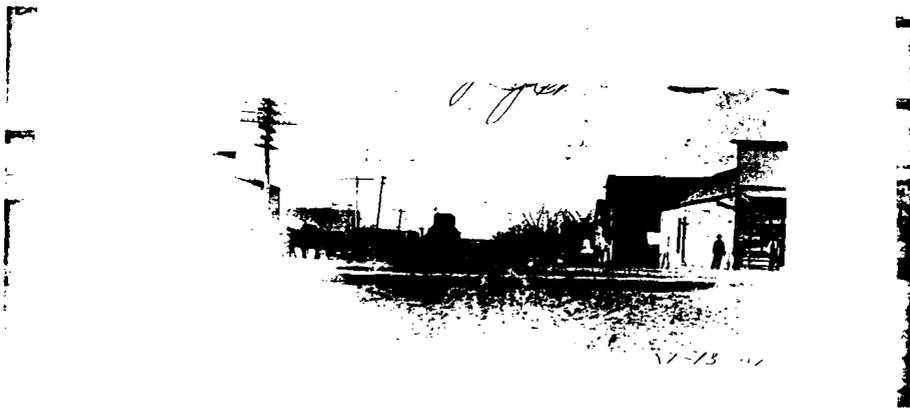


Fig. 44 - Weber's Elevator. 1905.

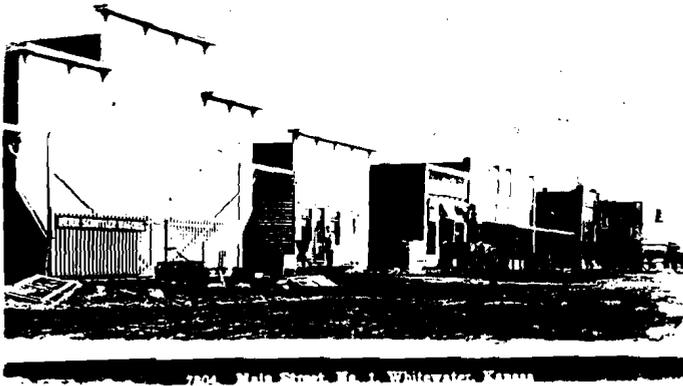


Fig. 45 - George Nieman Lumber and Coal. 1908.



Fig. 46 - Dean Livery Stable. 1905.

quent and annoying that the community formed a society for their protection. The Whitewater Anti-Horsetheft Association at one time had 168 members. Livery stables were necessary for the general welfare of the town, and several existed through the years. Operators were C. B. Dean (Fig. 46, page 73), O. C. Sharp, and George McSparrin, who later sold to a Mr. Kelly (Figs. 47-48). C. C. Carter established the first dray and general hauling business.<sup>13</sup>

The town's first bank, moved from Brainerd, was established in 1889. Its officers were A. H. McLain, President; A. H. McLain, Jr., Vice-President; and E. S. McLain, Cashier. In the depression of 1891, the bank of Whitewater failed under the McLain management.<sup>14</sup> I. H. Neiman was the largest stockholder and consequently the heaviest loser. On April 3, 1891, the bank was reorganized by George P. Neiman and Howard Neiman. The new officers were: J. C. Kirkwood, President; I. H. Neiman, Vice-President; G. P. Neiman, Cashier; and R. G. Kirkwood, Assistant Cashier.<sup>15</sup> Less than a year after the reorganization, J. D. Joseph purchased an interest in the bank and became a director and an assistant cashier on April 1, 1892. At that time, the

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<sup>13</sup>Statement by Esther Davis, personal interview.

<sup>14</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>15</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 595.



Fig. 47 - McSparrin Livery Stable. 1905.



Fig. 48 - Kelly's Livery Stable. 1903.

officers were I. H. Neiman, President; J. C. Kirkwood, Vice-President; and G. P. Neiman, Cashier.<sup>16</sup>

The last decade of the Nineteenth Century found many different business establishments operating in Whitewater. In those days wooden sidewalks were of a hit and miss variety as were many other modern conveniences.<sup>17</sup> The wooden sidewalks existed in front of the stores on the west side of Main Street (Fig. 49); and the first brick sidewalk put down in town was laid by the Bank of Whitewater in 1897 (Fig. 50).<sup>18</sup> Another modern development was the waterworks system powered by a windmill and located opposite the school. The system was begun by the McLains of the bank in 1890, and was built by John E. Ford of Newton. The waterworks was purchased in 1892 by the city of Whitewater for use as the municipal water supply.<sup>19</sup>

As the town developed, more and varied businesses began to strengthen the prosperity of the community. Some of the businesses which came into being during the last decade of the Nineteenth Century were as follows:

W. Newberry, cobbler shop  
Bus Williams, bakery

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<sup>16</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

<sup>17</sup>Statement by Arthur Penner, personal interview.

<sup>18</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>19</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.* pp. 177-178.



Fig. 49 - West Side Store Fronts. 1903.

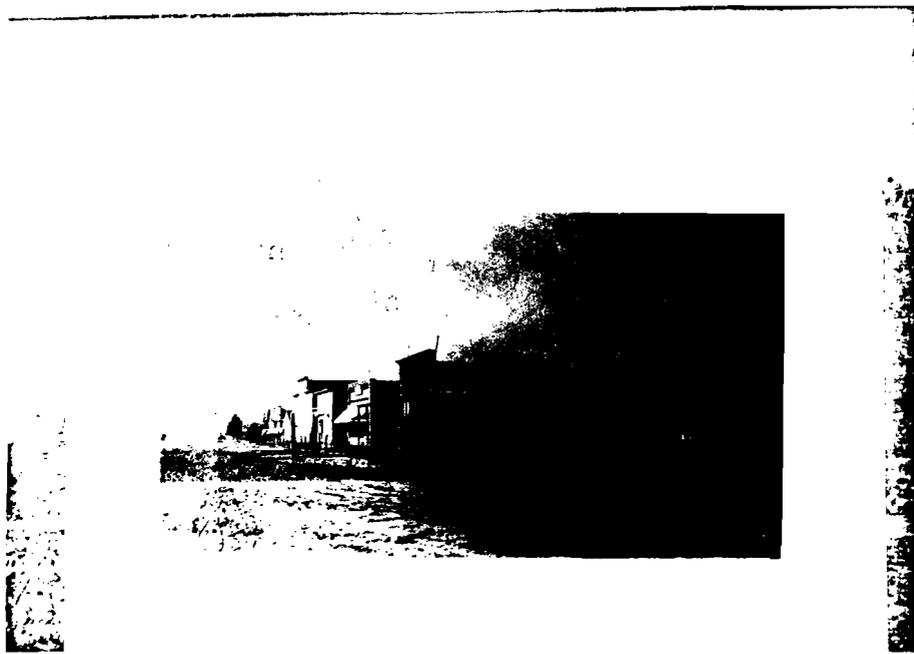


Fig. 50 - Bank of Whitewater. 1903.

