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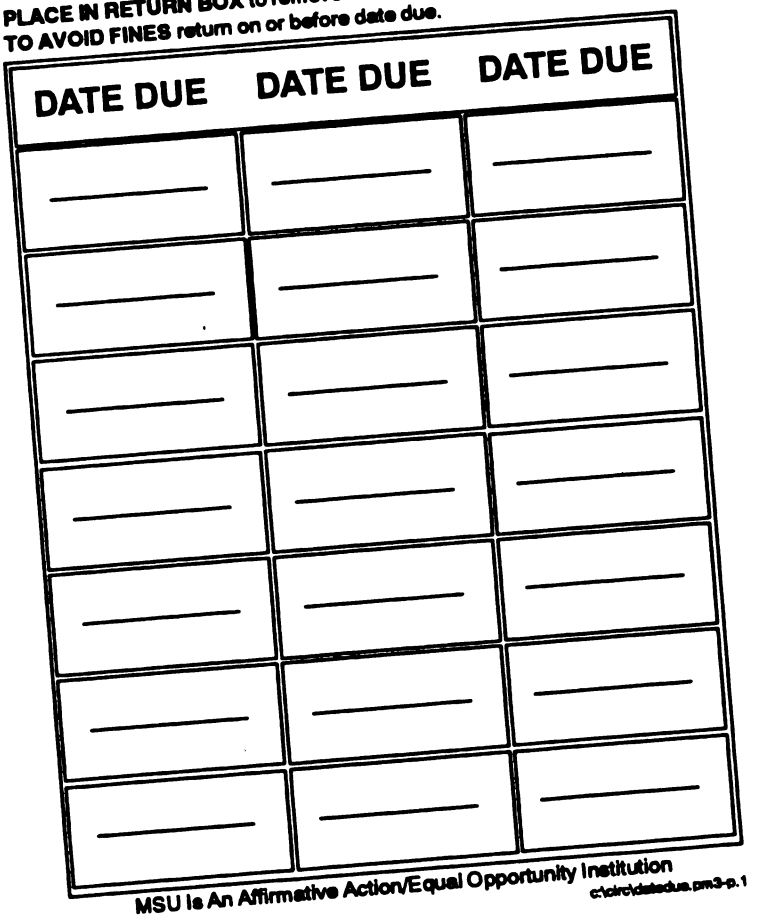

SOCIAL RECREATIONAL ENTERTAINMENTS IN OLATHE, MCPHERSON AND GARDEN CITY, KANSAS FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RAILROAD TO THE BUILDING OF THE FIRST OPERA HOUSES: A NARRATIVE HISTORY

By

Ricky W. Tyler

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL RECREATIONAL ENTERTAINMENTS IN
OLATHE, MCPHERSON AND GARDEN CITY, KANSAS
FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RAILROAD
TO THE BUILDING OF THE FIRST OPERA HOUSES:
A NARRATIVE HISTORY

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Documentation of local theatre histories is essential for the compilation of an accurate national theatre history; a truly representative history reflecting the events not only of urban locales but also those which occurred in small towns throughout this country.

This study focuses on the use of social recreational entertainments in three small Kansas towns from their founding until each had a permanent opera house. The encompassing presumption is that once a certain mixture of entertainment had been achieved, an opera house would be built. Each town represents a different geographical setting in Kansas and was located along the Santa Fe Trail and subsequent railroad replacement.

Olathe, located in the northeastern section of the state, was the first to be settled. Dates for the study of Olathe range from 1857 until approximately one year beyond the 1880 opening of the Hayes Opera House. The study of McPherson, centrally located in the state, encompasses the years from 1872 through 1889. The McPherson Opera House, the only one of the three in existence today, opened in January, 1889. Garden City was organized in 1878 in the southwest portion of the state. With the aid of a real estate boom, it grew the quickest and acquired the Stevens' Opera House in October of 1886.

Prior to the study of the entertainments, the following areas are examined: connections of the town to the Santa Fe Trail, the settling of the town site, pertinent biographies, the newspapers present, the railroads servicing the communities, and the growth of each town.

Entertainments for the communities are examined in the categories of social gatherings, political maneuverings, fund raisers and for-profit ventures. Entertainments experienced were very similar. Location, date of settlement, general characteristics of the populace, rail service, and the local press all had impact on the number and variety of entertainments presented to and participated in by each town.

The pervading presumption that opera houses were the natural realization of towns actively engaged in entertainments was not supported. Opera houses were built as business ventures, each town having a unique scenario leading to the construction of its opera house.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to aid in the documentation of the history of theatre during the last half of the nineteenth century in the United States. More specifically, the study will focus on three small towns located along the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas. Their founding and establishment provides the matrix from which the theatrical entertainments developed. Theatrical entertainments will examined within the more inclusive cluster of social recreation entertainment. The study will record the various uses of social recreational entertainment that culminated in the building of a permanent opera house thus providing a more focused and regularized offering of theatrical entertainments.

Rationale

Theatre history of the last half of the nineteenth century in the United States traditionally includes an examination of melodrama, comments on the emergence of the director, statements and/or explanations of the various technical advances, a recounting of the accomplishments of a limited number of actors and actor/managers, and a brief look at how theatre capitalized on the western expansion of the country.[1]

The western settlement of the United States is covered quickly and succinctly with a statement about the importance of the railroad giving stars and their touring companies a chance to enrich the cultural offerings of this new frontier.[2] Most then hurry on to a brief study of theatrical entertainments in California and some include mention of

Salt Lake City and the interest shown in theatre by the Mormons.[3] Rarely, however, does one read what it was like for people in the thousands of small towns hugging the railroad lines between Chicago and Denver as they developed the cultural offerings of their new hometowns. And even more rare is the inclusion of any information concerning the opera houses of these small towns.

The scope of theatre's historical research needs to continue to be broadened, including all areas of the country from the established metropolitan areas in the east to the small rural communities beginning to surface west of the Mississippi River during the last half of the nineteenth century. According to Douglas McDermott and Robert K. Sarlos in their essay included in Theatrical Touring and Founding in North America:

> the heritage of American theatre is coming into sharper focus. . . . An important task in this process of rediscovery is to correct the traditional American assumption that only the biggest or the oldest is significant. . . . Those who explore the nineteenth century must continue to demonstrate that its theatre was not confined to playhouses built by major entrepreneurs and played in by only a handful of stars. . . . It is, therefore, the overwhelming bulk of theatrical activity, that of the minor yet ubiquitous craftsmen, that needs surveying. We need to focus on the itinerant actors and managers, as well as on the playhouses they toured, and from which the syndicators eventually assembled their empire (57-58).

This sentiment is shared by Elbert R. Bowen in the introduction of his book, Theatrical Entertainments in Rural Missouri Before the Civil War. However, Bowen strengthens the issue by stating that "much of the written history assumes that professional activity in the metropolis represents the entirety of the American theatre." He continues by establishing that:

> cities, however, do not epitomize the full extent of America's theatrical scene, for many a small town of today could once boast the presence of a theatre which helped fill human

> hours untouched by motion picture, the radio, or the television receiver (vii–viii).

In the preface to Melvin Schoberlin's book, From Candles to Footlights, A Biography of the Pike's Peak Theatre 1859–1876, Barrett H. Clark indicates that it is imperative for scholars to record local theatre histories. Clark continues that each community able to complete such a study has taken a step "toward the erection of an important part of that larger structure which we call the history of the American people (ix–x)." By focusing on the early theatrical history of three towns located on the prairies of Kansas and the subsequent acquisition of an opera house, this dissertation will contribute to a more thorough theatrical history of this country.

Background

There are published local theatrical histories of many of the larger frontier cities; those located at significant geographic points that assured them of substantial growth or those fortunate enough to be the site of a gold rush. Kansas City's history has been well documented in two general histories, three studies of specific theatres or theatrical buildings, and a 60 part series in the Kansas City Star, as well as in a multitude of articles published in national and regional journals (Larson 82–83). The theatrical record of St. Louis has received extensive study by William G. B. Carson in his two volume history covering the first thirty years (Bowen viii). A minimum of twenty–five other historians have documented portions of that river town's theatrical history (Larson 84–87). Denver's history has been the subject of at least fifteen studies and has been mentioned in countless others (Larson 18–19). Regional areas and specific states of the Midwest have received attention as well. Montana,

Nebraska, the Rocky Mountains, Iowa as well as specific studies of eastern and south eastern Iowa, Arkansas, rural Missouri, and the Ozarks are among the many.[4]

Within the state of Kansas specific opera houses have been the focus of at least four unpublished master's theses.[5] The tours of the James A. Lord Chicago Dramatic Company were the focus of an in depth five-part series published by the Kansas State Historical Society.[6] Wichita,[7] Lawrence,[8] Topeka, Atchison, Dodge City, Emporia, and other Kansas cities have been either the focus of targeted studies or have been representatives in more topic oriented studies.[9] Some work has been collected on the theatre at two military forts in the state.[10] The remainder of the coverage in the state of Kansas varies from details assembled for various local centennial celebrations to sporadic clippings saved by individuals probably unaware that they had possibly chronicled the only remaining history of their home town's theatrical heritage.

Limitations of Study

This is a descriptive study and is not intended to be hypothesis-testing. The hypothesis it generates will be dealt with in the final chapter of the dissertation.

The most valuable mission undertaken by the countless newspaper reporters, editors, and printers was that of the unofficial chroniclers of the towns' histories. A major portion of this study is an examination of the uses of entertainments within a community, focused primarily on events that were reported by these unofficial chroniclers. These men of European descent allowed for the creation of a local history, a biased local history. The diverse bias of each editor and the lack of attention

paid to detail by individual reporters resulted in the loss of a portion of each town's history. However, the information published in the volumes of their weekly and daily editions is a vast supply of information from which the beginnings of a local history can be assembled.

The participants involved in most of the events included in the study are predominantly of northern European descent and immigrated to Kansas primarily from states north of the Ohio River. African-American slaves were present in Johnson County (the location of the first town examined) prior to the Civil War, but information was not available concerning their involvement in the town's entertainments. After the war, African-Americans settled throughout the state, although they were not often invited or included in the entertainments.

McPherson County, site of the second town examined, had Swedish Lutheran and Russian Mennonite settlements. However, entertainments unique to those settlements were not part of the entertainments of McPherson. Women are included in all entertainments except when noted as being selectively male. Age, wealth, and religious preference are referred to only when integral to the entertainment examined.

Choice of Kansas. The geographical position of Kansas facilitated it as the crossroads for an expanding nation. From 1821 through 1900 the state was crisscrossed by the Holladay Overland Mail route, the Butter-field Overland Despatch route, the Pony Express, the Western Cattle Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, the Chisolm Trail, the Shawnee Trails, the Oregon Trail, the Cimarron Trail, and as many railroad lines (Zornow 57). Kansas was the place to go through on the journey to somewhere else, an avenue to the West. Once the railroad was introduced, the Santa Fe Trail (along

with the stagecoach, the pony express and other mail routes and trails) was quickly disregarded. One branch of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, however, did follow close to the original northern route of the Santa Fe Trail. By the turn of the century a total of twenty-three towns with opera houses were located on that particular branch of the railroad (Theatres 3-9). By using the original Santa Fe Trail and the subsequent expansion of the railroad as a vantage point for viewing the state of Kansas, a sweep of the state's small town theatrical history can be surveyed.

Overview of the Santa Fe Trail. In this study the Santa Fe Trail serves primarily as a point of reference, as a geographical location on which to situate the study, the route on which the settlements are located. The trail diagonally bisects the state of Kansas from the northeast to the southwest. The entire trail runs from Independence, Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico--a total of 775 miles with approximately 550 of them within the present boundaries of Kansas (Zornow 60).

Originally the Santa Fe Trail was a "commercial and cultural link between the borderlands of the United States and Mexico (Brown 1)" first traveled by a merchant, William Becknell in 1821. During its approximate fifty year history (1822 - 1875) the trail served as a military highway for both the Mexican War and the Civil War, the southern route for the numerous cries of "gold rush", and the thoroughfare for the overland stagecoach, immigrant wagon trains, and oxen hauling commercial freighters. Josiah Gregg's 1844 landmark book about the American West, Commerce of the Prairies, provided "for stay-at-homes" a trek through "a world as unknown in that day as the back of the moon is to Americans

today. For those going West he offered a a superb guidebook to the Santa Fe Trail and what they might find in New Mexico (Hawke xiii)."

The Santa Fe Trail was undoubtedly one of the major arteries moving the mercantile commodities and the population of this country from east to west during the middle of the nineteenth century. With each new crossing of the prairies more and more people opted for homesteading and more fortunes were made trading in the lucrative markets of the southwest. Then "the railroad came, pushing the eastern terminus of the trail ever westward, until finally by 1880 there was no more trail (Brown 2)."

The Railroad. Before the introduction of the railroads to the vast prairies, few businessmen found it profitable to invest in the towns springing up along the trails; few individuals and families found the promise of a new life strong enough to make the trip west; and few theatrical companies found it feasible to venture out of the cities of the east. But once the railroad headed on to the prairies – the people, the money and the theatrical entertainments followed in greater numbers.

"Railroad promoters were equally cognizant of the profit possibilities that followed established pathways westward; for decades Americans had dreamed of linking the mineral-rich Pacific coast to the settled, manufacturing Atlantic seaboard (Connor and Skaggs 181)." The country entered the second half of the nineteenth century and that interest for a transcontinental railroad dimmed as the secession language increased in the South and the resources for such a venture eventually had to be split for the sake of the Union; no one route would appease both factions. With the acquisition of the Gadsden Purchase in 1853 from Mexico

for the South and the legislative action of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 for the North, the two regions had the means by which they could commence work on their own transcontinental rails. However, the border wars and guerrilla tactics in Kansas quickly extinguished the hope of either railway becoming a reality until the conclusion of the Civil War.

From the nine thousand miles of railroad track in 1850, a "national railway system of 30,000 miles" had been developed by 1860 and increased "to a total of 93,000 by 1880 (Slout 1)." The joining of the East and West for the nation finally occurred with the pounding of the golden spike in Promontory Point, Utah in 1869.

Eastern investors were not as enticed with the crossing of the prairies in central Kansas as they had been with the allure of the transcontinental project. After lengthy lobbying in Topeka and Washington D. C., the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad had been successful in securing the needed backing and by December of 1872 the Colorado border was reached.

On February 16, 1880 the arrival of the first

> train in Santa Fe ended for all time the need for the slow-moving wooden wagons, for bewhiskered teamsters who spat tobacco juice at the rumps of their mules, for jaded cavalrymen who rode pell-mell into the mountains to eject Indians who raided along the trail. It also eliminated most of the adaptive, innovative entrepreneurs who for decades had profited by risking all in outfitting trading ventures to remote New Mexico. The iron horse had arrived. All else was passe (Connor and Skaggs 195).

And although the railroad's primary goal was to replace the Santa Fe Trail for commercial ventures, the long-term effects of the rails had a far more widespread influence on all aspects of the westward American expansion.

The expansion and improvement of transportation of almost any

form had always been "a boon . . . to the expansion of theatre as well (Wilson 132)." Robert C. Toll acknowledges the railroad as the enabler for "performers to honeycomb the nation, bringing virtually every type of popular entertainment to virtually every settlement in the country (146)." In his book Actors and the American Culture, 1880-1920, Benjamin McArthur credits the railroad with the growth of the combination companies (9). Within the introductory chapter in his book on repertoire tent theatre, William Slout writes that the "rapid expansion of railroad mileage following the Civil War furnished the means for touring companies organized in New York and other large cities to add heretofore inaccessible towns to their itineraries, breaking up long jumps, and thus making the touring more profitable (1)."

To capitalize on the increased theatrical activity and on the influx of homesteaders, both made possible by the railroad, town leaders sought to surround their communities with the trappings of "culture." Ronald L. Davis comments on the development of the opera house as a staple in this quest for growth and stability. In his article, "Sopranos and Six Guns - The Frontier Opera House as a Cultural Symbol," Davis states that as

> the frontier towns became more prosperous and orderly, and as the number of women and children in the community increased, civic leaders grew anxious about their town's image, seeking overt signs of respectability and gentility. Merchants and land speculators, on their part, realizing an advantage in projecting a degree of permanence and solidarity, began encouraging cultural activities in the hope of attracting prospective settlers and industries. . . . And yet in a convulsive society in which everything must be achieved quickly---amid the work of establishing an economy, maintaining law and order, and building homes and schools and churches---time was at a premium. Cultural symbols, therefore, must be tried and sure, potent with civilizing influence, and guaranteed to produce immediately the desired aura of stability and refinement. . . . In this search for instant culture, the frontier opera house emerged as perhaps the most coveted of cultural symbols (11).

As the railroad continued to add miles to its network, "nearly every town on a major rail line found a need for an opera house. By 1896 the numbers of theatres in cities large enough to profitably accommodate national touring companies had increased to an estimated 1,300. Many were in communities of from two to five thousand population (Slout 2)."

Town Selection. The three towns selected for this study were chosen primarily because of their location in the state, on the Santa Fe Trail, and subsequently on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.

Olathe is located ten miles from the Kansas Missouri border southeast of Kansas City. It would easily have been reached the first day out of Independence or Westport, Missouri on the Santa Fe Trail. It is currently a suburb of Kansas City and county seat for Johnson County, Kansas. Its early history ties in closely with its location ten miles from the pro-slavery state of Missouri at the beginning of the Civil War. The close proximity to Kansas City and Topeka also has ramifications in regard to some of the town's entertainments.

McPherson, Kansas is located in the geographic center of the state, to the west of the Flint Hills and yet still east of the great plains. Its central location in the state as well as in the county featured significantly in its settlement and erection of an opera house. It is county seat for the county bearing the same name.

Garden City is among the most western of the towns in Kansas which built opera houses and was virtually the last theatre prior to those located on the eastern slope of the Colorado Rockies. It too is a county seat. Located in the center of Finney County it is approximately 70 miles from the Colorado border and 53 miles northwest of Dodge City.

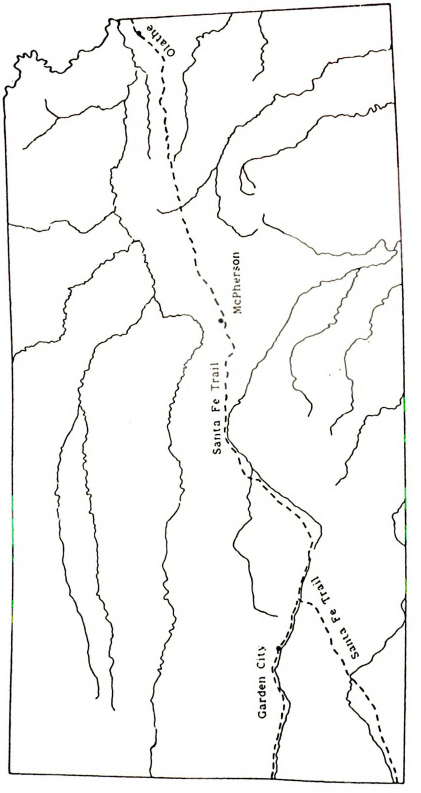

Figure 1. Town Site Locations

Primary Research. Through television, movies, novels and drama (more often romanticized than historically accurate), we have become acquainted with the early pioneers who settled on the prairies. We know of the pioneer types from the saloon halls, cattle drives, barn raisings, and town socials. We know of their losses in childbirth, hangings, grasshoppers, and blizzards. And although much has been written about the "type" and how they survived on the prairies in the early days, very little has been written about what they did for entertainment or about the types of entertainments that existed, and more specifically, the theatrical entertainments.

However, through the writing of the pioneers themselves, their stories truly come to life. Void of Hollywood glamour, the voices of the women and men of the communities are told through diaries, journals and the newspapers. All the incidents may not be neatly tied together with the correct style and form of the trained dramatist, but there is an honesty. And although the information gathered from the extensive volumes of newspapers was slanted depending on the individual reporters and editors, "it is impossible for a person to con the pages of eighteen years of newspapers, day by day, without forming friendships with the men and women whose daily lives unfold before him (Schoberlin xvi)." In all probability, it is to the women and men employed by the various newspapers during the nineteenth century that historians and particularly theatrical historians owe a debt of gratitude. For "in the towns, the newspapers led the crusades for culture. . . . It was these same journalists who pleaded with their readers for the establishment of cultural and educational institutions (Bowen 1-2)." These same journalist are partially responsible for ensuring our theatrical heritage. They were the civic

conscience of the towns, constantly primed, continually searching for the next opportunity to rouse, awaken and challenge their neighbors. To date, much of the writing of these early journalists has never been lifted from the countless reels of microfilm.

Dissertation Organization

When discussing the findings of their study about the opera house in Woodland, California, McDermott and Sarlos offer suggestions to others involved in similar studies. They compare the researcher to a surveyor. The "surveyor must choose a vantage point. He can choose that of traveller, following a particular . . . route, describing and analyzing the process of getting from one place to another." Or the surveyor might choose the

> opposite vantage point - that of the settlement through which the travellers passed. . . .Emphasis on the settlements tells of the lives of the audience. Who the travelers were and what they purveyed provides some insight into an aspect of small-town life that otherwise remains closed (71-72).

For the purpose of this study, the latter was selected and expanded to give insight into the three specific locations situated along the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas.

Chapter I of this dissertation serves as an introduction to the study and contains the purpose of the study, rationale, background, the limitations of the study, the organization of the dissertation and the definition of terms used. The major portion of the dissertation will be Chapters II, III, and IV. Each will focus on one of the selected towns and will be organized into three major sections.

The first section is comprised of the background of each town and will include the following:

1. a record of its historical connection with the Santa Fe Trail;

2. the settling of the town site;

3. biographical information of persons significant to growth of the town;

4. information concerning the various newspapers publishing during the years examined for the dissertation;

5. the contributions of the railroad;

6. the growth of the community in population and businesses.

The second section of the chapters will focus on the uses of theatrical entertainment within the following four categories: 1. social gatherings; 2. events embracing political resonances; 3. fund raising; and 4. for-profit ventures. Social gatherings encompass town dances, public receptions, church functions and holidays, civic organizations, and private parties when the primary function of the gathering was for amiable purposes. Events embracing political resonances are comprised of political party conventions, national holidays including Decoration Day, 4th of July, and Election day, and Chautauqua and other special events associated with the political and governance aspects of the communities. Fund raisers include events sponsored by churches, literary societies, musical groups, and civic organization for which the primary focus was the raising of funds for a specific project. Various theatrical entertainments produced for the sole purpose of making money will compose the for-profit ventures.

The third section of each of the three town chapters encompasses the events leading up to and including the building of the opera house. This section includes:

1. locations used for housing entertainments prior to the building

of the opera house;

2. biographical material of the personalities or groups responsible for the building of the opera house;

3. the planning for the opera house;

4. a physical description of the opera house;

5. the opening of the opera house;

6. the future of the opera house.

The conclusions, similarities, differences, and summary are in Chapter V.

Definition of Terms

Within this dissertation there are specific words or phrases that could be interpreted by the reader in various ways. For the purpose of clarification, the following terms have been defined and will be used accordingly throughout the remainder of the dissertation.

Entertainments Used as an inclusive term for events to which persons would gather for the purpose of pleasure, i.e. amusements, diversions, or interests. It is synonymous with the term social recreational entertainments.

Theatrical entertainments The referents of this term include staged dramatic presentations, i.e. plays, minstrel shows, cantatas, operettas, musicals, and burlesques.

Social gatherings The primary function of the event was to give the persons attending an opportunity to be with other persons, i.e. town dances, public receptions, private parties, civic organizations, church dinners, quilting bees, barn raisings, etc. while participating in some form of entertainment.

Political maneuverings This term refers to the events at which the primary focus was to influence others into sharing similar political and civic views and values.

Fund raisers Refers to those events produced by groups which had as an end result the purpose of raising funds for a specific project though the use of various entertainments.

CHAPTER TWO

OLATHE, KANSAS

Olathe is located in the northeast section of the state, fifteen miles southwest of Kansas City. It is the county seat of Johnson County and in 1994 had a population in excess of 63,000.

Background

Santa Fe Trail Connections. The route which became the Santa Fe Trail by an act of Congress in 1825, had long been the natural route used by Indian tribes searching for better grazing and hunting grounds. For the most part, these human wanderers adopted the trails that buffalo and deer had established over time during their inhabitation of the area. From the mid 1820s the trail was more and more heavily trafficked by carters carrying merchandise back and forth between the eastern terminus at Independence, Missouri and the western station in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

On the first day out, the wagons passed through the Osage Cuestas[11] which would later become the site of Olathe. The area is said to have been a powerful lure to the transient "wagonmasters and ox drovers (Simmons 2)" however, the lure of silver from the Santa Fe markets refocused their attention. They continued to Council Grove, where the trains were organized for the remainder of the trek to Santa Fe (Benton 3). It would not be until the 1850's that the attraction of the fertile lands would be strong enough to entice settlers to disembark from the

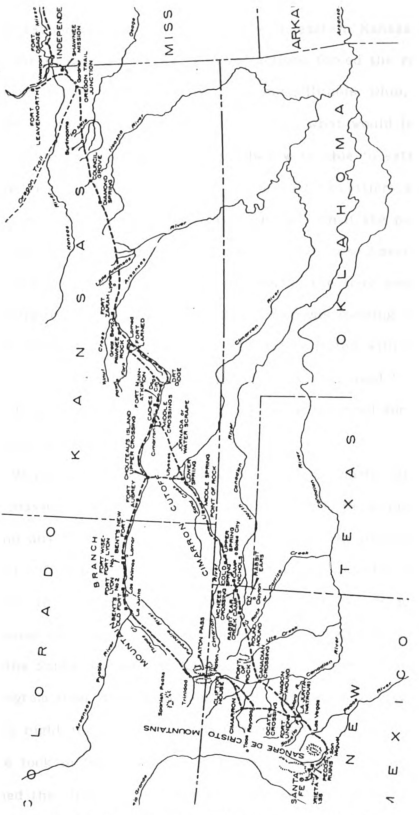

Figure 2. Santa Fe Trail (Brown endpiece)

trail.

Before 1825 the principal Indian tribes in eastern Kansas were the Kansas and the Osage. From 1825 Federal actions forced the resettlement in this area of Indian communities from Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and Mississippi. The Shawnee from Missouri relocated to what would later be surveyed as Olathe[12] (Zornow 48). Here they were able to settle peacefully, for the most part until the land was opened to settlers and the Indians were moved again, this time to Oklahoma. Until the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act thirty years later (1854), Euro-American presence in the area was mainly transient; among the more nearly permanent were trappers, traders and a handful of persons running three missions for the Indians, the government officials connected with the supervision of Indian affairs, the various military personnel used to guard and monitor the trail, and the periodic civilians using the trail for transportation to Santa Fe and other points west.

J. B. Mahaffie was among those who settled in Olathe during its first year. Having moved to Johnson County in 1857, he acquired 160 acres of land directly adjacent to the trail in 1858. In that same year he purchased a five room frame house in Olathe and moved it the one mile northeast to his farm with a yoke of oxen. With the acquisition of the small house he became the owner of the first hotel and stage coach station on the Santa Fe Trail in Johnson County. According to the souvenir program from the Olathe centennial, Olathe, "The City Beautiful", on "the first night the story and a half frame house stood on his land, Mr. Mahaffie took in five dollars from travelers along the Santa Fe Trail, who welcomed the chance to pay for the privilege of sleeping on the floor (6)." The Mahaffie house became the first night's stop out of Westport,

Missouri for caravans of travelers, teams of freight wagons, and stage coach lines on the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails from that point on.

During the Civil War the trail became "primarily a military highway with conflicts raging all the way from the Missouri border to New Mexico (Brown 62)." Olathe's location in close proximity to Fort Leavenworth and the Kansas–Missouri border guaranteed it a place of activity preceding and continuing throughout the entirety of the war.

With the end of the Civil War, the Santa Fe Trail had become the "interstate" of choice for many of the civilian personnel seeking a fresh start. The new settlers were using the trail in greater numbers and Olathe, determined to take advantage of these prospective citizens, used the power of the press to entice some of them to shorten the journey by ending their trek in Olathe. The following feature appeared in the Olathe Mirror (a local newspaper, hereafter referred to as the Mirror) on November 23, 1865:

> Olathe, the county seat of Johnson County, is situated in the center of one of the best counties in the state, and is destined erelong to become a place of considerable size and importance. We do not expect it will ever be equal to New York or St. Louis in size or importance, yet we believe we shall have one of the best inland towns in the state.

The trail continued to be the mainstay of economic growth for Olathe with close to two hundred teams using the Santa Fe Trail daily (Mirror 29 October 1868) and the hotels filled with visitors throughout the summer (Mirror 24 September 1868). With the announcement of the railroad building a line to Olathe in 1868, the "business in Olathe . . . improved considerably [and] . . . one hundred hands are now employed within three miles of this place, and more are wanted (Mirror 17 September 1868)." By the holiday season, the railroad was "making regular trips between this place and Kansas City" with the promise of passenger cars

placed on the road by the following week (Mirror 26 November 1868).

Although the original use of the Santa Fe Trail had quietly slipped into the past, its location and purpose of connecting the country to the southwest and points beyond was continued in earnest by the various railroad companies. William E. Brown describes the demise of the trail in his book The Santa Fe Trail:

> The Civil War had released the industrial energies of the nation, and foremost among them was the great surge of the railroads across the plains. The railroads broke distance into pieces. The old trails thrived on distance, on isolation, on wilderness. Trails of mud and dust could not compare against the trails of steel that now stretched westward from the Missouri. . . .
>
> The old trail, once the path of empire, now became a servant of the railroad. Cut off at the roots, it bent and writhed across the plains, from railhead to railhead, ever westward. In 1870 the Kansas Pacific reached Kit Carson, Colorado, and this became the eastern terminus of the trail. Financial backing for the railway lagged for a while and the pause gave the remnant of the Santa Fe Trail a short lease on life. But no mistake, the trail was now a spur line of the railroad. . . .
>
> Finally, on February 9, 1880, the first train entered Santa Fe. The old trail was now a part of history (70-71).

Settling of Town Site. On the occasion of a meeting of the Old Settlers Association on September 17, 1898 in Olathe Kansas, William Fisher, an original member of the founding party, described what he remembered from that first day in a speech to persons assembled to pay honor to himself and others instrumental in the founding of Olathe.

> Olathe township was [in 1857] only a broad, beautiful, waste of living green; no one here to occupy and claim its fertile lands and all its abundant wealth of rich, succulent food going to waste simply for the want of something to eat it.
>
> My first visit to Olathe township as a bona fide settler was as a member of a town company, seeking a suitable site on which to locate a town that might in after years become the capital city of Johnson County. And I was present on

> that memorable occasion . . . when the Indian guide, Dave Daugherty, led his companions to an eminence overlooking this city, and as they gazed at the beautiful expanse spread out before them, burst forth simultaneously into those irrepressible exclamations: 'Olathe!' 'Beautiful!' 'Magnificent!' 'Charming!' and synonymous expressions of the same rapturous feelings of admiration and delight.
>
> This first visit gave location to the site, and this first expression of the Indian, 'Olathe,' gave it the name. No more exploring was done, and the city of Olathe then and there commenced to have its being and assume tangibleness. Preparations were at once consummated and a portion of the town company, with Surveyor Bradford, repaired to the spot with grub and stake timber and commenced the work of driving stakes and town making. From this first beginning has evolved this beautiful little city--beautiful in fact, as well as name--we now occupy (Fisher 2).

With Fisher in 1857 were Dr. John T. Barton[13], A. G. Boone, Charles A. Osgood, R. B. Finley, and Henry W. Jones. Kansas had been opened to settlement "by the white man" (Benton, 3) only three years prior to the visit by this company "seeking new homes in the newly-opened territory (Barnes 32)." After this parcel of the Shawnee Reservation had been surveyed and the townships sectioned by the government surveyors, Dr. Barton and a portion of the original six member town company returned.

Early in 1857 Dr. John T. Barton and a surveyor by the name of Bradford laid "out the southeast quarter of section 26, and the northeast quarter of section 35, of town 13, of range 23 east, into lots and blocks, streets and alleys (Giffen 86)." From that point on the settlers, land speculators, and town fathers began the task of ensuring that Olathe would become a prosperous, permanent town in northeast Kansas. Within the first year of settlement for Olathe, the first building erected "was 12 x 14, and served as a grocery, drug store, dry goods store, saloon, and hotel (Lethem 17);" the first marriage took place between D. W. Wallingford and Elizabeth Swartz just four days after they met (Andreas 629); the

first death mourned was that of a carpenter from the effects of hitting his knee with an adze (Olathe Mirror & News Letter 15 November 1877); the first child born was a daughter to a slave (Giffen 87); and the first church building was commenced only to be leveled by a storm two months later (Olathe 13)---a fairly typical beginning of a new town on the Kansas prairies.

Among the early inhabitants in Johnson County, organized in 1855 as initially pro-slavery, were slave-owners. Among them were Rev. Thomas Johnson, who established three missions for the Shawnee and was the county namesake, and Shawnee Chief Joseph Parks (Roy 3). The future of Kansas to be admitted as either a slave state or a free state was to be the matter of "popular sovereignty." Because of this, Johnson County (like the other eastern counties in Kansas) was from the first involved in the sometimes bloody struggles between the free-staters and the proslavery advocates (Zornow 68-74). Although the city of Olathe escaped damaging involvement in the Kansas border war of 1856-58[14] (Blair 114) it did not fare as well during the Civil War; the town of Olathe underwent something of a revolution in its population. John W. Giffen, editor of the Olathe Herald from 1859 through 1862[15] explained the depopulation of Olathe during the war this way:

> In 1860, when the census was taken, Olathe had a population of 520 men, women and children. More than half this number left during the year 1861, and when the war closed there were only fifteen persons left of those who were included in the census list of 1860, yet our town was as densely populated as when the census was taken, by refugees from Missouri, Arkansas and the Indian Territory (100).

The implementation of entertainments in Olathe is similar to many of the young towns springing up during the same period. Erecting the necessary buildings to run a town, organizing the local governing struc-

ture, and attracting the necessary businesses to keep the town functioning were primary tasks. Entertainment would come later, when the town was more comfortable with its prospects for the future. In Olathe, Kansas that prospect was pushed back about eight years by the border wars, drought, and the Civil War coming in quick succession.

Biographical Information. The biographical information of persons important to the settling of Olathe in conjunction with the building of the opera house is limited to one person; that being Josiah E. Hayes. His biographical notes are located in this chapter with the materials concerning the building of the opera house.

Newspapers. The newspapers listed below are those that were published in Olathe during the years covered in this dissertation. The dates listed are approximate dates of issue. Those newspapers with open ended dates continued publishing beyond the September 30, 1881 cut off date of this section of the dissertation, that being one year after the opening of the Hayes' Opera House. The Johnson County Democrat is included as a source in reference to the future of the opera house.

The Olathe Herald: August 29, 1859 - September 1862.

The Olathe Mirror: May 16, 1861 - 1874.

The Olathe News Letter: February 1870 - 1874.

The Olathe Mirror and News Letter: 1874 -.

The Olathe Evening Meteor: April 3, 1879 - April 26, 1879.

The Olathe Leader: January 9, 1879 - March 18, 1881.

The Olathe Gazette: July 24. 1879 -.

The Johnson County Democrat: May 18, 1882 -.

The first newspaper to publish in Johnson County was the politically Democratic (pro-slavery) Herald which issued its first weekly on August 29, 1859. It was joined in 1861 by the Republican (pro-freedom) offering, the Mirror, edited by John Francis. Both of these papers were visited by Quantrill's marauders during the raid early in September of 1862;[16] the Herald did not reopen after the raid.[17]

The arrival of 1864 brought with it a new editor for the Mirror as Mr. Francis sold the newspaper to S. E. McKee and later moved to Chicago to assume an associate editorship of the Religio-Philosophical Journal (Andreas 630).

From 1868 to 1871 the daily history of Olathe is sketchy due to the absence of any issues from either of the two newspapers printing during that time. The News Letter began publication in February of 1870 but there are no known extant issues until October of 1873. The Mirror continued publication but issues are missing from December 17, 1868 until April 25, 1872.

S. E. McKee died in 1871 and the Mirror was purchased by T. J. Hadley "who changed it from a Republican to a Liberal Republican paper (Andreas 630). Pollock and Aikman were listed as proprietors and editors in April of 1873 with Pollock and Ogg proprietors and J. B. Pollock editor by November of the same year. The Mirror and the News Letter were combined early in 1874 into the Mirror and News Letter with M. V. B. Parker as publisher and proprietor. Early in 1876 the Mirror & News Letter was sold to J. A. and H. F. Canutt, editors and proprietors. It became the principal newspaper for the next five years until the Gazette began to publish in July of 1879 (Andreas 630).

The Evening Meteor was a short-lived attempt to offer the town a

daily. The Leader was published concurrently with the Mirror & News Letter and the Gazette; material covered by the Leader is repetitious of that in the other two papers.

The newspapers grew as did the town and throughout the years became better equipped at reporting the events and serving the needs of their readers. The first newspapers were four pages long and contained the national and international news on pages one and two, the local news on page three and the fourth page was filled primarily with advertisements. A strong political editorial slant became more evident around election days and national holidays. The character of the town was allowed to take shape among the personal columns and local news of page three. Within the various columns on page three, the comings and goings of certain citizens were marked, new business ventures encouraged, the deaths, births, marriages, and birthdays noted, and the daily occurrences of a growing population were cited. By 1876 the newspapers had changed to an eight page format with the local news usually on page one (Mirror & News Letter 10 February 1876).

Early published records of entertainments in Olathe were limited. Glimpses into what might have comprised the entertainment offerings were given through brief blurbs listed throughout the personal columns of the weekly papers. One such example was printed in 1862 voicing concern for the whereabouts of the Olathe literary society (Mirror 16 January 1862) and another in 1863 which also furnished insight about the size and importance of neighboring Kansas City: "Kansas City is a large town but it can't support a theatre. It takes Leavenworth to do that (Mirror 11 July 1863)." It appeared as if Olathe was a town knowledgeable about various entertainments but as of yet unable to capitalize on them for the

benefits of its citizens. Certainly the financial and human resources demanded by the Civil War impacted the availability and revenue for such entertainments.

In addition to reporting on the events which transpired in Olathe and the rest of Johnson County, the various editors took it upon themselves to act as the social, political and ethical conscience for the young town. They encouraged community support for such items as sidewalk installation and repair or the construction of a bandstand; they solicited monies from individuals for band instruments, public buildings and utilities; and they encouraged political support for candidates and demanded community intolerance (or tolerance) of such community blights as tramps, quacks, and harlots. The editors were an extremely influential group in Olathe and a majority of what they requested from the people in their weekly columns was eventually recognized.

During the last week in January of 1865, S. E. McKee, editor of the Mirror, used the occasion of the first touring company in Olathe as the event to usher in his position as the social conscience of the town. The performances of the group were praised effusively and in another article in the same issue McKee posed the need for a public hall:

> Will not some of our enterprising citizens build a public hall for the coming seasons; there is no doubt that it would prove remunerative to the owner and at the same time confer a lasting benefit to the community. There is not a room in the county that will accommodate comfortably two hundred persons; and it is a crying shame that the citizens of the county seat of the best county in the state have overlooked this matter so long (4 February 1865).

However, with the end of the Civil War imminent, the reconstruction of Olathe surfaced as the town's primary concern. The advancement of entertainment would be placed on hold until more pragmatic issues had been dealt with as Olathe's development began for a second time.

In April of 1865, McKee once again used the Mirror as the sounding board for raising the community conscience. This time he posed the need for a schoolhouse to his readers and by the end of June was urging support for a gymnasium to be built in Olathe. Within six months he had confronted the town with the necessity of a public hall, a new schoolhouse, and a gymnasium for their future as a vital community in the area. McKee appeared reticent in his position as the public conscience for Olathe, cautiously observing the actions of the town and calculating the appropriate timing for the next missive to be dangled in front of the citizens as a reminder of their civic obligations.

McKee continued in his role as the town's conscience but by the end of 1867 he also began to utilize the Mirror as a vehicle by which to control some of his own profits as well as record a sketchy diary of the town's entertainments.

The various locals were expected to be used by touring companies and lecturers for the purpose of printing billboards and/or hand bills. In return the press would be expected to advertise the coming events as a sort of public service announcement. They would also receive free tickets to the event with the intent being a (hopefully) favorable review.

By the turn of the century the use of the local press for advertising and printing was a standard practice and the amount to be printed was pre-determined by many of the Kansas towns (Theatres 3-9). Notices of a particular company's favorable performances were also a part of the advance publicity package available to the local newspapers. Prior to the opening of the opera house in 1880, paid advertisements for entertainments in Olathe appeared to be limited in general to traveling circuses, wild west shows, and certain minstrel companies. Within two years

following the opening of the opera house, complete seasons of entertainments to be presented in Olathe were published in the months of September and October. Weekly advertisements appeared in the Gazette and the Mirror & News Letter listing the recently secured offerings. If the house was dark that week, the presence of the opera house was still felt through the press, boasting either "Unrivaled Attractions" in the Gazette or "The Finest Hall in the State" in the Mirror & News Letter.

A repeat performance of the Hutchinson Family in early December of 1867 revealed the spite that could be delivered to those not properly utilizing the local press. Having failed to appear for the scheduled performance on November 19, they rescheduled again on their way through town on November 20, and when they appeared for their December 4 date without very much forewarning and having forgotten "the printer who had given them favorable notices," they surely felt the reverberations of not dealing with the local press: "Those attending pronounced it a humbug (Mirror 5 December 1867)."