W. F. Wakefield, restaurant  
 C. Smith, carpet weaving plant  
 Fred Breising, butcher shop and ice plant  
 Peter E. Ashenfelter, lawyer from Brainerd  
 H. H. Weachman, hardware and implements  
 E. L. Neal, tinner and tank maker, established in  
 1891  
 O. E. McDowell, barber and painter  
 Joseph Weatherby, carpenter from Annelly  
 J. Fowler, carpenter  
 G. B. Hanstine, carpenter  
 Charles Wilson, dry cleaning and hat rebuilding  
 Ben Todd, plasterer  
 H. M. Nolder, produce dealer  
 John A. Dilzer, harness maker  
 Mr. Kinney, broom factory  
 W. H. Lambert, grocery and meat market  
 Henry Heiger, furniture  
 E. S. Raymond, druggist from Brainerd<sup>20</sup>

Politics began to play an important part in the development of the area. Until 1890, residents of White-water went to Brainerd to vote in county, state, and national elections as there was only one voting precinct in the area prior to that time.<sup>21</sup> During one election before the turn of the century, a one-wheel-driven Frick steam tractor was used to encourage voters to send a Democrat to the White House (Fig. 51). Also used at various times for events other than the political parades was an organized city band with a membership of about eighteen musicians under the direction of

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<sup>20</sup>Statement by Arthur Penner, personal interview.  
 Statement by Herman F. Bruhn, personal interview.  
 Statement by Mrs. Ted Roth, Sr., personal interview.  
 Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>21</sup>Statement by Esther Davis, personal interview.

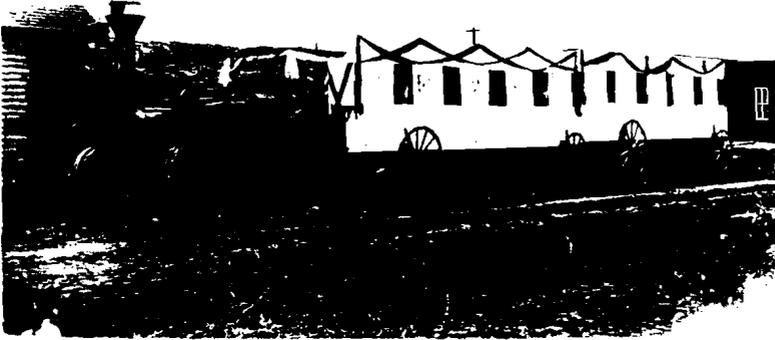


Fig. 51 - Campaign Wagons



Fig. 52 - Whitewater Band. 1900.

Dr. John Horner (Fig. 52, p. 79). The year 1889 also found the town becoming incorporated with G. H. Otto as the first mayor with the following members of the Council: J. Weatherby, G. G. Coons, H. H. Weachman, Fred Breising, and E. T. Burns. William Newberry became the first Town Marshall; and E. L. Neal, W. F. Wakefield, and S. L. Motter formed the first Board of Canvassers for the election.<sup>22</sup>

As the area developed, newspapers were one means of drawing the community together; and printed news was of importance in those days of no telephones, radios, or cars. Already mentioned was the movement of the *Brainerd Ensign* to Whitewater, becoming the *Whitewater Tribune*, printed from June 20, 1890, to 1893. The *Herald* followed the *Tribune*, and continued from June 22, 1893, until 1896. The *Independent* was founded on October 8, 1896, by E. Davis, Jr., and was edited for many years by him (Figs. 53-54).<sup>23</sup>

The Whitewater Post Office was opened on May, 15, 1888, with I. H. Neiman, an ardent Democrat, as the first postmaster, receiving his appointment from President Cleveland.<sup>24</sup> S. L. Motter was the Deputy Postmaster. Neiman was succeeded in order by Nellie M. Godfrey, Republican; H. W.

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<sup>22</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>23</sup>William E. Connelley, History of Kansas Newspapers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, 1916.

<sup>24</sup>Baughman, *op. cit.*, p. 138.



Fig. 53 - *Independent Office.* E. Davis  
in white shirt. 1905.

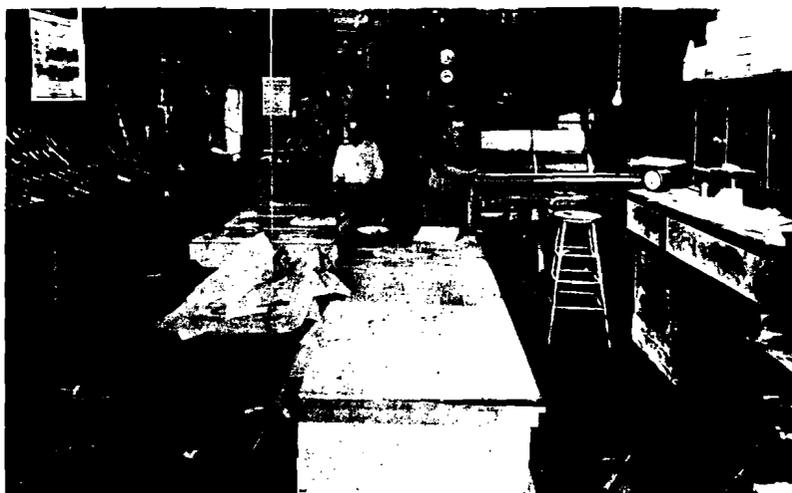


Fig. 54 - *Independent Print Shop,*  
interior. 1905.

Bailey, Republican; G. W. Penner, Democrat (1893-97); and George H. Otto.<sup>25</sup>

Along with the development of the town, churches became a permanent asset to the area. The Grace Reformed Church was organized in 1888 by the Rev. D. B. Shuey, and the congregation erected a place of worship in the following year (Fig. 55). The Evangelical Lutheran Church, which was organized in 1881 at Annelly by the Rev. Henry Ackers, erected a \$1400 building in 1889 on the site of the present Federated Church. The building burned on November 19, 1893, from an unknown cause, and was replaced in 1894 (Fig. 56).<sup>26</sup>

As the churches developed, several fraternal organizations were also created to meet the needs of those who wished to join. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows in Whitewater organized in 1889. The Masonic Lodge 280 was created about this time; and the Modern Woodmen Camp 3860 was chartered on May 9, 1896, with J. W. Stiger as First COUNSUL and J. M. Pace as First Clerk.<sup>27</sup>

The first grade school, a one-room structure, was built in 1889 near the Rock Island Railroad. Mary Neiman was the first teacher and held the position until her marri-

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<sup>25</sup>Statement by Arthur Penner, personal interview.

<sup>26</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>27</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 308.