Receipt of news items of concern to all communities from the wire service were also used by the editors to urge citizens into action on such matters as community safety. One such article concerning a fire disaster in a Brooklyn theatre brought about similar concerns for public safety in Olathe. With the increased use of a public hall for entertainments and gatherings, Olathe's social conscience at the Mirror & News Letter seized the opportunity to once again confront the citizens about their responsibilities. In the December 14, 1876 issue, after presenting details of people trapped in the Brooklyn theatre and the steps taken in New York to help alleviate the situation, the writer addressed his home town audience directly:

> This town needs some action of this kind as well as others. We have a public hall with only one door for exit and that shutting from the inside. In case of a panic with a crowded hall there would undoubtedly be a loss of life or severe personal injuries. The school board should also inspect the public school building and adopt such precaution as may be necessary for the safety of the scholars. A few dollars extra expense should weigh nothing against the human lives.

J. A. and H. F. Canutt became editors and proprietors of the Mirror and News Letter in 1876 and under their leadership the coverage of entertainments appeared to be more complete. Their coverage of the events suggested that there might have been a definite theatre season in place, but no evidence exists to support that claim. They also continued in the common editorial position as Olathe's civic conscience.

Railroads. News of the railroad coming to Olathe surfaced midsummer of 1868 and was accompanied by speculation as to its impact on the future of Olathe. The line was to run from Kansas City to Olathe and was to be completed by the end of the year.

The trains that were so important in bringing touring companies to small towns like Olathe were eventually responsible for touring companies being able to justify longer runs in a single location by bringing residents from the surrounding communities into the larger cities, thus creating theatrical centers like Kansas City. Beginning in 1872, excursion trains started transporting the people of Olathe to Kansas City to view theatre and other entertainments too costly or too large to be enticed to play Olathe. The various railroads lured groups by special rates for theatre packages. The Missouri River, Fort and Gulf Railroad offered those going to Kansas City to attend the Great Boston Jubilee a ticket at half fare for the occasion. To make it even more attractive tickets were available at the Olathe depot (Mirror 13 June 1872). Another such

excursion was offered to the people of Olathe in December 19, 1872 issue of the Mirror in the form of an invitation to "attend the entertainment at Coates' Opera House. when Miss Maggie Mitchell, the world-renowned actress will appear in one of her favorite characters. Greatly reduced rates will be given to all wishing to attend. For further information enquire of H. S. Ming, agent."

Located near Kansas City, which was quickly becoming an important railroad, cattle and river town as well as a midwestern cultural center, Olathe was able to take advantage of many offerings in the way of the big-name touring companies. The railroads continued the practice of special excursions for such events and when P. T. Barnum's Exhibition played Kansas City in September 1877, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad offered such an excursion specifically for the people of Olathe (Mirror & News Letter 20 September 1877).

Although the railroad had begun to transport people from Olathe to Kansas City for some entertainments, numerous companies depended on the smaller towns for their livelihood and Olathe was able to solicit their performances.

When "62 trains pass over the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad track daily and business is increasing right along (Mirror & News Letter 29 November 1877)" it was time to start applauding the efforts of the company responsible for such traffic. Olathe had been discussed as one of the competing points for through freights from the eastern termination to the mountains on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe line and was appreciative for such consideration. They would no longer be left solely to depend on the generosity of the Fort Scott road. By late January of 1878 the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad added a train

with new coaches and altered the arrival and departure times "to accommodate the people of Johnson County (Mirror & News Letter 31 January 1878)."

There were also notices that the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad had purchased a road bed, that when completed, would link Olathe with the Mississippi River (Mirror & News Letter 31 January 1878). The Olathe depot had been remodeled and by the first week in March, 1878 tickets were selling "from Olathe to Kansas City at $1.00, and may in a short time sell round trip tickets from Olathe to Kansas City and return at reduced figures. This would pay the company as they would then receive the entire patronage of Olathe to and from Kansas City (Mirror & News Letter 7 March 1878)."

Growth. Because the Kansas-Nebraska Act made it possible for farmers to get good title to land in the newly organized territories, the population of non-native Americans in Johnson County grew explosively in a few years, from approximately 50 in 1854 to 4,364 in 1860 (Blair 77).

According to the Herald's advertisements of that first issue in 1859 the following businesses were already present in Olathe: two law firms, four land agents, one hotel, a tailor, an architectural firm, a saloon, a bakery, one grocery store, a school, and a drug store. There were also advertisements from a variety of other businesses located within the county (Blair 81).

By 1866 the appearance of the town as represented in the Mirror was that of a rapidly growing community well suited for families and business opportunities and complete with music classes, commerce, a new Presbyterian Church building, a visit by a traveling circus, a soon to be

organized brass band, a new town hall and grand cotillions. Olathe had been successful in its reconstruction.

The Kansas State Legislature took action on February 15, 1866 to reorganize the Kansas Institute for the Deaf and Dumb. They voted to allocate funds for its support and moved it from its location in Baldwin City to the east side of Olathe where the school is still located today.[18]

During the final weeks of 1866 the editor of the Mirror took time to reflect on the events that had transpired throughout the year. In the December 6 issue of the Mirror, Olathe's conscience offered congratulations to a town which had succeeded in spite of the war and the natural setbacks delivered to them through droughts, tornadoes, and heavy rains.

> To convince any man however skeptical he may be on these points that Olathe is a live town just let him for one moment make a note of the amount of business done here. And let it be remembered that during the war Olathe instead of improving as our neighboring towns have done it was going back in all that speaks of prosperity and enterprise. Olathe was about three years old when the war began consequently counting out the period of the war it is now less than five years old. We now have nearly one thousand inhabitants and the amount of business transacted in our thriving burg will compare with that of any other place in the state of the same size. We now have in successful operation, four dry goods stores, three grocery stores, two drug store, one ready made clothing and boot and shoe store combined, one boot and shoe store, one furniture store, three boot and shoe shops, three blacksmith shops, two wagon shops, two tent shops, one gunsmith shop, one furniture shop, one carpenter and joiner shop, one tailor shop, one silversmith shop, two meat shops, two harness shops, one paint shop, four milliner and dressmaker shops, one barber shop, one bakery, two hotels, one boarding house, one dairy, one livery stable, one photograph gallery, one printing office, one oil and petroleum company, four resident ministers, one graded school, two common schools and a fair portion of lawyers and doctors. There have been since last spring no less than fifty buildings erected costing from $500.00 to $20,000.00 each including the courthouse and city hall 40 by 70 feet. Olathe is a county seat and one of the best counties in the state and is situated in the center of the county (Mirror 6 December 1866).

By the end of 1872 the population in Olathe was 2,460 (Mirror 5 December 1872). Kansas' population at the time of the 1870 census had increased 239.9 percent over the preceding decade (Zornow, 163) and Olathe's population reflects that trend. However, the rush of settlers that followed the end of the Civil War began to slow to a mere trickle of homesteaders in 1873. Three factors contributed heavily to this change in Kansas settlement: the depression of 1873, and the drought and grasshoppers of 1874. Information concerning the financial crisis of '73 is included in the biographical notes of Col. Hayes' tenure as State Treasurer located later in this chapter. The drought and the grasshoppers had a more immediate effect on the Olathe community. Because of their more fertile eastern location, farmers in the Olathe area planted more corn than wheat. Due to the drought hitting Kansas during July and August the wheat had already been harvested but the corn crop was ruined. A good wheat harvest that year in Johnson County saved it from complete bankruptcy. However, "in seventeen counties, with 158,000 acres planted in corn, not a bushel was raised (Zornow 163)." As similar stories were transported to the east, prospective immigrants were discouraged from settling in Kansas.

On August 7, 1874, adding insult to injury, the grasshoppers arrived in Johnson County. In her history of Johnson County, Elizabeth Barnes presented a graphic account of the event: "All vegetation was stripped of leaves. Cornfields became acres of naked stalks. Green pastures were left in a state of desolation (20)." To assist with relief for the plague created by the grasshoppers, the governor called a special session of the legislature to establish a new agency to deal with the appropriations. Although the western portion of the state was hit hard-

est. the results were also felt in Olathe.

After 1874, Olathe recovered from the financial crisis, the grasshoppers and the drought; the town prospered, growing steadily from that time forward.

Entertainments

"While the settlers were scattered and there were no such things as close neighbors, telephones, television, automobiles or hard surfaced roads, the social life was surprisingly full. Generally families were large enough to find companionship among themselves, and there was little loneliness (Barnes 20)." Early in the settlement of most towns, the entertainments were 'tacked on' to necessary work projects such as barn raisings, quilting bees, planting, harvesting, and house buildings or they were associated with holidays or school and church functions. When the work was finished or the program was completed, tables would be pushed back, room would be made and the dancing, the swapping of tales and the nipping of the rum would begin. On rare occasions one would hear of a traveling minstrel show or a theatrical troupe passing through. As time passed the minstrel shows and theatrical troupes became more common occurrences.

Social Gatherings. Information concerning two dances held in late winter and early spring of 1864 at the Hayes House (Mirror, 30 January 1864 & Mirror, 12 March 1864) gave witness that at least some moments of festivity were surfacing in the lives of the young people and for those who dared to venture out for an evening during the Civil War. Prior to 1864, no mention of any type of social entertainment was listed in the news-

papers. However, as the Civil War drew to a close, the entertainments increased greatly. The unexpected arrival of Col. Hayes on Saturday, March 13, 1865 and the spontaneous reception that followed within two hours of his arrival as reported in the Mirror[19] was the event which also inaugurated the return of pleasurable social gatherings into the routine activities for Olathe. From that point on dances and social parties were reported in the newspaper.

Social gatherings in Olathe appeared to cluster into the following categories: dances, school activities, musical presentations, special interest groups, and special occasion parties.

Dances were among the most frequent form of entertainment reported by the newspapers. As listed above the earliest reference to them was in the early part of 1864. Possibly because of their ease in organization and possibly because they were usually accompanied with a full dinner or at the least dessert, dances were popular among the residents, easily attracting from 40 to 82 couples.[20]

Many of the dances were featured as calico parties in which the dress was informal. Citizens of Olathe were invited to such a calico party in Kansas City (Mirror 28 January 1865) and the Olathe Social Orchestra sponsored one in May of 1879 (Mirror & News letter 24 April 1879). The Olathe Rifles sponsored a grand military ball for which they requested the men "to appear in full military uniform and the ladies in calico (Mirror & News Letter 12 February 1880)."

More formal dances were also held. A "grand cotillion party (Mirror 18 October 1866)" was given as the opening event of Francis Hall (one of the forerunners of the opera house). Supper was provided for the forty couple in attendance at the Hayes Hotel. From that time on, most dances

held at Francis Hall were accompanied by a supper served at one of the hotels in town. General invitations to the residents of Olathe and the surrounding townships for the dances were published in one of the newspapers. An example of one such invitation follows: "There will be a dance at Francis Hall on Christmas the 25. The company of yourself and lady is respectfully solicited (Mirror 13 December 1866)."

Christmas, Washington's birthday, the 4th of July were the holidays for which dances were planned on a fairly regular basis.

Different instrumental groups prepared music for the various dances. Oftentimes dances were specifically scheduled for the first public performance of a newly organized group. Among the many groups which provided dance music were the Olathe Brass and String Band (Mirror 31 January 1867), the Julien Bros. Band (Mirror 13 February 1868), the Olathe Cornet Band (Mirror 9 July, 1868), Prof. Warner (Mirror & News Letter 17 October 1878), the Olathe Social Orchestra (Mirror & News Letter 27 March 1879), and the Olathe Rifles Band (Mirror & News Letter 22 January 1880).

Specific social organizations were among the groups that sponsored dances, i.e. the Merry Bachelors (Mirror 26 December 1867 and 17 December 1868),[21] the Olathe Fire Company (Mirror 25 April 1872). Such organizations also supported dances for their own groups. The Olathe Business College sponsored a "hop" for the students after they presented one of their annual entertainments (Mirror & News Letter 24 February 1876).

Masquerade balls became a popular variance to the more formal balls given. These were usually accompanied with the arrival of a costumer from Kansas City who would bring in various disguises for the

dance, renting them out to those who attended (Mirror & News Letter 15 February 1877; 26 July 1877; 6, 27 December 1877; 10 January 1878).

The school activities in Olathe provided entertainment in the place of a 'literary society'. Students were expected to recite poetry, essays, and speeches in front of their parents and classmates on special occasions. Yearly graduation exercises were also considered a social event that involved some aspects of entertainment, i.e musical solos, recitations, speeches.

Prof. Shaw, an instructor in elocution had his class present an entertainment which included a number of readings and short plays. The reporter for the Mirror noted that certain performances "moistened many eyes in the audience. We noticed Saturday night, that after the curtain dropped on the first act, several moments of oppressive silence elapsed before the revulsion of feeling manifested itself in the prolonged applause that on each night followed the climax (Mirror 25 April 1872)." This form of entertainment by elocution students was repeated at various times over the years with different instructors[22] (Mirror & News Letter 20 April 1876, 4 May 1876) and proved to be favored by the patrons.[23]

The school for children of the black community in Olathe was also given coverage in the Mirror & News Letter as having "pupils [who] acquitted themselves admirably in recitations, dialogs, tableaus and etc. (30 March 1876)."

The Kansas State School for "the Deaf and Dumb" presented a Christmas entertainment in 1866 and issued a general invitation to the residents of Olathe and surrounding townships (Mirror 20 December 1866).

The Olathe Academy and Business College also presented programs of entertainment for the general public. The programs usually consisted

of vocal music selections and a variety of readings. One such occasion resulted in such a large turnout that patrons unable to secure tickets for the one night event encouraged the school to repeat the event two weeks later (Mirror & News Letter 10 February 1876). The second performance was also highly attended.[24] Programs by the Academy and Business College became popular enough that between 1876 and 1878 they were presented on the average of twice a year (Mirror & News Letter 20 January 1876, 3 February 1876, 14 December 1876, 6 December 1877, 14 March 1878 & 19 December 1878).

A portion of the musical presentations took the form of recitals given by students taking private lessons. The number of individuals who gave private lessons were as varied as the types of recitals in which their students were expected to perform before the general public. These recitals ranged in format from operetta (Mirror & News Letter 28 June 1877) to a standard concert programme (Mirror & News Letter 30 August 1877).

Various community musical groups were formed and abandoned throughout the years before the building of the opera house. Among the first to present a concert was the Olathe Philharmonic Society. The first mention of their performing was in reference to a concert presented on Friday, March 13, 1868 (Mirror 12 March 1868). The Quintette Club performed twice in February of 1873 (Mirror 30 January 1873), the Olathe Brass Band was proposing "Saturday evening concerts in the public square provided they . . . [could] build a bandstand (Mirror & News Letter 14 June 1877)" during the summer of 1877, and the Olathe Social Orchestra provided music for at least two dances in 1879 (Mirror & News Letter 27 March 1879, 8 May 1879). During the winter of 1879–80, the Olathe

Rifles Band was organized and became the most popular home talent musical group to play in town for a variety of functions from dances (Mirror & News Letter 22 January 1880) to the dedication of the Hayes' Opera House (Mirror & News Letter 19 August 1880).

The organization of clubs by individuals who shared a similar interest in a particular hobby or type of activity also provided a chance for individuals to socialize. Many of the above mentioned musical groups served that purpose for those who performed with the group. Other such groups included the Johnson County Horticultural Society (Mirror & News Letter 4 May 1876) and the Olathe Rifles, a military company with the purpose of preserving and passing on drills and exercises learned during the war. The Mirror & News Letter described the organization of such a company as:

> a source of more actual benefit to the people of Olathe than anything that has yet been projected. In the first place the exercise is healthful as well as enjoyable while it supplies a pleasant and profitable recreation for our young men who might otherwise be spending their evenings in loitering around the billiard halls and places of questionable reputation (25 December 1879).

The final type of social gatherings to be examined is that of the special occasion party. These were events held at special times or events in the lives of the private citizens as well as businesses, i.e. weddings, anniversaries, special promotions or new business openings. Such events might have been held for no particular reason other than to gather friends for an evening of parlor games, food, and conversation. An open invitation to such an event at the Mahaffie House appeared in the February 22 issue of the Mirror in 1866.

The opening of a cheese factory in Olathe in 1868 brought about what was termed a "cheese entertainment (Mirror 11 June 1868)." The

owner wanted to inform his future patrons about the process involved in making cheese as well as give them samples of the products offered. The event was unique and received adequate coverage and support in the local paper.

Holidays brought with them the gathering of friends together to share in the festivities. Special parties in honor of leap year were anticipated by the young ladies of Olathe. These events gave the girls permission to express their assertive side when it came to selecting a young man (Mirror 4 June 1868). The Fourth of July, St. Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving and New Year's Day were holidays that brought about many special invitations to gatherings, but "private parties and suppers were [most] numerous(Mirror & News Letter 4 January 1877)" during the Christmas holidays.

Political Maneuverings. Much of the early history of Olathe was of a political nature due to the turmoil in the area caused by the issue of Kansas' admittance as a free state or a slave state. The first newspaper record of any gathering in Olathe was in response to that very issue:

> Notice. A mass meeting of citizens of Olathe and vicinity will be held at Hayes Hall on next Saturday evening at early candle light for the purposes of organizing an indicative military company for home protection. All able bodied men are invited to attend and enroll their names (Mirror 30 May 1861).

After the war, temperance seemed to be the issue that capitalized on gathering the residents for political purposes. At times the message was joined with musical entertainment as in the case of the repeat visits by the Hutchinson Family but the more usual fare was the direct approach. Among the temperance lecturers who presented in Olathe were E. B. Arnold and Dr. Frost (Mirror & News Letter 1 November 1877), Mason

Long, a reformed gambler and saloon keeper (Mirror & News Letter 7 November 1878), "the world renowned" Luther Benson (Mirror & News Letter 2 January 1879), Dan Rice, former showman and clown (Mirror & News Letter and Gazette 1 January 1880), and George W. Bain (Mirror & News Letter 30 September 1880).

National holidays such as Washington's Birthday, the Fourth of July, Decoration Day, and the American Centennial celebration were among the opportunities for political candidates to entertain their constituents with parades, dances, food, and speeches. Although these events had the appearance of a social gathering, the political aspirations of public officials and the parties' agenda were at the core of most.

Political speeches surfaced at times other than holidays and Olathe had regular visits from politicians. D. C. Haskell spoke in late August of 1876 (Mirror & News Letter 24 August 1876) and again one month later (Mirror & News Letter 21 September 1876) when he was campaigning for a seat in Congress. He returned in 1878 (Mirror & News Letter 31 October 1878), 1879 (Mirror & News Letter 16 October 1879) and again in 1880 and was among the first to speak in Hayes' Opera House at the Republican Convention held two days after the dedication (Mirror & News Letter 12 August 1880).

Prominent national political figures scheduled speeches in Olathe as well. Schuyler Colfax, Vice President under President Grant, spoke in the spring of 1878 (Mirror & News Letter 2 May 1878). Governor St. John was a resident of Olathe and returned frequently during his term in the statehouse. He was in attendance at many events held in Olathe and spoke at the funeral of Col. Josiah E. Hayes.

Special guests were scheduled to speak for a particular group or to

encourage some action be taken by the politically active citizens of Olathe. The nineteenth wife of Brigham Young, Anne Eliza Young, came and presented "one of the finest lectures ever delivered in behalf of woman (Mirror & News Letter 1 May 1879)" at American Hall (forerunner of the opera house). In January of 1880 a special meeting was held "to extend a helping hand to the suffering sons and daughters of the Emerald Isle (Gazette 8 January 1880).

Routine meetings for the governance of the town also had social implications. Meetings called for purpose of planning the Johnson County celebration for the country's centennial (Mirror & News Letter 25 May 1876) and "to take action concerning the purchase of the cemetery grounds (Mirror & News Letter 15 May 1879)" were listed as if they were among the more important social events of the month.

Fund Raisers. Entertainments sponsored by various organizations quickly became the prevalent practice for raising money for special projects. First to experience the benefits of such patronage was the building fund for the M. E. Church. A performance by Prof. Root's music students drew a large crowd with the proceeds "applied toward paying off the indebtedness (Mirror 17 May 1866)" of the church. The Professor's students per formed in many of the same type of benefits for the new Presbyterian Church as well and once the church building had been enclosed, Prof. Root moved the site of his lessons to the church. This arrangement continued until the church debt had been removed (Mirror 19 July 1866).

A presentation of Rip Van Winkle sponsored by the Library Association and featuring home talent was scheduled for performance on Tuesday, March 28, 1876. At the time that announcement was issued, the Library

Association was also in the process of producing "a grand centennial old time concert . . . embracing such songs as Way down by Swanee River, Old Kentucky Home, Annie Laurie, Kitty Clyde, Wake Nichodemus, Wait for the Wagon, What are the Wild Waves Saying, etc. (Mirror & News Letter 2 March 1876)." The centennial concert netted the association $35.00. Rip Van Winkle fared much better but it also received much more attention than did the concert. The Mirror & News Letter supported the theatrical endeavor with at least two notices per week during its three week rehearsal period. In the issue that went to press during the week the play opened, the association received another plug in the guise of Olathe's civic conscience:

> Rip Van Winkle in American Hall Tuesday evening. The proceeds of it to be devoted to the library and the reading room. In addition to this inducement for attending, the performance will be one of the best given in the city. Secure reserved seats, or go early, as the hall will undoubtedly be packed (Mirror & News Letter 23 March 1876).

The hall was packed and the entertainment critic for the newspaper posted the following review:

> Jo. Jefferson must look to his laurels. He has been having a monopoly of Rip Van Winkle for the two or three years past, and it was popularly supposed to be a piece of folly for anyone to attempt to give it will while he was on the boards. This view was taken before Olathe had tried her hand, but now we want Joseph to divide the honors. Nat Dawson is out and there are two Richmonds in the field. Seriously the play given by Nat and his talented supporters on Tuesday evening was excellently rendered. They had evidently studied their characters with care and entered into to it with a spirit that could not fall short of success. Nat as the leading personage did splendidly. The vagabond old Rip stood before the audience as natural as life. The transitions from the easy insouciance of the idol old to the feeling of the man whose family was lost to him, were faithfully given. Accent, tone and expression of countenance were both in full keeping with the character. Mrs. G. W. Parker as Dame Van Winkle represented truly the change that can be effected in "lovely woman" under the schooling of the shiftless aggravating husband. Miss Jennie Dawson as Alice and

> Anna Wilson as Loreena gracefully portrayed their respective characters. Prof. L. Roberts as Derric Van Slaus to the life. The pompous knickerbocker stood forth in all his dignity in the person of G. L. Wycoff. Johnny and Lutie St. John enacted the children's parts to perfection. In truth all did so well that it is not necessary to particularize. As an amateur company they stand without rivals and even professionals might not have much to boast of in competition. Our artist Amos gave the stage a metropolitan appearance in the way of scenery. For all it was a most favorable evening. The hall was crowded to its utmost capacity every seat being filled and many standing in the passageways. Toward the close a wish that the play might be repeated was expressed by a number of the audience, and according a motion was offered to that affect and unanimously carried. The performers have acceded to the request and will give it again on next Tuesday evening. The hall will undoubtedly be filled again. Many who attended this performance will go again, and no one who did not should fail to take advantage of the opportunity that may not be offered again. Little Nat is a genius in a thespian line and fully deserves the many encomiums that have been bestowed upon his first effort here (Mirror & News Letter 30 March 1876).

The play was presented a second time during the following week. The first week of ticket sales realized $109 for the association and no mention was made of the monies received for the second performance. When reviewing the second performance the Mirror & News Letter again took it upon itself to recreate the role of the town's conscience concerning civic matters. Positioned among the accolades for Nat Dawson and the rest of the company was a challenge for others in the community to become involved in such activities:

> They have devoted their time and talent to it gratuitously, and raised a larger fund by these two performances than could have been gained by subscription in a year. If other citizens would take the same interest and invince it by acts we would soon boast of one of the finest libraries in the state.(Mirror & News Letter 6 April 1876).

The Library Association, a group of civic minded residents whose leadership fluctuated, sponsored a similar production in the late fall. This second production capitalized on a female talent in a production of Fanchon, the Cricket. It was equally successful, clearing a profit of

$66.70 (Mirror & News Letter 16 November 1876).

With the successes of Rip Van Winkle and Fanchon, the Cricket Olathe had achieved yet another reason to be proud of what it was able to offer to its citizens. Their local amateur theatrical productions had become very successful at appealing to and entertaining their audiences. The Mirror & News Letter reporter assigned to the local entertainment was pleased by what he had seen during the year of 1876.

> Our amateurs have gained a brilliant reputation . . . and the public will be scarcely satisfied if they do not appear again sometime during the winter. In this connection it may not be amiss to propose the organization of a dramatic club. We can boast of much talent in this line as any town of the state; it would afford pleasant entertainments for the public during the winter and further keep the spare change devoted to amusements at home (23 November 1876).

Even though the local thespians did not form a dramatics club until the fall of 1878 and the winter, spring and summer were void of local theatricals, the Library Association had begun a tradition and started to produce a play each fall using home talent to raise money for the purchase of books. Each of the plays, For Fifteen Years of a Drunkards Life in 1877, All That Glitters Is Not Gold in 1878, and Haymakers in 1879, was a success. Association members deliberately selected persons from the community who would guarantee a large audience. One of the local ministers took the lead in the temperance play (Mirror & News Letter 1 November 1877), a doctor played the homespun farmer (Mirror & News Letter 26 June 1879) and for their one dramatic selection, the association selected a strong cast and then added the talents of the Olathe Social Orchestra to add underscoring in appropriate scenes as well as provide entertainment during intermissions (Mirror & News Letter 26 December 1878). The Library Association used entertainments to their

advantage, not just with the theatrical productions but with musical concerts, literary presentations and one entertainment referred to as an "old folk's exhibition."[25] The response to the "exhibition" by the Mirror & News Letter in the March 29, 1877 issue was similar to that of most events produced by the association but the editor's voice of civic responsibility was becoming more pronounced.

> It was a grand success in every way and gave evidence from the way it was patronized that the citizens of Olathe believe it much better to thus spend their money in helping to build up the Olathe library than in spending it for all kinds of frivolous amusements such as negro minstrels, traveling theatres and the like. Let the good work go on and in a few years we will have a first class public library were young and old alike can spend their evenings with profit to themselves and without danger to either their health or their morals.

With the establishment of a military company in 1879, most of the attention given to the productions of the Library Association was shifted to the presentations of the Olathe Rifles. (They also became the predominant producer of home talent theatricals for the next three years.) Coverage and support was given by the Mirror & News Letter throughout the month of December as the company formed, secured an instructor, and began rehearsal for a production of The Union Spy, one of the more popular war dramas based on the Civil War presented in the area.[26]

During the week before Christmas, rehearsal for The Union Spy had commenced in rooms at the Olathe Academy and Business College and notices concerning rehearsal began appearing in the Mirror & News Letter as well as in the newly introduced Gazette. The notices had become teasers for the production, now scheduled to be produced the first three days of January. Between these notices about the local production and those of a production in Paola, a town located thirty miles south of Olathe, The Union Spy had become one of the most written about produc-

tions to date in Olathe.

The play opened on January 1, 1880 and the Mirror & News Letter delayed publication for one day to include a review of the play. The production was successful and was repeated during March of the same year to accommodate those who were unable to attend the first performance. Governor St. John was in attendance at the second performance accompanied by his staff and by Adjutant General Nowell (Mirror & News Letter 1 January 1880).

The Olathe Rifles produced two more home talent war dramas during the following year. The Dutch Recruit was presented February 10, 11, and 12, 1881 and The Union Spy was repeated on March 25 and 26, 1881.

With the combining of the Olathe Rifles and the Olathe Brass Band into the Olathe Rifles and Band, the organization became diversified in its entertainment offerings. With the merger of those two organizations they soon became the predominant presenter of dances as well as theatricals for Olathe. The dances ranged from grand military balls to home-spun calico balls.

The Olathe Rifles had learned well from the Library Association and were able to capitalize effectively on various entertainments to underwrite their projects. The total receipts from the first year they produced The Union Spy were "$674.00 averaging very near $100 per night (Mirror & News Letter 18 March 1880)."

Other local groups capitalized on using entertainments for the purpose of raising funds and the group that used in most often was the local churches. The Methodists were the first to organize in Olathe and were also the denomination to capitalize on entertainment as a fund raiser for their various projects. Records of such events began in 1868

and included a wide range of offerings for their parishioners and patrons. The most typical were suppers or dessert gatherings accompanied with some musical entertainment. Tickets to these events, including supper were usually 25 cents (Mirror 18 June 1868); sometimes the cost for the entertainment only would be reduced to 10 cents (Mirror & News Letter 21 November 1878).

The M. E. Church continued to offer a variety of other entertainments such as a concert for the benefit of the M.E. Sunday School which blended the talents of thirteen professional musicians with those of the home talent (Mirror & News Letter 3 February 1876). Other events sponsored by the church included an "old folks concert" on New Year's Eve (Mirror & News Letter 23 December 1875), ice cream festivals Mirror & News Letter 15 June 1876), music concerts (Mirror & News Letter 7 September 1876), Martha Washington tea party in historic costumes (Mirror & News Letter 16 November 1876), a Christmas concert complete with music, tableaus and recitations (Mirror & News Letter 13 December 1877), Thanksgiving festival and oyster supper (Mirror & News Letter 20 November 1879, Gazette 4 November 1880), and a presentation of a panorama of the Bible[27](Gazette 11 September 1879).

The Congregational Church hosted similar functions including a peach festival late in the summer of 1868 (Mirror 17 September 1868) and a New Year's Eve Sunday School entertainment which included music, recitations, a sliding admission fee structure, and a temperance watch meeting for the final two hours of 1877 (Mirror & News Letter 27 December 1877).

The other churches of Olathe utilized the fund raiser for their work as well. The Catholic Church sponsored fairs, the Baptist Church

used the Christmas season as its primary time for fund raising, while the Presbyterian Church capitalized on Thanksgiving turkey dinners and oyster suppers. The Christian Church also sponsored music concerts given by its members.

Various local music groups used their performances as fund raisers to help pay for the cost of music and instruments. However, the first brass band formed in 1866 was much more direct in their seeking of funds. They appealed directly to the people for a flat donation of $350.00 to pay for the instruments (Mirror 30 August 1866). By the middle of October they had their instruments and were playing for dances in Olathe.

The Young Men's Cornet Band Association proposed to stage a play to raise money. They began rehearsals for The Colleen Bawn, or The Brides of Garrowen in mid-February (Mirror & News Letter 21 February 1878) but there was never any record of the performance.

Halleck's Minstrels and Prof. Prior's Ladies Cornet Band and Orchestra presented their entertainment on June 11 as scheduled and at the conclusion of their concert they were approached with the proposition of remaining in town another three days to present a benefit concert for the Olathe Brass Band. The Olathe group was undertaking the project of raising monies to erect a bandstand and speaker's platform in the public square(Mirror & News Letter 14 June 1877). The visitors agreed, the fund was established, and the bandstand was eventually realized.

The Masonic Lodge and the Eastern Star hosted a number of dances and suppers for the purpose of raising money to support their various charities. Their prices were higher than those of the churches; "tickets including supper and dance $1.75 (Mirror & News Letter 22 June 1876)"

for the centennial celebration and $1.00 for a ball (Mirror & News Letter 14 December 1876, 20 December 1877, & 20 November 1879).

For-Profit Ventures. After the Civil War the entertainments gradually became more numerous in Olathe. For the first two years, the entertainments were primarily sponsored by home talent, but the professionals touring by wagon or stagecoach did not take long to follow. Once the rails reached Olathe, the number of professional performances increased. Various types of entertainments were presented in Olathe as a business venture, hoping to make money from the sale of tickets. The following categories of for-profit ventures are included: circuses/museums, concerts, minstrel shows, plays, and bell ringers.

Circuses and museums were the first to find their way to Olathe after the war. The New York Circus was in town for "one day only (Mirror 27 July 1865)" during the summer of 1865. By 1867 two circuses/museums played during the summer; the Orton Bros. Great American Circus on May 30 (Mirror 30 May 1867) and "John Hank's museum of the living wonders and gallery fine arts (Mirror 1 August 1867)" on August 12. From that point on a circus was in town almost every summer. Among them were the following: Dan Rice's Paris Pavilion Circus (Mirror 9 May 1872), the International Circus (Mirror 16 May 1872), Older's Museum, Circus and Menagerie (Mirror 16 May 1872), Sell's Bros. Great European Circus Menagerie (Mirror & News Letter 10 August 1876, 1 April 1880 and Gazette 1 July 1880), the Tom Thumb Troupe (Mirror & News Letter 12 April 1877), Anderson's Circus (Mirror & News Letter 22 August 1878), and the Great London Circus (Mirror & News Letter 17 July 1879).

P.T. Barnum never made it to Olathe but did play Kansas City and other northeast Kansas towns on a least two occasions. Citizens from Olathe were in attendance on both occasions (Mirror & News Letter 27 September 1877 and Gazette 12 April 1880).

Not requiring special staging requirements, concerts were among the first entertainments to play the small towns without an opera house. Most town halls, churches or hotel dining rooms could accommodate the demands of a single musician or a small ensemble and Olathe was more than willing to oblige.

The first professional entertainment to play Olathe was the Hutchinson Family who provided a musical concert for a very receptive audience (Mirror 4 February 1865). Their first engagement gained them a repeat visit two years later. However, this was the visit they toured the region for the state temperance society and missed the engagement scheduled for Olathe. As mentioned earlier, when they finally managed to appear in town, they had not utilized the press for printing or publicity and did not receive a very large house (Mirror 28 November 1867). There was no record of another return engagement until over eleven years later when they played to a full house at the M. E. Church (Mirror & News Letter 16 January 1879).

Other touring musicians received warm receptions from the citizens of Olathe after the war. From soloists singing patriotic music and selling pianos on the side (Mirror 9 May 1867) to the Jubilee singers consisting of nine performers singing "plantation melodies (Mirror & News Letter 28 October 1875)," the Olathe audiences were supportive and eager for live entertainment.

Among the other musicians who played Olathe were "'Blind Tom' the

greatest musical curiosity in the universe (Mirror & news Letter 18 April 1878)", Haverly's Band (Mirror & News Letter 12 September 1878), and the Pacific Concert Company (Mirror & News Letter 24 April 1879).

Not all the groups presenting concerts in Olathe were on the road full time. Local musical ensembles, soloists, and teachers often gave concerts in other locations and reciprocated by hosting groups from the neighboring towns. Among the more popular groups that played Olathe was the Kansas City Social Orchestra which played the first weekend in March, 1877 (Mirror & News Letter 2 March 1877).

Concerts were sometimes more along the lines of variety shows which featured comedians or contortionists like Alf Burnett who was booked for return engagements (Mirror & News Letter 25 March 1880). Prof. Wyman "the monarch of Magicians" brought a show which featured magic, ventriloquism, and a "boy cornetist . . . [who is] the only boy in the world who plays the complicated piece of music called the Whirlwind polka (Mirror & News Letter 8 April 1880)." The Berger Family traveled with a parlor orchestra, a ventriloquist, storyteller, vocalists, and a military band (Mirror & News Letter 28 October 1880).

Specialty performers also played the concert tours. When a spirit seance with three mediums and spirits "made to appear to mingle with the audience" played in Olathe it was accompanied with a disclaimer for the types of spooks and spirits that might have been present (Gazette 10 April 1879).

Lecturers on the road have been discussed in the category dealing with fund raisers but they were also brought in as a business venture. Dan Rice, whose circus was in Olathe in May of 1872, appeared as a lecturer in January of 1880. He had been considered one of the great

clowns and circus showmen and by 1880 had begun traveling the country, sharing stories from his circus career, and promoting "the happiness of others (Gazette 8 January 1880)." While Dan Rice received a small house because of inclement weather, Mary P. Johnson, "the 'only female humorist' came near being the only person at her lecture last night (Gazette 4 March 1880)" because she neglected to place notices in the local press.

Minstrel shows were very popular with the Olathe audiences and the local press was often amazed at the numbers that would attend the minstrel shows. They sometimes included notes about their amazement about the types of good performances that were passed by for minstrelsy.

Citizens who wanted to attend minstrel shows in the early part of he 1870's had to travel to Kansas City to do so (Mirror 23 May 1872). But by 1876 the minstrel shows were playing in Olathe and had taken in some lucrative box office receipts. The Georgia Minstrels made $250.00 for a one night stand (Mirror & News Letter 16 November 1876).

Among the various minstrel groups that played Olathe were Halleck's Minstrel (Mirror & News Letter 7 June 1877), Duprez and Benedict"s Minstrels (Mirror & News Letter 16 May 1878), Haverly's Minstrels (Meteor 11 April 1879), Webb's Minstrels (Mirror & News Letter 1 April 1880), Morton and Homer's Original Big Four Minstrels (Mirror & News Letter 21 October 1880), and McIntyre and Heath's Great Southern Minstrels (Gazette 13 January 1881).

One female minstrel company, Fanny May's Folly Company, appeared in Olathe and "was attended by a goodly number of the members of the bar and press, but the ladies and the clergy were conspicuously absent (Gazette 4 March 1880)."[28]

The type of professional entertainment that was by far the most

numerous in Olathe was the touring acting company. They became prevalent in 1876 and were a major part of the Olathe entertainment from that time on. Most of the companies played at least two nights while some stayed for a lengthy four night run. Because of the size of the town and the cost of tickets, most people could not afford to go to all nights of a run that lasted four nights. If one of the four plays presented was of a serious nature, that was usually the one that was slighted.

Among the companies that stayed four nights or longer were: Enoch Arden Combination (Mirror & News Letter 18 May 1876), Simon's Comedy Company (Mirror & News Letter 30 November 1876), Globe Dramatic Company (Mirror & News Letter 10 May 1877), Golden Dramatic Troupe (Mirror & News Letter 21 March 1878), and the Western Theatre Company Mirror & News Letter 27 February 1879).

One night stands were common and were more economical for some of the smaller companies. Among the groups that played Olathe for the more economical one night stands were: McEvoy's (Mirror & News Letter 7 December 1876), Wallace Sisters' Combination (Mirror & News Letter 15 January 1880), Alvin Joslyn Comedy Company (Mirror & News Letter 15 April 1880), Gulick Blaisdell Company (Mirror & News Letter 23 September 1880), and Forbes Dramatic Company Mirror & News Letter and Gazette 18 November 1880).

The companies listed below played either two or three nights in Olathe: Carrie Plunkett Troupe (Mirror & News Letter 12 December 1878), Occidental Variety Theatre (Mirror & News Letter 30 January 1879), Forbes Dramatic Company (Mirror & News Letter and Gazette 30 October 1879), Mitchell's Grand Dramatic Company (Gazette and Mirror & News Letter 1 January 1880, and the Roshelle Dramatic Company Mirror & News

Letter 30 September 1880).

The final group of professional entertainers to be included are the bell ringers. These professionals focused on the presentation of music by bell choirs but usually traveled with comedians and vocalists to give variety to their programs. Among the groups that toured through Olathe were Leavitt's Swiss Bell ringers (Mirror & News Letter 16 March 1876 and 19 April 1877), the Peak Family Bell Ringers (Mirror & News Letter 11 May 1876), the Alleghanians Vocalists and Swiss Bell Ringers (Mirror & News Letter 13 December 1877), and the Oakes Brothers Select Concert and Bell Ringers (Mirror & News Letter 17 October 1878).

The Opera House

Prior locations. Among the locations used to house entertainments in Olathe prior to the opening of the Hayes' Opera House were the following: Hayes Hall (House or Hotel), the J. B. Mahaffie House, Church buildings including the Presbyterian Church and the M. E. Church, Francis Hall, the town square, and American Hall.

October of 1866 hosted the opening of the first town hall. A grand cotillion was attended by forty couples with the event setting the tone for the prosperity of future entertainments in Olathe (Mirror 18 October 1866). Upon the completion of Francis Hall, the town possessed a location more suitable than a church sanctuary or a rearranged hotel dining room in which to accommodate entertainments. Francis Hall was scheduled on a weekly basis with dances, church socials, lectures, music school concerts and holiday gatherings. Events scheduled in the hall served as the pivotal focus for the citizens of Olathe and the surrounding communities of Johnson County to join together in social endeavors.

The transition from Francis Hall to American Hall is one major piece of information that disappeared along with the issues of the Mirror and the News Letter. Prior to this three and a half year period, Francis Hall was the prevalent location for entertainments held in Olathe. After the three and a half year period the extant issues of the newspapers mentioned American Hall as the location for such events. There is also evidence that American Hall was owned by Col. Hayes, but no records were uncovered verifying the erection of American Hall. Nor do any records show the location of the earlier Francis Hall or whether Francis Hall was renamed American Hall. Sometime during this three year period, Francis Hall ceased to exist as such and American Hall appears to have replaced it in function. An article in reference to the history of the county courthouse printed in the centennial souvenir program/history album of Olathe made mention that in January of 1871 the county commissioners signed a three year lease to rent American Hall from Col. Hayes for the use of it as the county courthouse (Olathe 25). This would narrow the dates of the mystery to a two year period, but there were no references as to the source of this material. Published in 1874, Atlas Map of Johnson County, Kansas includes a pen and ink sketch of the American block at the corner of park and Chestnut Streets. A portion of that block is labeled American Hall (74).

Biographical Information. Among the new settlers in 1857 was Josiah E. Hayes, Olathe's first philanthropist, and important leader in the town's early life. Hayes was the man responsible for building the hotel that was first used for socials and owned American Hall which served the same function until it was renovated into Hayes' Opera House in 1880.

Hayes' accomplishments in Olathe were influential in the history of the town and instrumental to the addition of an opera house.

Josiah E. Hayes was born in Fanbarton, New Hampshire. on July 17, 1817. At the age of 18 he moved to Putnam, County, Illinois with his family. He married twice, to Louisa Fanning in 1838, and on March 28, 1850 to Nancy A. Potter. The couple moved to Bureau County, also in Illinois, began their family and resided there until the move to Olathe in 1858.

Hayes originally operated a mercantile business and soon became involved in real estate and development (Andreas 632). During his first summer in Olathe he built a store room and a residence for his family; by 1860 had built the county jail and a hotel known as the Hayes House.[29]

It is significant that in a strongly Democratic (pro-slavery) county Hayes, an active Republican, could win the $6000 contract for the new county jail. Evidently he had unusual qualities to recommend him. A contemporary recalls. "We felt good, all of us, everybody in town, when the contract was let to build the jail, as we felt confident that it would be built if Colonel Hayes got the job (Giffen 93)."[30] In fact the jail was ready within the year.

In 1860 J. E. Hayes was one of the five trustees of the town of Olathe.[31] That June he was on the "committee on invitation"(Blair, 96) for the dedication of the new Masonic hall. Kansas entered the Union as a free state on January 29, 1861; when the first legislature met in Topeka on March 26 of the same year, J. E. Hayes was one of three representatives in the House from Olathe (Blair 99-100).

When the Civil War began Hayes enlisted and was Captain of Company A, Fourth Kansas Infantry (Andreas 632). By early September

he had risen to the rank of Major. The Mirror followed his career with enthusiasm and as closely as military censorship allowed.

Hayes was stationed at Ft. Leavenworth where he received military training, but part of his duty included visits to Olathe to encourage recruitment. On January 2, 1862, the Mirror reported that "Capt. Hayes one of the most efficient and popular officers in the service wants a few more recruits from his company. His company is emphatically a Johnson County company and he would prefer recruits from the same source." Later in 1862 Hayes was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of the Twelfth Kansas Infantry, his post until the end of the war.[32] During an engagement in 1864 Col. Hayes received injuries which resulted in the amputation of a leg and he remained in Confederate prison hospitals for approximately a year until his release in February of 1865.

By June of 1865 life appeared to be returning to normal in Olathe. Col. Hayes had purchased the land necessary to begin development of another section of town for private residences.

> Col. Hayes has purchased of Mrs. Judy her interest in the northwest 80 acres of the school section and has laid it off into 5 acre tracts. The lots are beautifully and pleasantly situated for residenees, and those of our citizens who desire to obtain small pieces of ground upon which to build a home would do well to call on the Col. (Mirror 13 July 1865).

In November the Colonel` ran for county treasurer on the more popular Republican party ticket, and was elected. This was a position that he held for two years (Blair 74).

In 1869 Col. Hayes began a banking venture and started the Johnson County Bank; the bank was later organized in 1871 as the First National Bank of Olathe with Col. Hayes as president and his son Charles as cashier. In 1870 he was elected as State Treasurer and was re-elect-

ed in 1872 by a majority of 30,000 votes. April 30, 1874 he resigned his office. It appeared that Col. Hayes had been caught in the repercussions of the financial crisis of 1873.

> On account of the danger of traveling at that time with money on the person, County treasurers very generally refused to settle with the State Treasurer in anything but drafts on New York. These drafts were collected through two Topeka banks. When the financial crisis of 1873 came upon the country, the New York bank having in charge these collections for the Topeka banks suspended. This led to the suspension of the Topeka banks, and this to the embarrassment of the State Treasurer, who had at the time about $75,000 in process of collection. The State was reimbursed over the counter of the Hayes Bank in Olathe, Col. Hayes being made good in part by the receipt of other property, some of it western land. While Col. Hayes was in technical violation of the State law, which required State taxes to be paid in lawful money, and while his political enemies eagerly seized upon this technical violation of the law as a convenient weapon with which to defeat his aspirations toward further political promotion, yet the State lost not one dollar through the dereliction, and not a shadow of suspicion rested or rests upon the integrity or character of Col. Hayes. Preceding State Treasurers had received County taxes in the same way. It was Col. Hayes' misfortune to be in office when the crisis came (Andreas 632).

After his time spent in Topeka the Col. returned to Olathe and reentered the banking industry. The bonds of the First National Bank of Olathe were surrendered and he resumed private banking under the title of the Hayes Bank. This bank was closed in 1878 and was immediately re-organized as the Johnson County Bank by George B. Lord and Co. and was operated by George B. Lord (Col. Hayes' son-in-law) until August of 1880.

Hayes' health was a continual deterrent to him. Together with various family members he spent many weeks during the years after the war vacationing in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Time spent in the baths of natural spring waters appeared to relieve some of his discomfort. In February of 1881 the Col., Mrs. Hayes and their daughter, Mrs. George B.

Lord, left for one more visit to Eureka Springs. Shortly after arriving in Arkansas, the Colonel developed a fever and never recovered. He died on the morning of March 8, 1881. His body was brought back to Olathe and his funeral service was held in the opera house bearing his name.[33]

Two and a half weeks after his death, the editor of the Mirror & News Letter paid one more tribute to the Col. when he published the following article:

> One of the last acts of Col. Hayes' life immediately proceeding his departure for Eureka Springs was to submit the following proposition to the board of county commissioners. The noble and generous spirit portrayed in this single act is only characteristic of the whole life of Col. Hayes. Those of our readers who were not personally acquainted with him can from this form some idea of how this great and good man will be missed in the community. The following is the proposition: To the honorable county commissioners of Johnson County Kansas: the undersigned, believing that the interest and honor of our county require a more commodious place for holding the district court, and believing that the present state of our finances will not allow us to build such a courthouse as would do honor to the best county in Kansas, would tender to you the hall known as Hayes' Opera House, on such terms as you may deem just; and should you think that you would not be justified in paying any rent, I hereby tender to you the use of said hall for one year free of charge, and have appointed George B. Lord as my attorney to enter into a contract to that affect.
>
> Signed, J. E. Hayes(24 March 1881).

Truly a philanthropist to the people of Olathe, Josiah E. Hayes' contribution of an opera house to the community placed them among the fortunate as they attained one of the most coveted cultural symbols of the time.

Planning. Col. J. E. Hayes announced plans to convert American Hall into an opera house early in January of 1880. Prior to that announcement the only work done on the building in the previous ten years had been a replastering and painting of the interior during June of 1876 and painting

prior to the heavy use of the hall during the Christmas holiday season in 1877.[34] Information about the conversion of the hall began appearing in the local papers during the first week of the new year and the notices continued to appear on a weekly basis until Hayes' Opera House opened at the end of September.

Information noted in the January 8, 1880 issue of the Mirror & News Letter concerning the early stages of planning for the renovation included simply "enlarging it and making extensive improvements." According to the Gazette on February 12, these improvements included extending "American Hall sixteen feet further east, and raise the ceiling ten feet. This will make the hall seventy-two feet long, forty and one half feet wide inside, and twenty-four feet high" with the overall structure 76 feet by 43 feet.

Commencement of the masonry work took place the first of March and by the middle of the month the foundation was completed for the extension of the building. Mr. A. Thavis was awarded the contract for the stone and brick work on the renovation project (Mirror & News Letter 18 March 1880) which appeared to have had a temporary delay based on weather. Mr. W. D. Brickell was given the contract for the woodwork needed in the renovation (Mirror & News Letter 22 April 1880).

Early in April of 1880, Hayes was unable to secure rights from the parties owning the building to the north of his American Hall. This is where he had planned to expand the space. The Mirror & News Letter reported that the Col. "will be unable to extend his opera house beyond its present limits, but as soon as he can get bricks he will improve the present hall by raising the roof and putting in a gallery on three sides (8 April 1880)." Within two weeks the Col. had gained the permission of

the parties to the north and the worked continued uninterrupted through to the completion of the renovation.

Throughout the first four months of the project, the hall continued to be utilized as a performance space, a dance hall and a lecture room. By the end of April the renovation shifted to a faster pace and the with the engagement of the Hibernica Blondes on April 21, 1880, entertainments ceased until the opening date drew closer.

With performances completed for the season, the old stage was removed and work began on the new walls. As soon as the work on the walls was completed, the crew embarked on building the new roof over the existing one. To create an interior free of obstructed view, Hayes had visited many structures in the area and decided on the utilization of iron building materials from a Cincinnati firm (Gazette 20 May 1880). The masonry work was completed the first week of June (Mirror & News Letter 27 May 1880) with the plastering and the remainder of the work completed by the end of July (Mirror & News Letter 29 July 1880). The month of August was mainly devoted to the painting and frescoing done by Ben Amos.

The new show curtain was painted by a scenic studio in St. Louis at the cost of $125.00 (Gazette 10 June 1880) and arrived in town during the middle of June. No location in town existed that was large enough to accommodate the new soft goods (Mirror & News Letter 17 June 1880). The panels remained folded until the second week of August when enough of the work had been completed, enabling the curtain to be hung. Once hung, the "view of the bay and town of Torrento", Italy waited for the grand opening while the remainder of the scenery was rigged and hung as quickly as crews were able (Gazette 12 August 1880).

Physical Description. The only extant representation of the Hayes Opera House are Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Plate #2 of 1884 for the city of Olathe presented the building as part of a three story structure referred to as the American Block located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Park and Chestnut Streets.

Figure 3. American Hall, 1874 (Heisler 75)

The building faced west on Chestnut Street with access to the theatre from stairs that were entered from Chestnut Street as well. The entire length of sidewalk on the Chestnut Street face of the building was protected by a wooden awning that then wrapped around the corner of the building and extended four to six feet east on the Park Street face of the building as well. This awning provided at least some protection from the elements as patrons entered and exited the building.

The opera house was located on the second and third floors of the American block and sandwiched between other business establishments. In December of 1884 the businesses to the south appear to have been a grocery store and a drug store; to the north a bank.

The majority of the building was composed of brick with the stage and scenery area built of stone and being only two stories tall. A four foot wide wooden frame structure was attached to the building behind the stage. This structure appears to have been some kind of storage or dressing room space. Stairs are located to the north of this framed section leading into an alley. The roof of the building was either slate or tin with a metal cornice. A fire wall existed twelve inches above the roof.

Various issues of both the Gazette and the Mirror & News Letter made note that the interior will be further improved by the addition of new seats built in Olathe by Messrs. Brickle and Stratton (Gazette 12 February 1880), new show curtain (Gazette 12 August 1880, Mirror & News Letter 17 June 1880), a twenty foot wide stage on the east end of the space (Gazette 10 June 1880), the addition of a gallery that wrapped two thirds of west side of the house (Mirror & News Letter 8 April 1880), and the removal of a center column by engineering the roof to be self-

supporting (Gazette 12 February 1880).

Opening.

With the work nearing completion by mid-August, the dedication of the new opera house was planned, invitations sent out to area dignitaries and first performance was booked. The Mirror & News Letter published a notice concerning the dedication ceremonies in the August 19, 1880 issue:

> Dedication of Hayes' Opera House.
>
> The completion and formal opening of Hayes' Opera House is an event that has been looked forward to with much interest for some time. Col. Hayes has had a large force of workmen engaged for some months and has visited all the public buildings in some of the larger cities to avail himself of all the latest improvements. The result is that Olathe has now one of the finest opera houses for its size in the state, and outside of Leavenworth probably the best in the state. The scenery is all new and first class, Col. Hayes having had the painting done in St. Louis at a heavy cost. The opera house has a seating capacity of about 700, all within easy view of the stage. The formal opening of this building will take place on next Thursday evening August 26 by a grand concert to be given under the auspices of the Olathe Rifles. The exercises will consist in part of vocal and instrumental music and a good program throughout will be presented. The military will give a grand parade in the afternoon preceding the concert. The band will be out to furnish music for the occasion. The price of admission will be low probably not more than 25 cents so that all can come out and see our splendid new opera house formally dedicated.

The actual opening of the opera house was scheduled for September 29, 1880 featuring the Gulick Blaisdell Company from Chicago (Mirror & News Letter 9 September 1880) with a production of Hop Scotch.[35] The crowd was not as large as one might have expected and the reporter from the Mirror & News Letter was not pleased. Blame was placed on the Olathe Rifles and Band which had accepted an engagement out of town and pulled a large following from the local citizenry. The reporter's summary follows:

> A very fair audience greeted Hopscotch at the opera house last night, but nothing like there would have been had not the military absorbed so much attention. The play was just tiptop and was one continual budget of fun from rise until fall of the curtain. The company is composed of a perfect set of gentlemen as well as good actors and should Gulick and Blaisdell send Hopscotch this way again, the paper would have to be taken off he walls of the opera house so the crowd could all get in (30 September 1880).

Although all three of the newspapers publishing at that time covered the renovation, dedication and opening of the opera house, the Mirror & News Letter appeared more excited in seeing the completion of the building and anticipated what the addition of an opera house would mean for Olathe. The reporter's pride in Olathe and the achievements the town had reached are obvious. The remarks were written as if there was some unknown competition among all the towns of the state and each was secretly mandated to perpetually tally their status in areas such as business endeavors, construction of civic buildings, numbers of professional men situated in town, etc.; and of course Olathe was in the lead. The civic conscience of Olathe proclaimed once again:

> We are not ashamed to invite comparisons with any other house of the kind in the state, and with the liberal patronage that our people always give to a worthy entertainment, we can now hope for visits from better companies than have usually found their way to Olathe (Mirror & News Letter 23 September 1880).

Future. The Hayes' Opera House was the culmination of twenty three years of building a town, of rebuilding a town, and of community leaders seeking the best for their citizens. It is possible that the thousands of hours of rehearsal by band members, elocution students, and home-talent thespians, and the hundreds of performances by the various touring companies of bell ringers, minstrel shows and temperance lecturers had an impact on the creation of the opera house. Col. Josiah E. Hayes fur-

nished Olathe a fitting tribute to the early settlers for their creative, sometimes rough, but almost always enjoyable inclusion of entertainment in their community.

As the Mirror & News Letter hoped for better companies, they came. Col. Hayes had appointed Ivory H. Legate as manager of the house. Legate owned one of the drug stores in town and was an "aggressive salesman (Mirror & News Letter 30 September 1880)." Reserved seats and general admission tickets for all productions became available at Legate's Palace Drug Store and within two years following the appointment of Legate as manager of the space, complete seasons of the entertainments to be presented in the opera house were published in the months of September and October. Weekly advertisements appeared in the Gazette and the Mirror & News Letter listing the recently secured offerings. Within the year following the opera house opening, nationally known groups did play Olathe. Among them were the Arlington Minstrels (Gazette 2 June 1881), Heywood's Mastodon Minstrels (Gazette 10 March 1881), the Forbes Dramatic Company (Gazette 18 November 1880), and the Roshelle Dramatic Company (Mirror & News Letter 7 October 1880).

Entertainments in Olathe had been securely located in Hayes' Opera House and remained there until motion pictures began to replace the live entertainment. The amount and varieties of entertainments continued to expand. During the remainder of the 19th century the opera house was joined by other entertainment facilities, further guaranteeing the entertainment opportunities for the community.

CHAPTER THREE

MCPHERSON, KANSAS

McPherson is located in the geographical center of the state. It is the county seat of McPherson County and had a population of approximately 12,500 in 1994.

Background

Santa Fe Trail Connections. In 1823 the first wagon train from Missouri to Santa Fe passed through Kansas, but it is probable that it did not pass through McPherson County, but would more naturally follow the Arkansas Valley. In 1825 was established the 'Santa Fe Trail,' traces of which can yet be seen three miles south of the city of McPherson (Independent 24 January 1878).

The Santa Fe Trail enters McPherson County at approximately the midpoint of its eastern border and travels along a southwesterly diagonal to the center of the county. At that point it turns slightly northwesterly, following the higher ground and exits the county slightly south of the center of the county's western border. Two campsites were located along the trail in McPherson County; the first was reached after traveling 217 miles from the trail's beginning at Independence, Missouri (Brown 29). It was located on the Sora Kansas Creek (known today as the Dry Turkey Creek), three miles south of town of McPherson. The second campsite was located as the trail crossed the Little Arkansas River near the western border of the county (Simmons 92).

The land which would later become McPherson County was first

claimed by the Kaw Indians as "hunting grounds and their trail crossed the center of the county. As time went on, marks of the white men's trails became distinct on the prairie (Nyquist 6)." The use of the Santa Fe Trail increased along with the disregard for the rights held by various Indian tribes of the prairies. Treaties concerned primarily with safe conduct through the lands controlled by the tribes were made between representatives of the United States Government and the chiefs of the tribes. Ten days after the more famous treaty signed with the Osage Indians in Council Grove, the United States Government also signed a treaty with the Kaw granting safe travel on the portion of the trail as it passed through central Kansas (Simmons 91). The treaty with the Kaw was made in McPherson County, at Elyria, six miles south of the present McPherson. The Kaw were later given five hundred dollars for this provision to pass through their hunting grounds (MacDonald).

McPherson was located on what was referred to as the second section of the Santa Fe Trail; the first being from Missouri to Council Grove where the wagon trains were organized for the remainder of the trip. The second section connected Council Grove with the two cut-offs of the trail in the western third of the state, one heading westwardly into Colorado and then south to Santa Fe with the other continuing on in a southwesterly direction (Zornow 59).

> Past Council Grove the landscape changed from rolling prairie, with an occasional copse of trees, to flatter, short-grass prairie. Trees, mainly cottonwoods, were found only along streams, and the horizon became like that of a far-stretching sea (Brown 27).

Numerous ranches were established along this central portion of the trail. These were "located by the Government and the land was given to the party who would keep the ranch (Andreas 810)." They would be

comparable to early hotels at which travelers could find accommodations for both themselves and their animals. In 1855, Charles Fuller established such a ranch at the intersection of Running Turkey Creek and the Santa Fe Trail, seven miles southeast of McPherson. Among the first Euro-American women recorded having been in the area were Clara and Norma Noma who worked for Fuller at the ranch, cooking and waiting tables.

Settling of the Town Site. Town site fever was the reason stated by L. G. Skanke for venturing from his "soft job and easy money" as the chief clerk in the land office in Salina, Kansas. "Mr. Skanke, in the discharge of his duties, heard a great deal of talk about townsites, and the money made out of them if properly handled (Republican 1 March 1901)." Skanke had been told by an old settler in the area about the intentions of a community from Kentucky that was coming west and indicated their plans included settlement of the area known as McPherson flats. Upon hearing about the Kentucky community, Skanke conceived the idea of laying out a townsite in that area; a townsite waiting to be settled. Skanke shared the idea with three friends, James Marlin, Oscar Seitz, and R. H. Bishop. Townsite fever quickly consumed his three friends as well.

On Sunday morning, June 4, 1872

> the quartette left Salina in an old stage coach piloted by Mr. Huebner. In the stage and on the box, in addition to the human freight, was a supply of bacon, coffee, flour, crackers, cheese, etc., to stay their pangs of hunger, and several jugs, supposed to contain medicine for use in case of illness. Barring a ducking in fording the Smoky Hill river, no mishap occurred on their trip. At Point Creek they were joined by J. R. Fisher and T. E. Simpson, and at last, tired, wet, hungry and thirsty; the party reached their destination about noon (Republican 1 March 1901).[36]

The men began their work by undertaking the task to locate the stone set by the government survey.[37] Hidden among the tall prairie grasses was the limestone that marked the "northwest corner of section 28, township 19, range 3 west of the sixth principal meridian (Krehbiel)." It was eventually located at what is now the intersection of the Main Street and Kansas Avenue (Anson). The small delegation christened the site McPherson Center and quickly organized a town company with the following officers: James Marlin, president, L. G. Skanke, secretary, and R. H. Bishop, treasurer. All but one of the six men made improvements on their land by turning a shovel of the prairie sod thus marking the corner of a future store, excavating the beginnings of storage pit, or improving the property upon which a bank would eventually be located. "The first filing on the town site was at once made by James H. Marlin, and the present city of McPherson had its inception (Republican 1 March 1901)."

Business investment was the primary reason for establishing McPherson and these men were diligent in their efforts to make sure it would succeed. The small town of Lindsborg (fifteen miles to the north of McPherson) was the current site of the county seat but its location on the northern border of the county would allow it to claim that title for approximately only one more year. These men would soon make their bid for the county seat in their newly platted central location.[38]

In July the original town company consolidated with the King City company as a way to divert the competition.[39] King City, seven miles to the southeast of McPherson (Messenger 9 December 1872), had been established in 1871 and by the time McPherson had been located, King City boasted twenty-five houses (Andreas 811). It was certain of its fate as the county seat. However, the state legislature transferred the southern

tier of townships from McPherson County to Harvey and Reno counties, placing King City too far south for the prized central location (Rowland 9). Being the oldest town in the county and the most well established, Lindsborg believed the redistribution of the southern tiers to be the guarantee it needed to become the permanent county seat (Independent 24 January 1878). It was at this time that the townsite fever-struck party of men from the north established McPherson on the prime central location. By consolidating with the businessmen from King City, McPherson would be guaranteed the county seat on a not-to-distant election day.

Designation as county seat transferred into business ventures, and business venture, after all, was what McPherson's founders were all about. The consolidation of Salina businessmen, King City town company members and interested citizens from McPherson County appeared to have been the first in a line of successful ventures that would play a major role in the development of McPherson.[40]

Biographical Information. There were no predominant individuals responsible for the building of the McPherson Opera House. It was built as the result of a number of local businessmen forming the McPherson Opera House Company.

Newspapers. In the second issue of their young paper, the editors of The McPherson Freeman included a long article about McPherson, its history, the importance of the railroad, and a commentary on the significant attributes of the community. Within that article the two local papers were briefly described but more importantly the editors declared the importance of newspapers to the McPherson citizenry:

> Newspapers . . . we desire to say . . . are too often considered enterprises of little importance. We hope however, that this people may not consider the McPherson county papers as such. Newspapers do more toward building up a country than any other enterprise or business (16 August 1878)."

The newspapers listed below are those that were published in McPherson during the years referred to in this section of the dissertation. The dates listed are approximate dates of issue. Those newspapers with open ended dates continued publication beyond the cut off date of this section of the dissertation, that being one year after the opening of the McPherson Opera House.

The McPherson Messenger: December 9, 1872–May, 1874.

The McPherson Independent: May, 1874–November 27, 1879.

The Farmer's Advocate: July 9, 1874–September 11, 1874.

The McPherson Freeman: August 9, 1878–.

The McPherson Republican: December 4, 1879–.

The McPherson Leader: March 1880–July 1881.

The Comet: July 1881–January 1882.

The Industrial Liberator: January 1882–August 1882.

The McPherson Independent: August 30, 1882–.

The McPherson Democrat: October 1886–.[41]

The first newspaper published in McPherson was the Messenger. It was established in December, 1872 with a Republican bias by the Yale Brothers six months after the founding of the town. "In December, 1873, the paper was purchased by Clark and McClintick, and in May, 1874, George W. McClintick became sole editor and proprietor. He changed the name of the paper to the Independent (Andreas 814)." In December of 1879 the Independent was purchased by S. G. Mead and Mr. Presbrey. They changed the name to The McPherson Republican and began publica-

tion on December 4, 1879. Mead held on to his interest in the paper but his partners changed, first in June, 1880 when H. E. Watkins purchased half interest in the paper. One year later Watkins sold his interest to H. M. Conklin. In June of 1881 the Republican was issued with S. G. Mead editor; H. M. Conklin business manager. Mead eventually gained exclusive control of the paper in the mid 1880s and changed the name once more; it officially became The McPherson Republican Weekly Press. In 1888 "the demands of the town made it advisable to publish a daily; being the only one published on the Marion and McPherson branch of the Santa Fe" (Lethem 118) and thus The McPherson Republican Daily Press was added to the list of titles of this enterprise. Mead continued publication of both the weekly and daily editions beyond the dates concerning this dissertation.

The Farmer's Advocate was published by Albin and Albin with the following purpose for its existence stated in the first issue dated July 9, 1874:

> While our paper will be directly devoted to the interests of the farming class it will also aim to do all in its power to further all other honorable or legitimate business. We regard the interests of all industries as mutual and dependent upon each other. Hence the success of all should be the desire and object of each.

By the end of July the Advocate ran a notice from a Newton, Kansas paper which speculated how their "neighbor county can support two papers now when she has not given one a respectable keeping in the past remains to be seen (Advocate 30 July 1874)." By mid-September McPherson readers could subscribe to only one newspaper, the Independent.

The Freeman first appeared on August 9, 1878. It was edited and published by A. L. Clark and D. L. McCray as a Republican paper. In February of 1879 D. L. McCray sold his interest in the paper to H. B.

Kelly. Clark and Kelly published the paper through December 1880. The Freeman began 1881 under H. B. Kelly as sole editor and proprietor. A daily issue was published from September, 1887 to November, 1888.

The Leader was first published in March, 1880 by G. W. McClintick as a Greenback paper.[42] It was discontinued after a little more than a year's existence with its editor headed to Soccorro, New Mexico to start another newspaper. According to the Freeman "his advocacy of the Greenback cause has been financially detrimental to him. . . . A man can't live on faith (Freeman 24 June 1881)."

The Comet, although independent in politics, was the replacement paper for the Leader. It was edited by the former Freeman partner A. L. Clark. The Comet was first published in August of 1881 and was shortly thereafter renamed The Industrial Liberator (Lethem 115).

Within a year G. W. McClintick moved back to McPherson, bought the Liberator and was publishing again, this time a newspaper with its politics clearly stated in its name: The McPherson Independent (Freeman 25 August 1882). McClintick continued with the Independent beyond the years covered in this dissertation.

The Democrat was first issued as a weekly on September 30, 1886. It was "a five column eight page paper, under the editorial management of Warren Knaus. The weekly edition of the Democrat will consist of 1200 copies and advertisers will find it a valuable medium through which to communicate with their patrons (Freeman 24 September 1886)."

The common practice of newspapers to act as the social conscience or community watchdog was strictly adhered to in McPherson. Topping the list in the item-to-appear-most-often category was sidewalks. The attention to sidewalks ranged from wanting "the city Dads to pass an

ordinance to clear the sidewalks of all empty boxes, barrels, etc. (Independent 13 June 1878)" to having the sidewalks overhauled. "Before ordering new ones, it would be well to enquire into the cost and utility of the asphalt walks now being put down in Topeka and other cities (Freeman16 April 1886)."

Many issues dealt with by the press concerned morals and were most often directed toward the young men of the town or the proprietors of billiard halls and saloons. The most frequently abused by the wayward members of the community were the God-fearing, respectable ladies. The following notice appeared in the Independent on November, 1882:

> McPherson, . . . the most moral and highly polished city in the known world, is not exempt from that pest of civilization, the street loafer. These hoodlums, since the last storm, stand on the most frequented street corners, and watch the ladies who from the necessities of the case are obliged to raise their dresses to keep them from being bedraggled in the mud. If these youths have no higher aspirations than ladies' ankles, they are very low-minded, indeed.

Improvements in the quality of life for the McPherson citizens were also strongly crusaded for by the press. The formation and equipping of a fire protection company was at the insistence of the newspapers, as was the installation of electricity, telephones, parks, and trees. Theatrical entertainments, the need for more, the need for fewer, the high price of tickets, and specific recommendations for certain companies were all the focus of a press release. The following notice appeared in the Freeman on September 16, 1881:

> Why not have an entertainment of some kind? We have a good Opera Hall, and are compelled to use our own resources for amusement. It is now the season of the year that towns around us are enjoying the pleasures of dramatical entertainments, and we would suggest the managers of the Opera House at doing something in securing a company soon.

The press was the major form of advertising for most events held

in town, whether the event was sponsored locally or presented by a traveling company. "Companies did little advertising, other than line notices in the personal column of local newspapers (Doyen 19)." Local groups relied on the same methods of advertising. Most editors eventually grew weary of the massive numbers of events they were expected to print free. One such McPherson Independent editor opted for creativity when he informed his readers of a new policy:

> The editor of this paper sometimes attends dances, shows and festivals, and sometimes when they are held in his immediate neighborhood he does not attend. The reason is easily shown. He enjoys a good dance and a good supper, such as they sometimes have at church festivals, exceedingly well, the main trouble with this individual is that he is poor, and rarely possesses any of the filthy lukor somewhat sought after by the people of the Lord. There are times when he can borrow seventy-five cents from a friend and agree to pay when he gets it, but these times are rare, and the longer he lives the rarer they get, and he can seldom borrow from the same person a second time. He owns a paper which it cost him several years of hard labor to establish. It belongs to him personally as managers of balls, festivals, etc. insist that his column should be free to them. They say: "Please announce through your paper that there will be a grand ball at Mr. Tuffcusses on such an evening, and a cordial invitation is extended to everybody. Admission and supper $2." Or, "Please say to the people that there will be a grand festival at the Hightoned Church on such a night for the benefit of the church. Terms: $1.00 to get in, $2.00 to get out." This is a convenient way of advertising a business out of which they expect to make money. People like to see their names in the paper, and they like to see enterprises which they may get unfavorably spoken of yet they expect the person who goes there to make a report pay the same as anyone else, or, that if he be admitted free is called a dead-beat. Especially is this the case near the home of the editor, while away from home the opposite is the case. He finds solace, however, in the thought that a philosopher is respected, except in his own country. We have come to this conclusion: If it is worth anything to the managers of balls, etc., to have published to the people their advertisements it is at least worth half-price, and on after this date, December the 20th, in the year of our Lord, One thousand, eight hundred and seventy-seven this will be a fixed rule that all entertainments at which a fee is charged at the door shall be paid for at the rate of five cents per line. If the editor or a reporter attends one of those balls or entertainments

> upon his own the responsibility, he expects to pay the same that others pay, but if he be especially invited to make a report of the proceedings, then he expects to be furnished a complementary ticket, SO!

Between the numerous churches and the guardian newspapermen, McPherson was bound to be a strong moral community. As was stated in the Freeman's second edition on August 16 1878: "Newspapers do more toward building up a country than any other enterprise or business."

Railroads. McPherson residents felt the effects of the railroad long before the iron steam engines would pull even a single freight car into town. The first mention of the railroad in a McPherson newspaper was in the form of bashing from the local press. In January, 1873, the Messenger was having a difficult time printing because the paper order was not getting through from Topeka.

> It's very strange that it should require two weeks for goods to come from Topeka to Salina when trains run through every few hours. The old style of freighting with ox teams is far superior to the Kansas Pacific Railroad for fast freighting. However, the Kansas Pacific Railroad is no worse than the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad because it took four weeks to get paper from Topeka on that line (Messenger 23 January 1873).

By April, 1873, meetings began being held with representatives of various railroad lines speculating about bringing a railroad through McPherson. It would be another six years before the townspeople would see the black smoke of the engine as it slowed to stop at a depot in McPherson. By the time the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad actually began serious negotiations, many of the people within the town and the county had "been disappointed so often that we don't propose to 'gush' any this time (Independent 3 September 1878)." However, on September 23, 1879 seven to ten thousand people came to McPherson to

welcome the railroad to McPherson (Freeman 26 September 1879).

Prior to that date the community leaders of McPherson had spent a great deal of time, energy, and money on trying to lure railroad lines to town, on building roads to the closest towns with access to a railroad, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the narrow gauge and standard railroad tracks, and motivating the inhabitants of the county to get behind the railroad movement in a favorable way.

On May 7, 1877 a railroad committee was formed and a letter was sent to the officials of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. In the letter the committee requested a meeting between themselves and the railroad officials for the "purpose of projecting a line of railroad from Florence to McPherson through Marion Center to get a railroad to McPherson (Independent 10 May 1879)." Within days the committee received a response and were invited to Newton, Kansas to meet with the directors of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. At that meeting the McPherson representatives were listened to, but promised nothing. The McPherson delegation was asked to send representatives to Topeka to meet with the officials at the railroad company's main office (Independent 24 May 1877).

The trip to Topeka did not bring the immediate results the representatives had hoped for but did produce the specific parameters by which the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe would be willing to bring a road to McPherson the following year:

> If the people are in favor of it at that time, they will do it providing the people furnish the right of way, and take stock to the amount of $3174, per mile. This proposition is favorably received by the people of this county as it is also by the people of Marion Center, but one or two places in Marion County is already bonded to the extent of that law, so that if McPherson wants the road, she must take enough stock, to make up for those deficiencies (Independent 31 May 1877).

Little was heard from the railroad company until September of 1878. By that time the company was willing to come but the parameters had become more inclusive. Not wanting to be without a railroad any longer, the citizens of the county met in McPherson and adopted the following resolution:

> Resolved: that we as a people, do hereby agree that we will grade, tie and bridge the proposed road from McPherson City, in McPherson County, to the east line of range one, east, in Marion County; provided, Marion County will build the road from the said point on range line one, east, to Florence, on the A. T. & S. F. Railroad.
>
> For the purpose of taking the sense of the meeting the following motion was offered. Moved, that we are willing to furnish sufficient means (not exceeding $65,000) to grade, tie and bridge the road from McPherson to the east line of range one, east (Independent 5 September 1878).

From that point the actual work needed to bring the railroad to McPherson proceeded at a much quicker pace. A local company was formed in early November to take care of the legal matters and to work with its equivalent group in Marion County. By the end of November the Marion and McPherson Railroad Company had been incorporated and the charter filed (Independent 21 November 1878).

The Freeman and Independent took control of urging work on the railroad prospect to be moved along. For the next six months both newspapers ran notices similar to the following: "The next thing McPherson wants after getting a railroad is a fine school building (Independent 5 December 1878)." and "Nine men out of every ten, will vote for bonds for the M. & M. R. R., and by the first of October, next, the iron horse will be skimming the prairies of McPherson county. This is as it should be (Freeman 17 January 1879)."

The bonds were voted for by a 300 vote majority on February 25,[43] and one of the largest celebrations every staged in McPherson took place.

The account of the celebration by W. J. Krehbiel in the March 1, 1901 special pictorial edition of the Republican follows:

> The most enthusiastic crowd that ever assembled in McPherson was the one that participated in the ratification of the bond election for the Marion & McPherson railroad. The northern and southern tiers of townships were 'ferninst' the bonds and the election was a hot one. . . . Early in March the election was held and the bond issue won. A traction engine and every farm wagon in the city was pressed into service for an impromptu train. Banners on each wagon read "Marion & McPherson R. R.," and the train consisted of baggage, express, postal, first class, second class, chair and sleeping cars. . . . Every implement dealer in the city furnished all the new wagons he had and everything went on ratification day.

By mid-June ground had been broken for the Marion and McPherson Railroad. The first ground broken was four miles east of McPherson as workers commenced grading the Kansas prairies for the first railway into McPherson.

In town, the excitement was building with the realization that they would soon become a two railroad town. In April the surveyors of the Union Pacific Railroad were in the county making plans to extend their road south from Salina to McPherson. The railroad fever was increased when a writer for the Freeman learned that the chief engineer was selecting the site for the depot "with a view to the road becoming the main line of the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe. Won't McPherson boom with the two best roads in the state; the Santa Fe and the Kansas Pacific (Freeman 11 July 1879).[44]

The remainder of the summer was spent reporting the progress of the railroad on a weekly basis, bragging about the growth McPherson would experience once the railroad reached its limits, and planning a celebration for September 23, the date when the iron horse would officially roll into town.[45] McPherson was gearing up for the changes that were

certain to change it from a quiet little town to one anxiously anticipated the changes bestowed on a prairie boom town.

Three days following the grand celebration of the railroad's arrival, the following appeared in the Freeman: "150 buildings have been put up here in the past four months. An average of a building and a half per day (26 September 1879)." McPherson had indeed been preparing for the changes to come.

It was time to deliver the bonds to the railroad company. E. P. Williams, a local banker who had insisted in the early meetings that an $8,000 per mile limit be placed on the road's mortgage, discovered that the road had actually been mortgaged to $12,000 per mile (Republican 1 March 1901). He consulted the county attorney and it was decided to withhold delivery on the bonds. They claimed the railroad to be in violation of the original contract. The railroad people eventually dropped the matter and no bonds were ever delivered to them; E. P. Williams had saved the county $120,000.

Primarily an agricultural county, McPherson's farmers were now well supplied with access to the new grain elevators and were delighted at the ease associated with shipping grain from a local connection on the rail system. "Two thousand five hundred bushels of wheat were sold in this city (Freeman 10 October 1879)" the first Saturday in October, 1879 while twenty freight cars arrived to transport the wheat to market. By the end of October the cattlemen were benefited with the addition of a stockyard near the depot. In addition to the farmers needs being met, the town's residents were impressed with the faster mail delivery, the idea of a telegraph office in town, and the increased number of new items available through the town's merchants now that they were connected to

the rails.

The Union Pacific Railroad had to complete their line to southern border of the city limits of McPherson by January 1, 1888 or the company would forfeit all of the bonds. With five days to spare, they were within the north part of town (Freeman 26 December 1879) and did meet their deadline. McPherson celebrated the arrival of 1880 with two railroad companies in place and others beginning to negotiate for future lines.

In the next eight years leading up to the building of the McPherson Opera House, the railroads mentioned did indeed assist with the growth of McPherson. During the first year of service to the county these two companies paid an approximate $5,000 in taxes to the county. Their service to the community was questioned periodically, especially in regard to the lack of passenger coaches on the track thus forcing passengers to ride in freight cars. However, each time this issue was brought up, the company at fault eventually improved its service to McPherson.

Growth. With the printing of the first issue of the first newspaper in McPherson, the town company actively sought out prospective citizens for their new town. They ran a large advertisement in which they declared that "lots are given by the company to anyone who will erect thereon a building suitable for a business or a dwelling house, and for every $100 which the building erected exceeds $500 in cost, one additional lot [will be given] (Messenger 9 December 1872)." In the same issue the editors ran a large article primarily concerned with describing the county, the early history, the geography of the area, and the benefits of living in McPherson. The section on the benefits of selecting McPherson as a new home concluding with the following:

> The people of McPherson County are whole, intelligent, energetic and industrious. No saloons or gambling houses have been established in the county and the people are opposed to everything of an immoral character. Schools and churches, the prime elements of civilization, are fostered and encouraged in the highest degree.

This description was immediately followed by an explanation of how one could secure land in the county. Both preemption and homesteading were clearly and succinctly explained. Prospective settlers were being led step by step into filing claims for land in McPherson County.

During the winter of 1872–73, the town company erected their building. By February 27, 1873 the building was complete except for the brick on the chimneys and the town company was able to move in shortly thereafter. The Messenger had made arrangements to lease the ground floor of the building with the space on the second floor reserved a town hall, a court room and offices.

Now possessing a building fitted with a court room and a modest number of businesses and homesteaders, the McPherson Town Company was ready to move into the next phase of guaranteeing the success of their town site. Time had come to motivate the remainder of the county into selecting McPherson as the new county seat. The first step was the unanimous passing of the following on May 15, 1873: "Moved, that the McPherson Town Company give the County of McPherson the second story of the Town Building for county purposes free of charge for a period of five years." To this inducement was added "that the Company donate to the County one square in the town of McPherson to be selected by the County Commissioners for county buildings (Messenger 15 May 1873)." Three weeks later the deal was made even more appealing when the Town Company added another five years of use at no cost and two squares of land for county buildings (Messenger 5 June 1873).

The local press ran notices throughout the month preceding the June 10 election date. Notices varied from general concern "that every voter should consider the matter thoroughly and make up his mind to vote for McPherson (22 May 1873)" to listing the reasons why McPherson should be selected the new county seat over others in the county: "Lindsborg is too far north and King City is too far south. McPherson and New Gottland are more in the center (29 May 1873)." The article favored McPherson over New Gottland because it was closer to the geographical center of the county and there were already buildings in McPherson. The article further explained that within one year's time McPherson had acquired a "printing office, store, hotel, shops, doctors, lawyers, and mechanics." The Town Company had been doing its job.

On election day McPherson was successful in its bid for the county seat. "McPherson received 605, New Gottland 325 votes, King City 3 and Lindsborg 1. McPherson's majority over all was 276 (Rowland, 15)."

Growth was slow for McPherson over the next five years. Without a railroad, it was hard to attract a population. Approximately one year before the arrival of the railroad, the Independent published an article detailing the various businesses and the men who ran them. Editor George McClintick created a clear picture of McPherson in 1878:

> Five years ago the proprietor of this poverty stricken concern landed in McPherson. The town was then in its infancy, – it is in its infancy now, but then it was in its swaddling clothes. One business house, a boarding house, a blacksmith shop and a printing office in the hands of the sheriff comprised the business institutions of the town. The old Pioneer store of H. Bowker, was the rallying point for this part of the county. Here was the Post office, the trading point and the loafing place for the young city and newly settled country. Here the preacher stopped, here they held their sociables, Mite societies, donations parties etc. . . At night the coyotes howled themselves hoarse upon the town site and in the daytime the buffalo pastured upon the main streets of

> the city. Now the thing looks a little different. We have not much of a city but we have had nothing to make a city. No railroad and a farming population that did its trading at railroad points. With all our disadvantages we now have a city of 500, and business houses to the number of about 50. Seven preachers, nine lawyers, eight doctors and two regulated printing offices, – not much to brag of and nothing to be ashamed of (28 November 1878).