Fig. 55 - Grace Reformed Church. 1896.



Fig. 56 - Evangelical Lutheran Church. 1895.

age to J. D. Joseph on March 2, 1892. The first school board directors of Butler-Harvey County District 95 were John Eilert, Joseph Weatherby, and Chester Smith. In 1890, a four-room, two-story building was erected on the present school block (Figs. 57-58).<sup>28</sup>

Thus, through the determination of many people to make the most of two railroad lines, from the birth of the city of Whitewater to the year 1900, the citizens found themselves with a potential for growth and future progress--unlike those inhabitants of Plum Grove and Brainerd (Figs. 59-67). Yet, there were those citizens of west Butler County who did not move to Whitewater with the building of the Rock Island Railroad. Sixty-eight persons remained in Brainerd;<sup>29</sup> and about 189 continued to live in Potwin, since it was an established settlement prior to the construction of the Rock Island Railroad line through Whitewater.<sup>30</sup>

Further evidence of persons remaining in Brainerd and Potwin after 1887 is found by checking the grave stones near those two town sites. The following persons who were active in Brainerd and Potwin are interned in the respective town cemeteries. In the Brainerd cemetery are G. A. Watson,

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<sup>28</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>29</sup>Vol. 17 Biennial Reports of the State Board of Agriculture 1899-1900.

<sup>30</sup>Statement by Mrs. Cordy Jones, personal interview.

1891; S. S. Thomas, 1897; Peter Ashenfelter, 1933; C. A. Roach, 1896; G. H. Roach, 1900; Fred Schroke, 1924; and Joseph Weatherby, 1921. Interned at Potwin are Joseph Longstreth, 1903; Richard Watkins, 1915; Green Adams, 1892; and Walt Meredith, 1901.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>On site inspection by author in Brainerd and Potwin cemeteries on October 31 and November 7, 1970.

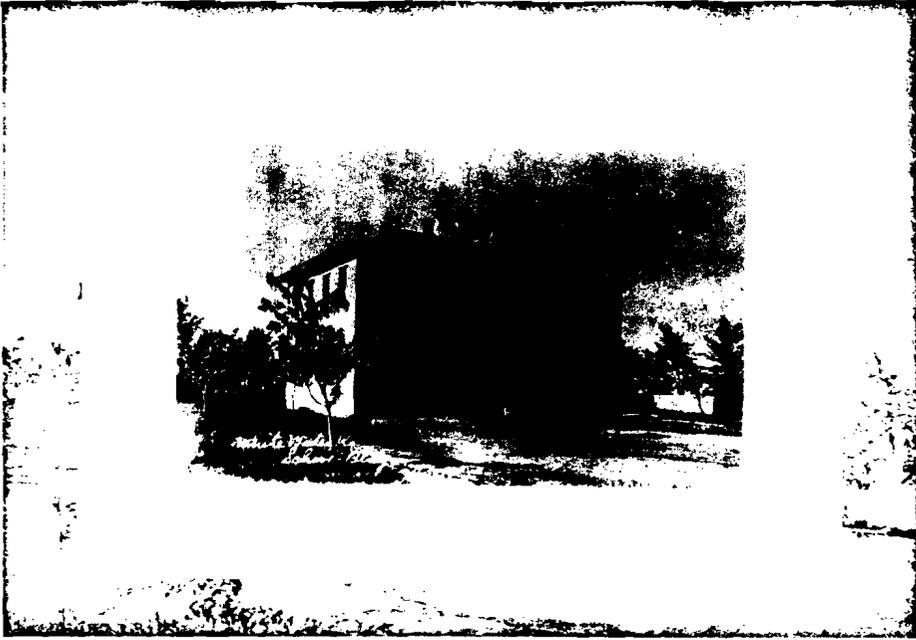


Fig. 57 - Whitewater Grade School. 1895.

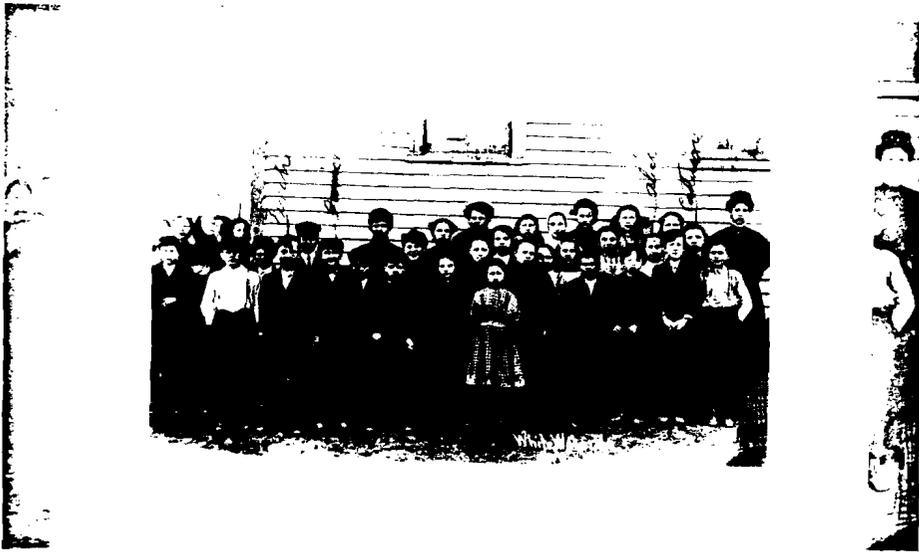


Fig. 58 - School Class - 1890's.



Fig. 59 - S. R. Neiman Home. 1895.



Fig. 60 - R. H. Farr Home. 1899.



Fig. 61 - North Edge of Business  
District. West side of street. 1906.



Fig. 62 - Middle of Town. East side  
of street. 1906.

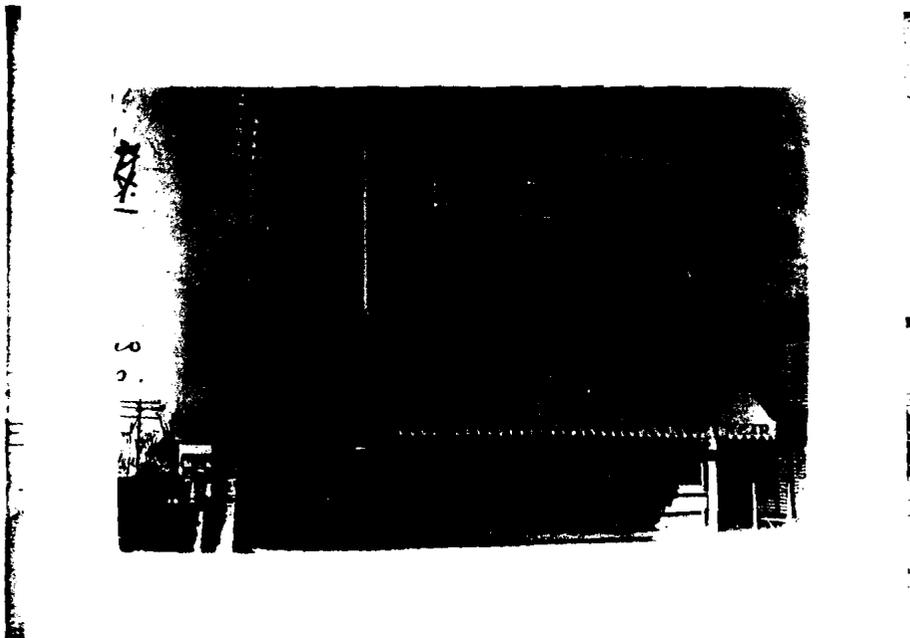


Fig. 63 - Huguenin Bros. Store. Dry goods.  
South, across street from bank; they moved  
the business to Peabody, Kansas, after the  
turn of the century. 1906.



Fig. 64 - Dean's Livery Barn

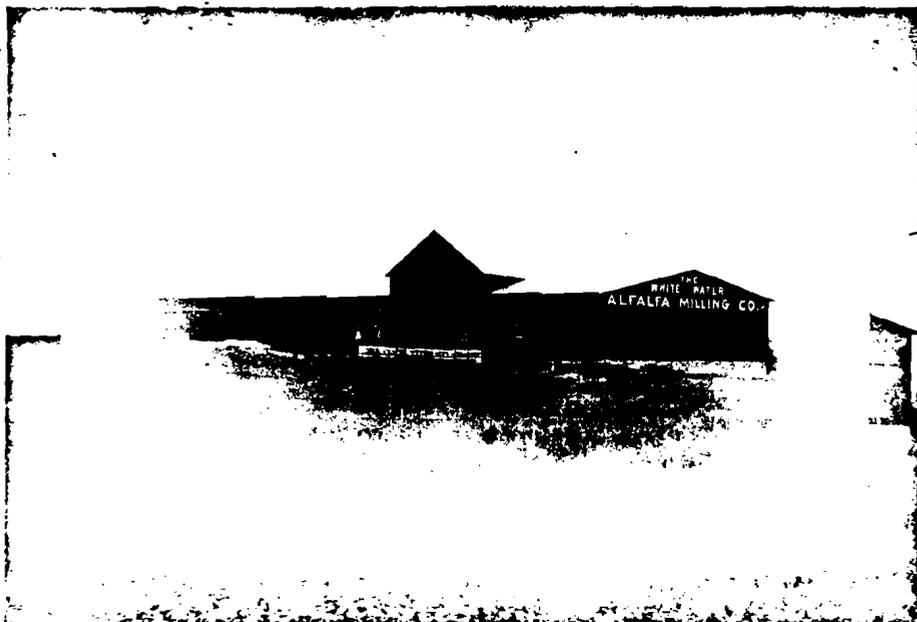


Fig. 65 - Whitewater Alfalfa Milling Co.  
Located on Rock Island Railroad, north  
edge of town. 1910.

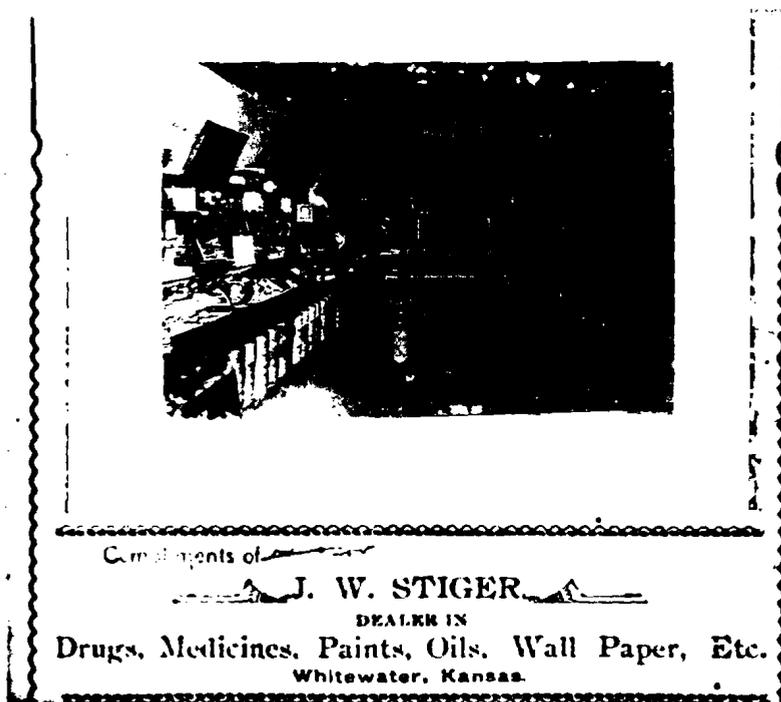


Fig. 66 - J. W. Stiger Store -  
Interior. 1910.



Fig. 67 - George H. Roach Store -  
interior. 1896.

## CHAPTER VI

### POTWIN, KANSAS

Potwin, like Brainerd, grew into a town when the Missouri Pacific Railroad began building through western Butler County. The railroad, continuing west from El Dorado, reached Potwin prior to its arrival in Brainerd. Thus, the movement for incorporation of Potwin started a month earlier than the move to incorporate Brainerd. Mr. Charles W. Potwin owned the land of the proposed town site and offered the land for the town if it were named for Potwin.

The town was originally laid out on 40 acres of land in the center of the northwest quarter of Section 29, Township 24, Range 4 East, with the charter being granted by E. B. Allen, Secretary of State, on April 17, 1885. The Potwin Town Company's board of directors were C. A. Potwin, S. M. Kellogg, Jr., W. M. Crawford, W. S. Reece, and T. N. Lewis. (See copy of charter, starting on p. 93.) C. A. Potwin and D. P. Jones deeded some land to the newly formed Potwin Charter Company in 1885. Information found by Mrs. Elsie Smith indicated that fees of \$500 were paid by the company to Mr. Potwin.<sup>1</sup> (See Map 11, p. 97.)

The town was located on high ground on a series of

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<sup>1</sup>Elsie Higdon Smith, Potwin Christian Church: A History (North Newton [Kansas]: The Mennonite Press, 1969), p. 11.

CERTIFIED COPY

OF

# Charter

OF THE

*Potwin*

*Town Company*

Filed \_\_\_\_\_, 188

From Office of Secretary of State, Topeka, Kansas.

Fig. 68 - Potwin Charter (4 pp.)



Fig. 68 - cont.

CHARTER  
of the  
POTVIN TOWN COMPANY.

FIRST.--The corporation shall be known as the "POTVIN TOWN  
COMPANY."