Thirteen months later the railroad had come to town and the Freeman published an article similar to the Independent's:

> Since March '79 it has surpassed the expectation of the most sanguine. There are now two churches and a third nearly completed. A good graded school; two railroads with line depots; two large elevators, with two more to go up in the spring; two feed mills in operation; one flouring mill nearing completion and the second to be commenced at an early date. Three large lumber yards; four coal yards and one marble yard. One steam furniture and turning shop. Three laundries, five livery and feed stables. Ten hotels and boarding houses. Twelve lawyers, four or five real estate agencies, a half dozen loan agencies, and several insurance. Nine doctors and one dentist, two jewelry stores, one gunsmith, two music stores, three blacksmith shops, three paint shops, one wagon shop, three boot and shoe shops, one tailor shop, one bakery, two confectionery stores, two harness and saddle shops, two billiard halls, five butcher shops, four barber shops, two dairy yards, two express offices, one telegraph office. Six carpenter shops, three brick yards, two milliner shops and three dressmakers. Ten firms of stone, brick and plastering contractors. Eleven dry good stores, two clothing stores, five grocery stores. Six hardware, tinware and agricultural implement stores. Two flour stores, seven drug stores and three printing offices, three cigar stores, two banks and two furniture stores. In July '78 there were all told, about 82 houses in the town, now there are 320. Then the population was 300, now it is about 1,500. At that time nothing but a neighborhood trade was done in McPherson, now we have the bulk of trade from all parts of the county. . . . McPherson is in the heart of the best agricultural region in the west. With such a country and the best railroad facilities it is but a matter of time when this city is to be numbered among the best of Kansas. We are sure to become the leading city of central Kansas (2 January 188).

The 1880's were a period on growth for McPherson. It was forced to confront many problems that were faced by other cities expanding during the same time. The community had to make decisions on whether

a county jail should be built instead of sending its prisoners to Hutchinson or Salina; building schools that would adequately house the student population; supplying utilities to the populace; constantly staying ahead of repairing the existing while keeping up with the need for new sidewalks; wrestling with the issue of fire protection until too many businesses had been lost; confronting the ethical and moral dilemmas that came with billiards, saloons and prostitutes; and eagerly embracing new conveniences like the telephone, street cars and bus lines.

The final push for growth in McPherson came as the capital removal notion was gaining support from towns throughout the state but especially those centrally located. The thought of moving the state capital out of Topeka was initiated as the western sections of the state became settled. The people living in the western counties of the state became frustrated with the capital's eastern location, specifically when needing to attend to governmental matters. In April, 1888 a state-wide convention to discuss the removal issue was held in Abeline and "from throughout the state pressure groups poured to the meeting (Anson, "State Capital")."

McPherson was eager to become the new site for the capital. As early as 1877 the idea of becoming the state's capital had been appearing in the local press. The May 30, 1877 edition of the Independent included a sketch of McPherson's past and the prospects for the town's future: "It is certain to be a great railroad centre and capital of the state of Kansas in the next five years. This is no fancy picture or exaggeration of its real prospects . . . and those who ridicule the ideas . . . will probably live to see them verified." The following year a similar notice was again run in the Independent:

> Did you ever stand at the north end of Main Street, in McPherson and imagine what a splendid view of the business street there will be, when the street on both sides becomes an unbroken row of blocks for one mile. The street will be lived [sic] with teams, busses, and streetcars. . . . At the lower or south end will be the depot of the A.T. & S.F.; to your left the depot of the Kansas Central Narrow Gage; out at your right shoulder where now stands the house of J.B. Haight, will be standing a magnificent structure – the Capital Building of the glorious state of Kansas. Only five years. See if we have not put it correctly (28 March 1878).

That was the end of the talk until 1886 when H. B. Kelly, editor of the Freeman became involved in the movement. He actively sought occasions to meet with legislators both in Topeka and by inviting them to McPherson for the sole purpose of getting the capital removed from Topeka and hopefully built in McPherson. On February 19, 1887 a train with six coaches of state legislators arrived in McPherson for an on-site visit. They were served a formal dinner of 50 items at the Union Hotel.[46] After supper the group was ushered across the street and up the stairs to the second floor opera hall where the delegation was entertained and strongly lobbied. Above the speakers hung a large banner reading: "The First Session of the Legislature in McPherson (Rhodenbaugh)."

During the following year McPherson experienced its largest growth, Kelly was elected to the state Senate, and all seemed ready for the convention in Abeline. The correct steps had been orchestrated to maneuver McPherson into a strategic position for the final assault on capital removal.

Early on the morning of April 25, 1888, the 150 McPherson delegates and that many more interested parties received a warm send off as their four coaches of the Union Pacific Railroad headed north to Abeline (Republican 27 April 1888). The McPherson delegation was the largest at

the convention and their railroad cars decorated with capital removal cartoons received considerable notice. The convention was called to order and after a welcome to the city of Abeline by J. R. Burton, in which he set the stage for the convention to deal with a variety of conflicting issues of capital removal, H. B. Kelly was unanimously elected President of the convention. An Abeline newspaper reprinted the entire speech Kelly delivered after his election in which he stated that:

> a hundred and twenty-five thousand people twenty-five years ago, cut the garment for a boy; now a million and three-fourth people should shape the pattern for Kansas in its full grown manhood. . . . Let us then shape the institutions of the state for the Kansas of today. . . . It is not a site speculation but one in which the whole state has an interest, and especially the great agricultural region of central and western Kansas (Weekly Gazette 26 April 1888).

When the meeting was adjourned, McPherson was fairly well assured of being the new capital location.

Records do not exist concerning why the vote was never taken in Topeka for the removal issue. Speculation was that

> jealousy had a part in keeping the capital in Topeka. As so frequently happened in those days in the legislature, a fight probably developed over some minor matter between the house and the senate. Neither would pass the other's bills. Wanting the capital bill to pass, the senate held it, awaiting a better time to get it put to a vote, a time when it would go through and the trade could be accomplished.
>
> The days of the legislature dragged on and on and so did the fight. As the end of the session loomed, vital bills were rammed through. Still the capital bill waited.
>
> Finally, the legislature session ended, without the bill ever coming to a vote. McPherson had lost its chance for the state capitol, probably because of a petty grievance on the part of some legislator (Anson, "State Capital").

It was during the years preceding the capital removal convention that the Capital Block was erected and that plans for the McPherson Opera House were begun. Some local residents today believe that the opera house was a lure, just as were the erection of the Capital Block on

Main Street in 1887 and the annexation of the "Capital Hill Addition (Rhodenbaugh)" in May, 1887. One more lure offered in the attempt to secure McPherson as the capital location. Others insist that the timing of the two events was coincidental.

Entertainments

Social Gatherings. Gathering together with one's friends was among the highest priorities for the people in McPherson. Leisure time spent together was valued and usually shared with those who had similar interests. Most social gathering were the result of gathering for some other purpose; whether it was done under the auspices of the church or the local schools. The people of McPherson enjoyed spending time together socially. Their social gatherings will be examined within the following groupings: dances, musical groups, sporting events, church functions, school activities, special interest groups, and special occasion parties.

Whether listed as a calico ball,[47] a necktie social,[48] or a social hop, dances were the most popular form of social gathering held in McPherson. The Fire Protection Co. used dances primarily as a fund raising device, as did the various bands that would charge to supply music for organizations wanting to sponsor dances. Occasionally the secret societies and social clubs would have a dance for which they would charge, but most of the dances held were merely for bringing people together for an enjoyable few hours spent in dancing and conversation.

During the early years of the town's existence, those wanting to attend dances would often need to travel to other communities in the county. The first dance referred to in the local press was in the form of

an invitation "to attend a Grand Calico Ball in King City on Friday February 14 (Messenger 13 February, 1873)." The second dance was held two weeks later in McPherson. The notice in the Messenger follows: "Remember the ball next Thursday evening. If you haven't received an invitation, come anyway (20 February 1873)." Correct social etiquette was not nearly as important as having people getting together.

The editor of the Farmer's Advocate included the following notice in the August 14, 1874 issue: "The ball on last Monday evening was not very largely attended, but judging as a spectator we would think that those who participated enjoyed the evening exceedingly well." It didn't appear that the numbers of people attending the early gatherings was all that important either, or whether they were actively involved in the dancing. The primary focus was that people from around the county were beginning to form bonds that could help build a stronger community. Another newspaper editor held a Christmas dance at his residence in 1873 to which a group of new settlers from Kentucky were invited and ultimately complimented "for their sociability, generosity and good looking girls (Messenger 27 December 1873)."

With a strong religious element present in the community, many of the residents were forced to select between attending dances or attending socials. The editor of the Independent explained the importance in a brief notice published in the October 17, 1878 edition: "Sociables are now being talked up, among the Christians of our city, and dances are being talked up among the other folks, for the winter enjoyment." A year earlier the Independent ran the following:

> An eminent physician says that dancing is the king and queen of all indoor exercises. It is suitable for all classes, all ages and both sexes. It is a most elegant and most exhilarating exercise. It is one of the most ancient and one

> of the most salutary. . . . It is deplorable that dancing and amusement of merely every kind should have fallen under ban of the clergy, and should be preached against as sinful. It is doubtful whether the morals of mankind are benefited by forbidding all amusements, and it is most certain that the health of thousands are sacrificed by it.

Truly amazing was the number of dances held in a community with as many churches and with as high morals as in McPherson. In excess of one hundred dances received notice in the newspapers from 1873 to 1885. Also amazing is that dances were held in conjunction with most holidays, patriotic and religious.

The Fourth of July was the holiday most often celebrated with dancing. The first "grand ball" to be held in McPherson was on the evening of the 4th in 1873. For the centennial Fourth of July celebration in 1876, a band from nearby Hutchinson was secured to supply the music for the day as well as for the dance in the evening. Approximately 3,000 persons assembled for the celebration, the largest number ever in McPherson's short history. Large muslin shades had been created and then secured with rope to various buildings. To accommodate those wanting to participate in the dance, a large floor was assembled "upon which the youngsters exercised their limbs until late at night (Independent 6 July 1876)."

The location of the county-wide Fourth of July celebration was shared among all of the towns willing to host the event. However, as the population of the county increased, so did the number of alternative locations holding celebrations on the Fourth. In 1877 the official county celebration was held at Hovey's farm, nine miles northwest of McPherson (Independent 28 June 1877). Celebrations were also held at King City, Marquette, and Roxbury. These all in a year for which the Independent declared that the Fourth "wasn't generally observed because of the press-

ing demands of the harvest (5 July 1877)." Notices from the various newspapers report at least one dance being held on the Fourth of July during every year included within the McPherson study.

As the town grew in size, the number of dances increased. Private citizens began holding dances in their homes for small groups of their friends as well as for the entire community. Other individuals would service the young people in town, giving them a location to dance that would not upset those members of the community that needed to retire at an earlier hour. Hotel and restaurant proprietors would often clear away the furnishings in the lobbies and dining rooms of their establishments and invite those who desired to trip the light fantastic to do so. Farmers opened their barns for special holiday dances. One of the more common practices was to hold a dance in a new building prior to the owners moving in. This gave the inquisitive the opportunity to see the new structure, helped smooth off the new floor boards, and offered many more options as possible dance locations. When the roller skating rink opened in 1884 it was frequently used for dances, sometimes not even starting them until after the skating was over for the evening.

Prior to the opening of the opera hall (not to be confused with the McPherson Opera House)[49] and the establishment of a theatrical season from October to May, the dance season flourished in that same period of months. "The dancing season is upon us and the "light fantastic" is tripped somewhere in town every week(Freeman 3 October 1884)." Special balls were sometimes held to inaugurate and close the season. Grand balls were held periodically. Individual citizens would sponsor elaborate dinners and dances in their own homes or use a hotel for the occasion if their houses could not adequately hold the expected number of people.

Weather would often cause a dance to be postponed. Snowstorms caused the postponement of a dance on two occasions in January of 1879. It was eventually held on February 5 with the following notice from the Independent: "Remember the postponement and come out next Wednesday evening. Carriages will be sent to the residences of all ladies who live in or out of the city that wish to attend, whether they have gentlemen escorts or not (30 January 1879)."

Masquerade balls were among the more exciting events for the local supporters of the dance. The disguises brought a new excitement into the evening and great lengths were taken to secure costumers from Kansas City. A representative and trunks of costumes arrived in town at least one day prior to the masquerade balls, allowing the patrons to select from a wide array of characters. For one such dance held on February 1, 1888, a special order of masks was obtained by a local merchant to compliment the disguises offered by the Kansas City supplier (Republican 27 January 1888). For a ball held on January 8, 1884 at the opera hall, a supper was held prior to the dance in an adjacent location. The costumes worn that evening were described the following day in the Independent as being capable of making a "horse laugh; some were bright and beautiful and others were hideous as sin, but nearly all the disguises were so complete that friend did not recognize friend, husband wife nor wife husband (9 January 1884)." The same edition of the paper also carried a notice regarding the level of excitement created by a clown who somehow "knocked down a lighted lamp from the chandelier which was dashed to pieces upon the floor."

With the railroad opening easier access to the towns of the west and the new opera hall offering touring companies a reason for stopping at

the McPherson depot, the one-time champion of leisure time was being challenged. The number of dances slowly diminished and their place of importance as a newsworthy event all but disappeared. By 1886 the only dances reported by the local press were those associated with the Fourth of July celebrations and occasional social dances sponsored by the local dancing academy.

Involvement in a musical ensemble was a major social experience for those participating. The organization of a "singing school" was included in the eleventh issue of the Messenger in 1873. Music has been a strong faction of the social experiences in McPherson ever since. Over the years the city's consistent desire to have a band organized, rehearsed and able to play for holidays, dances and special events has kept that group in existence. Town choirs, glee clubs, and orchestras have come and gone; most having been formed for one specific performance.

The brass band was first organized in April of 1877, was reorganized in January, 1879, and disappeared in 1880. The Freeman urged their reorganization in November, 1881:

> The fact that this city is the owner of a set of brass band instruments, and that they are lying idle, speaks badly for the place. There is enough talent in McPherson to compose an organization that would not necessarily be second to none in the state, should the proper efforts be put forward. We suggest that something be done in the matter, and that ere long we may have a cornet band of which the citizens may feel proud (11 November 1881).

In April, 1882 an instructor was found, new horns ordered, and a new band was organized. This group performed well, so well in fact that the city bought them silver instruments and new uniforms (Freeman October 3 & 24 1884). After the band supplied music for a Thanksgiving

dance at the skating rink in 1884, the band's leader and one of the members mysteriously left town (Freeman 28 November 1884). The band had a difficult time recovering from that departure.

The Silver Cornet Band eventually gave way to a kids band that was organized in June, 1885. The another new set of instruments and uniforms were purchased. This group became very popular, playing for the county fair in 1885 as well as presenting concerts, dances, and serenading the shoppers on Main Street. An adult band was finally reorganized in 1888 and was present throughout the remainder of the century.

Unlike Olathe, where very little reference to sporting events was found until after the renovation of the opera house, McPherson was actively involved in sporting events as recreation from the first year of its existence. Sporting events in the area originally gave social significance to the participants only. However, with improvements at the fairground's driving track and the growing popularity of baseball, the spectator's role in the events also increased.

Baseball was consistently the major focus of group sport throughout this period. Various teams were organized over the years with a black team receiving notice by the press in July, 1885. The teams usually played others from the county, beginning as early as April and playing through September. A traveling team passed through McPherson during the summer of 1886 and challenged the McPherson Razorbacks to a game. No results were published (Freeman 27 August 1886).

Hunting and the shooting tournaments that accompanied the sport drew participants to McPherson from all over the state. The November 13, 1879 Independent declared the following: "McPherson, this year, is the best resort for hunters in the State. They are here from all parts,

and some of them are bagging a good many birds." Earlier that year a sporting club had been organized for the town's marksmen. Shooting tournaments were scheduled on a yearly basis from 1879. A two day shoot was held in 1880 with participants from all over the state (Freeman 27 March 1880).[50]

Horse racing attracted interest in McPherson, first as a causal occurrence between braggarts but later as a true sporting event.

> The six strong young cities of the golden belt of Kansas, have organized the "Kansas Pacific Circuit of Race Meetings and Fairs," and offer this fall $12,500 in purses for trotting, running and pacing. Their object is to encourage the breeding and owning of first-class roadster horses and to make of their particular section of country the Kentucky "Blue Grass Region" of the west, avoiding, if possible, the demoralizing influences that are supposed to attach to races in that famous southern country (Freeman 14 August 1885).

The towns included in the circuit were Concordia, Salina, Minneapolis, Clay Center, Abeline and McPherson. That fall, with the circuit in place and operating, the fair association promised the "best and most successful county exhibition ever held in Kansas" with entries of trotters and pacing horses which "are among the best from the following states, Kansas, Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, and Texas (Freeman 11 September 1885)."

Other sporting activities that received participation from the McPherson people included croquet, fishing, kite-flying, swimming, roller skating, sleighing, archery, bicycling and bowling. Those involved with archery formed the Olympic Archery Club in 1879 (Independent 21 August 1879). The sport's popularity grew and by 1885 both men and women were involved in target practice.

> A number of young gentlemen and ladies of town have supplied themselves with archery and will engage in the past time of target shooting. In all probability the residence in the neighborhood will petition to have a tight board fence

> twenty feet high erected around the grounds where the archers will let fly their arrows (Freeman 15 May 1885).

Five churches were active in McPherson by 1876. The denominations present were Baptist, Congregational, Methodist Episcopal, United Brethren, and Free Methodist (Independent 20 April 1876). By 1882 Lutheran, Christian, Catholic, and Universalist congregations had begun as well (Independent 6 September 1882). A Jewish community was actively practicing in the city by 1884 (Freeman3 October 1884).

McPherson also had an active Union Sunday School for members of all denominations. This group held programs on a regular basis. These events included devotional exercises, music selections, an address from one of the local clergymen, and a message particularly selected for the children (Independent 27 September 1877). Picnics held at various groves throughout the county during the summer months served as the more relaxed social aspect of the Union Sunday School.

Most of the denominations held socials for their members on a monthly basis. Numerous members of the congregation shared in hosting the regular monthly socials which usually featured refreshments, music, readings, games and conversation. Periodically a social was targeted for a particular faction of the congregation with the young people of the church (Independent 10 January 1878) or a special ladies' group (Freeman 15 April 1881) being the most frequent recipients.

In addition to the socials, entertainments were also a part of the activities scheduled by the churches. Sunday school children presented concerts, youth groups delivered readings, and some churches sponsored visiting lecturers. However, the ladies of the Baptist Church reigned supreme with their monthly entertainments:

> The ladies of the Baptist Church have fixed on the evening of Tuesday May 31, for their monthly entertainment. These evenings have hitherto been a lot profitable and instructive and from the programme promised on this evening it will excel all previous occasions. Mrs. Shiels is to deliver a new and thrilling temperance poem written by Mrs. Lucy C. Blinn. Mrs. Jessie Hill Aldrick's "Face in the Window," Miss Minnie Wolcott "The May Queen" Tennyson's most touching poem, Miss Eva Bliss a humorous poem and Elder Shiels Poe's "Raven" that weird strange fancy of a disordered mind.
>
> There will be new songs by Prof. Green, Mr. and Mrs. Fellows and Mrs. Green also instrumental music by some of our lady pianists. Admission 15 and 10 cents (Freeman 27 May 1881).

Sunday school conventions, Union prayer meetings, revivals, choir practice and denominational conferences held in McPherson were additional offerings for persons to gather under the auspices of the church in a social setting. Activities to assist in raising money offered even more opportunities for the church members to assemble. Those events are included below under Fund-Raisers.

The process of educating of the youth of McPherson created many opportunities for the community to gather. Some activities were held as fund raisers for various projects and they, like the church fund raisers, are included below. Additional opportunities arose from the regular activities of the students. Exhibitions of the students' work were scheduled throughout the year but most frequently would occur during the weeks prior to summer dismissal. These exhibitions could consist of "declamations, select readings, concert, recitations, songs and a paper (Freeman 14 January 1881)."

The high school developed its own literary group and offered many presentations to the general public at which they "were highly entertained. The exercise consisted of recitations, declamation, essays, a paper and debate (Independent 2 April 1884)." The high school literary group started as a boys debating society at the school "causing those

who participate to inform themselves on important political questions (Freeman 23 February 1881)." This group continued to develop as an organization, presenting many of their debates and mock trials for the public. By 1888 they were meeting in their own rooms over businesses on Main Street. The June 15, 1888 edition of the Republican carried the following: "Last evening a goodly number of high school literary society members met . . . and reorganized adopting a new constitution and by-laws, electing an entirely new set of officers, [and] a new name - McPherson Literary and Debating Club."

Commencement exercises soon became an event supported by the entire community. A description of high school commencement was published in the June 4, 1884 edition of the Independent:

> The second annual commencement exercises of McPherson High School at the Opera Hall last Thursday evening were witnessed by as large an audience as could get into the hall. The exercises opened with a greeting song led by Prof. Hulse, and participated in by the teachers and a portion of the advanced pupils.

Each graduate was featured in some type of a presentation; students read speeches, delivered elocutions, and performed not less than six musical selections.

Activities sponsored by special interest groups provided yet another outlet for community members to come together. One of the most consistent in its offerings of activities was the McPherson County Agricultural and Mechanical Society. This group successfully sponsored the county fair every year with the exception of 1881; the first fair being held in 1876. They began planning for the annual event in April or May with the fair usually held the second week of October.

For the first two years the fair was primarily for the farming

community of the county to display their works. By the third year the fair had added a variety of exhibitions and concluded the activities of the 1878 fair with female equestrians (Independent 26 September 1878). The society was yoked with the McPherson County Park Association in 1879 and together purchased land north of town for a permanent fair grounds. Dances were added to the activities of the 1879 fair, being held on two of the three nights of the fair. McPherson County fairs had quickly become another means by which the people of McPherson could come together socially.

Societies such as the Odd Fellows, the Free Masons, the Knights of Pythias, and the Grand Army of the Republic served another facet of the community with social opportunities. The organizations were primarily for the benefit of their members but would also host events for the entire community. The first event held in the opera hall in 1880 was the

> Masonic Ball given Monday night at the Opera Hall; [it] was the largest and perhaps most fashionable gathering ever witnessed in McPherson. The room was spacious being large enough for 75 couple of dancers at one time. The Salina Band and the Nevenhuysen Band together, furnished the music. The dancing commenced about 8 o'clock and continued until about 2 o'clock a.m. . . . Over 100 numbers were out and notwithstanding the large crowd, there was ample room for all (Freeman 30 December 1880).

The Odd Fellows were the most frequent and varied in their offering to the public. They would annually sponsor a dinner and dance in the fall and again in the spring. In addition to these events, one year they hosted a festival and dance on Washington's birthday (Independent 31 January 1878), in the leap year 1888, the society sponsored two leap year parties in the spring (Republican 27 January & 4 May 1888), and in April, 1881 held a public celebration including "addresses, music and readings (Freeman 15 April 1881)" in honor of the sixty second anniver-

sary of the founding of the order in the United States.

In addition to the dinners held for its member and their families, the G. A. R. would also periodically sponsor old soldier reunions. They would recreate camps as similar as possible to what they had experienced during the Civil War. The Freeman encouraged its readers as well as the old soldiers to visit the encampment:

> Don't fail to come to the reunion of the 28, 29 and 30 of this month. Army life will be carried out to perfection; the camp life and amusements with drum head court martial drumming out of camp and many other features of army life to recall old scenes to the old soldier and show the young people what army life is. Come and bring your family. Old soldiers will miss a pleasant time if they fail to come (24 September 1886).

James B. McPherson Post No. 87 and Women's Relief Corps No. 110 of the G. A. R. would also sponsor and carry out yearly Decoration Day services for the town. Even though their intentions had the appearance of good work, many in the community longed for the G. A. R. to be less visible among the town's undertakings. In 1883 the editor of the Independent urged the G. A. R. to "let the war be over and not keep bringing up bad feelings (19 September 1883)." He concluded the notice with a suggestion that the group might need to be disbanded if all they could do was stir up painful memories for others.

McPherson was established and promoted as a town with strong morals and a place where saloons were not a common business. It was only a matter of time before "the temperance women of McPherson . . . organized a Women's Christian Temperance Union." The notice from the November 5, 1880 Freeman continued:

> This is a move in the right direction. It should receive the hearty endorsement of all the temperance workers. Their free lunch on election day was a new feature in their work, and was voted by all as a success. Their presence at the polls had a good influence.

They were an active group with their many visiting lecturers speaking on the evils of drink and their annual coffee tent outside the courthouse on election day (Freeman 5 November 1880). The ladies worked closely with various church groups and sponsored a variety of entertainments. The notice of one entertainment was published in the August 20, 1886 Freeman:

> Basket picnic with a platform dance at night will be held in Johnson's Grove, September 9, or if raining, September 10. The parties getting up the picnic are sparing no pains to make it a complete success. The grove is one of the best in the county, and the drive to it fine and hence a pleasant time awaits all who may attend. Prof. Dickey, of St. Louis, will speak upon the subject of temperance, so that there will be entertainment for all who may go.

The Blue Ribbon Club (Independent 27 June 1878) and the Royal Templars of Temperance (Freeman 25 March 1881) were two other organizations that were active in the cause of temperance during the 1870's and 1880's.

Public lectures were another venue for persons with similar interests to come together. A wide spectrum of topics were offered to the McPherson audiences from 1872 to 1889. Astronomy, spiritualism, electrical psychology, and universalism were among the topics that dared to challenge the beliefs of some listeners. Other speakers took their audiences on oral tours of Siam, west Africa, and the holy city of Mecca. Several other speakers entertained with the poetry of Longfellow and topics with the following titles: "The Wisdom of the Ages," "Snobs and Snobbery," and "Men's Wrongs and Women's Rights." Temperance was the most frequent topic and it was proclaimed by as many different kinds of people as there were occasions for which they were invited to speak.

Home talent theatrical productions were the work of those who shared the special interest in performing in front of a live audience.

Although many of these performances were used as fund raisers and will be discussed later, some were actual just for the fun of presenting a script.

The first group to emerge from the rehearsal room above some business onto a performance space was the McPherson Merry Makers. They were a short lived group that was "organized in this city [as] a comedy-dramatic company . . . It will be composed of the best talent the city affords, and with a good drill master at the helm, will be able to appear before our people with a good programme and first-class entertainment (Freeman 6 January 1882)." They produced two plays during February, 1882; "one of the most interesting dramas ever produced, entitled Louva the Pauper," and the other was "the roaring farce, The Kansas Immigrant (Freeman 20 January 1882)."

Asked to perform The Octoroon, the Amateur Dramatic Association began rehearsal in January of 1883 (Independent 10 January 1883). No other recorded notice of a group going by that name was found.

The McPherson Dramatic Club was organized in March, 1884 with Elder Shiels, the local elocution instructor, as the director (Independent 12 March 1884). Their first production was listed in the April 2, 1884 edition of the Independent as the "great American comedy drama, entitled A Soldier of Fortune, or The Villain's Last Shot." The show received the following review two weeks later in the Independent:

> The Opera House was well filled last Thursday night, to greet the first appearance of the McPherson Dramatic Club. As the company is made up from among our most popular young ladies and gentlemen, expectations as to their success in their new role run high and we are happy to state that their expectations were fully realized. The absence of the usual tedious delay between acts, was one of the happy features in this entertainment, scarcely was one act off before another was on so that this long play ("The Soldier of Fortune") occupied only about two hours. The acting was almost fault-

> less and with the exception of a failure on the part of some of the actors to make themselves understood at all times, and this is a good deal the fault of the hall, there was little call for criticism. As the actors are all friends of ours we do not feel like passing compliments on any particular individual of the troupe. Suffice it to say they did well, will do better next time and when they make their next appearance, should they do so, will be complimented with a larger audience if possible than they had this time (16 April 1884).

Even though they were supposed to present another play sometime in June, the next actual notice of a production by the McPherson Dramatics Club was during the last week of September, 1886. They presented the play, Among the Breakers, for a two night run; they were sandwiched between the Andrew's Opera Company production of The Mikado and The Madison Square Company's week long engagement (Freeman 1 October 1886). The club returned to the stage at the end of November in that same year with a production of Turn of the Tide (Freeman 12 November 1886), a show which they also presented in May, 1888 (Republican 27 April 1888).

An assortment of social clubs was organized by different groups in McPherson. Some existed for one meeting such as the Drinking Club and the Society Against Horse Thieves. Others existed which had a more serious purpose. Included in this category were the Society for Earnest Workers and the Flambeau Club. Still others were strictly social. The Pickwick Club was a group of men who met yearly at the home of Mrs. Maxwell during the month of January for dinner and conversation (Freeman 16 January 1885). The Atheneum Club was comprised of thirty young men who fitted up rooms in March, 1885.

> The social and literary department is supplied with nearly all the best and leading magazines of the country and also all first-class papers. The room is furnished with chairs and tables, and each member of the club carries his own key, getting him free access to the hall at any time. The by-laws are very strict in regard to gambling or using any kind

> of intoxicants while in the hall. The gymnasium is supplied with gloves, Indian clubs, dumbbells etc., and all kinds of games generally used by clubs of this kind, and will, no doubt, be a source of enjoyment to all members (Freeman 6 March 1885).

In addition to having their own furnished rooms, the Atheneum Club would occasionally hold social dinners and dances. The January 1, 1886 issue of the Freeman contained the following notice of one of their events: "The ball and banquet given at the Union Hotel parlors Christmas eve by the Atheneum Club, was a pleasant gathering and highly enjoyed by all the 'merrymakers'."

Special occasion parties were plentiful among the socially active members of town. Among the socials offered in McPherson were an evening of piano and violin music hosted by the editor of the Freeman, H. B. Kelly (Freeman 24 March 1882); a reception for honoring "the first wedding of colored folk in McPherson (Freeman 4 June 1880);" a mum sociable[51] at which a "verdant couple well schooled in the art of love making . . . gave lessons in 'sparking' to the delight of all present (Independent 23 January 1879);" and a leap year party that lasted until midnight (Republican 17 August 1888).

Birthday parties, especially for children and men turning forty, became more common during the last few months of 1884 and then increased in popularity. Parties of introduction for the arrival of long term house guests as well as farewell parties marking their return home, were quite customary. New Year's Day, 1881 ushered in another event that was to become a social tradition in town, New Year's callers.

> For the first time in the history of McPherson, New Year's Day was observed by quite a number in the way of making New Year's calls. The callers started about 2 o'clock and continued until about 10 p.m. The ladies who had advertised "open house," had made ample provision and entertained their callers, right royally. Coffee, tea and lemonade with

> cold meats, cake, fruit, nuts, etc. etc. were served but no wine offered. The gentlemen as a rule went in squads, numbering from two to ten. There was one squad of bachelors numbering perhaps 8 or ten. These traveled on their good looks (Freeman 7 January 1881).

Political Maneuverings. Politics created a strong undercurrent that manipulated and shaped many of the important events in McPherson. On the surface most of the political endeavors took the appearance of aggressive business owners and community leaders pushing McPherson into the spotlight as exemplified in the bid for the county seat, the maneuverings for railroads, and the bid at becoming the location for the state capital. However, these events were all strongly political and did bring the citizens of McPherson together for celebrations and social activities, even if it was primarily in the name of a political party or a civic conviction.

The three events mentioned above and in the section of the dissertation devoted to the growth of McPherson were major issues that had exposure confined to the event. Other political events were those associated with the on-going process necessary for the political parties to move ahead. The Republican party was by far the favored allegiance in the city as well as the county. All other party affiliations were smaller, among these were the Greenback party, the Democratic party, and the Prohibition party. Party meetings would commence in the spring or early summer to assist with the organization and preparation of the parties' campaign needs. The next publicized event was the various individuals running for offices to declare their intent in the local press. The major focus for all parties was the elections in November, usually followed by an announcement that now that the elections were over, they could all

get back to the other matters of living together.

In addition to the political parties, temperance was a major issue in McPherson. From early on in the recruiting of new settlers to the area, the abstinence of liquor in the community was a major point. When the first saloon was permitted in town, it was closely scrutinized in the press. A local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was organized and became a very active organization in town, sponsoring lecturers, encouraging citizens to vote and even operating a coffee stand for those voting on election day.

High-ranking political figures were rarely in attendance at McPherson events. The distance from Topeka seemed to control this issue. However, the upper echelon of politicians did occasionally delivery some word to the local voters. Lt. Governor and Governors were welcomed to a varying degree depending on their travel arrangements through the western Kansas towns.

The funerals of both President Grant and President McKinley generated a number of community activities. There was a national fund raising campaign to assist in the cost of the national monument to Grant; a dance was held in McPherson to raise funds for the memorial.

Fund Raisers. The churches in McPherson were the most skilled of all organizations in the management of fund raisers. Most of the churches were built with subscription from their parishioners. However, the money raised by the ladies of each denomination serving meals, oysters, strawberries and holding festivals assisted the groups with their special projects or contributed to the general building fund.

Church fund raisers started in McPherson on Thanksgiving evening

during the second year of the town existence. From that year forward, Thanksgiving was the major holiday of the churches cooperating with joint services, dinners, and socials. The first gathering in 1873 was a fund raiser social for the benefit of the Union Sunday School. The entertainment included three charades, declamations and a supper "which is expected to outrival in social feasting anything of the season (Messenger 22 November 1873)." The event was even reviewed by the neighboring Saline County Journal and the success of the festival spurred another social to be planned for New Year's Eve.

The Baptist, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches were among the first organized and therefore the most active during the years covered in this dissertation. Among the special projects for which the ladies raised money were new seating for the church (Freeman 19 November 1880), the completion of a parsonage (Independent 5 March 1879), and a new bell for the church steeple (Freeman 5 November 1880). The assortment of events sponsored by the ladies ranged from the more ordinary strawberry and ice cream festivals to more unique occurrences including a waffle festival, mush and milk socials, a pink tea party, a close order drill presentation by the Broom Brigade (Freeman23 June 1882), and a strawberry festival at which a solid gold ring was baked into a cake with slices from it sold for 25 cents (Freeman 10 June 1881). Other distinctive offerings included a maple sugar festival, a moonlight social, the Dairy Maids Jubilee, spelling match, and the auction of a silk quilt. Lectures were given occasionally, as were special musical or elocutionary recitals. The Congregational Church received over $100 (Freeman 6 December 1878) in benefits from a three night run of Ten Nights in a Bar Room performed in a livery stable (Independent 5 December 1873).

The cooking talents of the church ladies were the big drawing card. The largest amount of money taken in at a dinner was $125 by the ladies of the Presbyterian Church at their Thanksgiving feast which included "turkey, chicken, roast pig, pies, vegetables, sauces, and etc." for the noon meal; for supper they supplied "oysters, cold turkey, cake and etc. in quantities to fill the inner man" (Independent 5 December 1883). The Methodist ladies collected $113.20 for an oyster festival which included musical entertainment and the local female elocutionist, Mrs. Rathburn, with a performance of "The Bells (Freeman 26 November 1880)."

The local press was very supportive of the work of the church ladies. However, the press would periodically need to remind the ladies how much advertising was being given away. The press would occasionally take pleasure in the overabundance of dinners, suppers and festivals.

> That church fairs and oyster suppers for the benefit of some over-burden church will soon be in order, a plan which has been successfully adopted in other place might be worked to advantage here. It is always customary to have at least one oyster in a dish of soup, not so much for the value of the loan oyster, but for appearance sake. The plan is to make one oyster answer for many dishes of soup by putting a printed request upon the walls of the church: "Please leave the oyster in the dish" it could be returned to the soup kettle, be made to do service again and in the matter one can of oysters could be made to go a long ways toward the payment of the church debt and the spreading of the gospel among the heathen. We don't ask a complimentary to the supper for this valuable suggestion (Independent 20 December 1882).

In addition to the churches, the various local brass bands, the public schools, extensive library and reading room associations, and the Fire Protection Co. also became adept at offering a wide range of events that sought community support.

The various bands used the money raised at dances, or from playing at various community events such as the Fourth of July celebrations

to help with expenses, but would usually hold some other form of fund raiser to assist with the purchase of instruments or uniforms. In April, 1877 a meeting was held to assist them in deciding exactly what type of entertainment could be held for the band boys to raise money to apply on their instruments Independent 12 April 1877). The first two Friday nights in June were reserved by the band as dates for sociables on which their would-be patrons could listen to their music, partake of refreshments, and donate to the cause(Independent 10 May & 7 June 1877). In 1884 the band sponsored a dance at the skating rink on Thanksgiving evening (Freeman 31 October 1884).

By 1885 a "kids" band was organized and was very active for at least that one summer. They raised $30 from an ice cream social (Freeman 7 August 1888). The following spring the band had developed more adept mastery of their instruments. The Freeman chronicled the bands March activities with notices when they played on the streets for the Saturday shoppers(12 March 1886), serenaded the local clergy at their respective homes on a Saturday evening and played in concert at both the opera hall in McPherson (19 March 1886) and at neighboring Canton (26 March 1886).

The schools became almost as good as the band at raising money through various events that would entertain the citizenry. A dance at the house of a private citizen was used to raise money for a township school house three mile northwest of McPherson (Independent 25 October 1877). A lecture entitled "Old Times and New" was delivered by Col. Sanford at the opera hall to assist in raising money to buy a piano for the high school (Independent 7 February 1883). The following notice appeared in the effort to raise money for a district school library:

> All persons interested in arranging for a concert, the proceeds to be devoted to the Dist. School Library, are requested to meet at McCann's Hall Saturday evening at 7:30, p.m. Bring all the conquerors you can find, and we will have a good old fashion sing, under the leadership of Prof. Hulse. At the meeting we can talk the matter up more fully, and arrange for practice as is thought best. Let all singers come out. We are interested in our district's school. By request of the school board (Independent 21 March 1883).

The following week the local press followed up with an additional notice that this kind of entertainment "should receive the encouragement of all the people interested in the education of the children. A school library is a necessity and not a luxury. Let the boys and girls have plenty of good reading to keep their minds busy."

A play presented by the "grammar and 1st and 2nd intermediate departments (Independent 30 May 1883) was presented to showcase the students as well as to raise funds to improve the appearance and facilities of the classrooms. The high school retained the services of Helen Potter, "America's best leader and impersonator (Independent 12 March 1884) for a general benefit. Early October weather lent itself to a neck tie social held in a township schoolhouse to raise funds for the completion of the building (Independent 5 October 1876).

The various attempts at establishing a reading room or library were continuous in their use of entertainments for a way of raising funds. Over the years the library associated with the following groups for fund raising projects. Lectures were give by Eli Perkins (Freeman 6 November 1885) and by J. E. Higgins (Freeman 16 April 1886) to benefit the Library Association. The Church Lyceum of McPherson held a social entertainment of music and refreshment at the parsonage of the Methodist Episcopal Church to aid in the formation of a town reading room (Independent 17 October 1878).

The McPherson Fire Protection Co. entered into the fund raising campaign when they decided "to raise money for a better engine than the one they just received. It doesn't work like they thought it would and so its going back to the company (Independent 12 December 1883)" and thus began a long involvement with fund raisers for the fire volunteers. Dances seemed to be their most successful venue and theirs were among the most successful held in town. Fifty couple attended the Christmas ball held in the opera hall in 1884 (Freeman 2 January 1885). They held a dance in the city park as part of the Fourth of July celebration in 1885 and raised funds to help defray operating expenses of the company (Freeman 25 June 1885). Their first dance in February, 1884 brought in $50 over expenses and was noted as among the "best patronized" dances in the city's history (Independent 27 February 1884).

Community wide charity events were held to raise money for some member of the town that had run into hard times. The city hall was "literally crowded with fair women and brave men. . . . The net proceeds, $27.00 were used for a charitable purpose, that of assisting L. W. McClellan who met with a great loss by fire a short time since (Framers Advocate 9 July 1874)." A company of home talent dramatists were organized for the staging of the play My Awful Dad in the spring of 1885 to assist a young woman's family in raising "the balance of the requisite amount to purchase for her a set of braces (Freeman 6 March 1885)."

Various special projects that arose over the years would also use the methods refined by the ladies of the various churches to aid in fund raising. Among these projects for McPherson were the sidewalks and a town clock.

The sidewalks in McPherson were a major issue constantly brought

to focus under the continual scrutiny of all the local newspapers. The sidewalks on Main Street were to be taken care of by the city council. However, the sidewalks connecting the other streets in town to Main Street were left to private subscription. The editor of the Independent had become intrigued with Mum sociables and offered the following suggestion: "Let us have a 'Mum' and apply its proceeds toward laying a two-plank walk from Main Street to the schoolhouse (29 November 1877)."

Prof. Vittum, one of the more popular teachers at the high school and a frequent director of dramatic offerings took it upon himself to raise money for the purchase of a striking town clock to be set in the school house. His first event was a two night run with a Saturday matinee for children of two plays, The Drunkards Warning and David Garrick (Freeman 13 May 1881). These plays were presented by students from the public schools and netted approximately $70 to add to the clock fund. The play, The Drunkard's Warning was repeated the end of June and raised an additional $30 (Freeman 24 June 1881). That fall Prof. Vittum organized a group of adult home talent and produced East Lynne for the benefit of his clock fund. Produced the last Saturday in October, the play proved to be a hit among the people and also added another $114 to the fund; another $100 and the clock would become a reality (Freeman 4 November 1881). His final event was a holiday production of Under Gaslight to be performed on Christmas eve. This production was also scheduled for neighboring Salina the day after Christmas (Freeman 23 December 1881). The remaining $100 was raised and the money was left in an account; a clock was never purchased. The Independent ran the following notice about Prof. Vittum's $300 clock fund:

> They had quite an animated discussion at the school meeting Thursday afternoon over the appropriating by the board to the school fund of about $300, raised by a dramatic club in this city for a town clock. The board had used the money in purchasing a bell for the school house and small clocks for the different rooms. It seems that at the annual meeting last year a citizen made a motion that the money be so appropriated and it was carried, and upon this authority the board took the action it did. The members of the club, however, were not consulted and claimed that neither the citizens nor the board had the authority to divert that money from its original object. It seems the club wants the money appropriated towards a public library. . . . Members of the dramatic club discussed the issue on the side of the club and . . . the discussion waxed quite warm and furnished a good deal of amusement to the spectators. The club now proposes to sue E. B. Williams with whom the money was deposited for its returns. Since the club is willing to appropriate the money for a public library, and an institution of that kind is conceded to be needed, it looks to us as if the easiest and best way to settle the matter would be for the board to return the money for that purpose and to have no more trouble about it.