C. A. POTWIN.

S. M. BEEBEEGG, JR.

W. M. CRAWFORD.

W. S. BENDG.

T. H. LAMMS.

7885

# Potwin.

Scale 200 ft. = 1 inch.



Map 11 - Potwin Plat Map - 1885.

POTWIN

Cemetery ↗

T-22

MO PAC RR

T-21A

29

T-95

T-85

T-24

11.2

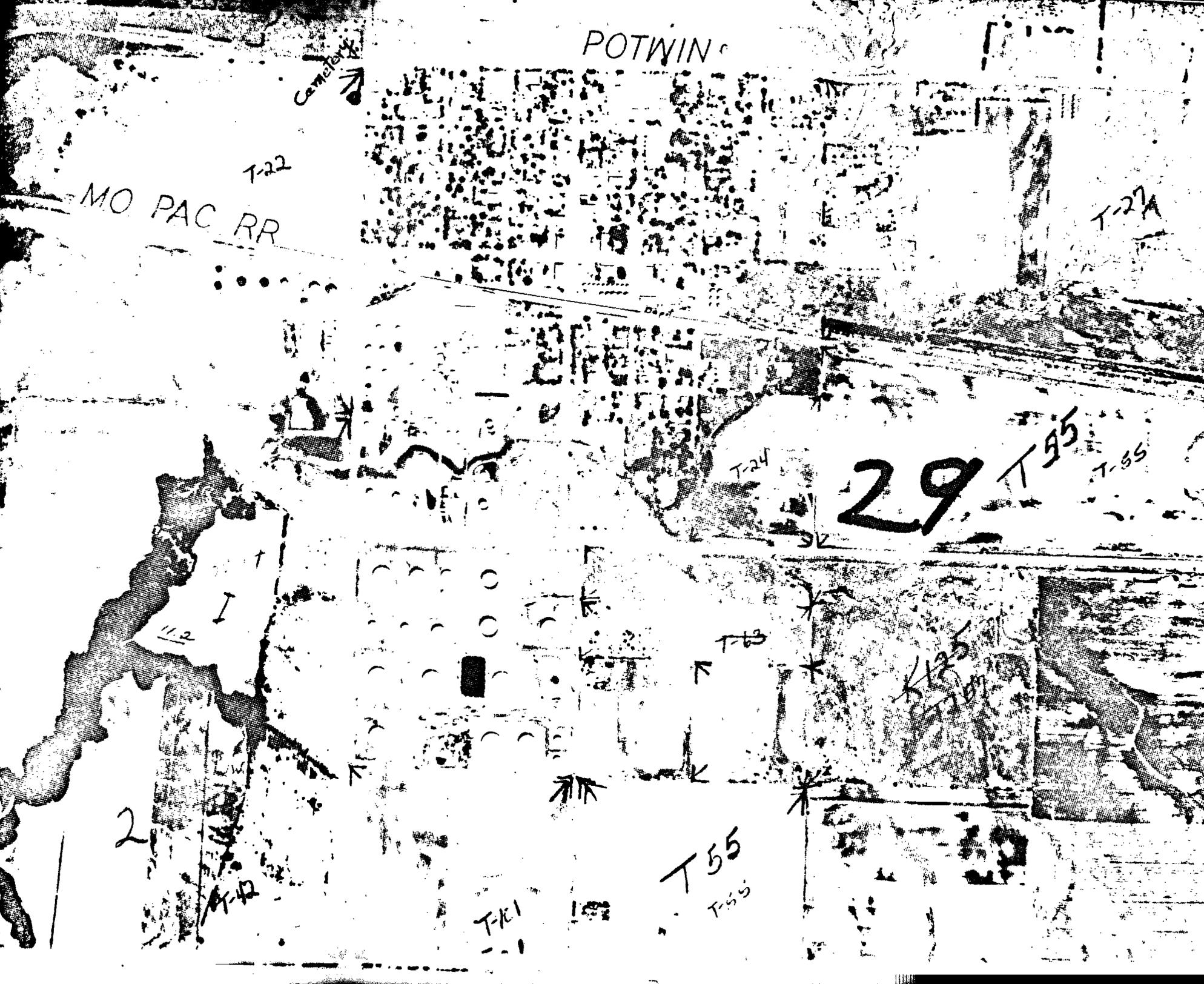
T-63

2

T-42

T-101

T-55  
T-55



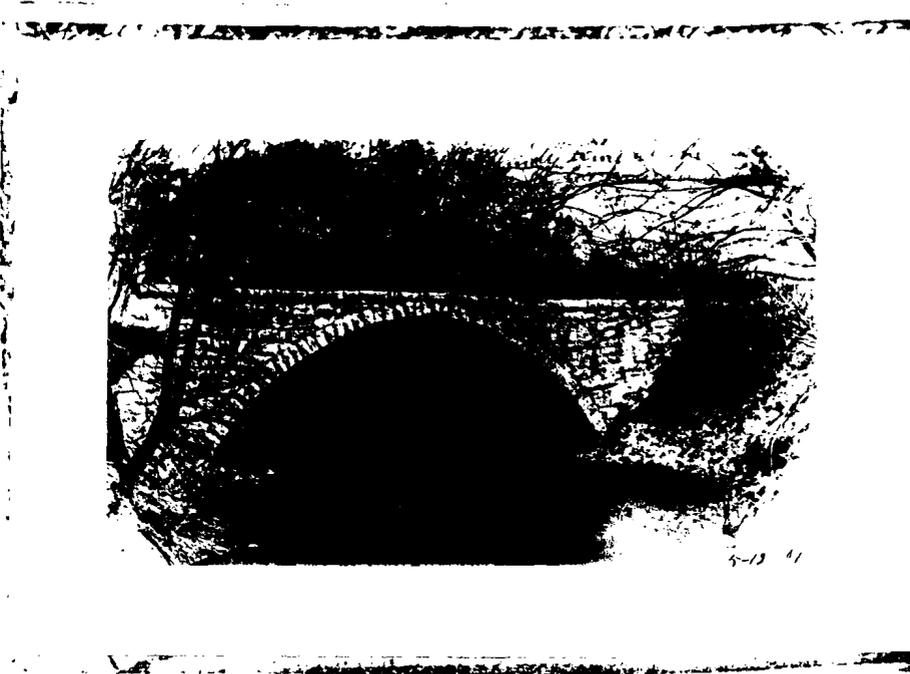


Fig. 69 - River Bridge.



Fig. 70 - Depot.

In addition to the farm items being shipped out, the economy of Potwin included a stone quarry north of the town site which was owned by William I. Joseph. The railroad built a spur to the quarry to handle large shipments of the stone. By 1888, a substantial number of the buildings in the Newton business district were being built of stone from Potwin.<sup>5</sup>

Andy Patterson, a stone mason, used native stone to build a two-story school in 1886, replacing an earlier frame building which had existed on the same site since 1873. J. D. Joseph, assisted by R. V. Smith, became the principal of the school. The school board consisted of R. B. Rand, Director; T. A. Bowyer, Clerk; and A. B. Ewing, Treasurer.<sup>6</sup>

Newspapers became an important segment in the town's communication in keeping the people informed of school events as well as other happenings. In 1885, Joseph M. Worley issued the first number of the *Potwin Herald* and continued to print the paper for a number of years. In 1887, the *Potwin Messenger* also competed with the *Herald*, but the *Messenger* was short lived. In the mid-1880's, another paper outside the community, the *Walnut Valley Times* of El Dorado, inserted a line or two about its neighbor city of Potwin:

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<sup>5</sup>Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup>Smith, *loc. cit.*

"Potwin's mineral springs are creating quite an excitement."<sup>7</sup>

The two-story brick Potwin Building at the corner of Randall and Marshall Streets was begun in 1885 by Charles W. Potwin and his son, C. A. Potwin (Figs. 71-72). The top floor was designed as a hall and was built to be used for community and church gatherings. Two divisions on the ground floor housed businesses for many years. The west side served as a drug store operated by G. W. and Ed Ball. Later this portion became a hardware and harness shop operated by Sam Cobb. The east part of the ground floor held a general store run by A. A. Rice, a native of Ohio. He traded a flock of sheep brought from Augusta to a merchant in Newton for a stock of goods to set up his trade. Upon his father's death in February of 1894, Frank A. Rice took over the business.<sup>8</sup>

To further facilitate communications, a post office was opened on September 22, 1885; and, as the first postmaster, George M. Daffron used his store to house the new office.<sup>9</sup> Mr. Daffron lived in Plum Grove before moving to Potwin. J. E. Ball was acting postmaster in 1888-1889; Urban D. Poe succeeded him and held the position until October 16, 1893. When Daffron's building burned, the office

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<sup>7</sup>*Walnut Valley Times*, August 22-27, 1885.

<sup>8</sup>Statement by Elsie H. Smith, personal interview.

<sup>9</sup>Baughman, *op. cit.*, p. 104.



Fig. 71 - Potwin Building - Capstone.  
January, 1970.



Fig. 72 - Potwin Building. 1886.

was moved to the front of the Rice store, the east half of the Potwin Building. Sallis R. Joseph (Rice) was appointed and served from October 17, 1893, until July 26, 1897; her sister, Josephine Joseph (Cobb), became her assistant. On July 27, 1897, Sam E. Cobb (father of Mrs. Alf Landon) was appointed as postmaster and, consequently, moved the post office to the Cobb Hardware store in the west side of the Potwin Building. He held the position until December 31, 1900.<sup>10</sup>

Following the erection of the Potwin Building in 1885-1886, other buildings began to spring up, and sales of merchandise took place before the last brick was laid or the last board nailed to the outside wall. Many businesses in addition to the Daffron store opened to serve the needs of the community during the remainder of the 1880's and 1890's. Like the businesses of Brainerd, some of these operations did not last long. Some of the owners and their businesses or occupations were as follows:

John Morran, opened a hotel in 1887  
 P. J. Graber, Potwin Mill, also farm implements  
 Urban D. Poe, groceries  
 C. U. Dumont, groceries and produce  
 John Olinger, groceries  
 Joseph Longstreth, groceries  
 Ed and J. W. Ball, general merchandisers  
 I. Howe, groceries  
 McIntyre Lumber Yard, Richard Watkins, caretaker

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<sup>10</sup>Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

J. C. Olinger, hardware and coal  
 Phillips Brothers, coal (The correspondent to the  
*Walnut Valley Times* on January 7, 1887, wrote about  
 the coal suppliers of Potwin, "Between the two  
 firms we generally freeze.")  
 Green Adams, blacksmith  
 W. W. Kemper, blacksmith (formerly at Plum Grove and  
 Brainerd)  
 James E. Chart, wagon shop (formerly owned by J. Cox)  
 Mr. Graham, carpenter  
 Dan Jones, carpenter  
 E. E. Bell and I. Howe, notaries  
 William I. Joseph, Justice of the Peace  
 Len Phillips, agent for the Adams Express Company  
 John Hopkins, feed mill (later run by G. E. Garri-  
 son)  
 J. W. Jennings, Central Hotel  
 Dr. Henry Smith, M. D.  
 Dr. Seaman, M. D.  
 J. Warren McLain, harness shop (from Brainerd to  
 Potwin in 1896, then moved to El Dorado)  
 Sam E. Cobb, hardware bought from the Ball Brothers  
 (later moved to Burns, Kansas, to work in the bank)  
 John Q. Ralph, lumber yard  
 Charles Rand, hardware  
 Walt Meredith, barber  
 Ed Stahlaker, livery stable  
 Jake Ullum, livery stable<sup>11</sup>

Churches played an important part in the lives of  
 the people in the Potwin community. The second story of the  
 Potwin Building was used for church services until houses of  
 worship were built (Figs. 73-74). The Methodists first held  
 church services in the parsonage moved from Plum Grove in  
 1885 to a site given by the Potwin family. But the building  
 served both the Methodists and the Evangelicals on alternate  
 Sundays. P. D. Lahr, James W. Pruen, Celia Graham, Ezra

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<sup>11</sup>Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 15, 16.  
*Walnut Valley Times*, January 7, 1887, p. 232.



Fig. 73 - Methodist Episcopal Church. 1886.



Fig. 74 - Christian Church. 1896.

Corrie, and Peter C. Dilts were some of the early Methodist ministers. The Presbyterians worshipped in their own church building in Brainerd. In 1895, the Christian Church was organized and the members built a church that year, with the dedication in June of 1896. This building was also shared with the Evangelicals for several years. M. C. Snorf, one of the remaining residents of Brainerd, was an early member of the new Christian Church. The first service held in this church was the funeral of John Clawson. Interment for most of the deceased took place on the northwest edge of the town site in the Potwin Cemetery (Fig. 75), given to the town by William I. Joseph.<sup>12</sup>



Fig. 75 - Potwin Cemetery.  
January, 1970.

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<sup>12</sup>Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 9-11.

To meet the needs of the community, various social organizations existed. The Literary and Dramatics Club put on the play "Ten Nights in a Barroom" in the spring of 1888. A chapter of the G. A. R. was organized, and the Modern Woodmen of America organized in November of 1892.<sup>13</sup>

Potwin, at the turn of the century, had a population of about 189 residents. The pleasantness and friendliness of neighbors, all facing pioneering hardships, resulted in community cohesion. Many people stayed and built better homes, established businesses, educated their children, and worshipped together--giving the town stability.