For-Profit Ventures. Prior to the building of the opera hall in 1880, the people of McPherson's professional entertainment consisted of circuses, a magic lantern show, a ventriloquist/magician, and a solo musician or two. They had been entertained primarily with an abundance of church socials, dinners, picnics and festivals, dances, school and church presentations and some sporting events. However, with the arrival of the railroad in 1879 and the opera hall opening the following year, McPherson welcomed the onslaught of professionals to entertain. The professionals who entertained in McPherson have been categorized into the following groups: circuses, street performers, lecturers, concerts, minstrel shows, variety and/or specialty companies, and acting companies.

Circuses that visited McPherson were closely scrutinized by the press and the local clergy. Among most notices for the circus scheduled to visit McPherson was a notice similar to the following: "Look out for

the largest crowd next Saturday that ever assembled in McPherson. Look out also for the confidence men who make their living following circuses (Independent 11 July 1883)." However, if the press had received notices from other towns concerning the poor quality of a circus, a notice more like the following appeared:

> The Great Menagerie Circus will be here to-morrow. The animals consist of a spotted donkey, three speckled dogs, a monkey, a red-headed girl, a coyote, a wood-chuck, a fat woman, a bull snake, some wax figures, a guyascutus, three clowns, a band wagon, three bareback riders, one rider nearly bare all over, a bearded woman, several women without beards, and a congregation of sneak thieves, gamblers, jugglers, swindlers and rogues generally. The side shows will get many a dime for which the victim gets no value received, the soap man will rake in many a dollar from the man who sees through the whole thing; the monte man will find fools who will bet on the card with the fly speck on it; Justices offices will be thronged with men who have been swindled and want the swindlers brought to justice and the same thing will be done which have been done before, and will be done again until the end of time. Warnings are useless, advice will be thrown away and the great moral show will depart to play the same games in our sister towns, and gather in the hard-earned shekels of industrious citizens. We suppose whatever is, is right, but about the worse thing for the pockets of a community is a poor, low down circus, such as this one is said to be (Independent 14 May 1884).

Two circuses actually received praise from the press and one of them welcomed the clergy of McPherson to a close inspection of the circus grounds. On their first visit in August, 1882, the Sells' Bros. circus was scrutinized by a member of the press who concluded his article with the following statement about the character of the McPherson citizens: "The biggest show Tuesday was to see 7,000 to 8,000 people in McPherson and not a single disturbance from drunkenness. Very few were even noticeably under the influence of liquor. Circus lemonade and soda water were the popular drinks (11 August 1882)." Sells' Bros. attraction visited McPherson two years later and the September 12, 1884 issue of the Freeman recounted how "the ministers of town visited the grounds and it

was a wonderful time. . . The Sells' Bros. are certainly the peer of all showmen in conducting a show free from all the elements of rowdyism, vulgarity or obscenity." Sells' Bros. continued to play McPherson for a number of years and were welcomed as one of the few respectable organizations connected with the circus world.

The other circus that received favorable comments from the McPherson press was the Pullman, Mack and Co.'s Grand Eight United Mastodon Show, Circus, Menagerie. An article in the Independent declared that they were "one of the most honorable circuses on the road and actually brings what they say they are going to bring (4 June 1884)." The following week, the newspaper announced: "The circus was much better than it was anticipated it would be. The managers all appeared to be perfect gentlemen and from the large crowd that attended we believe they did well here (11 June 1884)."

Most of the circuses did well in McPherson. The S. H. Barrett and Co.'s New United Monster Railroad Show claimed to have left McPherson county with approximately $7,000 (Independent 18 July 1883). The local businesses also did well on circus days. A high percentage of the county population would be in town for the circus and make a day of the trip to town. The restaurants, merchants, and livery stables, all were happy for circus days. Notices similar to that found in the Freeman's May 28, 1886 issue were common in all of the local papers the week after the circus had played McPherson: "The circus brought an immense crowd to town Monday and our merchants and clerks were kept busy all day."

Among the circuses that visited McPherson (in addition to those mentioned above) were the Anglo-American Circus on August 24, 1884 (Freeman 15 August 1884), John Robinson's Great World Exposition on May

18, 1885 (Freeman 8 May 1885), Adam Forepaugh's New Colossal All Feature Show on September 19, 1885 (Freeman 11 September 1885), W. W. Cole's Great Show on October 5, 1886 (Freeman 17 September 1886), and on May 31, 1877 Soulier's Parisienne Hippodrome–the Great Universal Fair and Wonderworld Exposition Hippodrome Menagerie Circus Museum and Congress of Novelties played two performances, "at 1 and 7 o'clock (Independent 24 May 1877)." The former was among the first that brought with it a street parade complete with wild animals in cages, tumblers, and a balloon ascension. The promoters secured permission to have the windows of a new restaurant in town "beautifully ornamented and painted in large words, 'Great Universal Fair & Wonderworld Exposition' (Independent 31 May 1877)."

The world famous circuses never played McPherson. However, the Madagascar Natives from P.T. Barnum's show did exhibit in the opera hall in February, 1886; and General Tom Thumb's company did travel the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad two years prior to that railroad having a line through McPherson.

Street performers were the most impromptu of the professional entertainment. "Professional" is applied to this group primarily in the aspect of them getting some sort of payment for their services. These professionals were not necessarily out to make a profit with their forms of entertainment, just an existence. Most of them frequented Main Street during the warmer months, however, a tightrope walker did visit in January, 1880 and gave a free exhibition one a rope stretched between buildings on Main Street (Freeman 16 January 1880).

McPherson was visited by entertaining dancing bears and not so entertaining dancing bears; blind men playing hand organs, violins, and

singing comic and sentimental songs; men with music machines, one that could grind out music "off of a piece of paper" and one that had a "talking, singing, whistling machine." Italian musicians ventured into town on numerous occasions. One group stayed in town for a week, entertaining patrons of the business houses and were then asked to play for a dance in the Union Hotel. Their music "was superior to any that has been furnished for similar occasions for a long time (Freeman 25 July 1884)."

One of the most highly publicized of the street performances was a free balloon ascension at which a crowd of "several hundred people witnessed Prof. Platner, 'ascend to the clouds' (Freeman 6 September 1878)." The September 6 1878 edition of the Independent reported the event as follows:

> Large posters, and small handbills announcing a grand balloon ascension in McPherson, August 31st, have been stuck up, and pretty generally circulated in and around this city for a week previous to Saturday last. And as a result a large crowd congregated here on that day to witness it. Crowds commenced flocking in from the rural districts at an early hour, and at twelve m, the streets of our city were filled with eager sightseers, all dressed in holiday attire, and all on the ragged edge of anxiety, anxiously waiting for the balloon to "go up."
>
> The work of inflating attracted considerable attention and a catch penny side show professed to offer immense attractions to those who would visit their "mammoth exhibit of living curiosities" during the time the aureonaut was getting his balloon in readiness. Shortly after 5 o'clock, the work of inflation having been completed and everything in readiness, the fastenings were unloosed and the balloon shot up into space, the daring aureonaut hanging suspended to a horizontal bar on which he performed some perilous feats while in mid air. The ascension was made from the vacant lot immediately in the rear of Keyte's Hardware Store. The balloon reached an altitude of between three and four hundred yards coming down in the vicinity of the residence of Reverend Profit. The ascension was all that had been advertised and the many who witnessed it could not have been other than well satisfied with the exhibition (Independent 5 September 1878).

Lecturers for entertainment's sake were not as abundant in McPherson as other forms of entertainment. The extensive religious lectures delivered from the various pulpits throughout the week might have accounted for the lack of additional speakers. One of the more unique lecturers along the religious vein was George R. Wendling who delivered a lecture on the contrasts in the life of Voltaire and the life of Christ. He received the following review in the Freeman's March 10, 1882 edition:

> The speaker, with his hair parted in the middle; and given to a free use of stage dialect, failed in the outset to make the most favorable impressions. For a half hour, it was difficult to tell what he was talking about, but he finally warmed up to his subject, when drawing a picture of the Nazarene. His contrast between Christ, his teachings, character and followers and that of Voltaire was very striking. His "March of the Ages," was very fine. From this point one is disposed to forget the speaker's hair and "frills", and all else, in following the lecturer, who leaves his audience with the conviction that they have heard a splendid discourse.

Other speakers included a graduate from the St. Louis Institute for the Blind, a spiritualist who also performed a seance, the author of a political novel, and a California humorist. There were two more famous speakers who presented to the McPherson audience.

> The sister of Gen. Custer recited several pieces at the Opera House on Monday evening. She is a widow lady and was dressed in second-mourning. As an elocutionist she is quite good, but draws a crowd only because of having been a sister to the most cavalier leader the world ever knew (Independent 27 February 1884).

The other speaker drew an audience because of her reputation as a woman suffragette.

> Miss Susan B. Anthony was greeted with a packed house Monday night, in the opera hall, having been filled to its utmost capacity. The lady did not impress herself favorably on the audience as a good public speaker. It was hard to tell from her talk what her present political predilections are.

The above statement from the October 28, 1886 Freeman appeared among

the notices in the local columns. The editor added his comments in a different section of the paper:

> We failed to hear Susan B. Anthony in the opera house Monday night, but we have since been amused about comments of her remarks. A Democrat informed us the speaker had "mopped the floor" with the Republican party; a Republican rejoiced that not a grease spot had been left of Democracy, while the Prohibition party had been utterly annihilated. We concluded, after hearing all sides, that Miss Anthony had abused and used up every person but Susan B., while pocketing her "50 cents per head" from contributors for a "free lecture."

Professional musicians in concert ran the gamut from international performers to "unmitigated frauds" taking people for the price of admission and then moving on to the next town. One such fraud was bold enough to not only charge for admission but then left town not paying his printing bill at Freeman office. The following notice was sent out on the news service to warn other towns:

> A fraud, traveling as Dr. Arnold came along here last week. He is traveling as a singer. He is a fraud, and a deadbeat. We advise the papers of the state to require cash in advance for all printing for him (12 December 1879).

Other groups had scheduled and then became no-shows. This group of performers were also blasted by the press. The following appeared in the June 28, 1877 edition of the Independent:

> The concert that was to have been last Thursday evening was postponed on the account of the nonarrival of the performers. We suppose the Salina gentlemen thought it would not pay to come up here for the entertainment of "Children."

The majority of the concert performers were legitimate and did entertain the McPherson audiences. The groups ranged from the more popular entertainers like Blind Boone who played McPherson on numerous occasions, showcasing other blind black musicians, to lesser known but still competent musicians such as the pianist Dahlberg.

The Swedish settlement of Lindsborg,[52] fifteen miles north of McPherson, created an attractive appeal to the various Swedish musicians traveling on the plains. These performers often played McPherson in addition to an engagement in Lindsborg. Prof. Stolpe, a composer, violinist, and pianist from Stockholm toured the area in August, 1884. Mme. Ahlalder Bergstrom, a vocalist compared to Jenny Lind, performed the following January.

Taking the name of a composer whose work was featured by the performing musical ensemble was a popular way of packaging musical concerts. Groups such as the Mendelssohn Quintet Club and the Schubert Quartet both played McPherson's opera hall in 1886 with the Schubert Quartet playing a repeat engagement later in the same year.

Vocal concert companies were also popular with the McPherson audiences. The McGibeney Family, the Slayton Star Concert Co., Donovan's Original Tennesseans, The Stewart Grand Concert Co. and Western Musical Institute were among the many groups that toured through McPherson during the 1880's.

Notices for the sporadic performances by minstrel companies began appearing after the arrival of the railroad but the number of troupes performing in McPherson increased greatly after the official opening of the opera hall during the Christmas season of 1880. Before it was actually available for housing performances, the companies began inquiring about and actually booking shows in McPherson. "Messrs. McIntyre and Heath, proprietors of the Great Southern Minstrels of St. Louis have written to Simpson, Bowker and Boggs, for the use of the Opera Hall, and will give a series of entertainments as soon as the hall is completed (Freeman 24 December 1880)."

Minstrel shows were very popular with the audiences of the county. The street parades that served as a teaser for these groups proved to work successfully in McPherson. Even when groups were forced to cancel, the press was kind as represented in the following notice : "Heywood's Minstrels failed to reach this place, as billed last Wednesday night, we learned, however, they intend coming here as soon as convenient. This is a fine company, and will be repaid for their visit here(Freeman 14 October 1881)."

Among the minstrels shows that played in McPherson were Hi Henry's Minstrels who played first in 1882 and played a return engagement in January, 1884; the Santa Fe Minstrels; the Paragon Minstrels; Sprague's Original Georgia Minstrels who also played a repeat engagement in September, 1884 after their first performance in 1881; Heywood's Minstrels; Bairds Minstrels; and Beach and Bower's Minstrels.

Specialty performers, variety companies, and optical shows are grouped together in this section. A wide range of ability and a wider range of variety is present among this group of entertainers. The first professional entertainer to play in McPherson was a magic lantern showman who cleared somewhere between $4 and $5 during his one night stand. The May 30, 1877 edition of the Independent declared him as "deaf, defective in speech, minus one leg, and badly crippled in the other. He is a pitiable sight, yet the most thankful man we have met for some time. He is thankful that he is yet able to get around on one leg, to show his pictures." Other "picture shows" that played in the various halls of McPherson were the Grand Scioptic Exhibition on January 3, 1884 (Independent 2 January 1884), a two-night run of Grant's Tour Around the World on March 3 and 4, 1880 (Freeman 27 February 1880), and on

April 8, 1882 the Mammoth Moving Panorama of New York and Musical Brigade (Freeman 24 March 1882).

Varied specialty performers included magicians, ventriloquists, an illusionist, a bird show, and a Punch and Judy show. Blaisdell's Merry Makers, Fanny May's Folly Combination, The Swedish Ladies Quartet, the Hyer's Sisters Combination Co., the Arlington Company and the Stewart-Wilberforce Grand Concert Company were among the variety shows that comprised a portion of the list of such companies that toured through McPherson.

The professional acting companies that played McPherson were numerous and varied. Most played only once and then moved on while others endeared themselves to the locals (or achieved a large enough box office to warrant their return) and played repeat performances. Only a small number of companies ventured into the area prior to the opera hall's existence and none of them performed prior to the arrival of the railroad.

Over fifty different companies passed through McPherson in the nine year period from the arrival of the first railroad to the opening of the McPherson Opera House. The name of each company was repeatedly printed among the columns of the local notices in the various newspapers, each company hoping its name would pull in a profitable size audience. Most were star companies depending on the name of their leading actor as the drawing card. A few billed themselves as Uncle Tom Companies, presenting Stowe's classic work wherever they performed. A few claimed to be opera companies while others attempted to capitalize on some urban location to assist in securing a favorable audience. Whichever approach was used, McPherson audiences were supportive of professional acting

companies.

Among the more prominent star companies scheduled to perform in McPherson was that of Clara Louise Kellogg. E. H. Heithecker, the manager of the opera hall had received notification from Kellogg's managers that they would be interested in having their star perform in McPherson if enough interest could be raised through ticket subscription.

A night in March had been reserved for her performance; now the tickets needed to be guaranteed. The following notice appeared under the headline:

> "Coming! Clara Louise Kellogg! . . . It will depend entirely on our music loving people, if they wish to hear this great songstress, and if so, this lyric star can be secured if all persons encouraging first-class entertainments will call at Heitheckers Block store and sign their names to the subscription list, stating how many seats they wish (Republican 13 January 1888).

Heithecker had even arranged for persons living outside of McPherson to make reservations. However, since no further mention of the opera star exists in the newspapers it can be assumed that the required 350-400 subscribed seats were not realized. She did play in the new opera house in May of its inaugural year.

Louie Lord and her company played to McPherson audiences on five different occasions; originally in November, 1881; a full week in November, 1882 (after having to cancel a late September date); a three night run in January, 1884; three nights the second week of November, 1884; and again for four nights in November, 1886. She was an obvious favorite among the McPherson audiences. On her last visit to McPherson she received the following notice:

> Louie Lord and company will be with us next week for four nights. We take pleasure in announcing her coming, as Louie Lord stands on an equal place with America's most artistic

> and refined actresses. Also being Kansas' favorite. She is supported by a first-class company, endorsed by the press and the public wherever they appear (Freeman 19 November 1886).

The Faye Templeton Comic Opera Company presented the play, Mascot to a McPherson audience on January 24, 1885. Two weeks prior to her arrival the local column of the January 16 issue of the Freeman was crowded with over fifteen notices about her performance in town at the opera hall. Among them was one in which the "Faye Templeton Company is pronounced by all the leading papers in the United States as being the best troupe of its kind traveling. Faye Templeton is pronounced the Queen of Comic Opera. Remember that this company has 33 star artists." Also included among the notices was one for a clever piano salesman who was nameless in the following: "The piano to be used at the Faye Templeton opera, will be the renowned 'Ames' of Boston, Massachusetts. . . . It will be on exhibition in the opera hall for the next thirty days." After Templeton and company had moved on, the Freeman acknowledged that only a "fair audience assembled (30 January 1885)" to behold the performance.

The Louise Sylvester Company followed closely after the Templeton troupe, playing to a large audience on February 27, 1885. Although not publicized as much the previous group, she did receive a glowing notice:

> This renowned actress . . . was for three years a leading lady of the Union Square Theatre, the leading theatre of this country, and has been starred under their management in all the principal cities of the union. She is famous as having created more prominent characters in all the leading plays, than any other actress on the stage. She is known the world over as an actress of rare talent. We are fortunate in having her appear in our city. . . .
>
> The play chosen for her appearance is one best adapted to show her immense versatile powers, as in it she takes seven different characters, entirely dissimilar to each other. (Freeman 6 March 1885).

The more favorable reaction to Sylvester's play, Little Ferret, afforded her company a return engagement later that fall. Her second engagement on October 10 was billed as "a rollicking, jolly, comic gem" and the Freeman announced her return to McPherson with the following notice:

> This inimitable comedienne, aided by a large and talented company, will appear at the opera house on Saturday night October 10 in her latest and greatest success, an extremely funny, farce comedy, entitled, "A Hot Time," interspersed with the brightest musical gems, including selections of the catchiest and choicest numbers from the foremost comic opera successes of New York, London and Paris. . . . [including] Nanon, The Black Hussar, Mikado, and Harrigan & Hart's most popular melodies (2 October 1885).

John Dillon did not receive such lavish publicity as the above mentioned companies. His performance was announced in the Independent as follows: "John Dillon, the famous actor will be here on the 14th and will give us the comedy 'State's Attorney.' No one should fail to hear him (7 November 1883)." He did however, generate a large audience and "made [them] laugh until their sides were sore (Independent 21 November 1883)."

Among the innumerable companies that traveled this country with their own stage version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin were Mason and Morgan's Uncle Tom's Cabin Troupe, the Double Mammoth Uncle Tom's Cabin Company, and the Boston Double Mammoth Uncle Tom's Cabin Company. These were only three of the many such companies that played McPherson. Each company producing the Stowe classic attempted to engage an audience by billing their company as having some scene or animal or amount of animals or a larger chorus of black singers that no other troupe could claim.

Mason and Morgan's company claimed that their "great Ohio River

scene and Eliza crossing with bloodhounds on her track, is intensely interesting and realistic" and that it contained a "superb revival; elegant scenery; great special company; trained donkey; genuine imported Siberian bloodhounds (Independent 22 November 1882)." The Double Mammoth Co. maintained that their production included "25 performing on the stage, 10 colored plantation singers, 2 Marks the lawyers, 2 trick mules, 2 mammoth bloodhounds (Freeman 19 March 1886)." The Boston Double Mammoth Co. surpassed both of these companies. The February 6, 1885 edition of the Freeman included the following notice concerning the Boston Double Mammoth Uncle Tom's Cabin Company:

> They will bring a mammoth company of 25 performers, ten colored plantation singers, two imported Irish trick donkeys, and 6 monster bloodhounds. The press pronounces it the best on the road. They have their own new version of the drama, and will introduce many old time southern scenes characteristic of the south in slavery days before the war. The management of this great company guarantee to the people of this city and surrounding towns, to produce everything in a realistic manner. Special new scenery comes with the company, and will produce the great plantation festival and Mississippi steamboat scene on the Mississippi. The jolly coon quartet and South Carolina plantation singers, the escape of Eliza pursued by the ferocious bloodhounds, the two Marks, the lawyers, the great auction scene and a host of novelties taken from the story of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

With the announcement of the building of the McPherson Opera House, the Republican included the following concerning the overabundance of opportunities of which McPherson had been able to view Uncle Tom's Cabin productions: "McPherson is to have a $35,000 opera house and 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is never, never to be rendered within its walls (2 September 1887)." The demands of the press were not adhered to. Companies arrived at the McPherson depot with carloads of "special scenery, concert band and symphony orchestra for performances in 1891, 1899, 1902, 1907 and 1923 (Mines 29)."

Promoters with claims of their companies presenting opera used the term more as a synonym for musical theatre or operetta. In his article entitled "Grand Opera in Kansas in the 19th Century" Harlan Jennings states that in the 1880's "there were two companies which were responsible for bringing complete productions of grand opera to Kansas: the Emma Abbott Grand English Opera Company . . . and Her Majesty's Opera Company (76)." The Emma Abbott company was slated to open the new opera house but had to cancel weeks before the event.

Three companies claiming to perform opera received notices in the McPherson papers; one actually made an appearance prior to the opening of the McPherson Opera House. Andrews' Opera Company did produce a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's Mikado on September 24, 1886. "This company has rendered this opera over 300 times throughout the country and are endorsed by the press as giving the most enjoyable rendition of any company traveling (Freeman 24 September 1886)". The Holeman English Opera Company had to cancel all their engagements among which was a production of Olivette scheduled for production in McPherson on April 17, 1882 (Freeman 14 April 1882). Records indicate the advance agent for the Kate Bensberg Opera Company was in town on March 9, 1888 (Republican 9 March 1888) but no other records exist to document whether a performance by the company was scheduled and/or produced.

The final cluster of professional acting companies are those using an urban city or a particular location from an urban setting in its name. From the number of companies in existence which followed this practice, it seemed to be a fairly common occurrence. Most of these companies depended on the wonderful memories of life in the larger eastern cities that audience members brought with them to the west. These memories of

culturally opulent cities and evenings of glittering excitement were expected to be transmitted to the companies traveling among the supposedly culturally deprived towns of the prairies.

The Chicago Comedy Company was the most successful organization among those in this category. They played at least twice in McPherson; once in June, 1883 and again in November, 1886 for a two night engagement. Their opening presentation of the two night run was a production of The Octoroon on November 1, 1886 (Freeman 28 October 1886).

Other companies bearing the names that would hopefully lure the audiences into thinking they were among the elite of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or Chicago were the Boston Theatre Company, Waite's Union Square Company, and the Madison Square Company. The Boston group played a week's engagement in October, 1884. "It is a good company, but unfortunately for them, they put on a play Monday evening which was a one person play, a contraction of East Lynne with the good parts left out. They have however, redeemed themselves since (Freeman 17 October 1884)."

Waite's Union Square Company opened the 1884–85 theatrical season for McPherson with a production of My Partner. The Freeman, when reviewing the company's offerings of the previous week, suggested:

> the opening piece . . . was hardly what the people expected. It is a piece that will not take with the average Kansas audience. Miss Nelson is not suited to the part allotted to her. She has no chance to display her talent. . . . Saturday night they presented the "Mountain Rose," with Miss Nelson as the leading character. She did exceedingly well and those who were there were well pleased. Waite has a good company, and if they had put any other play except "My Partner" on the boards the first night, they would have made a decided hit, but that prevented a good turn out the second night, and they hardly made expenses. . . . The people here . . . would gladly welcome them again if they should come this way (12 September 1884).

The Madison Square Company offered a week of their repertoire to McPherson audiences beginning Monday evening October 4, 1886. Titles presented during their week-long run included Danites, Two Orphans, and Peck's Bad Boy (Freeman 8 October 1886). They left McPherson with an invitation to return and a local band member as the newest addition to their troupe's orchestra.

The Opera House

Prior Locations. Among the locations used to house entertainments in McPherson prior to the completion of the McPherson Opera House in 1889 were the following: the Town Company building, the dining rooms of various hotels, township schoolhouses, Hughes' Hall, McCann's Hall, the skating rink, numerous private homes, various church buildings including the Baptist Church, the Congregational Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church, and the Opera Hall.

The first issue of a newspaper in McPherson contained a short article stating that the foundation for the town company's building had been completed and also gave information concerning the size and use of the building. "It will be 24 X 40 feet and two stories high. The upper level will be used for public purposes, and the first floor will be occupied by The Messenger Office (Messenger 9 December 1872)." This notice appeared five months after the town was first laid out and by the end of February, 1873 the building was complete. This location was used for church services, dances, political gatherings, a court room, and the town company meetings. It was indiscriminately referred to as the Town Company building, the Town Hall, the Hall, the Court Room, and city hall and was the site for most of McPherson's early entertainment.

During the early years in McPherson many of the gatherings were held out of doors. Seven different groves were listed for the locations of church socials, dances, political rallies, and musical performances. To assist in controlling the heat of the prairie sun, large muslin canopies were hung to give relief for those in attendance. Private homes and barns were often opened up for the entire town to hold a dinner or a dance. New buildings were often initiated by a dance before the owner moved in the business' furnishings and inventory. The dining rooms of restaurants were also used for a variety of the town's socials, especially dances.

Township schoolhouses throughout the county were used as social gathering points as well as polling locations and meeting halls for the political needs. They were also used as locations for festivals held by the various churches intent on raising funds for their own buildings. Once a church building had been erected, the favor was usually reciprocated. The schools would occasionally hold their programs in the churches because they could hold many more people than could a single room of a school building.

Heggelund's Hall, Hughes' Hall and McCann's Hall were the locations used heavily during 1879 and 1880. All three of these halls appear to have been second floor rooms over store front properties on the ground floor. DeFord's Livery was used on occasion for home talent dramatic presentations as well as for dances and some church services.

In 1880 the opera block was built on the southwest corner of Main and Marlin Streets. As the building progressed toward completion in the final two months of 1880, the Independent followed the progress of the building with weekly notices. An end of the year update on the build-

ings constructed during the past year ran in the Republican and gave a fairly good description of the businesses housed in the opera block.

> The business floor contains the following, 2 business rooms - John Kern & Company and C. H. Morrison (Jewelry & Music Store) and the banking rooms of Williams and Cottingham, also a large room occupied by the County Clerk and County Treasurer. The second floor has several offices and also the finest Opera House in this section of the country. It will seat 600 persons comfortably and provides a good stage, scenery, dressing rooms, etc. This building would be considered first class in a city of 20,000 inhabitants (Republican 29 December 1880).

The first event held in the new opera hall was a dance on the evening of December 26.

> The Masonic Ball given Monday night at the Opera Hall was the largest and perhaps most fashionable gathering ever witnessed in McPherson. The room was spacious being large enough for 75 couple of dancers at one time. The Salina Band and the Nevenhuysen Band together, furnished the music. The dancing commenced about 8 o'clock and continued until about 2 o'clock a.m. . . . Over 100 numbers were out and notwithstanding the large crowd, there was ample room for all. To the builders of the hall, Messrs. Williams and Cunningham, Simpson, Bowker and Boggs, and W. F. Pitzer, much credit is due. While the hall will not likely pay a big interest on the money it is just such as has been needed by our city. The opening of the hall, though not yet completed, was a pleasant affair in every respect. The managers preserved excellent order throughout and nothing occurred to mar the pleasures of the evening (Freeman 30 December 1880).

The first performance on the stage of the new hall was presented on March 30, 1881, after the entire building had been plastered, painted, and furnished with the appropriate fixtures (Freeman 25 March 1881).

The opening of the opera hall brought a rapid increase in the number of "for profit" entertainments staged in McPherson as well as a much needed adequate space for other gatherings. It contained a variety of scenery available for touring companies as well as the local talent that performed in the space.

Between the opening of the opera hall and the construction of the

McPherson Opera House, periodic improvements were made in the hall. Footlights were added in 1881 as the first of the improvements. The managers of the opera hall also became members of a lecture and theatre circuit in 1881.[53] The new management was also applauded for their strict control of "keeping those who pay at the door off of the reserve section. The will soon learn that they can not have a reserved seat without paying for it (Freeman 26 September 1884)."

Along with the managerial improvements came a series of enhancements to the physical space. In response to the numerous concerns raised by the press in regard to fire safety, the hall was furnished with a water faucet and fire hose in January, 1885. The hall was "calsomined, painted and fixed up generally for the fall's campaign" of 1883 (Independent 22 August 1883). The final major improvement occurred in 1884 with the addition of new scenery. A representative of the Freeman examined the new additions and placed the following notice about what he saw in the September 5, 1884 edition:

> A kitchen, parlor, wood and street scenes have been put in, together with a new drop curtain. . . . The scenery is all on rollers except the wings and can be changed almost instantly, which will do away with the long, tiresome waiting between acts. There is no shoving of wings and scenery, and change being nearly or quite noiselessly made. . . . The opera house will now compare favorably with cities much larger than McPherson.

Planning. Talk of a new opera house first surfaced in the Freeman on July 25, 1884 with the following notice: "The idea of building a ground floor opera house is received with favor by a large number, and several businessmen have said they would take stock in the enterprise if it is worked up." It wasn't until November 12, 1886 that the McPherson Opera

House Company was formed. A group of local businessmen elected E. G. Clarke president and E. H. Heithecker as secretary and manager. Action taken by that group was circulated among the citizens by the local newspapers; the Republican having printed the most detailed account:

> McPherson is to have a new opera house. The fiat has gone forth. A company has been organized with a capital stock of $35,000, and enough stock has already been subscribed to insure the enterprise. The subscribers are prominent businessmen of our town, able to carry out what they undertake, and with sufficient faith in the future of our city to invest their capital in permanent improvement. The location of the new building is not yet decided upon, but will be left to a vote of the stockholders as soon as the shares are all taken (19 November 1886).[54]

On January 10, 1887 a site was selected and the McPherson Opera House Company purchased three lots on the northeast corner of the intersection of Main and Sutherland Streets, three blocks south of the opera hall.[55] George W. Schaffer of Abeline was selected as architect for the building(Republican 1 July 1887).[56] By March, 1888 the background work had been done, the designs for the building were complete[57] and the company was ready to embark on its grand project. The March 30, 1888 issue of the Republican stated:

> The stockholders of the Opera House Company held the most enthusiastic meeting of the kind ever held in the city last evening. . . . They decided by an unanimous vote to commence the erection of the opera house block . . . This will be the beginning of the building boom in the city and will give employment to a large number of hands.

Local newspapers printed notices of the building's progress from the day the "new opera house grounds [were] staked off by City Engineer Cole (Republican 6 April 1888)" on the first Friday in April until the opera seats were in place just days before the opening on January 28, 1889 (Republican 25 January 1889). Readers of the local press were informed about deadlines for receiving bids and given the names of those contrac-

tors who received them.[58] Completion dates of different portions of the work of the building were reported as were commencement dates for other work.[59] Plans for performances scheduled into the new building were given notice[60] and the comings and going of various company members were included in the locals.

By mid-October the walls of the building were within four and a half feet of their finished height (Republican 12 October 1888) and by the first part of November the roof was started. The Republican announced the completion of the roof and the introduction of plaster to the interior in the same notice (16 November 1888).

Notices increased in the local press. The entire town appeared to have been taken by the frenzy of activity associated with the new opera house. The local orchestra began practicing for an entertainment in the new structure, a scenic artist and his wife arrived in town from Chicago to begin work on the 12 sets of scenery (Republican 23 November 1888), the side walk was laid, the hard finish on the walls was completed and the chairs were on their way from Grand Rapids (Republican 14 December 1888).

The last two items left for the general public were to purchase tickets for opening night and to bid on the "rights and privileges of seats in the new opera house (Republican 25 January 1889)." The tickets were available at Heithecker's book store for prices ranging from $1.50 to 25 cents. All 900 tickets were sold during the final week before the opening. On Thursday before the opening, the seats in the parquet section of the house were auctioned to assist in raising money for additional furniture and furnishing for the building. The February 1, 1889 edition of the Republican reported that the "bidding was spirited [and] 53

chairs were sold at the average of $5 per chair."

All was now complete and the local citizenry were left with nothing to do but to plan their activities and contemplate which fashions they would select to wear for their excursion into the McPherson Opera House on January 28, 29 or 30 to witness the "Chimes of Normandy."

Physical Description. The McPherson Opera House is the only one of the three structures examined in this dissertation that exists today. Many hours have been spent examining the structure's interior and exterior. In the early 1970's a professor of speech and theatre at McPherson College held an option to buy the space and encouraged students to accompany her on tours of the space. During the late 1970's and early 1980's, many trips were made through the structure with various individuals and groups as the many attempts to save the building were initiated. The opera house is currently under renovation by the McPherson Opera House Preservation Company and plans include an authentic restoration of the theatre portion of the building. Additional viewings of the structure have taken place during the 1990's as various phases of the renovation are in progress. The structure has been the focus of at least three project papers prepared by architectural students[61] as well as the subject of renovation feasibility studies prepared by architectural firms[62] contacted over the past twenty years concerning the renovation.

Honoring the town of McPherson's existence as the new century commenced, the Republican issued a pictorial edition on March 1, 1901 in which the opera house received a short notice and a picture. Twelve years after its opening it was described as:

> one of the finest equipped theatres in Kansas. . . a modern and elegant structure. It was built . . . at a cost of

$42,000, and has a seating capacity of 900. The auditorium has on the ground floor a parquet and dress circle, above which is a balcony circle and gallery. Each of the three floors are reached by separate stairways and is case of emergency the house can be cleared in a few minutes time.

Figure 4. McPherson Opera House, 1907

Very little actual documentation exists about the interior of the building but major portions of the original decorative elements have survived through several remodelings. Throughout the years the theatre portion of the building evolved from an opera house to a movie theatre with a manager's apartment to a antique collector's storeroom. The upper two floors of the portion facing Main street were converted from a court-room and county offices to various businesses and eventually remodeled

into apartments. The two retail spaces on the street level have housed a variety of businesses. The exterior of the building has remained basically unchanged except for minor alterations to the store fronts on the street level, the addition of two doors on the south side of the building, and a small number of windows added on the north and east side of the building during the remodeling for the apartments.

Kevin Miller's descriptions of the structure in his architectural study supply the most complete description of both the interior and exterior of the building:

> A unique feature of the opera house is its main entrance, which is not to the west, facing Main Street, but is located on the south facade facing Sutherland [Street]. The entrance is protected under a massive two story limestone arch, capped with a carved balustrade. Three limestone steps lead to the three wooden doors, which are set between two polished granite columns.
>
> The window openings, all of which have double hung windows, are treated differently at each level. The first floor windows are framed with stone jambs and arched stone lintels with detailed wooden molding. On the second floor, the windows feature horizontal lintels. The third floor windows are topped with arched lintels of brick and stone. Below the limestone cornice is a variety of brick detail work . . . while above it is a metal mansard roof. A stone gable exists above the south entrance. . . .
>
> Inside the main entrance, red carpet led up the stairs to the main lobby. Patrons either entered one of the five arched entrances of the curved wall to the parquet seating . . . or followed the red carpet stairways to the balcony. . . . The parquet floor, or main level of the theater, gently slopes down towards the stage. The individual wooden seats were connected with iron grill arm rests.
>
> The walls were painted blue and beige, with a rose and leaf pattern of red and green, which extended onto the ceiling. Darkly stained wainscotting complimented the light walls. A yellow sunburst completed the ceiling's decorations.
>
> Above the proscenium opening is a hand painted mural depicting a Kansas landscape of blue skies, buffalo and Indian teepees. On each side of the opening were large advertisements of local businesses. Private box seat areas with red velvet curtains were also located on each side of the stage.
>
> The colorful main curtain showed a boy fishing on the bank of a pond. . . . The main curtain opened to reveal a red velvet curtain that matched the seats and the curtains

of the private boxes. Bordering the stage, boxes, and along the balcony are ornate turnplate metal ornamentations.

The first balcony level again has a curved wall with arched entrances, leading into the seating area. . . . The seating area, running parallel with the curved wall, consists of eight rows of seats extending the width of the building. From the balcony level lobby, one could enter two arched openings into stairways leading to the gallery level. . . . The gallery, the least expensive viewing area, contained no seats but instead deep steps that the patrons could sit on during the performances. The gallery front ran parallel with the curved wall (13–16).

Figure 5. Sutherland St. Facade, McPherson Opera House, 1992 (Miller 60)

Charles L. Hall, a professor of architecture at Kansas State University, wrote an article entitled "Romanesque Architecture of the Plains" which featured the McPherson Opera House. This article is a very detailed account of the building's exterior. Hall described the building as a "large Romanesque style structure . . . approximately 130 feet long, 35

feet wide, and 40 feet high. The roof is steeply pitched in a mansard effect for several feet and then becomes a flat tar roof." His description of the grand entrance on the south facade are supportive of Miller's description. Hall continues with a description of the remaining portions of the building's exterior appearance:

> The exterior walls are of red brick and limestone and are topped by a stone cornice. A horizontal band of cut stone separates the first and second floors and a protruding band of brick on the south and stone on the west separates the second and third floors. Brick pilasters vertically divide the west facade into three symmetrical sections and the south facade into eight sections, some of them of unequal size. Each brick pilaster terminates above the roof line with a unique brick and stone pinnacle. . . .
>
> On the west a flat-roofed porch overhangs the sidewalk on the first floor level and shelters the entrance. An arched stone design centered on the west facade encloses the windows on the second and third floors. A stone gable similar to the one on the south is located over the arched design at the roof line. At the very bottom of the gable raised stone letters spell out OPERA HOUSE (12-D).

The interior of the building has received major alterations over the years. However, most of the theatre's original floor plan was left alone and those elements that were altered can be discerned upon careful observation of the various remodelings. The proscenium of the stage frames a 25 x 25 foot arched opening. The stage floor is slightly raked and is 40 feet deep and 50 feet wide. Originally the stage had twelve complete sets of scenery (Republican 23 November 1888) including drops flats, wings, and borders (Woods & Starr 2). "There are four set of trip grooves at the height of 18 feet, and the gridiron is 40 feet from the stage level. . . . The house is lighted by electricity and the stage has four sets of border lights besides side and foot lights (Republican 1 March 1901)." Dressing rooms were under the stage and originally access could be gained only from the house, a stage door located along an alley

to the east of the structure, or through a tunnel connecting the building with a nearby hotel.[63]

Figure 6. Main St. Facade, McPherson Opera House, Original (Miller 54)

The Main Street side of the structure has two store front properties on the street level and a series of six apartments on the second and third floors of the building. These apartments were created in the 1930's (Woods & Starr 4) from the space of the six original offices. Shortly

after the opera house opened the county rented the upper two floors for offices and a courtroom. The original distribution of office space is recounted in the book, The McPherson Opera House, A Prairie Landmark by Cindy Mines:

> The courtroom on the third floor of the new opera house was large and well-lighted and had an excellent view of the city and surrounding countryside. Also on the third floor was the office of the clerk of district court, where the commissioners met. The lower floors were used by county officials. The most infamous space, however, was the basement, which served as a dungeon-like jail (22-23).

The offices and commercial space were completely separate from the theatre section of the building. A door located between the two commercial properties of the street level opened onto a stairway which serviced the offices on the upper two floors. The lobbies for the three levels of theatre seating are raised half a story above the corresponding level of the commercial/office section of the building.

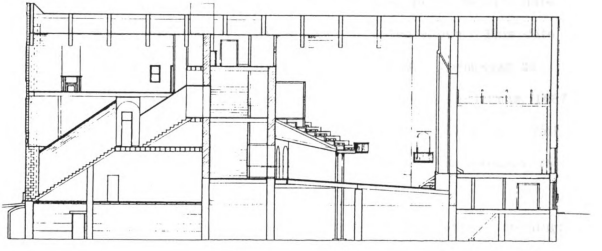

Figure 7. Cross Section, McPherson Opera House, 1992 (Miller 59)

Opening. E. H. Heithecker[64], manager of the new opera house had originally booked the Emma Abbott Grand English Opera Co. to stage the building's first attraction (Republican 22 June 1888) but the group was forced to cancel the performance due to the death of the star's husband (Republican 11 January 1889). Upon receiving the news of Emma Abbott's cancellation, Heithecker traveled to Topeka (Democrat 11 January 1889) and secured the Modoc Club of Topeka to fill the vacated performance date with a production of The Chimes of Normandy, or the Belles of Corneville (Republican 25 January 1889).

The opening of the McPherson Opera House had been promised for at least three different dates, the earliest having been with construction scheduled to commence in the spring of 1887(Freeman 26 November 1886). Construction did not take place at that time and work was then scheduled to "commence on the new opera house October 1. This statement comes from the Secretary of the company and can be relied on (Republican 2 September 1887)." Construction failed to take place on that date as well but was commenced on April 6, 1888 as noted above. This date presumed that the building could "be ready by December (Democrat 22 June 1888)." The opening was then nudged cautiously to Christmas, 1887 (Republican 23 November 1888), then shifted to "January 13 without fail (Republican 14 December 1888)," and eventually to Monday, January 28, 1889.

Mines creatively reconstructed the events of that January opening:

> Finally, after three years of waiting, it was opening night. While the men got the team of horses ready for the trip to see the new opera house, the women excitedly heated curling irons over kerosene lamps and donned their most fashionable flannel or wool dresses. In honor of the occasion, they slipped on their finest cloaks, silk mufflers and kid gloves to protect them from the cold that January

> evening in 1889. . . .
>
> The opera house had been finished just days before the Monday night opening, and few had yet been inside the massive double doors that were framed by polished granite columns and colored glass. Holding up their heavy skirts, the ladies alighted carefully from their wagons and carriages at the corner of Main and Sutherland. They stepped onto the wooden boardwalk surrounding the opera house and climbed the stairs through the arched entryway.
>
> They were not disappointed. A red carpet led straight ahead to a grand stairway. . . .
>
> Those in the audience studied their programs and waited for the curtain to rise on "The Chimes of Normandy." . . . From the minute Serpolette entered the stage until the last curtain call, the audience was captivated by the cast of more than 40 actors and actresses (15-17).