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<sup>13</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.* pp. 307-309.



Fig. 76 - Ox Team. 1912.

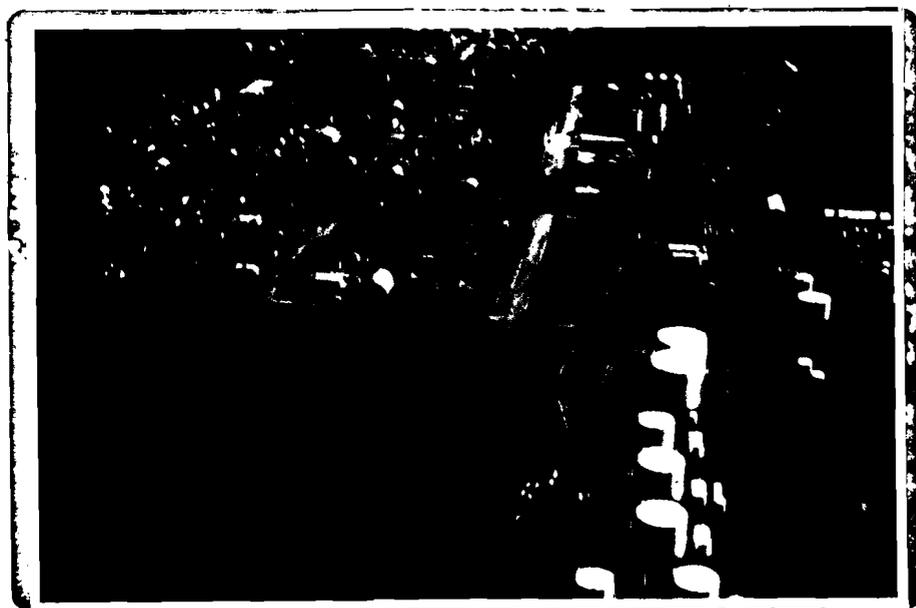


Fig. 77 - Potwin - contemporary  
aerial view. April, 1970.

## SUMMARY

To clarify the efforts of this study, the material is summarized to evaluate the evidence for the reader. The growth and development of northwest Butler County centered upon those people who established the towns of Plum Grove, Brainerd, Whitewater, and Potwin. These four towns were directly affected by the arrival of the first railroad facilities in 1885, and influenced by the anticipated arrival of the second railroad in 1887. Comprised of sparsely settled rural areas involved in ranching and cereal and feed grain production, the towns of Brainerd, Whitewater, and Potwin served as farm marketing and service centers with railroad access to larger markets. The demise of Plum Grove seems to have been caused by its having no railroad connections to any other urban centers (page 32).

Although Brainerd was well established, the arrival of the second railroad through Whitewater resulted in the majority of Brainerd's residents and their businesses moving to the town that offered greater economic promise. The movement of nearly all the people from Plum Grove to Brainerd and Potwin, then the exodus to Whitewater, found the businesses, schools, churches, and post offices all in a repeated condition of rootlessness.

Some people have been traced in their migration from one west Butler County town to another; several have been traced out of the area.

Beginning with those who resided in Plum Grove, M. C. Snorf, clerk in the Lobdell store, moved to Brainerd and operated his own general store there. Later he moved to Whitewater to his new grocery store. Daniel M. Elder engaged in saw milling, after which he sold land in Butler County, concluding his business activities by operating a stone quarry east of El Dorado. After her role as a homemaker, Mrs. John R. (Bertha) Wentworth taught school in Brainerd. Mrs. Mary Worline changed her occupation from running the Plum Grove Boarding House to operating a millinery shop in Brainerd. Blacksmithing was W. W. Kemper's trade; and this he maintained as he moved from Plum Grove to Brainerd, and then to Potwin. George M. Daffron's skills are unknown at Plum Grove, but he managed a general store in Potwin. (Detailed references to the above may be found in Chapters 3-6.)

After the building of the Rock Island Railroad through Whitewater in 1887, a number of Brainerd residents moved west to the town with two railroads. Some of these persons kept their former occupations--others made changes. Peter Ashenfelter operated a drug store and advised in matters of law while residing in Brainerd; however, after arriving in Whitewater, he only practiced law. Another who changed his trade was Thomas J. Whiteside. He managed both a livery barn and a general store in Brainerd, but in White-

water he kept only his general store. Among those who moved but did not change occupations were G. W. Neal, hardware dealer; George Roach and G. W. Penner, general store operators; and E. S. Raymond, druggist. Although Brainerd and Whitewater had railroads, there was still a need for carriages; consequently, Mr. Kelly continued to provide this service. Since more news was generated in a growing town, R. P. Morrison moved his newspaper publishing equipment from Brainerd to Whitewater. Most banking business exists where there are other businesses to serve, as well as the general public. The McLain family members, A. H., A. H., Jr., and E. S., moved their bank business from Brainerd to the growing town site. (Refer to Chapters 4 and 5 for more information.)

Not all persons were attracted to Whitewater. J. Warren McLain moved his harness shop from Brainerd to Potwin, then relocated in El Dorado. W. W. Kemper left Brainerd to establish his blacksmith shop in Potwin. (Refer to Chapters 4 and 6.)

With the reorganization of the bank in Whitewater in 1891. J. D. Joseph left his profession as the principal of the Potwin school to become cashier in the Whitewater bank. (Refer to Chapter 6.)

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of evidence that has been gathered, we can account for an increase and a decrease of population from one town to another in northwest Butler County. The hypothesis of the study was that these people moved to the town which had the most to offer in regard to transportation, and these facilities were wholly dominated by the advancing railroad systems. The actual movement of people has been traced, where possible, and recorded in the preceding chapters. This evidence would tend to indicate that there was a migration from Plum Grove to Brainerd, and from Brainerd to Whitewater as a result of two different railroad building programs. Very little evidence was found to indicate any strong attraction to Potwin with its one railroad system.

The people of Plum Grove had some expectations of a railroad when the California - Fort Smith Railroad surveyed the west edge of the town site in 1871. However, this railroad was never built. The 1871 decision of the California - Fort Smith Railroad not to build at all, and a later decision, in 1885, of the Missouri Pacific Railroad to build through Brainerd rather than Plum Grove, had a significant effect upon the population of Plum Grove. The town diminished in size. Four families have been traced from Plum Grove to Brainerd, two families have been traced from Plum Grove to Potwin, and one additional family has been traced

from Plum Grove to El Dorado. It would seem that they moved their businesses to where rail access would aid the transportation of commodities.

No evidence has been found as to why the California - Fort Smith Railroad did not build through Plum Grove or why the Missouri Pacific Railroad built three miles south of the Plum Grove town site through the future towns of Potwin and Brainerd.

After the arrival of the Missouri Pacific Railroad in June of 1885 at the future town site of Brainerd, sufficient numbers of people settled on the site to incorporate as a town on November 14, 1885, the population peaking at 500 in early 1887. Besides the former proprietors of Plum Grove, other people, anticipating a thriving community, moved to the new town. News items in periodicals gave evidence that the Chicago Kansas and Nebraska Railroad would build from Topeka, Kansas, to Wichita, Kansas. Since this line touched the town of Brainerd, it gave the feeling of optimism, and probably accounted for the influx of population during the years of 1886 and 1887. Railroad records or minutes of meetings as to why the Chicago Kansas and Nebraska Railroad was built three miles west of Brainerd have not been found.

In 1887, 500 persons lived in Brainerd. By 1890, the population had dropped to 203, and the year 1900 found 80 persons remaining in Brainerd. This indicates that maybe

people moved to the town which might offer more in theoretical benefits by having two railroads instead of one railroad system.

The first Chicago Kansas and Nebraska Railroad arrived in Whitewater in August of 1887. It gave Whitewater rail service to Topeka, Wichita, El Dorado, and McPherson; that is, Whitewater residents could now travel by rail to and from larger cities located north, east, south, and west of the town itself. This event marks the growth of one town and the demise of Brainerd. Eleven families can be traced from Brainerd to Whitewater; two families moved from Brainerd to Potwin; and one family moved from Brainerd to El Dorado. Whitewater, by 1890, had a population of 206, and ten years later recorded 240.

Potwin gained several residents during the exodus of population from Brainerd; two families were traced. Potwin's greater attraction could not be linked directly to railroad facilities. One family could be traced from Potwin to Whitewater. Of the four towns in northwest Butler County, Potwin is the only town where virtually no evidence could be found to trace or support the hypothesis that people moved to the town which had the most to offer in regard to transportation facilities.

Following are several factors which limited the study: early school records were missing; no evidence of

early day city records could be found; the tracing of people by checking tombstones was virtually fruitless; railroad records or minutes of meetings could not be found; and the Kansas State Historical Society could not provide much assistance in providing the material needed.

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## APPENDIX

Lord Alfred Harrison and Lord Scully, both English subjects, owned much land in Milton Township. Houses of a like pattern were placed on each quarter and rented or leased out. Scully land was leased for cash, the lessee paying the taxes.

In 1870, Charles Potwin, a land dealer, bought 34,683 acres of land in Butler County and Marion County from the Leavenworth, Lawrence and Galveston Railroad Company. It should be noted at this time that about all of the timber land and some of the choicest bottom land was owned by non-residents. In Plum Grove Township, all the odd-numbered sections, when not previously claimed, were included in the Santa Fe Land Grant. Quite a large amount of the best land along the streams was claimed by Lawrence and Potwin, who purchased it with railroad and agricultural college script.

Frederic Remington came to Butler County to visit a friend, Robert Camp, in 1883; and in April of that year, bought a "ranch" of 320 acres. Mr. Remington bought the southeast quarter of Section 26 and the southwest quarter of Section 25 in Fairmount Township. This land is two miles north and one mile west of Plum Grove. The land was deeded on February 13, 1884.<sup>1</sup> He raised sheep, cattle, and horses

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<sup>1</sup>Original deed. Frederic Remington Library, Brain-erd.

while in Butler County and hired Billy Kerr as his ranch hand. Mr. Remington sponsored boxing matches which were held on his ranch and attended by men from the surrounding area.<sup>2</sup> After three years in the area, Mr. Remington left and became famous for his painting of the cowboy and Indian, and scenes of the "wild and woolly West."



Fig. 78 - Boxing Match. This is much like those held on the Remington Ranch, on the old school grounds in Whitewater, Kansas, in 1905. This corner later was the site of the Zuercher Hatchery.

In 1873, twelve delegates were sent from Russian, Polish, and German Mennonite communities to secure a new

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<sup>2</sup>Statement by Esther Davis, personal interview.

homeland. Among these twelve delegates was Leonard Suderman from Russia, one of the founders of the Emmaus Mennonite Church, which is still located three miles west of the Plum Grove town site. The delegates went first to Manitoba, Canada, and then through the prairie states of the United States. One reason for settling in Kansas was the fertility of the land, and another was that in Kansas they could settle in compact groups since here the railroads had the alternate sections of land to sell. The United States Government had given the railroads the privilege of selling every other section of land along the railroad right-of-way for about twenty miles on either side of the tracks.

The railroad companies furnished the twelve delegates free transportation, not only rail but also ship passage, and wagons with drivers to look over the land. The land was cheap--\$5 per acre being an average price to pay. Few Mennonites have sold their land since settling in the area. Both Prussian and Swiss Mennonites located in Milton and Plum Grove Townships, building large houses and barns, raising crops as well as livestock and putting out orchards. Each group built and maintains its own church.<sup>3</sup>

Charles Birch was born on October 4, 1854, reared and educated in Liverpool, England, and came to the United

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<sup>3</sup>Statement by John Schmidt, personal interview.

in the Fall of 1882, locating on Section 14 in Milton Township. He became a horse dealer and made a specialty of breeding fine horses.

Amos Adams, a Civil War veteran and a cousin of Joseph H. Adams, and his wife, Nancy, came to Plum Grove Township in 1886, settling on the northwest quarter of Section 30. Mr. Adams lived there until his death in April of 1894. Mrs. Adams died on September 9, 1914, in El Dorado. A son, J. B. Adams, became a prominent political and financial figure in Butler County.<sup>4</sup>

Irwin Howe, farmer and stock raiser, was born in Marshall County, Virginia, in 1845, on December 29. As a child, he moved to Monroe County, Iowa, until 1873, when he became a resident of Plum Grove Township, settling on Section 2. He married in Iowa; from this union came three children: George, Flora, and Rose Mae. The Howe family were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>5</sup>

Charles Coppings placed his homestead entry on the southwest quarter of Section 26 in the spring of 1871, which was the last vacant government land in Plum Grove Township.

Of the original homesteaders, John H. Poffinbarger,

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<sup>4</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup>A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas (Chicago: A. J. Cox & Comp.)

a Civil War veteran, took his claim in 1870 and lived the longest on his homestead, the southwest quarter of Section 14 in Plum Grove Township.<sup>6</sup>

William I. Joseph, farmer and stock raiser, was born in Tyler County, West Virginia, on the 14th of February, 1835. He came to Kansas with his father, Waitman F. Joseph, in the spring of 1871, settling on Section 19 in Milton Township, but his post office was Plum Grove. Mr. Joseph was married in West Virginia to Miss L. A. Perkins, and they had four children: Flora, George, Alice, and Rufus. He was active in school affairs. For several years, he served as a Justice of the Peace.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, p. 748.

<sup>7</sup>Mooney, *op. cit.*, pp. 185 and 561.