The evening was a success in every way. Receipts at the box office on opening night were $900 (Democrat 1 February 1889). The writer who covered the event for the Republican had praise for the managers, the company, the company's principals, the company's chorus, the company's costumes and staging, and the audience. Special notice was given to the quality of the building and the importance of the presence of such a facility being in McPherson:

> The persons that conceived the erection and completion of this building deserve a great amount of praise from the people of McPherson, there being no finer, with the possible exception of one, in the state. The acoustic properties of the house are all that could be desired, it being no trouble to hear in any part of the hall without any great effort on the part of the speaker.
>
> McPherson will now be visited by the better class of entertainments, barn stormers will have to hunt new fields. The opening was a grand success in every particular, both audience and performers being fully satisfied (1 February 1889).

The evening must not have gone as well for all in attendance. In the same issue a cited above the following also appeared:

> Parties who attended the opening of the new opera house request that the hoodlums in the gallery be not allowed to throw anything heavier that fifteen pounds on the heads of those below. We understand that to be the limit in Topeka the standard there being a Topeka girl's rubber shoe which weighs about that much.

Future. McPherson was proud of the new opera house and proud of those who built it. Within two weeks of the opening, Heithecker had been visited by managers from two theatrical companies who wanted to make arrangements for their companies to play the McPherson Opera House. The February 8 issue of the Republican ran notice that Blind Boone would play on the 15th. He had been to McPherson's opera hall on numerous occasions and would continue to play McPherson well into the 20th century. "Just the plain Comedian, Willard Simms" played the opera house three weeks after opening night (Republican 15 February 1889) and was followed by the Republican convention and Prof. Morris' Canine Paradox complete with 25 trained dogs.

In March the offerings at the end of the month turned more political as the "Peoples' Ticket" held a political convention. They had a full house and McPherson entered into the women's suffrage movement in grand style with the "eminent lecturer, Mrs. Zerelda G. Wallace (Republican 29 March 1889)."

The highlight of the spring's entertainment was the scheduled performance of Miss Clara Louise Kellogg on May 15. The Republican made special note to inform the readers that it was costing Heithecker $300 to bring the celebrated singer to McPherson (10 May 1889). The highlight for the local citizens however, was the commencement of the high school seniors (Republican 17 May 1889). It was the first of many yearly school commencements.

The summer continued to bring performances into the opera house. This was highly uncommon due the extreme high temperatures on the plains from June through September. The Mikado was presented on the evening of July 4 by home talent to raise money for the construction of

a bandstand in the park. It was popular enough for a repeat engagement on the 24th of July but only after the gentlemen involved had been polled as to their "availability of repeating the performance (Republican 19 July 1889)." In September a second Gilbert and Sullivan operetta was staged. The Guild of the Episcopalian Church presented home talent in H.M.S. Pinafore, or The Lass that Loved a Sailor (Republican 20 September 1889).

The opera house was well on its way as the center of entertainment for the town and county. It would be the location for church festivals and State Sunday School Association conventions, musical recitals and band concerts, minstrel shows and the Merry Minstrel Maids, trained bears and trained dogs, touring companies and home talent.

By August of 1889 four railroads crossed through McPherson, bringing to the growing town new settlers to help calm the rough prairie town, new merchandise from the east to help them believe they were truly becoming a civilized land, and new touring companies who had for years been unknown to the small Kansas towns, now drawn in by the lure of the McPherson Opera House.

The founders of McPherson had carefully constructed a plan for the development of their town. During the seventeen years from its founding until the opening of the McPherson Opera House, they consistently and intentionally worked at seeing their plan to fruition. From selecting its central location as county seat to attracting railroads to their county in the center of the state, and ultimately in acquiring desirable businesses and institutions to aid in achieving confirmation as the site of the state's capital, the leaders of McPherson seized opportunities for the expansion of their plan. Although the attempt to become the new capital

site failed. McPherson succeeded in achieving many advantages often provided only to towns of greater size and in urban settings. The McPherson Opera House was one of those advantages resulting from the long range planning by six men overtaken with "town site fever."

CHAPTER FOUR

GARDEN CITY, KANSAS

Garden City is located in the southwest portion of the state, approximately 65 miles from both the Colorado border to the west and the Oklahoma border to the south. It is the county seat of Finney County and in 1994 the population of the town was estimated at slightly more than 24,000.

Background

Santa Fe Trail Connections. Present day Garden City is located on the northern bank of the Arkansas River; a fact that dominantly influenced its founding. Historically the geographic location was not highly sought after by humans for anything other than the vast herds of antelope and buffalo that once roamed the expansive Kansas prairies and as open grazing for Texas cattlemen. Mapmakers beginning as early as 1823 (and more commonly in the 1840s and 1850s) labeled this area as part of the Great American Desert (Hope 10). One author of the local history alluded to the responses of early explorers in reference to the land and climate in the following:

> Early visitors to the area stayed long enough only to mutter a few discouraging words. In 1541, Coronado and his men crossed the High Plains in search of Quivira, the legendary city of gold. Instead they found nomadic Indians and villages of straw huts in what is thought to be present-day Kansas. An Indian had led them there, hoping they would starve to death on the way. No gold, no slaves, it was a land where they could see sky between the legs of a buffalo and march several thousand strong without denting the grass. Coming from a semiarid land himself, Coronado noted the

> agricultural possibilities of the area; but he had not traveled across an ocean for farmland. Kansas was not Peru. The Spanish were not interested (Hope 9-10).

During the next three hundred years, this area of Kansas was traversed and exchanged by many different nationalities including the native tribes of the Comanche, Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Pawnee, Osage, and Kansas (Zornow 14 -15 & 37-38). The natural boundary formed by the Arkansas River allowed for the area on either side of the river to be controlled by France and Spain,[65] the United States and Spain, the United States and Mexico, and the United States and Texas. When Texas became a state in 1850, both sides of the river were finally owned by the United States (Directory 15).[66]

As the Santa Fe Trail was established in the early 1820s, the Arkansas River became an important landmark for about half of the distance of the trail within the state. Once travelers reached the Arkansas River[67] they continued to follow the river through its valley for the remainder of the approximate 220 miles of travel within Kansas.

It is in this southwest region of Kansas that the "Santa Fe Trail split into two great divisions---the Cimarron Cut-off or Desert Route; and the Mountain branch, also called the Bent's Fort Cut-off (Simmons 116)." It was the half-way point between Independence, Missouri and Santa Fe New, Mexico.

The Cimarron Cut-off was the more popular, shorter route but also contained more possibilities for Indian attacks and fewer resources for water. The Mountain branch was 100 miles longer but contained fewer water problems and Indian worries. In a presentation to the Rotary Club of Garden City, local historian Ben Grimsley described the Mountain branch in the following:

> The jump from Dodge City to Bents Fort was all open territory and the favorite hunting grounds of the Cheyennes, the Pawnees and the favorite robbing area of those "gangsters of the plains," the Comanches. Countless buffaloes roamed this area. We find estimates on the number of buffalo from fifteen to fifty million, possibly the figure seventeen million is used more than any other (Grimsley 58).

The Mountain branch was favored during "only three periods---the Mexican War, the Civil War, and during the last days of the trail when the Cimarron Cutoff was bypassed by the railroad (Brown 108)." It is the latter of the above three periods that brought about the establishment and development of Garden City.

Garden City would eventually be located along the trail another 30 miles beyond the Mountain branch cut-off to the west, northwest. Although the trail was allowing for would-be settlers to journey through the lands of southwest Kansas on their way west, it wasn't until after the completion of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad[68] in late fall of 1872 that any settlers were to appear in the area. The railroad was the only reason for the few who did relocate in the area to have been there.[69] It would take more than a river and a railroad line to encourage a migration of any size to take place in the area.

Settling of Town Site. In the opening chapter of her book Garden City, Dreams in a Kansas Town, Holly Hope proceeded with a description of the area apropos to this study in which she states that "this land and climate have historically offered the farmer and the entrepreneur a thin margin of hope the other side of prudence and provided . . . [a] glimpse of the vagaries of nature and the stubbornness of the human spirit blinded by a vision (9)." In other words, there wasn't much to encourage anyone to pull up roots and relocate to southwestern Kansas unless he

was involved in a business that could take advantage of wide open prairies with unpredictable weather and was among the most focused individuals to have ever had a dream about building a life in the southwest.

The first to take advantage of the open prairies in southwest Kansas were cattlemen. The railroad had greatly enhanced the cattle industry but the same railroad also brought about the short reign of its supremacy. With inducements of cheap land, the railroads began to transport the cattlemen's nightmare: homesteaders sectioning off the land and erecting fences across the thousands of acres of open grazing lands.

In her book, Conquest of Southwest Kansas, Leona Howard Blanchard describes that year when the cattlemen's nightmare became a reality:

> The spring of 1878 opened with plentiful moisture. As far as the eye could reach the short-grass plains were covered with a carpet of green, unmarked by roads and highways. Not a sign of civilization except the iron rails of the Santa Fe railroad. Not a tree or a shrub was here to break the vision, nothing in sight but the great herds of Texas cattle grazing at will in this vacant "back yard" of Kansas settlement.
>
> But the eyes of the cowboys who guarded the herds began anxiously to watch the distant horizons, for they had heard the rumors of coming settlers. As the days passed, sure enough, tiny dust clouds appeared far to the east and grew, and soon they could discern covered wagons lumbering slowly, but steadily advancing over the maze of cattle trails. As the hours passed they could hear the shouts of the drivers above the creaking wagons urging their sweating horses or ox teams and tired domestic cattle toward the valleys of the Pawnee or Arkansas rivers. And they could see written across the canvas tops in crude letters, "WESTERN KANSAS OR BUST" (55-56).

The settlers had arrived and they were not dismayed by the cattlemen or the vast horizons without a single tree casting a shadow. These early homesteaders were optimistically looking toward a future when vast acres of grain fields would replace the buffalo grasses presently bowed to the southern winds. And to those who were without property

in the east, the "opportunity to settle upon government land and acquire fee simple title to a quarter section of land for a mere living upon it (Blanchard 57)"[70] was inducement enough to forge out a new beginning in an otherwise unfriendly environment.

Beginning in the spring of 1878 "a few men, mostly from Sterling, Kansas, in Rice County,[71] decided to start a town farther west on the frontier (Kearsey 50)." With the hope of a new life, the promise of inexpensive land, and the lush green vista provided by the unusual good fortune of an above average rainfall, the homesteaders began to descend upon the lands surrounding the Arkansas River as it meandered through the southwest corner of Kansas.

The first settlement on the Garden City site was by two brothers, William D. and James R. Fulton. They moved from Sterling in March and each filed claims on a quarter of the same section of land. A month later, the future son-in-law of William Fulton, John A. Stevens (the man eventually responsible for building the opera house), moved from Sterling as well and filed claim to the third quarter section. In the summer of 1878, a Mr. Corse filed a timber claim on the final quarter of the section. With the arrival of C. J. Jones the following spring and his acquisition of the Corse quarter section, the two most integral players were in place for the development of Garden City.[72]

The site selected by the Fultons for their new town was located in the unorganized county of Sequoyah[73] which "was the third county on the Colorado line on the west and the third county from the Indian Territory on the south (Directory 19)." Garden City was platted by the Garden City Town Company on the 8th of April, 1879 and was filed at Dodge City, Ford County, to which at that time Sequoyah County was

attached (Kearsey 40).

Originally the town went by the name of Fulton, even though those sharing the name did not whole heartily approve. During the summer of 1878 the name was officially changed when Mrs. William Fulton experienced a chance run-in with a tramp passing through the settlement. George W. Finnup, a young boy living in the town at the time, recalled the story of the acquisition of the name:

> Garden City was named by Mrs. Wm. D. Fulton. She kept a small hotel on the east side of Main Street. In the summer of 1878, a tramp who was resourceful came along and asked Mrs. Fulton what they called the town. She told him that they had not decided on a name as of yet. There were no trees but the buffalo grass was nice and green. He said, "Why not call it Garden City, as it looks so pretty around here." That evening when the men came in from work or hunting, she told them about the conversation with the "bright" tramp, and they all said the name sounded good; that they like the idea of calling it "garden city", altho there were no gardens here; all those things were to come later on (Kearsey 48).

Holly Hope, a more contemporary local historian, stated that her hometown "was named out of unabashed optimism (Hope 9)."

Whether it was the praises of a tramp looking for a hand-out or the optimistic hopes of people anticipating a successful venture, the name stuck and eventually the area did "green up." One reason for the greening of Garden City was C. J. "Buffalo" Jones. The first issue of The Garden City Paper printed the following:

> Last week, C. J. Jones shipped a carload of trees from Sterling to this place and donated them to the town to decorate the streets with. If the desert does not blossom . . . it will not be his fault, as he is doing all that can be done to aid the town (3 April 1879).

As both Jones and Stevens became more involved with real estate in Garden City, the planting of trees along the streets continued.

"Everything planted that first year yielded bountifully, and the

country gave out every promise to those desiring to make permanent settlement (Blanchard 58-59)." However, the second year, nature reverted back to a more normal showing and the crops failed miserably. It was time for the second step of the greening of Garden City, the addition of canals for irrigation.

The first canal was dug in 1879. George W. Finnup relates the steps taken to build that first ditch:

> Landis and Hollinger of Sterling started in the spring of 1879 a General Store with Mr. Wilkinson as manager, and a lumber yard with Mr. Armentrout as manager. 1879 was a very dry year. Most of the settlers had to leave. Very few of the early settlers had much money. Mr. Armentrout was a very active man, and he induced Landis and Hollinger to build a Ditch to help hold the people here, which they did in the latter part of 1879. This was later known as the Garden City Ditch, being west of town and its branches running through town north and south of the railroad. This idea led to one ditch after another being built in this locality, and meant much in attracting people to come here, and brought some leading pioneer farmers and the growing of alfalfa and later to secure the only Beet Sugar factory in Kansas for Garden City (Kearsey 50).

Those early canals were not the most dependable but did direct a great deal of interest to farming in the Garden City area. By 1886 "the area capable of being irrigated by these canals [was] more than 300 square miles (Directory 38)."[74] But the crude ditches could not compete with the major droughts that plagued the area in 1881-82 and again in 1887-89. However, in that five year period between the two droughts is wherein lies the story of Garden City the boom town and the beginnings of the Stevens Opera House.

Biographical Information. Two men played very significant roles in the development of Garden City, first by attracting possible homesteaders to the community and secondly by guaranteeing the success of Garden City

through their real estate developments. These two men were C. J. "Buffalo" Jones and John A. Stevens. A real estate war of sorts developed between them; both wanting the business district of Garden City to expand toward their residential additions (Kearsey 51). Both men had the prosperity of Garden City well in sight as they continued to out produce the other in everything from trees offered as incentives when selling residential lots to land gifts offered to the county for public buildings. The city's acquisition of an opera house resulted from such one-up-manship during a town council election. The promise of building or not building an opera house depending on who was elected was the leverage that finally swung the election in favor of John Stevens.

Biographical information on Stevens is located in the section addressing the opera house. The information concerning Jones follows.

Probably most well known for the inspiration for Zane Gray's book The Last of the Plainsman, C. J. "Buffalo" Jones was also the man most responsible for the development of Garden City, Kansas. From his arrival to the site from Sterling, Kansas, he constantly worked toward securing advantages for the town and the people who lived there. A local newspaper man at the time of the 50th anniversary celebration for Garden City described him in the following biographical section taken from the Garden City News:

> He had dreams of a beautiful and growing Garden City; his whole heart was in his work as a town builder; he always strived to construct for the future; laid his plans for railroads and irrigation ditches, but often saw the fruits of these labors garnered by others. You will perhaps say that after all it was the mighty dollar he was after and so it was to a certain extent, but with this difference: He was willing to put in two dollars for every one that he took out, if he thought it was to the interest of the town and the country (Norris "Half a Century").

Originally from Tazewell County, Illinois, Jones left home at the age of 21 to enter Wesleyan University at Bloomington, Illinois. He spent two years there and in the mid-60s left Illinois and moved to Kansas,

> settling first at Troy in Doniphan County. There on January 20, 1869, Mr. Jones was married to Martha J. Walton. In April 1872 accompanied by his wife and small child, he again took up the westward trek, settling first at Sterling; and in 1878 continued to the plains of Western Kansas, stopping at Garden City (Kearsey 15).

As stated earlier, Jones was one of the four men who purchased the original 320 acre section that comprised the town site of Garden City. From his original 160 acres, Jones was able to develop a large business based on the sale of residential lots. That money was repeatedly reinvested into the community in various undertakings over the years.

Early during his days as a land developer, Jones "shipped a carload of trees from Sterling to this place and donated them to the town to decorate the streets . . . . Such energy and knowledge as he possesses is invaluable to a new country (Paper 3 April 1879)." Others in town were undoubtedly impressed by his willingness to give to the town and his ability to convince others of his desires. From that point on he was regarded as the "leading spirit of the community, and is doing much toward settling up the country (Paper 8 May 1879)."

He spent the rest of 1879 building a new residence on his farm (Paper 3 April 1879), worked at his job as station agent (Paper 22 May 1879), broke ground for a new hotel (Paper 3 April 1879), and invited the governor out for a hunting vacation (Kearsey 230).

In 1883 Jones was instrumental in the United States Land Office being moved from Larned, 112 miles to the east, to Garden City. That move was crucial; people "from all over Southwest Kansas [came] to file on and make proof on land; also contests, and naturally [it was] a great

advertisement for Garden City, giving it much publicity (Kearsey 49)." Jones considered the move of the land office to Garden City as

> one of his greatest successes . . . and he had the laudable ambition to become one of its officers, and here met one of the greatest disappointments of his life. He was given the choice of either having the office in Lakin and being appointed register, or getting the office for Garden City and foregoing the appointment, but could not have both, so without hesitation he told the government to locate the office here and forget his personal desires, as it would be for the greater good (Norris "Half a Century").

During the same year Garden City was also made a city of third class with C. J. Jones as the first mayor (Lethem 159).

In addition to having been among the most vital individuals involved in developing Garden City as a new town, Jones also served the political life of the community. He was selected as a delegate to the state Republican convention and from there a delegate to the national convention held in Chicago in June of 1884 (Irrigator 19 June 1884). In October of 1884 he was elected to the Kansas House of Representatives and served one term for the people of Finney County (Irrigator 6 November 1884).

His most notable influence on Garden City would be the contributions he made in the development of real estate. He started early in the establishment of Garden City as a city destined to become a major economic center of southwestern Kansas. He broke ground for a new hotel in 1879, and from that point on was busy in some aspect of the city's development until the boom began to die down in 1887. In 1884, he established a land development partnership with C. O. Chapman (Irrigator 26 June 1884) which was of the most successful in the county. He made the original contact with a company responsible for building a bridge across the Arkansas River and although problems arouse with the firm,

Jones continued working with the project until it was completed (Irrigator 15 January, 25 June 1885, & Sentinel 9 December 1885). He was responsible for the citizens' support of a bond issue for a school building (Irrigator 2 & 9 April 1885). His erection of the Marble Block, complete with a two story stone business building and the addition of a three story hotel was perhaps the most lasting mark made on the downtown area.[75] He donated the lot for the county courthouse, had the structure built (Irrigator 6 August 1885) and later donated rooms to be used as a jail until a suitable space could be built (Sentinel 20 January 1886). On two separate occasions he offered major savings to individuals wanting residential lots in both Garden City and nearby Hartland by holding discount sales for his properties (Sentinel 5 August & 25 November 1885 & Irrigator 12 September 1885). Jones was instrumental in the negotiations for a number of railroads planning to build lines to Garden City (Blanchard 328) and was successful in having a road built through the sand hills south of town (Sentinel 9 December 1885). He continued to donate trees to be planted on the streets of the city, bringing in carloads of them from around the state and from neighboring Colorado (Herald 31 March 1883 & Irrigator 26 June 1884). During the years beyond the scope of this study, Jones invested heavily in the irrigation development of the area, traveled extensively in Africa and the Antarctic in search of animals for American zoos, spent time as a game warden at Yellowstone, filmed animals on the plains of Africa, and homesteaded for a short time in Oklahoma (Norris "Half a Century").

"Despite the fact that . . . Jones lost thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars in numerous investments and ventures in and around Garden City, he was never embittered (Norris "Half a

Century")." He was very devoted to the betterment of the town and the lives of the people who shared it with him and for those who would share in its benefits in the future.

The nick-name "Buffalo" came from his preservation of his name-sake (Lethem 162). "Killing was repulsive to him, and seeing that the extinction of the buffalo was inevitable, he smashed his rifle over a wagon wheel and vowed to save the species (Norris "Half a Century"). He made several trips into Oklahoma and Texas with the intent of bringing back buffalo calves. After a few disastrous attempts, he discovered a method that was safe for the animals and productive to his enterprise. He eventually developed a herd on his farm outside of Garden City (Lethem 162) and over the years established herds in Yellowstone, a buffalo ranch near the Grand Canyon, and a herd near Salt Lake City. Today, descendants from the herd of buffalo he established on his ranch outside Garden City are still roaming the prairies in the area.

Although Jones and J. A. Stevens were business adversaries for most of their lives, "these two factions were friendly rivals (Kearsey 63)." Just prior to his death in Topeka in 1919, Jones wrote the following of Stevens:

> John Stevens and I shared many ups and downs with a small number of sturdy pioneers. Some of our achievements will stand out as 'footprints in the sands of time'. Some of the landmarks of the town are the Stevens block, the Buffalo block, and the thousands of trees we planted, and the hundreds of miles of irrigation ditches that were built.

His daughter Olive added to the letter:

> Papa is very feeble now, and can hardly stand alone, and it is only a question of time until he goes on that 'last adventure'. He has had a wonderful life and enjoyed to the full the glorious time he had. He is quite ready to go on and meet his old friends over there. His thoughts and conversation are largely of John Stevens, Frederick Finnup, the

> Fultons and John Biggs, and others whose lives were interwoven with his own (Blanchard 262).

Newspapers. One-time editor of the Garden City Herald, Hamer Norris introduced the section on the newspapers of southwest Kansas in Blanchard's book with the following:

> The newspapers have played an important and far-reaching part in the development and settlement of Finney county and all southwest Kansas. They came with the pioneer and covered wagon, and in many instances preceeded the church and the school. They were loyal to their communities and local institutions, and although at times they battled for mere existence they ever remained optimistic, visioning a brighter future, bidding all to hope for better days. Blizzards and drought might come and cause loss, hot winds might parch and blister, yet they continued to point out the silver lining to the clouds; they recorded the joys and sorrows of the pioneers; they stood rejoicing by the cradle, they stood at the altar of the bride and mingled their tears with the bereaved at the open grave; they helped the merchants fight their battles and loyally stood by party convictions, and were ever steadfast in support of all that was moral and right (Norris 174).

The newspapers listed below are those that were published in Garden City during the years referred to in this section of the dissertation. The dates listed are approximate dates of issue. Those newspapers with open ended dates continued publication beyond the cut off date of this section of the dissertation, that being one year after the opening of the Stevens Opera House.

The Garden City Paper: April 3, 1879-October 23, 1879.

The Garden City Optic: November 13, 1880.

The Garden City Irrigator: June 29, 1882-1887.

The Garden City Herald: March 17, 1883-1884; 1887.

The Garden City Sentinel: July 30, 1884-.

The Garden City Cultivator & Herdsman: May, 1884-September, 1884.

The Garden City Daily Irrigator: September 7, 1886-.

The Paper was the first newspaper to be published in the county, one year and one month after the first land claims had been filed. The editors were Kirk Himrod and Amos Baim and in the first issue they thanked the citizens of Garden City for the patronage already shown and assured those who had advertised that the Paper would "always endeavor to make it profitable to them in the future (3 April 1879)." The Paper shut down the presses seven months later as it had "succumbed to infantile paralysis or pernicious enemia, or whatever deadly disease attacked the pioneer papers (Norris "Half a Century").

Garden City was without a newspaper from November of 1879 until the Irrigator began publication in June of 1882. Major portions of the 1882 issues are missing. Thankfully there were a number of far-sighted local historians who secured the history of the city and the county through recollections of early settlers in the two volumes of the History of Finney County, Kansas.

According to the Directory of Finney County of 1886, the Irrigator was first "edited by Carr & Knight as a Republican paper" but by 1885 had changed hands and was then the "pioneer newspaper of southwestern Kansas, . . . thoroughly Democratic in politics (41)." O. O. Layne and Lyman Naugle became proprietors in 1885 and for a short period in 1886 released it in both a daily and a weekly edition (Directory 95-96).

The Herald was first established March 17, 1883 and published through 1884; it then began publication again for a short time in 1887 (Blanchard 177). Records indicate that there may have been two Heralds published. Other sources state that the Herald was also established April 24, 1886, and was published daily and weekly by the Herald Publishing Company. Mr. J. R. Graham was editor of the Herald (Directory 42 & 96;

Blanchard 177)." The Herald was a Republican publication, "but not blindly partizan (Directory 42)."

The Sentinel began publication as a weekly newspaper during the last week in July, 1884 with Joe H. Borders as editor and proprietor (Sentinel 30 July 1884). In early January of 1886, this Republican newspaper began publication by the Sentinel Publishing Company (of which John A. Stevens was treasurer). During 1886 it was also published as a daily and was described as "the leading daily in western Kansas . . . [with] a large general and local circulation. It is conducted with the enterprise and push characteristic of the west, and is doing excellent work in developing the resources of Finney county (Directory 42)."

The Cultivator & Herdsman started as a monthly "agricultural paper devoted to the interests of the farmers of southwestern Kansas (Directory 96)" and eventually changed to a weekly publication. Although it had major impact on the agricultural concerns of the county and southwest Kansas, it had minimal influence on the topic covered in this dissertation.[76]

Bundle of Sticks was a publication printed in Garden City by the Odd Fellows and was distributed as the order's journal for members in Kansas and Colorado (Sentinel 28 January 1885). It was published from February 15, 1885 through September 15, 1885 (Blanchard 177).

Railroads. The editors of the various Garden City newspapers were confident about the place that Kansas held in the entire process of national transportation links and they were continuously making their readers aware of that fact. The following was recorded in the July 7, 1886 issue

of the Sentinel:

> In no state in the Union do we see the activity in railroad building that is to be witnessed in Kansas. There is scarcely a county in the state but what is voting bonds to some important road. A week does not pass that a bond election is not held. Indeed, they are of almost daily occurrence. Great Eastern trunk lines are building into Kansas from all the important points on the Missouri River. The managers of eastern roads realize that Kansas is to be in a few years the center of an immense population, and they are anxious to secure the carrying trade for this splendid agricultural empire. . . . The railroad companies see in this state a magnificent prospect for the future and they find in the tireless enterprise of her people an encouragement for making permanent improvements here which they are quick to appreciate. Kansas within the next ten years will be gridironed with railroads to an extent known in no other state. Every city will have the amplest means of communication with every district east, west, north and south.

However, unlike the settling of Olathe and McPherson, the railroads arrived in western Kansas before the settlers. "The route established by the Santa Fe Trail early suggested the feasibility of establishing a grand trunk railway essentially over the same route which the instincts of pioneer trade had already selected (Blanchard 320)." With the completion of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad through southwest Kansas in 1872, that early idea became a reality. In her book, Garden City: Dreams in a Kansas Town, Holly Hope states that it was the construction of the transcontinental railroad that encouraged the settling of the vast empty regions of the great prairies.

> Between 1862 and 1882 more homestead claims were filed in Kansas than in any other state in the country. Eastern Kansas claimed the first settlers; western Kansas got the latecomers---the immigrants, the gamblers, the desperate. Only the powerful rhetoric of the railroad pamphlets and the promise of cheap land could lure folks to make this land swept of trees their destination. With the stroke of a pen the Great American Desert became the Garden (10-11)."

For five years the region had very little settlement; "there was no money in operating the road at that time for several years afterwards

(Blanchard 321)." However, once the people began moving to the southwest, the railroad figured greatly into bringing the speculative new homesteaders and land owners to Garden City.

The early Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad was "very ordinary . . . with small frame depots, very ordinary road bed and grade, and just a few ordinary trains of wood construction. The passenger cars were much smaller . . . [and] they had brakes on the end that turned by hand (Kearsey 49)." The depot in Garden City was completed in the late spring of 1879 (Paper 24 April 1879). As time progressed more and more improvements were made to the Garden City stop as well as to the cars that serviced the population. By the end of May the depot was complete as well as the a side-track, allowing for cars to be changed, dropped off, loaded and unloaded. By June the depot platform had been extended and new rails had been "put down for a considerable distance each side of Garden City (Paper 5 June 1879)."

As the town's population grew its needs for a larger depot with more services also grew. The talk of depot improvements continued in the press until the foundations for a new depot had been dug in October of 1885. "The main building is to be 30 feet square, two stories high with a bay window in front. A 90 foot shed will be added to the west end for baggage, express and freight (Irrigator 10 October 1885)."

That same depot that was being built in April of 1879, was still servicing the needs of the people in 1884. The Irrigator printed a number of notices asking for "better depot facilities, for the present building is entirely inadequate for our needs. It is of daily occurrence to see a larger pile of goods on the platform than can possibly be stored at the depot, and the ware room is full besides (Irrigator 24 April 1884)."

In the summer of 1885 the editor of the Irrigator had a conversation regarding the depot with the superintendent of the Santa Fe railroad (Irrigator 22 August 1885) and by early October work had commenced on a new depot.

As outlined in a grant of land that was transferred from the state to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, the railroad owned every odd number section on each side of roadbed for 10 miles (Kearsey 51). The land was originally given to the rail companies to assist in offsetting some of the construction and eventual maintenance costs of the roads. The railroads capitalized on this land, for in Finney County "these railroad lands were often the best lands in the inner valley along the Arkansas River and on the uplands. People locating on the railroad lands were closer to market than were those who settled farther . . . away (Larson 4)." The railroad also employed some of the early homesteaders determined to stay but who were financially unable to make it through the droughts. They would do section work for the railroads or walk the tracks, which entailed walking a certain number of miles of tracks on a regular basis, checking for signs of wear that might cause a derailment. Others were used to take care of the pumps at various water tanks. "The Santa Fe extended every reasonable inducement to get settlers interested in coming and in remaining in this region (Blanchard 325-326)."

Sometimes the settlers had to work hard to induce the railroad to work in their direction. The Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe owned the town site of neighboring Sherlock[77] and was determined to make Sherlock the county seat. However, Jones, Stevens and other citizens of Garden City were just as determined and were even more committed to the idea

that Garden City should be the county seat (Kearsey 32).

Weather appeared to be more of a problem for the railroads in western Kansas than it had been for those in the east and central parts of the state. Between the washouts and dust storms of the summer and blizzards in the winter months, delays were not uncommon and the locals learned to live with the inconvenience. In 1874 the railroad between Dodge City and Granada was closed for 21 days due to snow (Blanchard 322). The weather also played a major part in seasonal business. The cattle business had continued to flourish in spite of the homesteaders and "the Santa Fe [was] doing an immense business . . . in the transportation of cattle. About four trains per day passing through here bound east. This rush is caused through the uneasiness of the ranchers who want to get their stock away from the ranges before the blizzards set in (Irrigator 8 December 1886).

By 1885 other railways began to take an interest in the southwest. By that time the population had begun to grow and a boom was on the threshold. Many railroads promised to come although few actually completed the lines that promised to link Garden City with other destinations in the Midwest. "Several railroads have been surveyed through Finney county, and bonds voted by the citizens to help promote them, but they were never built and the bonds never issued. The surveyors and half-finished grades were abandoned by the promoters, and their story is almost forgotten (Blanchard 327)."

Among the first to take an interest in Garden City were rail lines from the north. The first was already in Concordia, Kansas and would link Garden City to the north central part of Kansas as well as central Nebraska. Another line was suggested that would connect "Garden City

to Denver direct (Irrigator 10 October 1885)." The "big one that got away" was the Nebraska, Garden City and Southwestern Railroad. The charter for this company was filed in Topeka with the Secretary of State on March 8, 1886. "It was to be built from Red Cloud, Nebraska, to the coal fields of Colorado, and Garden City was to be the most important intermediate point on the railroad (Blanchard 327)." The citizens of Garden City were very excited about the possibilities that this system would have offered. C. J. Jones ventured to New York "where he had been in conference with a number of prominent railroad officials (Irrigator 10 October 1885)."

The newspapers supported the various proposals to attract the railways to come through Garden City. In an attempt to entice the Kansas, Texas and Southwestern Railway, the Sentinel urged the citizens of Garden City to take action:

> Those interested in having another road come to this city should now be up doing. There is an opportunity to get the Kansas, Texas and Southwestern and to get it to embrace the present opportunity. As railroads are not always within the grasp of a city – an experience proves that as a rule, no people can afford to be indifferent when a company is proposing to build a line to them. Garden City needs another railroad and it can have it now if the people of Garden City and Finney County will take hold and make it an object to run the line here (16 June 1886).

The newspapers also were able to stay in touch with reality when it came to the railroad. Not all roads that were sought and filed charters to build through the city were to be completed. The editors of the local newspapers were constantly reminding the people to take advantage of as many opportunities as the railroads might bring. The Sentinel summarized it quite well with a short note in the January 6, 1886 issue: "There are now seven charters for new railroads which are to run through

this county. How many will be built?"

By the end of 1886 with the migration boom almost to its peak, the story of another railroad possibly coming to town didn't have near the impact it had a year earlier. "And still the railroads come. The latest is known as the Wellington, Anthony and Colorado Company (Irrigator 18 December 1886)." However the benefits of the railways to the Kansas towns were always important. The 1886 Directory of Finney County emphasized those benefits again: "If a road from the northeast can be secured, transportation charges would be cheapened through the competition which would result, and the farmer and merchant would both receive the benefit (39)."

Growth. In a 1962 study entitled Population Changes in Finney County, Kansas 1880-1958 Sara C. Larson stated four major factors that influenced population growth in the years 1880 to 1890:

> the abundance of cheap land, the ready access of southwestern Kansas by rail from the more populous East, the suitability of the new lands for crops and livestock without the arduous clearing of trees, and the possibility of ditch and shallow well irrigation in the inner Arkansas valley (3).

With all four of the above incentives in place by 1879, it took almost four years before any noticeable growth took place. "For some unaccountable reason, [Garden City] lacked the interest and bustle of the average western town (Sentinel 10 June 1885)."

Garden City was made a city of third class in 1883 (Lethem 159). Sequoyah County was reorganized into Finney County in 1884 with Garden City becoming county seat. Governor Glick appointed a census to be taken of the county in September of that year and the population was reported as 1569 (Kearsey 9).

The population of Garden City remained fairly constant at 250 from 1879 to 1883; by 1884 the number had almost doubled (Larson 6) and the residents and newspaper were talking boom town. The first reference to a boom was listed in the local newspapers in the fall of 1883 as the town prepared for one of the earlier migrations that would soon be flooding the area (Herald 3 November 1883).

With the spring of 1884 the migration was beginning to take on momentum and town was "full of land seekers (Irrigator 17 April 1884)." In addition to individuals seeking out the lands on their own, land speculators would also bring excursions groups through the area on special railroad cars. One of the largest such excursions to view Garden City was a group promised to be around 300 from Terre Haute, Indiana (Irrigator 29 May 1884). They had been promised free carriage hire and free entertainments consisting of a wild game hunt as incentives to make the trip. They arrived in a Pullman car "that President Arthur used on his trip to Yellowstone (Irrigator 3 July 1884)" and spent a number of days touring various land sites in the area. Although only about 40 actually made the trip, "many of them took claims, while others bought railroad land (Irrigator 20 November 1884)."

At the same time the city was making plans to host the group from Indiana, another group was already in town. They were a party of Swedish Lutherans from northern McPherson County and were:

> taken in charge by the ever present C. J. Jones, who found several locations for the whole party, some on public and some on railroad lands. They aim to establish a Swedish Lutheran colony, northwest of the city five or six miles. We welcome this important acquisition to our population, and can safely say no more desirable settlers could have been found (Irrigator 22 May 1884).

With the wave of settlers well on its way, the city was sure it

would reap the benefits of a large town and began to advertise as such:

> Garden City is growing rapidly, and is one of the most desirable places in the country to spend your life. We have two good churches and others will soon be built. Good schools will soon be one of our principal attractions, one of the best lot of citizens that have ever made up a town, and with the healthy climate, and an excellent hotel, there is no better place anywhere to live (Sentinel 27 August 1884).

By the end of 1885 a majority of the government land had been claimed, the town was expanding with new buildings going up almost daily and the population was speculated to reach between 3,000 and 5,000 during 1886. People were literally pouring into Garden City; "over 200 strangers arrived in this city Monday, and they will continue to come so long as Uncle Sam has an acre of land (Sentinel 11 November 1885)."

The town was not prepared for the numbers that had descended on it. Rooms for the prospective settlers were continually at a premium with all five hotels and the twenty-five boarding houses completely occupied (Sentinel 18 November 1885).[78]

The excursion trains kept coming, sometimes ten train cars at a time (Sentinel 16 September 1886). Others would continue further west to see what else was available but most prospective settlers disembarked from the trains to at least take a look at "the young famous . . . new prairie city (Kearsey 51)." In addition to those coming by train, those who wanted to transport their household items in wagons continued to use the trails of the cattlemen. "The canvas topped wagons arriving from the east are increasing in numbers every day. The bottom land near the river looks as though a small gray army were camped there (Irrigator 4 August 1886)."

The Irrigator warned of the continual onslaught of new immigrants on a fairly regular basis: "The people are coming and don't you forget

it. Already a rumbling is heard in the east and the advance guard is near at hand. Prepare for the great immigration this fall (Irrigator 14 August 1886)." And although some locals were tired of the constant progression of unfamiliar faces through their streets, most readily accepted the challenges that the hundreds of new people brought to the town. The editor of the Sentinel published the following as he reflected over the changes that had taken place in one year:

> The history of the town building in Kansas offers no parallel to the growth of Garden City, during the year that is just closing. . . . It was not a mining camp and yet gold and silver has been found here in abundance. Men have come from almost every state in the Union, and founded prosperous businesses, have opened productive farms, made pleasant homes and become in the mean time enthusiastic over profits of trade and productiveness of the farms (Sentinel 23 December 1885).

By the end of 1885 the city was boasting a "permanent population of 3,500 - 3,250 more than she claimed 12 months ago (Sentinel 23 December 1885)" and by mid-year of 1886 the numbers were up to 4,000 (Sentinel 2 June 1886).

As the city grew it became faced with the myriad of problems that face all developing towns. Garden City dealt with many including the need for schools, public halls, government buildings, prostitutes, sidewalks, street lamps, public health ordinances, saloons, roads, bridges, electricity, water works, telephones, and real estate development. The newspapers would print notices describing the problems or needs and eventually someone would carry through. Sometimes it would take only one mention of the problem, other times it would take months. In the case of a bridge over the Arkansas River to access the area south of it, an individual from the Kansas Lumber Company graciously offered to build the city a bridge at a minimal cost of $1,000 (Irrigator 15 January 1885).

After he built the bridge he then placed a toll on its use. The local business men tried to rent the bridge company. When they were refused they retaliated. A fund was established to cover the cost of tolls over the bridge and eventually they built their own road through the sand hills south of the river (Irrigator 25 June 1885).

Whenever the city's conscience dealt with the establishment of anything to do with real estate, two plans surfaced almost immediately; one from John A. Stevens and one from C. J. Jones. What was good for one of them surely must have been good for the other. They both donated land for a courthouse. Jones succeeded simply because he submitted his proposal first (Kearsey 9). They both brought train carloads of trees into the city to plant along the streets and on their respective residential lots (Irrigator 1 May 1884 & 26 June 1884). Both men were responsible for building large three and four story stone business blocks, complete with hotels built primarily from the sale of their residential lots (Kearsey 51). And both men had interests in either actively soliciting new homesteaders[79] or in assisting new businesses by becoming silent partners.[80] Jones was the political force behind having street cars in Garden City (Sentinel 16 December 1885) and Stevens spent many years on the city council where "he watches carefully the interests of the city and devotes much of his time to the affairs of the council (Sentinel 23 December 1885).

Needless to say there was a "rivalry between these two, and their efforts to out-do each other did much to boost the town (Blanchard 259-260)." During the boom years from 1885 to 1887 they each tried to maneuver the growth of the city toward their additions. Each accused the other of stacking the deck. Jones created a new street running at a

diagonal toward his residential addition and away from Main Street and Stevens' properties. This was the location for his Buffalo Hotel and marble block. When Stevens retaliated, Jones then tried to shift all blame on Stevens:

> Mr. Stevens bought a strip of land just west of the Buffalo Hotel, paying $1,500. He now owns the outlet to Grant Avenue, and intends to hold it to prevent any more buildings going up in that direction, and thus force the business to go to Main Street, where his property is. Signed, C. J. Jones (Blanchard 260).

Stevens had the final say in the matter when in 1886 he built the opera house block and in 1887 the adjoining Windsor Hotel. "However, Stevens never considered the opera house to be a business venture; he insisted the theatre was built to enhance the image of the city thereby attracting more settlers to the area (Irrigator 6 March 1886)."

During the summer of 1885, the Irrigator published a lengthy article entitled "The Grand Review. The Growth of Garden City, Finney County In Southwestern Kansas." The following is a partial list of what the town claimed as its own:

> a boom, 3 hotels, 2 dentists, 4 doctors, several groceries, no loafers, one stationary store, one post office, one tailor shop, one cemetary, two undertakers, three restaurants, 13 lawyers, two drug stores, three boss newspapers, a surplus of dogs, two coal dealers, two ice venders, a limited number of statesmen, about 2,000 souls, one express office, three butcher shops, one railroad depot, 4 livery stables, two church buildings, 5 church societies, two jewelry establishments, two furniture stores, one fine brass band, one photographer, several confectioneries, one G.A.R. post, two barber shops, two rattling good banks, three dry good stores, one Masonic Lodge, one telegraph office, and lots of solid men, two Sunday schools, no vacant houses, two blacksmith shops, carpenter shops innumerable, three town halls, oodles of pretty babies, the best people on the Earth, one Odd Fellows lodge, one K of P lodge, one county building, two shoe shops, host of sweet pretty girls, many beautiful residences, an able bar, two billiard saloons, one sewing machine agent, one harness and saddle shop, four general stores, one Chinese laundry, 16 boarding houses, one government land office, about 30 land agents, several lemonade stands, two bakeries,

> three dressmakers, three lumber yards, one concrete manufacturer, one grain and feed store, one broom factory, five insurance agents, one civil engineer, the prettiest town in the west, lots of room for energetic men, no use for loafers, no drunkards, no whiskey shops, three first class painters, the best of society, wide streets and avenues, hundreds of town lots for sale, four ice cream saloons, one shooting gallery, two piano and organ instructors, the largest skating rink in southwest Kansas, two hardware and implement houses, its full share of mechanics and laborers, and more shade trees than any town on the Santa Fe (10 June 1885).

One year later the Irrigator printed a similar article but listed only the number of businesses and professional men that had been granted licenses since the first of April in 1886. These approximately 150 new ventures brought the total of business establishments in Garden City to 256 in a short two year period. Among those that received licenses in a six month period were the following:

> 7 drug stores, 3 coal dealers, 9 livery stables, 8 hotels, 43 land agents and lawyers, 8 flour and feed stores, 7 auctioneers, 19 drays, 3 clothing stores, 3 jewelry stores, 9 restaurants, 5 dealers in general merchandise, 7 lumber yards, 5 millinery stores, 3 banks, 5 butcher shops, 6 barber shops, one dealer in painter supplies, 12 grocery stores, 2 bankers, 5 dealers in gents furnishing goods, 2 tailors, 5 hardware and implement stores, 8 boot and shoe dealers, 6 dry good houses, 2 hucksters, 3 furniture stores, 4 billiard rooms, 3 saddlery shops, 5 blacksmiths, 3 painters, 6 physicians, 2 second hand stores, 5 confectionery stands, one bottling establishment, 2 five and ten cent stores, 5 insurance agents, 5 job printing establishments, 4 newspapers, 4 livestock dealers, one ten pin alley, 2 stationary and book stores, one shooting gallery, 2 lunch stands, 2 photograph galleries, 2 dentists (Irrigator 30 October 1886).

The price of land soared during the three year period of the boom. Residential lots that could have been purchased for $75 in 1884 were selling for between $1000 and $2000 in 1885 (Sentinel 10 June 1885). By 1886 the percentage rose even higher:

> A little over a year ago Mr. R was here, and Mr. Jones offered him the entire block north of the courthouse for $800. It is now worth about $9,000. He says he never, in all his life saw a town grow so rapidly and could not believe it if he was not an eyewitness (Sentinel 8 September 1886).

Local speculators could not believe their good fortune. The population of the county reached 8,084 in 1887 (Larson 3) and in Garden City the population reached 2,000 (Kearsey 32). "There is no stemming the tide, Garden City is now destined to be the big city of western Kansas. We will have a population of 30,000 in ten years, and there is now telling where we will stop after that (Daily Irrigator 14 October 1886)." About one year from the publication to the above quote the "boom" burst. In 1887 the bottom fell out and the population left almost as quickly as it had arrived.

Entertainments

"The early settlers were left entirely on their own resources for amusements. . . . Picnics and dances were common, and holidays were all observed (Blanchard 71)." The entertainments that took place in this southwestern Kansas boom town were typical of all young towns and yet somewhat particular to this gathering of individuals in this place "where the West begins (Hope 9)." The explosive population growth was mirrored in the entertainment offerings of the town and at the height of the population boom, the towns social offerings were lauded by at least one of the newspapers: "Garden City is becoming noted for its various secret, social and musical organizations, and can boast of more and better ones of any city of twice its size in the last period (Irrigator 11 December 1886)."

Social Gatherings. The following are the observations made by the editor of the Herald in response to what he witnessed at a community Thanksgiving social:

> It is proper and pleasant for neighbors to meet thus occasionally. They warm up toward each other, forget the petty differences and become infused with more charity for the frailties of each other and suffering humanity. Let each of us endeavor to profit by them, cherish their memories, and seek to become more worthy in the favor of Him we need to thank for all the blessings we enjoy (Herald 1 December 1883).

A portion of what he recognized took place at each social gathering conducted in Garden City, a bonding that united the individuals into a collective gathering that was strengthened by their support for one another.

Social gatherings in Garden City began the summer the town was settled and continued to be a regular occurrence. By the second summer a band had been formed and the Fourth of July was to be celebrated but not without some urging by the local press. A meeting had been called for interested citizens to help plan the activities for the patriotic celebration and no one showed up. This caused the editor of the Paper to print the following:

> It seems our citizens don't take enough interest in the celebration of the Fourth of July to meet and take definite action on the matter.
>
> Last week we published a call for the meeting to be held last Saturday, but after wandering all over town to find the meeting, we gave up and came to the conclusion there was none.
>
> If our citizens intend doing anything, they should go to work like they meant business. This thing of starting a thing and letting it fall through, either on account of being too lazy or uninterested, is all foolishness.
>
> If the parties who set the move on foot would take a little more interest in the matter it would probably be carried through, but if the parties stay away and don't take an interest in the matter we can't blame others who are merely followers.
>
> We will make another effort to have a meeting next

> Saturday at 6:30 o'clock sharp, and want to see every citizen of Garden City present and take an interest in the movement and push it forward (12 June 1879).

The celebration did take place and was held at the Finnup building which had just been completed and was donated for the occasion. There were sack races, horse races, the reading of the Declaration of Independence, speeches, vocal music presentations, a basket dinner and the thirteen colonies were represented by thirteen little girls. The day was concluded by a dance with the music provided by the brass band (Paper 3 July, 1879). Blanchard stated in her book that people "came in wagons and on horseback for many miles, and they were all surprised that there were so many people really living in the country (71)." This celebration of the Fourth was the event that appeared to have spawned other such events and inaugurated social gatherings as a necessary component of life in Garden City.

A wide variety of interests and activities comprised the social gatherings in Garden City. They will be examined within the following groupings: dances, musical programs, sporting events, special interest groups, and special occasion parties.

After the dance held at the Fourth of July celebration of 1879, they seemed to be held on a frequent basis. Within a month of the dance on the Fourth, another dance was held with an open invitation extended to all in the county (Paper 24 July 1879). Dances on the Fourth were a yearly occurrence and by 1885 the town had grown large enough to support two dances, "one at the rink the other at Jones' new stone building. Ya pays yer money and takes yer choice (Sentinel 1 July 1885)."

As the town grew and experienced the boom of growth in 1885, the

dances increased as well. In addition to the dances on the Fourth and other holidays, dances seemed to be scheduled with a certain amount of regularity at the opening of new buildings. The opening of Jones' new hall[81] in May of 1883 brought out the dancers to a ball (Herald 5 May 1883) as did the opening of a new building erected by George Carr (Herald 22 September 1883). The most opulent of all the dances which coincided with the opening of buildings was that scheduled during the celebrations for the opening of C. J. Jones' Buffalo Hotel. Among the two weeks of activities celebrating the hotel and business block was a grand ball for which "there were about 194 couples in attendance (Irrigator 24 October 1885)."

As was the case in Olathe, dances for special events such as New Year's Day (Sentinel 24 December 1884), Christmas (Sentinel 23 December 1885) and Thanksgiving (Herald 1 December 1883) were usually accompanied by dinners prepared by restaurants connected to the hotels in which the dances were held or by local church groups.

Dances were held periodically for the sole purpose of giving the young people a place to go and "trip the light fantastic" (Sentinel 8 October 1884). Still others were held as social events to bring neighbors together for fun and food (Sentinel 6 August 1884).

Masquerades took the form of festivals rather than merely dances. They were most popular during the early months of 1886. Twenty-five couples participated in one such carnival that honored the arrival of 1886 (Irrigator 2 January 1886), while many more attended the event scheduled a month later. Spectator tickets were sold for those not wanting to be involved in the wearing of costumes (Irrigator 20 February 1886).

The popularity of dance continued to grow and in December of 1886, a dancing club was organized which had the intent of presenting a dance every two weeks during the winter. With 45 members which included "all monied young men, no doubt it will prove one of the leading features of Garden City's society (Sentinel 8 December 1886)."

Musical groups thrived in Garden City. Brass bands, orchestras, private lessons and staged cantatas were among the many to be appreciated and attended to by the citizenship.

Among the most popular was the brass band. A band was formed frequently as the interest of the members came and went. The first band was formed in 1879 (Paper 29 May 1879) and played at the first Fourth of July celebration held in the county. By September of the same year the "Garden City Cornet Band was organized (Paper 18 September 1879)."

One of the local papers appeared to have shamed the players into organizing by publishing the following about a much smaller town to the west: "West Las Animas has a brass band. Why not have one in this city (Sentinel 3 September 1884)." The notice accomplished its purpose; by September a band was organized (Sentinel 10 September 1884), by the end of October "the boys . . . [had] ordered the brass band instruments (Sentinel October 29, 1884), by mid-November they were "doing well" (Irrigator 13 November 1884), "and the horns . . . [were] distributed (Sentinel 12 November 1884)."

A group listed as "Reed's cornet band" (Sentinel 25 March 1885) was playing in the spring of 1885 and was one of the more popular groups of that time. By September of 1885 the band was practicing more frequently and was noted as "getting to be an excellent musical organization (Irrigator 5 September 1885)." It is not clear whether these were

the same organization or two separate bands practicing and performing during the same year.

In 1886 yet another band was organized, "the old band having become defunct (Irrigator 29 May 1886)." The people of Garden City again came to the aid and "at a meeting Wednesday night over $400 was reported as having been subscribed toward purchasing the new instruments (Irrigator 7 August 1886)." This notice of another reorganization of a brass band and another order for instruments was in conjunction with the exposition to be held in Garden City later that fall.

> "The Garden City band is about to receive its desserts at last. The citizens and the exposition association will supply it with instruments and get it in shape for the exposition. $500 worth of instruments are to be ordered for the use of the band. The instruments to be bought are courtois' [sic] the most celebrated in the world which are manufactured in Paris. . . . As soon as the new instruments arrive the band will be completely reorganized and each member will be given the instrument to which he is best suited. The citizens should see that a suitable uniform is provided for the band aside from the cost of the instruments (Sentinel 1 September 1886).

In addition to playing in parades held on patriotic holidays, for dances sponsored by various local organizations or giving concerts during the summer months (Sentinel 28 April 1886), the band was also involved in other forms of socializing: "The band went out and serenaded John Craig Friday evening, in honor of his matrimonial adventure (Irrigator 26 September 1885)."

A social orchestra was formed in the fall of 1886 and had a successful beginning. Its purpose was "for the sake of cultivating orchestral music in particular and for amusement in general (Sentinel 1 September 1886) and had players to staff an ensemble "composed of the following: 1st violin, 2nd violin, viola, bass, flute, clarinet, piccolo, cornet, trombone, French horn and a pianist (Sentinel 16 September 1886)."

Among the other ensembles that surfaced in Garden City were a glee club (Irrigator 18 June 1885), Reed's Orchestra (Herald 28 April 1883), and the Euterpean Orchestra composed of "flute, 1st violin, cornet, 2nd violin, piano (Irrigator 13 February 1886)."

Although instrumental music was more serviceable to other groups for dances or accompaniment, vocal music had a part of the social entertainments. Two cantatas were presented in 1885. The first to go into rehearsals was entitled "Jepthat's Daughter (Sentinel 17 December 1884)." The M. E. Church had originally scheduled it for performance early in February but was not performed at that time. Bad weather in December of 1884 and during much of January of 1885 caused numerous rehearsals to be canceled (Sentinel 28 January 1885).

During May of 1885 Prof. Ward from Hutchinson, Kansas was brought to town for the

> purpose of getting up the popular cantata "Queen Ester." There is no question that he is a musician of ability and we feel pretty sure he will find sufficient talent in our city to render this excellent cantata with satisfaction. We trust all will heartily cooperate in the production of this piece of music as it will be instructed and will add to their stock of musical education (Sentinel 13 May 1885).

The appropriate "leading amateurs of Garden City (Sentinel 20 May 1885)" were secured and the performances were scheduled for June 2 and 3 at the M. E. Church. "Esther, the Beautiful Queen" was very successful and that fall the Methodist Church choir decided to give their first choice a second chance. They "secured the services of Prof. Ward in the rendition of the cantata 'Jepthah's Daughter' which will be given about the holidays (Sentinel 28 October 1885)." This time the weather was not a problem and the production was staged at the Rink on December 15 with a cast that consisted of "fifteen ladies and the same number of

gentlemen, all dressed in ancient and oriental costumes (Sentinel 16 December 1885)?"

While in town Prof. Ward capitalized on his talents and offered lessons to the young people of Garden City. He then had his students perform with him in what was termed a "grand jubilee concert" in which "a great variety of the choicest songs of the day, solos, duets, choruses, etc. (Sentinel 20 May 1885) were introduced to the audiences of Garden City. The same process took place prior to the performance of the cantata in December (Sentinel 9 December 1885).[82]

Prior to the arrival of Prof. Ward, others of the community had offered lessons to the citizens of Garden City on a number of instruments. "Mrs. Joe H. Borders will give lessons in Instrumental and vocal music, on either piano or organ. Pupils taken at any time (Sentinel 17 December 1884)." About six months later the following note appeared in another newspaper: "Mrs. Ollie H. Mullins . . . is an experienced teacher in instrumental music and an excellent vocalist . . . [and] is prepared to give lessons at her home, corner of Fulton and 6th Streets or at the home of her pupils (Irrigator 16 April 1885)."

While both of these ladies advertised indirectly in the local press, another teacher wishing to secure students displayed his own abilities in a lecture recital and then waited for the appointments to be made. "Prof. Hill gave a very interesting and instructive lecture on vocal music at the church Tuesday evening. He succeeded in obtaining a good class, and will begin giving lessons in a few days. He will give another free practice this (Tuesday) evening (Sentinel 19 November 1884)." That technique worked so well he did it again in the fall of the year and received another forty students (Sentinel 26 November 1884). He con-

cluded the second class with a recital in December which brought even more students for classes held during the winter months (Sentinel 10 December 1884).

Sporting events proved to be popular in Garden City. The abundance of wild game[83] present in the area when the town was first settled is reason enough for the popularity of the hunts while the abundance of wild horses and the influence of cattle ranching gave support to horse racing. The recently invented and popularized game of baseball added another event to fill the leisure time during the fair weather months while skating dominated the sporting activities of the cooler months.

Hunting began in the area as a commercial venture for antelope and buffalo meat and for the capture of wild horses to supply the needs of cattle ranches. Both Stevens (Norris, "Half a Century") and Jones (Paper 3 April 1879) began their business ventures in Garden City in this endeavor. Hunts became a leisure sport almost as soon as the town was settled. During October of 1879 Kansas Governor John St. John was a guest of Jones for a ten day hunt that took them 80 miles to the northwest of Garden City, west of the Kansas border (Paper 23 October 1879).

Land excursion groups brought to the area with the hopes of either investing or homesteading were often taken on hunts as part of the enticement to relocate: "The grand finale of Blanchard's excursion, the antelope hunt, was just what he advertised it to be, a success in every sense of the word. Our people may well congratulate themselves on interest Mr. Blanchard is taking in this country. He says he will locate two hundred families in this county by July 1, 1885 (Irrigator 3 July 1884)."

Area locals would also take time off for extended hunts, both for

the sport and as a means of stocking the smoke houses and meat markets. These hunts took on various parameters and brought in a wide variety of game. "C. J. Jones and John H. Jones and W. D. Fulton and C. D. Wentworth just returned from a ten days hunt. . . . They killed 18 deer, 28 antelope, 6 wolves, and too much small game to mention (Irrigator 11 December 1884)." And a "circular hunt" took place on

> Thursday December 6, 1883 starting from Garden City to encircle 25 miles. From 100 to 300 antelope will be encircled and 25 to 50 wolves. At least 50 of the fastest and best greyhounds of Kansas will be on the grounds but not unleashed until the game is completely surrounded (Herald 1 December 1883).

The addition of a driving park north of town in 1886 created a new popular resort (Irrigator 15 May 1886) and brought out a variety of types of horse races. It was reported that at one event "400 people were out to see the race of two horses (Irrigator 29 May 1886)."

With the invention of baseball and the spread of its popularity, it seemed a natural addition to the summer activities. The first reported "symptoms of a base ball out break in Garden City" were evidenced during the summer of 1885 (Irrigator 2 July 1885) and by 1886 at least two city teams were fielded (Irrigator 14 August 1886). Often times the games recorded were in conjunction with the celebration of the Fourth of July (Sentinel 7 July 1886).

Early in December of 1884, both newspapers began the plea for a skating rink to be built (Irrigator 4 December 1884 & Sentinel 10 December 1884) and by the middle of the month the plans for a new skating rink were under way. It opened in mid-March of 1885 and was a popular gathering spot until it was converted into store fronts in September of 1886 (Sentinel 8 September 1886).

Roller skating proved very popular in Garden City; a skating club was formed and met two evenings a week at the Rink (Irrigator 14 May 1885). Professional skaters were booked into the Rink as money makers for the ownership and will be examined in the section concerning business ventures. The Rink also became the town social hall of sorts and will be explained in the section dealing with locations at which entertainments were held prior to the building of the Stevens Opera House.

Periodically other sporting events took place as well. A boxing match was booked but in order to be legal according to city code, "the mayor allowed the amusement to proceed providing no admission fee was charged or a money consideration involved (Sentinel 24 February 1886)." Early in the history of Garden City a notice appeared that the "young folk . . . had quite a pleasant time . . . playing croquet (Paper 5 June 1879)."

Special interest socials spanned a broad range of interests and gatherings were planned consisting of lectures on silk production (Irrigator 30 April 1885), Abraham Lincoln (Irrigator 6 August 1885), and Brigham Young (Daily Irrigator 8 October 1886), to meetings of the farmers club (Sentinel 10 April May 1884). In addition to the interest in special topics or work related matters shown by individuals, there were social gatherings held by groups formed for some special bond, belief, or participation in some qualifying event. The most productive over the years was the G. A. R. (Grand Army of the Republic). They planned many types of activities for their members and families. Some events were sponsored by the group for the entire community (Irrigator 1 May 1884, 8 January 1885 & 19 February 1885); at other times they would help plan and take part in the activity as they did at celebrations of the Fourth of July (Irriga-

tor 19 June 1884 & 8 May 1885); while other socials were restricted to members and their families and dealt with events relating to the war (Irrigator 23 April 1885, 10 April 1886, & Sentinel 15 April 1885).

The most impressive social organization that functioned in Garden City during this time was the Sequoyah Social Club. The organization was started by a group of men who filed a charter for their club "with the Secretary of State. The charter sets forth that the object of the club is promote the social enjoyment and welfare of its members (Irrigator 29 May 1886)." They had rooms fixed up and "ordered $1,000 worth of furniture from the east (Irrigator 7 August 1886)". They even tried to persuade the brass band to adopt the name Sequoyah to the sum of $100 (Irrigator 4 September 1886). All of their arrangements for furnishing were completed by the opening of the exposition in October of 1886. During the exposition's week of activities, the Sequoyah Club played host to many of the dignitaries[84] including the Editorial Association (Daily Irrigator 14 October 1886), the Louie Lord Company (Sentinel October 27 1886), and Governor Martin and other State dignitaries (Sentinel 13 October 1886).

In the months following the exposition, the club prepared their own minstrel show and presented themselves as the Sequoyah United Mastodon Minstrels. Together with "orchestral music . . . furnished by the symphony society (Irrigator 11 December 1886)" and their own "eight end men, the silver cornet band, . . . [and] a countless number of banjo artists, [they] will give their first entertainment at Stevens Opera House in about six weeks. This minstrel troupe will be composed of members of the Sequoyah Club, and others of musical ability in the city (Sentinel 17 November 1886)." They were a tremendous hit in the eyes of their

"large, fashionable and appreciative (Sentinel 22 December 1886)" opening night audience.

Literary groups were also present in Garden City. They received their start at the same time as did the library: "A free circulating library would be of benefit to our young people. The best way to start one is to organize a good literary society (Irrigator 8 January 1885)." If a concern was voiced by one of the newspapers for the betterment of the quality of life for the town, within a week someone responded.

> A meeting was held at the congregational [sic] church on Monday evening last for the purpose of organizing a literary, debating or kindred society. The primary object of which is to secure the city a free circulating library. Owing to lack of notices the meeting was not largely attended, but all present seemed interested in the subject, and were unanimous in their expressions of accord with the object of the meeting. An organization was effected by call of Mr. Bishop to the chair and electing Mr. Knaus secretary (Irrigator 8 January 1885).

By the end of the month the group was organized enough that they held their first debate: "'Resolve, that the right of suffrage should be conferred upon women,' was decided in the negative, after being ably debated. Readings, recitations and choice music completed the programme (Irrigator 29 January 1885)."[85]

There are newspaper notices of other groups with the same intent and it is not clear whether it was the same group under different names or whether there was more than one literary group functioning in Garden City.[86] Other literary programs were presented a various times in the city. One such event was the presentation of original prose at the Methodist Church during the week of the exposition (Daily Irrigator 13 October 1886).

The library that was mentioned in the original purpose of the literary society was initially supported by the G. A. R.(Irrigator 19

March 1885), but it was a Mr. Rose who was the first to actually set the process in motion by "getting up a circulating library, of Harpers standard works, which will be a treat to those who take hold of it. A $2.50 subscription gives you as equal interest with 40 others, so that you have the privilege of reading $100 worth of books for $2.50 (Sentinel 1 July 1885)." Within a month the books had been received and were ready to be distributed among the members (Sentinel 5 August 1885). By the following winter a reading club had been proposed by the youth the city and the Sentinel vowed its support in the success of the venture (Sentinel 3 February 1886).

The use of school as a social gathering was not reported as it had been in other communities. The building of the school received a great deal of press but not very much of the entertainment was as well treated by the press. Two notices about the school entertainment from the period were located. One appeared in the press and concerned the students "practicing . . . for an entertainment they expected to give during the holidays but being unable to prepare it in the allotted time they will be doing it in January (Irrigator 1 January 1887). The second item concerned graduation ceremonies in 1889 and was probably written with a great deal of truth concerning how most students felt about the excitement of school activities as social events:

> Our class graduated in 1889 from the stage of the new Stevens Opera House. We boys were dressed in Sunday best with stand up collars, while the girls wore white dresses and carried wreaths of flowers. We all received gifts from our parents and the bored friends who crowded the auditorium. Each member of the class gave an oration or essay of five minutes or longer (Kearsey 60).

Political Maneuverings. Politics were not a primary focal point in the establishment and development of Garden City. The Republican and Democrat county conventions were about as close as anything political that could be labeled entertainment. The celebration of the Fourth of July each year was by far the most widely publicized national patriotic holiday to be celebrated. The newspapers of course sponsored their particular candidates when election day was close. Periodically various churches and civic groups would sponsor a temperance lecturer, but other than these events, politics did not bring the citizens together for entertainment purposes.

Fund Raisers. The practice of presenting entertainments for the purpose of raising money for a project was limited primarily to the churches and the various brass bands that were formed in Garden City. However, there were other functions that used the same notion as did the churches and the band. One such occasion was the notice of a rehearsal for a concert to be presented by a group calling themselves the "Apolla Sextette", the proceeds going to the road fund (Sentinel3 March 1886). When the community was in rehearsal for the cantata "Jepthah's Daughter," editor Borders of the Sentinel sponsored the thirty characters of "Madame Jarley's Celebrated Wax Works" at his home (Sentinel 10 December 1884). That event was planned to raise money for the cost of the books for the cantata and raised $5.00 in that endeavor (Irrigator 18 December 1884).

The bands raised the majority of their money by outright donations but did sponsor a few events that were entertaining to the citizens. One such concert presented by the band in April of 1885 grossed $31.75 (Irrigator 9 April 1885). One of the first "grand balls" ever held in

Garden City was done so as a benefit for the newly formed cornet band (Paper 24 July 1879). In addition to providing musical concerts, on a least one occasion, the band sponsored a lecturer in hopes of raising money. "The celebrated female lecturer, Mrs. Mendoza Fletcher, will speak . . . and a large audience should greet her (Irrigator 4 September 1886)."

By far the groups that utilized the fund raising approach to entertainments the most were the various churches. The two most active denominations were the Congregational and the Methodists. Money raised (usually by the ladies of the church) went for items ranging from the lots on which to build a church (Irrigator 12 September 1885), to the organ fund (Sentinel 28 January 1885), to the general building fund for a denomination to erect a new building (Irrigator 22 May 1886).

The more popular events sponsored by the church groups always included food. Whether it was a Thanksgiving dinner, an oyster supper, a lecture on the life of Abraham Lincoln, a music and literary program, an ice cream and strawberry festival or a coffee social, food seemed to be the drawing card. The Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day were the holidays for which the churches annually supplied entertainment with late spring and summer being more heavily saturated with ice cream socials and basket dinners. Among the more unusual events sponsored by the congregations in Garden City were neck tie parties (Herald 10 November 1883), a watermelon and ice cream social (Irrigator 22 August 1885), a watermelon and buttermilk social (Sentinel 8 September 1886) and a "Chocolate Social" (Sentinel 24 June 1885).

There was an active Jewish congregation in Garden City and although they did not use town socials as a way of raising funds, they did

extend invitations to others of the faith in the area as they made preparations "for the celebration of Rosh Hashana, Jewish New Year and Yom Kippur. . . . Hebrews in this part of the state in quite a large number are expected to be present. The society already numbers 18 members and it is expected others will join before long (Irrigator 28 August 1886)."

For-Profit Ventures. Within five years of the founding of Garden City, the professional traveling companies had found their way to the southwest Kansas town despite the fact that trains had been running through the area since 1873 and ran "all the way through 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876 and 1877 without a soul getting off between Dodge and Granada, then capital of Eastern Colorado (Kearsey 48)." The first record of an acting company in town was a production of Van the Virginian produced by the Chicago Comedy Company Friday, April 4, 1884 in Jones' hall (Irrigator 3 April 1884). The newspaper announcement implies that this was not the first group to have played Garden City, but records were not found for an earlier group. Once the Rink was built in the early part of 1885, complete with a stage (Irrigator 19 March 1885), entertainments began arriving more frequently. However, it wasn't until the arrival of Will Burgess from Denver as the new manager of the Rink in September of 1885 that these entertainments began appearing with any regularity (Irrigator 19 September 1885).

The entertainments staged for-profit in Garden City will be examine within the following categories: circuses, minstrel shows, skating exhibitions, variety shows, and acting companies.

The first circus to ever play in Finney County was Hall's Consolidated Railroad Shows Circus, Museum, and Menagerie which played in

early May of 1886 (Sentinel 14 April 1886). It was followed closely by performances in early June by both Mlle. Corinne's Great Pavillion Circus and Comedy Company (Irrigator 5 June 1886) and the Great Western Circus (Irrigator 12 June 1886). Neither Hall's nor the Great Western were thought of highly by the press.

> Hall's Circus was not a big hit. Two cars carried everything. There were no horses, no rings, and really no circus performers. Half a dozen jumpers, tumblers and trapeze and horizontal bar performers furnished the entire entertainment (Sentinel 26 May 1886).

The Great Western Circus was described in the following: "It is the smallest little show I ever saw (Irrigator 12 June 1886)!"

The only other circus to play in town was Sell's Brothers Circus. They played in November of 1886 and was billed by the Sentinel as quite a feather in the cap of Garden City. "The circus is the next great event for Garden City. And considering the fact that a year ago Garden City had only 500 population and wouldn't have been visited by a Punch and Judy show, this is a great event (20 October 1886)."[87]

Barnum never made it to the western part of the state during this time but the Irrigator teased him any way: "Barnum is showing in the eastern part of the state. If he wants to 'grow up in the country' he ought to come west (18 September 1886)."

Two minstrel companies (in addition to the production staged by the Sequoyah Social club) were scheduled to present in Garden City. The first to receive a booking was Haverly's Minstrels who were scheduled for a performance sometime in January of 1886 (Irrigator 26 December 1886). However, in a notice for the second company to play, it was observed that "being the first minstrel troupe we have had here there is no doubt that they will have a full house (Irrigator 10 April 1886)." Possibly

Haverly's minstrels and Manager Burgess were never able to complete a contract.

I. W. Baird's Mammoth Minstrels and Spectacular Military Show did play in April of 1886 and were scheduled for a return engagement in September which they also played. Their first performance was reviewed as a "superior entertainment (Irrigator 17 April 1886)" while their second engagement was upstaged by a fire that ignited when the curtain was lowered.

> It gave way at the top falling on the footlights and turning them over. The audience at once rose and started en-masse for the doors but a few cool-headed ones kept them back and the fire being extinguished, that might have resulted in great loss of life ended in a fizzle (Irrigator 4 September 1885).

Because of the popularity of roller skating entertainments presented by professional skaters were among the more popular . The locals used the Rink quite frequently, with at least one skating club attending twice a week. Many contests were held to increase the patronage of the roller skating rink and various professional skaters were brought in for demonstrations and presentations. Among those featured at the rink were "Ralph L. Milicent, the champion skater of the state (Irrigator 30 April 1885 & Sentinel 29 April 1885)," the Gold Skate Combination who were noted for their "fancy, trick skating, [and] stilt skating (Irrigator 20 February 1886)," and "Messrs. Kern and Simmonds, the 'little roller' experts (Sentinel 24 February 1886)."

The Andreas Grand Pavilion Carnival of Novelty Company, Dan Morre Sullivan's Mirror of Ireland, and the Little Nugget Company were among the variety show companies that were booked into Garden City. The Andreas company stopped for a three night engagement before continuing on their way back east while "returning from a visit to the Pacif-

ic slope (Irrigator 20 November 1886)." Sullivan's Mirror of Ireland was a combination of scenic panoramas of Ireland as well as comic stories (Irrigator 25 December 1886). Comedy, farce, burlesque and "comedians and vocalists of the highest ability (Irrigator 6 March 1886)" were the more pleasing features of the Little Nugget Company which played the second week of March in 1886.

By far the most numerous entertainment for-profit to perform in Garden City were the touring acting companies. As stated above the first record of a professional company was the Chicago Comedy Company which performed a two-night run and made a good impression as "the troupe made many friends who will anxiously watch for their return(Irrigator 10 April 1884)." From the opening of the Rink in 1885 until the arrival of Burgess as the new manager in the fall of that year, no theatrical entertainments had been presented. However, with Burgess actively seeking entertainment of all kinds for the patrons, more and more touring companies were booked into the space.

The Tally Ho Company took the stage at the formal re-opening of the Rink under the management of Will Burgess. They played a two-night run featuring Robert L. Downing in Hank Monk and drew crowded houses for both performances (Sentinel 16 December 1885). From the first performances of the Tally Ho Company until the opening of the Stevens Opera House in October, at least five different companies played at the rink with one of them also playing a return engagement.

Simon's Comedy Company played the end of February as well as the end of March and were well received by the people of Garden City on both occasions. During their first run they were booked for a three night run but eventually stayed for a week. The first Saturday they were in

town they staged a matinee of Rip Van Winkle for the "ladies and children (Irrigator 27 February 1886)" The evening performances included productions of Baron Ludwig, or the Female Detective, My Mother-in-Law, The Persecuted Dutchman, Toby Twinkle the Conjurer, Martha Gibbs, the Factory Girl (Sentinel 3 March 1886), and Oliver Twist (Irrigator 6 March 1886). The Thursday evening production was a benefit for the Sand Hill Road and netted the community $150 for the project (Irrigator 6 March 1886). When the company returned at the end of March they presented a production of Damon and Pythias as a benefit for the Knights of Pythias lodge. The Octoroon was played on their second night of the return engagement (Sentinel 24 March 1886).

The remainder of the spring was filled with productions by McFadden's Boston Double Uncle Tom's Cabin Troupe, Tom Ding's Humpty Dumpty Troupe, George S. Knight, and the Bella Moore Company. Other companies had been scheduled but for various reasons canceled their productions.

The entertainments of Garden City would not be complete without at least a mention of the Southwestern Kansas Exposition that was held the first part of October in 1886. The exposition was in actuality a state fair for southwestern Kansas. Work began early in the summer of 1886 with an "immense exposition building" being erected during September. "The building itself is much larger than anything yet constructed in western Kansas and contains, including the outside stall sheltered by the same roof, fully 15,000 square feet of space. It is capable of holding 5,000 people (Sentinel 29 September 1886)."

The entire town was involved in preparations for the exposition. A cantata especially written for the event, Fairies of the American Desert, was performed by 600 school children (Senitnel 20 October 1886) including

a chorus of 200 voices (Sentinel 6 October 1886), storerooms and private homes were turned into boarding houses, the street car lines were extended to the fair grounds and "new trucks have been ordered for the cars (Irrigator 25 September 1886)," every available wagon was used in transporting guests from the train station to the exposition grounds and by the end of the event 25,000 people had come to Garden City to take part (Sentinel 20 October 1886).[88]

A mile long procession escorting the Governor to the exposition (Sentinel 20 October 1886), special dinners and dances sponsored by the Sequoyah Social Club, tours and special events for the Editors Association (Sentinel 13 October 1886), an acrobatic show (Sentinel 6 October 1886), literary recitals (Daily Irrigator 12 October 1886), and a reunion of old soldiers were among the various other events held in conjunction with the exposition at different locations through the town.

In addition to the events taking place at the fair grounds, the grand opening of Stevens' Opera House began the festivities with a production of The Mikado by the Andrews' Opera Company. After opening, the newly built opera house provided entertainment nightly, boasting two companies playing for a total of six evenings. The Louie Lord Company played the first three nights and the Chicago Opera Company played the final three nights (Sentinel 6 October 1886). The Louie Lord Company began the week with performances of Forget-Me-Not, The Linwood Case, and A Modern Godiva (Sentinel 13 October 1886) while the Chicago Opera Company was scheduled to perform Fatinitza, the Sorcerer, Chimes of Normandy or Lao Mascotte (Sentinel 6 October 1886).

The Opera House

Prior Locations. Among the locations used to house the entertainments of Garden City preceding the building and opening of the Stevens Opera House were the following: Fulton's Hall, Jones' Hall, the G. A. R. Hall, the Rink, and various church buildings including the M. E. Church, the Congregational Church, and the Cumberlund Presbyterian Church.

The first mention of a space used for public functions was the Landis and Holinger building which was used for preaching and an ice cream social (Paper 28 August 1879). This was the dry goods, grocery, hardware, clothing, lumber, and farm implement store of Garden City for the first years. When a newspaper began publishing again there was mention of Jones' new hall (Herald 5 May 1883) and that location seemed to be the primary space for most town functions until the building of the Rink in early 1885. Various hotel dining rooms also served as host for many of the dances (Sentinel 6 August 1884) as did the church buildings for some of the musical events.

The skating rink was a building 50 x 100 feet "built in the best possible manner, built with hardwood floor, offices, skate room and every convenience Irrigator 12 February 1885)." Seven month later the space had become so popular as a gathering point that it was "converted into an opera house after the manner of the rink at Dodge. It is to be sealed and plastered, a stage erected at the rear end, which will be well supplied with scenery and stage effects (Irrigator 10 October 1885)."

The remodeled Rink was used heavily until the addition of Stevens Opera House as the major performance space. As soon as the lease on the Rink expired it was converted "into two large store rooms. The front will be changed and the interior will be furnished up in a good style. The

Rink has served its day. Our new opera house will fill its place (Irrigator 11 September 1886)."

Biographical Information. J. A. Stevens was one of the original men to file a claim on the section of land that was to become Garden City. Although not as flamboyant as Jones, Stevens was a major figure in the development of the town.

Stevens was born in Warren County, Illinois in December of 1850. He left Illinois in 1870, spent two years in Iowa, and then moved to Sterling, Kansas in 1873. "John Stevens came to this region in the early 70s as an employee of the Fulton Brothers who were engaged in capturing and selling wild horses and buffalo (Kearsey 15)." In 1878 he followed his employers west and filed claim on his 160 acres of land and from that began a very lucrative career in real estate development.

Stevens married the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Fulton in February of 1879. They lived in Garden City for the rest of their lives, became the parents of three children and were involved in a host of economic, political and social activities.

In addition to his career in real estate development, Stevens was also engaged in the livery business (Irrigator 6 July 1882), became a partner in a dry goods business (Irrigator 18 September 1886), was Vice-President of the Bank of Western Kansas (Directory), and was a silent partner in the development of a greenhouse and nursery (Irrigator 29 May 1886).

Stevens had a limited political career that was focused primarily on city government. He spent two terms as constable for Finney township (Irrigator 17 April 1884 and 5 February 1885), was elected along with C.

J. Jones as a representative to the state Republican convention, and was elected city councilman, a position he held for a number of years. He served the community as a member of various committees and boards. He was treasurer of the school board as they organized and built the first school building (Irrigator 22 August 1885), he was secretary for the Southwestern Kansas Exposition (Irrigator 21 August 1886), was on the building committee for the Cumberlund Presbyterian Church (Irrigator 5 September 1885), and offered to endorse the notes for the building of a bridge across the Arkansas River (Irrigator 29 January 1885).

Among his real estate development contributions to the city were the planting of numerous trees in his residential additions, the opening of a number of new streets to better access the areas of town, the establishment of a city park, and the gifts of lots to the city for the purposes of a courthouse and a schoolhouse. He also erected a number of buildings, both private dwellings and commercial spaces, with the most impressive being the Stevens' Opera House in 1886 followed by the Windsor Hotel in 1887.

Stevens lost a great deal of his money and property as the town began to dry up. However, he "did not surrender and quit but turned his attention to farming and developed some of the finest alfalfa fields in the county (Norris "Half a Century"). Had it not been for Stevens to serve as Jones' adversary and vice versa, one questions how much development would have taken place in Garden City and whether the opera house would have ever been built.

Planning. The first announcement by Stevens to build the opera house was recorded in the Irrigator in October of 1885. By the first of Novem-

ber he had gone to Kansas City to look at plans and other buildings, had contracted with an architect in Emporia and had the stone for the foundation already on the location (Irrigator 7 November 1885). After a trip to Emporia toward the end of February to confirm the plans, all was set to begin construction in early spring of 1886.

An early description of the building was released in the Irrigator in March of 1886; a portion of it follows:

> The building will be three stories high, 50 feet front and 110 feet back, perhaps 115 feet back . . . he will consult with theatrical managers and if they advise making it larger . . . he will put on an extra 5 feet. He prefers to have it perfect at whatever cost. It will be constructed of brick, trimmed with stone. The auditorium will be on the second floor, stairway to lead up between two large store rooms on the first floor. They third story will afford a large gallery. . . . The building will not be let to contractors but will be built under the personal supervision of Mr. Stevens and his architect.

By the end of March the price tag on the building had jumped from $20,000 to $30,000 but Stevens "proposes to make it perfect at whatever cost (Irrigator 24 April 1886)."

The first minor set back tested Stevens pledge when there arose a disagreement over the cost of stone. True to his word, Stevens supported the contractor who "opened a quarry of his own and said he will now put the work through in a hurry (Irrigator 22 May 1886)."

Throughout that summer the walls of the opera house climbed higher and higher as plans were made concerning the company that was contracted to play on opening night as well as other entertainers that would play throughout the inaugural season. The original plans called for the opera house to be

> opened September 15 by the Alpha Norma Opera Company, one of the best in the Unites States, and Manager Burgess has also dates for the following popular companies: Haverly'

> Minstrels, Stranglers of Paris, the Madison Square Company, Gilmore's Band, Lizzie May Ulmer, and several others (Irrigator 14 August 1886).

By mid-September the opening had to be changed to October and the contract with the Alfa Norma Company was dropped (Irrigator 25 September 1886). The replacement company was the Andrew's Opera Company with a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's The Mikado (Sentinel 6 October 1886).

Most of the month of August was spent finishing the exterior work on the building including the installation of the roof and the machinery to control the gas used throughout the building.[89] By the first of September the building was rapidly taking shape; the contractor was taking men off other jobs to try to ready the opera house for its opening.

The remainder of the month of September and the first week in October were spent in the administration of the finishing work to the interior of the building. The carpentry work was finished by the end of September and then the plasterers moved in (Sentinel 16 September 1886). An article appearing in the October 6 issue of the Sentinel demonstrated how hectic things were trying to ready the building for its October 7 opening:

> The work went on at the opera house day and night yesterday again. The gas was turned on and its full brilliance lit up the auditorium splendidly. The gas fixtures are very fine. The opera chairs were rapidly put in place, and by this evening if no accident intervenes, Stevens Opera House will be ready to open.

The actual curtain for the building was not complete in time for he opening and one was borrowed from a house in Kansas City. The curtain was put in place after the exposition (Sentinel 20 October 1886). Scenery for the building was completed by L. T. Close and Company of Kansas

City (Daily Irrigator 18 October 1886) and was finally all hung in place by the end of October.

Physical Description. When the plans of the new opera house were released to the press, the opening statement in the notice published in the Irrigator referred to the structure as "putting it mild when we say this is going to be an elegant building (Irrigator 6 March 1886)."[90] The brick building trimmed with stone was to be "116 feet long, three stories high, 50 feet front (Irrigator 24 April 1886)." The plans called for two business establishments on the first floor with the opera house on the second and third. A stairway leading to the ticket booth on the second floor was located between the two ground floor businesses. Entrances either side of the ticket booth directed audience members to seating; to the right was the gallery located on the third floor and to the left was the entrance to orchestra level (Irrigator 6 March 1886). The main floor contained seating for 370 persons with the rows of seats serviced by two aisles. The circular gallery accommodated approximately 120 persons on benches and each of the boxes contained chairs for eight.

A large gas chandelier was suspended in the center of the ceiling; additional lighting fixtures lined the gallery and side walls of the house. The proscenium arch was framed by four private boxes; two boxes on either side. One box was at gallery level and one was slightly above the seating on the main floor. Each box was hung with red velvet drapes which matched the act curtain. Chairs in the boxes were upholstered in a red and gold tapestry (Carter 2). The side walls of the theatre were painted a light tan and "profusely frescoed (Irrigator 6 March 1886)" with small statues mounted on either side of the paintings (Fowler 19).[91]

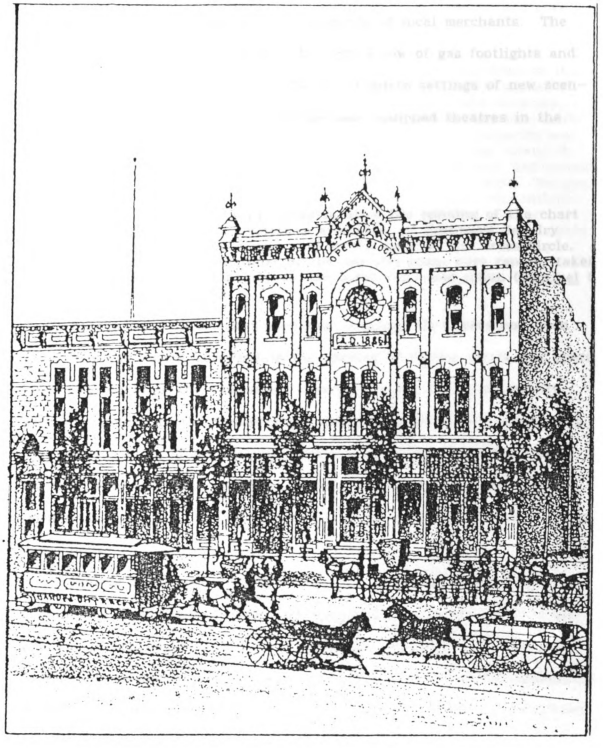

Figure 8. Stevens' Opera House, 1887 (Everts 319)

The twenty-two foot proscenium opening was fitted with an act curtain and a drop containing advertisements of local merchants. The thirty-five foot deep stage was lit by both a row of gas footlights and an array of overhead gas lights. Twelve complete settings of new scenery[92] made the opera house one of the best equipped theatres in the state (Irrigator 18 October 1886).

Opening. Within twenty minutes after the opening of the chart for the Mikado yesterday afternoon, at Cochran's Jewelry Store, 200 seats were sold in the parquet and dress circle. During the remainder of the day the seats were rapidly taken and by night nearly all the lower floor was taken (Sentinel 6 October 1886).

By the time the doors opened that evening, all tickets had been sold. The excitement surrounding the opening of Garden City's new opera house was equal to the excitement running through the entire county with the opening of the Southwestern Kansas Exposition only week away. The grand opening of Steven Opera House was a "pre-Exposition" party for the locals and their neighbors, for many would be kept too busy during the exposition to take advantage of the offerings presented in the opera house.

Months of planning had gone into the festivities planned for the opening. A special Mikado souvenir was purchased for the occasion and one was presented to all ladies in attendance (Sentinel 6 October 1886). Special dinner parties had been arranged for groups of visiting dignitaries as well as groups of locals. A portion of Stevens' friends had purchased a gold-headed ebony cane from a local jeweler for $65 and planned to present it to him during the evening (Blanchard 261).

The grand opening of the Stevens Opera House took place on October 6, 1886 with the private boxes, auditorium and gallery filled by

a capacity crowd of 500. Before the Andrews' Opera Company's production of Mikado,

> the curtain was rung up and Judge Abbott appeared on the stage, made a neat little opening speech . . . He spoke of the mariners on the sea who unexpectedly came upon an island that was not known, being on neither map nor chart; that our beautiful city, its rise, growth and prosperity was as surprising to everyone as the emerging of the island in the sea. Art is here displayed to please the eye, and science exhibited in the building of the beautiful structure. We can tell of the religious meetings and the political conventions that will be held within these walls. Senators may be chosen here and Governors named. The past ages will again be brought before us upon this stage, the times of King George and Richard. And to whom are we indebted for this? To our honored fellow townsman, John A. Stevens. (Loud applause.) Mr. Abbott then stepped forward to the box occupied by Mr. Stevens and in behalf of the citizens, presented him with a handsome ebony, goldheaded, cane as a small token of esteem in which he was held by his fellow citizens (Daily Irrigator 7 October 1886).

Stevens then concluded the pre-show portion of the evening by presenting a speech in which he dedicated the opera house to the city.

The play was warmly received, but the editor of the Irrigator was not impressed. He had a barb tacked on to his observations of the grand opening:

> We shall not criticize the management at this time but if all our amusements are to be on this order this winter, we shall have to enter a protest. There is not a city in the state which can turn out a more cultured audience than Garden City, for one more capable of judging the merits of a play or its actors. As a rule our people are willing to pay the first-class prices, but in return they want, and will demand, first-class plays. We hope manager Burgess will in the future favor them with that sort of amusement (Daily Irrigator 7 October 1886).

The editor of the Sentinel was not impressed with portions of the production but was much more indirect with his comments:

> The occasion was the presentation for the first time in this city of Gilbert and Sullivan's opera, "The Mikado," by Andrews' Opera Company. A large part of the audience had witnessed the opera before in other cities, but the lack of a

> suitable place of amusement had prevented its presentation here. The Mikado is of a strikingly popular nature, and is full of catchy aires which, though most of them are now familiar everywhere, it is still a pleasure to hear again on the stage. The company is quite up to the best known companies on the road. Although a larger chorus would have been preferable, the performance did not suffer. Ed. Andrews' as Ko-ko is superior. It is one of the best representations to be found in any opera company. He became at once a popular favorite. . . . The introduction of an aire from Il Travatore by Pooh-Bah may be a triumph for Pooh-Bah, but it is a little out of place in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera. Give us all Verdi or all Gilbert and Sullivan (Sentinel 13 October 1886).

The Sentinel also included in the same article, accolades for the work of the general contractor, Pat Hall, and for the manager of the space, Will Burgess. In conclusion, the newspaper declared that the "opening night of Steven's opera house was a success."

The Irrigator printed a letter it had received after the opening night festivities from Stevens. A portion of it follows:

> I desire to make my acknowledgement to the people of Garden City, for the interest manifested in the opening of the opera house on Wednesday night. Such appreciation of an effort made to supply a public want, was highly satisfactory to me, and produced sentiments which are hard to express in words. (Daily Irrigator 8 October 1886).

Future. Shortly after the opening of the opera house, Will Burgess and the managers of thirteen other opera houses (Sentinel 17 November 1886) in the southern half of the state formed a Southern Western Theatrical Association (Sentinel 1 December 1886).[93] Through the association, this new circuit had "for its object the securing of better attraction for the houses . . . which [had] never received just recognition at the hands of the former circuit managers (Sentinel 1 December 1886)."[94]

With Burgess as manager of the opera house, companies including the following were brought to Garden City over the next few years: the

Casino Opera Company, Peck's Bad Boy, the Georgia Minstrels, the Emma Abbott Opera Company, Billy Arlington's Minstrels, and East Lynne by the Charlotte Thompson Company (Fowler 58-63).

The future of the opera house in Garden City was tied very closely to the economic growth and decline. 1887 brought economic depression to the area in the way of poor crops as a result of bad weather. By 1896 Stevens lost all of his holdings except the opera house and some farm lands. Before the end of the year he was forced into bankruptcy and had to sell the building (Fowler 30).

What had begun as a family's decision to move west in hopes of building a life on the open prairies of western Kansas, ended nine years later with an economic depression causing financial failure for a majority of the community. However, in the nine years sandwiched between those two events a town had been established, a fertile farming enterprise had miraculously appeared in the middle of the "Great American Desert," and two business rivals had created an exciting opening chapter for the southwest Kansas town of Garden City.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Native Kansas landscapes of rolling hills covered in an abundance of lush grasses in the east and the immense level prairies alive with enormous herds of antelope and buffalo in the west were slowly transformed. With assistance first from the Santa Fe Trail and eventually the advancing railroads, the original landscapes evolved into a succession of small towns and vast agricultural communities connected with iron rails.

Many factors collaborated on the development of Kansas between the first bellows of oxen hauling freight on the trail and the final enthusiastic gloved applause signaling the curtain call of an evening's entertainment at the opera house. Emigration of Indian tribes from eastern states, bloody border skirmishes, the Civil War, cattle drives, the railroad, homesteading, free enterprise, land speculation, and leisure time all were significant.

With the presence of an opera house in the community, most citizens and town leaders supposed that the cultural needs of the community were being expressed. The opera house existed for the purpose of entertainment and at the very least as a vehicle for uniting the people of a town for social interaction. For others its presence was a confirming symbol for the possibility of cultural enlightenment and maturity. Harold and Ernestine Briggs state in their article entitled "The Early Theater on the Northern Plains," that "one of the first cultural institutions to be established in many areas was the theater. . . . Several frontier settlements had a theatre before they had a church or a school (231)."

The record of the entertainments practiced and experienced in these typical Kansas towns is clearly not supportive of the presumption that opera houses were built as the natural culmination of a certain mix of entertainments over a period of time. An alternative proposition emerges: opera houses were primarily business investments for local community leaders seeking profitable returns; hoping to capitalize on both the rental of commercial space during the traditional business day and the rental and/or sale of tickets in the theatrical space during the evenings and weekends.

Background

Quite by chance the character of all three towns reflected the physical surroundings and the significance of the Santa Fe Trail section along which each town was located. Olathe, currently the largest of the three, almost doubling the combined population of the others, was located on the first third of the trail. This section hosted more activity along the trail than did the others. At first it was the less stable with individual merchants, homesteaders and organized freighters all converging on Council Grove, there to be organized for transit. After the territory was opened to settlers, it was along this section of the trail that many homesteaders decided they were not suited to live in the west. Some would return home and others would simply become residents of whichever small town was close. As the wagons reached the land surrounding Olathe on the return trip it meant being within a single day's travel of the trail's end. Olathe was more quickly caught up in the political happenings of the state because of its close proximity to both the

Missouri border and Topeka; because of the date of its establishment and the commencement of the Civil War; and because of the persons who called it their home and their involvement in governmental affairs. It developed urban trappings much sooner than did the two towns located further west.

McPherson's portion of the trail was the second section and taught the inexperienced how to survive. The land gradually shifted from the rolling Flint Hills to the central plains without too many life threatening problems developing. It was the proving ground where the wagonmasters discovered which of their party could become competent drivers and which would remain easterners forever. Occasional settlements or ranches dotted the area unlike the final third of the trail which remained unpopulated by the European presence. McPherson was located on land that had the potential for fertile farms without vast numbers of the hardships to scare potential homesteaders away; a land suitable for the harmonious blending of the rural community and the business men that needed the agricultural trade to be successful. It was the transitional segment of the trail - the connection between the last forms of recognizable culture and the Great American Desert.

Garden City was the gateway to the final third of the trail. It marked where the road became treacherous, the terrain became more rugged, the weather more severe and the water less available. Acknowledgement of the presence of other humans was almost non-existent except for the Indian who was more terrifying to these early travelers than was the hostile terrain. It was the portion of the trail where one would need to invoke all of one's courage, common sense, ingenuity, and conviction of self-preservation to survive until arrival at Santa Fe.

The three towns selected for this study offered a variety of reasons for the establishment of each and yet all had similar experiences as they embarked, becoming county seats and developing into a major business center for each of the counties. Olathe was the result of a group of men initially wanting to establish a town in the center of the county that would one day become the county seat. Even though that eventually happened, their actual choice of the town site was based more on an initially spectacular view from a bluff than on whether they had arrived at the geographic center of Johnson County.

McPherson was established by business men who had heard of the money to be made by the proper handling of new town sites. They realized that the most centrally located town of significant size would usually be selected as county seat. Unlike their counterparts who founded Olathe, these men were very aware of the geography of McPherson County. From the beginning that central location was of major concern and would eventually give it an opportunity to be considered as the new site for the state capital.

Garden City was established by men moving to what they thought would be more productive lands, lured west by an unusually green prairie due to unusually high amounts of rain. Their town became the county seat because of a reorganization of county boundaries, not because they were actively seeking the prime location for a town destined to house the county government. Unlike McPherson and Olathe, the original intent of locating Garden City had nothing to do with becoming county seat, especially in a locale originally thought fit only for the grazing of livestock.

Railroads and newspapers were the two constants in the development of all three communities. Without either of these institutions there

would have been no settlement, no way of notifying the rest of the country of their existence, and no method of transportation attractive enough to lure settlers to town once they had decided that moving to Kansas did sound interesting. Although each location had different experiences in dealing with the railroads that served their communities, all three depended heavily on the rails for their existence.

In Garden City's instance, the railroad existed long before the town did. This eliminated some of the problems that faced Olathe and McPherson but did not eliminate the continual need to cultivate additional rails, expanding the markets and the transportation options. The railroad truly was the life line nurturing the southwest corner of Kansas.

Olathe's railroad dealings were more of service and accessibility to the same lines offered its larger neighbor directly east. Kansas City commanded the rails; Olathe wanted to capitalize on that fact. The other issue facing Olathe was the ease with which its citizens could embark on the trains and travel to the city for the day or to all points in any direction. The railroad gave them the options of a mobile population much sooner than other communities.

McPherson wanted desperately to succeed but knew success depended largely on the actualization of a rail service in their community. Without it there was little hope of being the central hub for which they had carefully planned. Multiple options for rail service were within the grasp of other towns in the county at earlier dates but for various reasons they were unsuccessful. However, once the first rail was in place, others soon made inquiry and by the turn of the century four different lines provided rail service to McPherson.

Railroads were more important in determining the success and fail-

ure of prairie towns than probably any other institutions present in the settling of Kansas. Location along a rail line could easily control the projected growth of a town merely due to accessibility. Without the railroad, it is doubtful whether any of the towns studied would have prospered to the point of building an opera house.

Newspapers were vital to the three towns at several levels. At the outset, all three locations were dependent on the press to advertise to prospective settlers. Without a steady flow of homesteaders and businesses being attracted to them, there would have been no town. Once in their new location, the newspapers provided the citizenry a link between the rest of the world and their new home towns. The events of the world were not unknown to people residing in these small towns. They were informed on the deaths of international leaders, news of the latest fashions in this country and abroad was made available, and travels of favorite celebrated performers as well as the new titles plastered on the marquees of theatres across the country was also (eventually) made available.

Editors were elevated (often by themselves) to the position of arbiter of the town's moral standards. As a group they had been traditionally entrusted with the well being of the community, guardians responsible for blowing the whistle on all evil and wrong doing. They were the conscience of the community, motivating when necessary, encouraging when deserved, and exposing when all else failed.

Newspapers were among the most political institutions within a community, shaping the personality of a community to be remembered by future generations. Inclusion in the town's social record (the newspapers) depended heavily on one's political allegiances. Notices were more fa-

vorable to events sponsored by those who shared similar political convictions and usually non-existent when sponsored by those from other parties.

The format of newspapers in all three locations was similar. The average paper reserved the front page for national news and advertisements. The second page usually housed state news, legal correspondence, installment novels, and advertisements. The third page was a potpourri of local notices, county items, and advertisements occasionally mixed in the same columns. Advertisements filled the majority of page four.

Entertainments

The social dance was the most common entertainment. All three evidenced a strong affinity for the dances, hops, cotillions, balls, and masquerades. Each town held dances as fund raisers, as society events for the elite, and as county wide events where people could become acquainted with their neighbors. McPherson had the highest number of dances documented by the local press. Olathe had more formal dances than did McPherson and Garden City; this is strongly substantiated with the much higher number of political functions held in Olathe as well as the private social functions at which state dignitaries would be in attendance.

Olathe and McPherson were provided with more entertainment opportunities by the local schools and had more township schools than did Garden City and Finney County. Much of this is due to the earlier settlement of the first two locations, thus providing a longer period to acquire a larger student population and to build more school houses.

Sporting events were much more prevalent in the two western loca-

tions, due to the larger tracts of yet uncultivated acreage and thus more wild game. Olathe was not as active or as diverse in sporting events.

Secret societies, social societies and special interest societies (such as the G. A. R. and the W. C. T. U.) were also more active in sponsoring activities in Garden City and McPherson. This may have been merely a matter of distance; the desire to organize such groups being stronger the more distant a community was from an urban locale.

Musical groups, especially brass bands were prevalent and active in all three towns. A community band was obviously an element of pride in most small towns of the prairies. They were paraded at county wide events; each town hoping that theirs was the best equipped, had the sharpest looking uniforms, and more importantly, that they dispersed the sweetest music.

Special parties marked the passage of major events in each town. These milestone celebrations added the most variety to the unique list of occasions in each of the locales. Olathe's more unique events included the spontaneous celebration on the return of Col. Hayes during the Civil War, the various receptions held during the visit of the Tom Thumb Troupe, and the festivities hosted in conjunction with the opening of a cheese factory. McPherson's list would include the special dinner held for the legislature during the capital removal campaign, the festivities that accompanied the passing of the railroad bonds, and the excitement of the first locomotive pulling into town on iron rails. Garden City's list would no doubt contain a variety of the events held during the Southwestern Kansas Exposition, among them the opening of Steven's Opera House.

Political maneuverings were most predominant in Olathe and McPherson while they were almost non-existent in Garden City.

Fund raisers were utilized in all three towns. Olathe was more successful in the use of theatrical presentations as fund raisers and was more actively involved in the acquisition of monetary support for the library than the other two towns. The majority of McPherson's fund raising energies were focused on church buildings. The schools in both McPherson and Olathe were also served well by these events. Garden City's use of fund raisers was centered on the churches and the brass bands.

The for-profit ventures were highly regarded in all of the communities with the touring acting companies the most actively supported. Circuses were among the first of the professional companies to venture on to the prairies and remained a constant source of entertainment during the warm months until the life of the small traveling circus was snuffed out.

McPherson was the most often served by the traveling companies with Olathe having the slimmest representation. Again, this can be explained by the close proximity to Kansas City and the easy access to the performances in that location. Being on the fringe of communities which housed a performance space large enough to host traveling companies might have been one reason fewer companies traveled to Garden City.

Many of the same companies traveled to these three towns during the years covered. One could begin to trace the paths of the various companies as they loaded and unloaded their trunks at the train depots around the state.

The Opera House

Each town had different motivations involved in the acquisition of an opera house. Olathe's opera house was the result of a true humanitarian wanting his town to have a comfortable location for entertainments and town gatherings. The Hayes' Opera House was the only one of the three that was a renovation of an existing structure. The renovation greatly enhanced the design of the space creating a much more efficient and better equipped site for the purpose of theatrical entertainments.

The story of the McPherson Opera House is that of a group of businessmen who saw an opportunity to improve on what was already there. According to some it was the story of a town bidding to be selected as the site for the state capital and a magnificent new opera house dominating the expansive plains might just be the one attribute that would secure McPherson's chance. Being the only one of the three structures still standing, much more information was available.

The events preceding the construction of the Stevens Opera House in Garden City were perhaps the most interesting; a history of one philanthropist attempting to do more than another, ending in a campaign promise of building an opera house if elected. It was the story of a boom town with an exciting rapid growth and an equally rapid bust.

Summary.

This dissertation began with the assumption that the three small towns utilized entertainments in a variety of ways. Whether it was merely for social interaction or the result of political maneuverings or to raise funds for local projects or to be entertained by professionals touring through the prairies, entertainment was a significant aspect in the

development of the small towns studied.

It was also presumed the acquisition of an opera house was a natural result of any town able to support a lively mix of entertainments. Any town of size would eventually outgrow church sanctuaries, school rooms, and social halls; at that time an opera house would materialize.[95]

However, each town studied had found numerous locations in which to hold its entertainments prior to the materialization of an opera house. A lively mix of entertainments was able to take place with or without an opera house. The acquisition of an opera house in each town was unique to the personalities existing in each. Although every one of the structures can be viewed as a "gift" to the community, a profitable return on the investments was at work (at least to an extent) in each instance.

Each community was established by individuals wanting to develop a new town or to begin a new business. The most profitable investment at that time in Kansas was that of land development and sales. In each community those responsible for the building of the opera house were involved in land development and were among the permanent residents of each. With the extremely transient population present in the last half of the 19th century, it is important to note the small, strong permanent residential core of business men and the control they administered over each community. They controlled the majority of land in each town and therefore took a major interest in making sure the town was successful.

Competent leaders of the business communities capitalized on as many attributes as were at their disposal to strengthen their towns. Railroads, land deals, schools, a diverse business community, banks, newspapers, agricultural opportunities, churches, public utilities and opera

houses were among the various lures used; railroads being the most important of the lures utilized to bring settlers to the community. Without the railroad, business was difficult and the development of a community was a much longer process. In each of the communities studied, the opera house was a lure which town fathers could dangle in front of prospective settlers as well as an attribute of which residents could boast.

Olathe received its opera house from a philanthropist wanting a more comfortable, larger and better equipped location for entertainments. McPherson's was part of a on-going plan by men who had been successful at stacking the deck in their favor, and Garden City's opera house was the result of a rivalry between two astute businessmen with the town's welfare veiling their profitable business ventures.

Each of these buildings was a business endeavor. Each was part of a business block; located either above commercial store fronts or at the rear of office and commercial space. The store fronts and office space would generate income during the day while the theatre portion would generate monies in the evening and from matinees.

Stevens' Opera House was a major attraction in the area. People from numerous locations in the southwest corner of Kansas as well as Colorado and Oklahoma would attend productions and special events held in it. Stevens was far-sighted enough to build a hotel adjoining the opera house to capitalize even more on the visitors coming to town to shop in his stores, attend his theatre, and buy his property. The McPherson Opera House Company managed to house the county offices and courthouse on the upper two floors of their building for five years at a yearly fee of $1,400. The company also had the benefit of two store

front properties to generate additional income. Col. Hayes was truly the most philanthropic with his investment, but was also able to cultivate returns from the retail space below his opera house.

Therefore, the hypothesis generated by this dissertation is supported in the affirmative. The erection of an opera house in small communities in Kansas appears to have been primarily a business investment and not a natural development of a community's cultural offerings.

The stories of these three towns are similar to other small towns across the country. The stories of these three opera houses are as unique to their towns as are all opera houses. Nothing very monumental occurred, no extraordinary people were produced. However, in the telling of their stories, the accounts of the comings and goings of the people who lived in these three towns have been transcribed from numerous roles of microfilm, and the hours they spent in being entertained and entertaining each other have been documented. This documentation can now be added to that of the growing list of small towns that are beginning to merge as a more honest representation of theatre in America.

Recommendations for Further Study

On the basis of the information compiled during research for this study, the following recommendations for further study are suggested.

1. The addition of ethnic and/or cultural heritage and the impact on entertainments should be gathered and integrated into the study.

2. Similar studies of small towns in other western states, especially those among the northern most tier of states, would add greatly to the breadth of material on American theatre history.

3. The continuation of the study of the professional acting companies that performed in these three towns to determine if any of the actors returned to the communities to settle, thus adding to the diversity of the population and availability for professionals to develop theatrical skills among the local residents.

4. A study of additional towns located on the same branch of the Santa Fe Railroad would move toward completing a study of all the town located along the railroad. This would enable the creation of a more complete study of the travels of selected professional acting companies.

5. Additional research should be done to integrate the documentation of touring acting companies that played the small towns with those performing in larger cities of Kansas, i.e. Kansas City, Topeka, Lawrence, Wichita, etc.

6. Although each of the towns had local talent productions, no permanent resident company was formed by any of them upon the completion of the opera house, as was the case in most larger metropolitan areas. This aspect of small community theatrical activity might elicit wider verification.

Notes

(1) Barnard Hewitt's book, Theatre U. S. A., 1665 to 1957, covers this period in Chapter Four, "Resident Company versus Traveling Star," and contains information about the resident companies in New York, theatre productions during the gold rush of California, theatre in the Mormon city of Salt Lake, the staging of Uncle Tom's Cabin in New York, repertory companies in New York, theatre productions during the Civil War in New York, and the careers of Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, Lotta Crabtree and others. Chapter Five, "Realism and the Regisseur," deals entirely with the professional theatres of the east coast and the innovations brought to the country with realism, both in scripts and in technical advances (161-279).

(2) Howard Taubman's The Making of the American Theatre briefly alluded to the importance of the rails in bringing the eastern shows to the people in the west, mentioned the mining town theatres of Colorado, California, and Nevada, the theatre of Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and then retreats to the east and the names of stars and new movements in style (93-124).

(3) The 6th edition of Oscar Brockett's History of the Theatre contains a nine page section of theatre in the United States from 1850-1895. Brockett begins with an overview of the western expansion and then continues with the theatres of California, Salt Lake City, and end in New York City where the remainder of the section explain the changes in the eastern professional theatre scene (451-462).

Garff B. Wilson's Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre includes mention of the frontier theatre in Sacramento, discusses the

western theatre movement in Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco, and Salt Lake City. The remainder of the book devoted to the second half of the nineteenth century focuses on the theatre in the east and the various styles, stars and technical innovations (129–286).

The 2nd edition of Glynne Wickham's A History of the Theatre briefly mentions the period in the United States amid the notes on melodrama and the contributions made by the California gold rush (188–189).

(4) Carl F. W. Larson's American Regional Theatre History to 1900: A Bibliography, lists books, articles, masters' theses, and Ph.D. dissertations dealing with general geographic locations as well as specific locations. These entries are located under a GENERAL category at the end of each state's listing.

(5) Peggy Doyen, "The History of Theater 1878–1925 in Concordia, Kansas," M.A. Kansas State University, 1969.

Larry Fowler, "History of the Stevens Opera House, Garden City, Kansas, 1886–1929," M.S. Emporia State University, 1969.

Marvin G. Jonason, "A History of the Junction City Opera House in Junction City, Kansas: 1880–1919," M.S. Emporia State University, 1970.

James Kemmerling, "A History of the Whitley Opera House in Emporia, Kansas: 1881–1913," M.S. Emporia State University, 1967.

(6) James C. Malin, "James A. and Louie Lord: Theatrical Team--Their Personal Story, 1869–1889," The Kansas Historical Quarterly 22 (1956): 242–273.

---, "Theatre in Kansas, 1858–1868: Background For the Coming of the Lord Dramatic Company to Kansas, 1869," The Kansas Historical Quarterly 23 (1957): 10–53.

---, "Theatre in Kansas, 1858–1868: Background For the Coming of

the Lord Dramatic Company to Kansas, 1869--Concluded," The Kansas Historical Quarterly 23 (1957): 191-203.

---, "Traveling Theatre in Kansas: The James A. Lord Chicago Dramatic Company, 1869-1871," The Kansas Historical Quarterly 23 (1957): 298-323.

---, "Traveling Theatre in Kansas: The James A. Lord Chicago Dramatic Company, 1869-1871--Concluded," The Kansas Historical Quarterly 23(1957): 401-438.

(7) Patricia Ann Mather, "The Theatrical History of Wichita, Kansas, 1872-1920," M.A. University of Kansas, 1950.

(8) Mona Birner, "A Chronological Record of Theatrical Activities in Lawrence, Kansas, between 1879 and 1911 as Reported in the Lawrence Newspapers," M.A. University of Kansas, 1962.

(9) George Meltzer, "Social Life and Entertainment on the Frontiers of Kansas, 1854-1890," M.A. Wichita State University, 1941. Pages 138-175 contain the theatrical portion and include information about Abilene, Atchison, Dodge City, Ellsworth, Emporia, Fort Riley, Fort Scott, Hays, Hutchinson, Leavenworth, Newton, and Topeka.

(10) James C. Malin, "Early Theatre at Fort Scott," The Kansas Historical Quarterly 24 (1958): 31-56.

Zida C. Ivey, "Early Theatre at Fort Atkinson," Wisconsin Stage 8 (1954-55): 8-10.

(11) Cuestas are hills with a steep face on one side and a gentle slope on the other; in the Osage Cuestas the steep slopes face east. Agriculture is more varied here than in other parts of the state with abundant woodlands, creeks, and meadows to support diverse options (Penner and Schmidt, 76).

(12) The Delaware of Missouri and Ohio, the Sauk and Fox of

Mississippi, the Ottawa of Ohio, and the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, and Piankashaw of Illinois and Missouri were among the Indian tribes relocated to lands adjacent the Shawnee. Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Clark presided over proceedings that enabled the United States government to secure these lands from the Kansa and Osage Indians (Zornow, 43-49).

(13) Dr. John T. Barton had conceived the idea of establishing a town near the center of the county for the purposes of a county seat.

> (14) Because the population in Olathe and Johnson county was predominantly proslavery, the town and county were spared any large part in the border war of '56-'58. By 1861 the political complexion of the population had changed completely and the city and county became overwhelmingly Republican, and this led the people of the city and county to expect their full share of trouble from the armed bands known to be across the line only ten miles distant. (Seaton, 114)

(15) Giffen's article entitled "The First Twenty Years" included in Blair's History of Johnson County is one of the more complete accounts of Olathe's early history.

(16) According to the Olathe centennial brochure, Quantrill "first destroyed the Olathe Herald newspaper thinking it was the Mirror. Before getting out of town, however, he destroyed a portion of the Mirror but failed to destroy the press and some of the type which had been hidden (26)."

(17) Editor John Giffen sold what was salvageable after the raid for "$306; original cost having been $3,500 (Andreas, 630)."

(18) Col. Hayes had been awarded the contract to erect the first building for the new site on land that he owned and had been developing for residential properties. The new stone building, a "structure 40 x 60 feet of three stories and a basement" (Olathe, 19) was completed in

November just as the newly organized board of trustees for the Institute were scheduled for their first meeting at the new location. The State then purchased the building and the twelve and one half acres of ground from the Col. for $15,000. With the first building complete and the re-organization finalized, the school was ready for occupancy on November 17, 1866. Other parties subsequently sold an additional 160 acres on which a farm was established for the school (Andreas, 629).

(19) Upon returning home, Col. and Mrs. Hayes were honored with an impromptu celebration reported in the March 18, 1865 Mirror:

> Last Saturday about 4 o'clock p.m. our citizens were greatly surprised and much delighted at the unexpected arrival at home of Lt. Col. Josiah E. Hayes and lady. . . . As soon as it was generally known that the Col. had really arrived our citizens concluded to give him and his lady a parade reception. As the time was short in which to make the necessary arrangements (only two hours) we were not prepared to witness such an outpouring of ladies and gentlemen as congregated at the hotel on last Saturday evening to welcome our distinguished fellow citizen. It was an entirely impromptu affair and tells with greater force than words are capable of expressing the high regard and sincere friendship in which Col. Hayes is held by the citizens of Johnson County. The house was crowded both upstairs and down, and the table had to be spread three times in order that all present might partake of supper . . . . After having partaken of their suppers the table was cleared, and Col. J. T. Burris delivered a welcoming speech which was a neat, impressive and pointed address, and reflected great credit upon the speaker. He was replied to in a touching manner by Col. Hayes who seemed to be almost overwhelmed by the spontaneous heartfelt greetings that were showered upon him by his old friends and associates. . . . We never witnessed a heartier reception and we are satisfied that all present enjoyed themselves in the highest degree. The compliment was well deserved and gratefully accepted.

(20) 60 couple were present at the Fourth of July dance in 1868 Mirror 9 July 1868; 50 couple were in attendance at the Olathe Social Orchestra Ball in 1879 (Mirror & News Letter 17 April 1879); 40 couple were present at the calico ball 1879 (Mirror & News Letter 22 May 1879).

(21) The ball given by the merry bachelors on Christmas eve was in every respect a success but it is known that Francis Hall

> happy throng and there were not less than two hundred persons present from which were taken 80 couple with thirty set on the floor at one time. . . (Mirror 26 December 1867).

(22) Prof. Carnes was reported to be in charge of the elocution classes by 1876.

(23) In the May 18, 1876 issue of the Mirror & News Letter the elocution class entertainment of May 11, 1876 was reviewed. The reporter was favorably impressed and was actively encouraging more local entertainments:

> We have had cause before to speak highly of Olathe talent, but never before was the reputation of the town better sustained than in this. . . . The entertainment throughout was excellent, and it is to be regretted that we can not have more home affairs of the kind. They are far better than imported institutions.

(24) The reporter for the Mirror & News Letter was impressed more so by the second performance of the Olathe Business College and encouraged the instructor to prepare more entertainments to be presented to the public:

> The commercial college entertainment on Thursday evening was excellent - even better than some of their previous efforts. The additional practice enabled the pupils to go through their respective parts more easily and smoothly than on the first trial of the week before. All did so well that it would be unjust to mention anyone without the others. As entertainment it was far superior to any of the traveling institutions that occasionally visit the city. The hall was filled, but owing to the excellent police arrangements there was no noise crowding or confusion. It is to be hoped that Prof. Poole will give us another entertainment of the kind at an early day (17 February 1876).

(25) The "old folk's exhibitions" sponsored by the Library Association cleared $32.20 for the purchase of materials (Mirror & News Letter 29 March 1877).

(26) Col. E. B. Temple who was producing The Union Spy in Olathe had played the production for 12 years earlier throughout Iowa and Kansas. Notices in the Gazette during the rehearsal period also men-

tioned productions of The Union Spy reviewed in the St. Paul Press and the Kalamazoo Telegraph (25 December 1879).

(27) Prof. J. Insco Williams presented a panorama of the Bible which included 4,000 yards of canvas at the M. E. Church for three nights in the fall of 1879 (Gazette 11 September 1879).

(28) The only other female groups to perform in Olathe were the Hibernian Blondes. They were the last group to play in American Hall before it was transformed into Hayes' Opera house and the only performance group to make it into the newspapers because of their misconduct. The following account is the story of their stay in Olathe from the April 29, 1880 issue of the Mirror & News Letter:

> The Hibernian Blondes gave a parade through the principal streets in Olathe on last Wednesday, and exhibited at American Hall at night. The performance was expected to be of the dance house and varieties order, but the Mayor having notified them that they could not have a license unless they gave a respectable performance the entertainment was without any very objectionable features, to the great disgust of many of the spectators. The troupe were so successful here they left the next morning without settling their bill at the hotel. The consequence was that a portion of their baggage was attached at the depot, and the officer would have obtained more property, but Madame Eugenie, the principal lady, seized a valise in each hand, jumped on the baggage car, and escaped to Kansas City. Those of our readers who wish to purchase a theatrical outfit will do well to attend the constable's sale.

(29) The building was sometimes referred to as Hayes Hall as well. It was later purchased, enlarged and operated as the American House by Peter Cochran and his son-in-law, Col. S. R. Burch (Olathe, 12).

(30) During the campaign the Republicans held a mass meeting in Olathe and at night pulled off a big torch light procession. What Republicans there were in town gathered on the corner of the square and put [John T.] Burris up on a dry goods box to make a speech as the procession passed, and he made one, which a year or two previous would have cost him his life. As the procession passed its members tried to drown his voice with groans and yells. Then they threatened to pull him down, and for a period of time a lively fight was in

> sight. However, the matter was compromised by an assault on a big Republican by the name of A. J. Hill, who made a run for a convenient stairway and caused the crows to scatter and forget to pull Burris down from his dry goods box. This was the first open defy on the part of Free State men in Johnson County. The Democratic ticket, needless to say, was elected. Although Colonel Hayes was not elected county treasurer this year, the Democratic county board gave him the contract for building the new county jail (Seaton, 114).

(31) Trustees were the town governing body and selected the mayor from among themselves.

(32) Andreas, in his History of the State of Kansas, reviews Hayes' military career as follows:

> In the fall of 1863, his regiment was ordered to Arkansas. It formed a part of Gen. Steele's command, which was attempting to from a junction with Gen. N.P. Banks, at Shreveport, La., when on the 30th of April, 1864, an engagement occurred between Gen. Steele's command and a large force of rebels at Jenkin's Ferry, Ark., ending in defeat of the Union forces. Early in the engagement, Col. Hayes was struck just below the knee, by a minie ball. The ball was split by striking against the bone, one part passing out of the leg, the other part passing around and above the knee joint, and up back of the thigh bone, nearly to the hip joint. The Union forces upon their retreat left the wounded upon the field, and all, Col. Hayes among them, became prisoners in the enemy's hands. His leg was amputated on the field, by Dr. Redfield of Fort Scott. He was at first taken to Camden, where he remained four months, suffering great pain and inconvenience from his wound. He was then removed to Shreveport La., where he remained until exchanged in February of 1864. . . . Mrs. Hayes, upon learning that her husband was wounded and a prisoner, immediately determined upon going to him. Neither could she be turned aside from her purpose by the earnest entreaties, persuasions and tears of her friends. After a hasty preparation, she started at once for Little Rock, and proceeding thence under a flag of truce to the rebel lines, she was permitted to go to Camden, where the Col. lay, traveling the whole distance, forty miles, through the enemy's country, with a rebel soldier as a driver. She remained with her husband until he was exchanged, and in all human probability, through her constant watchfulness and care, saved his life, and brought him home with her to their children and friends (632).

(33) The death of Col. Hayes shocked the town. "Every person . . . seemed to take upon himself the responsibility of giving the sad news further circulation, and in less than an hour after the telegram

arrived, everybody in town had heard of the death of Col. Hayes (17 March 1881)." The passages from his obituary and the report of the funeral services in the Mirror & News Letter suffice as a final statement from the town of Olathe and how they felt about the Col.:

> **Obituary.**
>
> Words can but feebly express the universal sorrow into which the entire community has been plunged by the sudden and unexpected death of Col. Josiah E. Hayes, nor is this sentiment a mere conventionality expressed on the demise of every good person, for Col. Hayes was a man who stood preeminent among his fellow men as a philanthropist; a man whose heart and hand were ever open to relieve the distress of the suffering, and in any enterprise that involved the upbuilding and advancement of Johnson County or the city of Olathe, he was always in the lead, and his abundant means were always ready to be applied in that direction. His life has been one of continual activity and no business enterprise has been too gigantic for his undertaking. No greater monument will arise to perpetuate his memory than the one of love in the hearts of his countrymen, nor no more fitting epitaph could be indicted than that inscribed in the hearts of this people, expressed by them in universal accord. "He was an honest man. . . .
>
> **The Funeral.**
>
> The lowering cloudy weather on Friday morning augmented the gloom in which the city was already enshrouded. The opera house in which Col. Hayes had so liberally appropriated his means to erect for the entertainment of the people of Olathe had been appropriately selected as the place for the last sad ceremonies. The stage was heavily draped in mourning, which was occupied only by the officiating clergymen. . . . The casket containing the remains were placed in front of the stage, while the choir occupied a position to the right. Both the auditorium and gallery were densely packed, but a solemn stillness pervaded the entire assembly. . . . Gov. St. John was greatly affected and came near breaking down in the midst of his address. He gave a short eulogy of Col. Hayes. The audience was then allowed to view the remains as they passed out of the room (17 March 1881).

(34) Col. Reed and his assistant, Jack Adell, were given the contract to repaint the interior in 1877. The December 13 issue of that year of the Mirror & News Letter claimed that Adell was "one of the finest fresco painters we have ever seen. It will pay anybody to visit the hall on the evening of the 25th to see the pretty pictures on the

ceiling."

(35) The following are the announcements which appeared in the various newspapers concerning the opening of the Hayes' Opera House:

> The Gulick Blaisdell guaranteed attraction No. 3 will on September 29 present their latest musical Hopscotch, a comic opera that has every where met with universal favor. The great comedians Mason and Sully, Lester and Williams, plus a full troupe of burlesque actors, vocalists and full chorus will appear. We advise our readers to secure seats at once, and there by avoid the rush that from present indications is inevitable. Our amusement loving people are promised a rare treat on next Wednesday evening by the entertainment announced for Hayes' Opera House to be given by the Gulick Blaisdell Company. The performance is a Comic opera, partaking somewhat of the character of Pinafore (Mirror & News Letter 23 September 1880).

And in the Gazette:

> On September 29th the Gulick-Blaisdell guaranteed attraction "No. 3" will appear in this city in the new musical oddity of "Hopscotch." Messrs. Mason and Sully, Lester and Williams, with a powerful supporting company, full chorus, brass band and opera orchestra, will participate in this fun producing entertainment. Messrs. Gulick & Blaisdell have four companies on the road, but none that are considered by competent judged to be superior to "Hop-Scotch." Seats can now be reserved without extra charge at Metclaf's book store (23 September 1880).

(36) An account of the founding of the town which appeared in History of Kansas by Andreas provides a much more detailed account of the fording of the Smoky Hill River:

> While crossing the Smoky Hill River, about one mile and a half east of Lindsborg,just as the old stage left the bank over it tipped, and men, horses, crackers, cheese, etc., were in confusion. Mr. Marlin and driver, who were on the top of the coach, were dumped into the river, and escaped by floundering around a little, up to their waists in the water. The inside passengers, however, were in a considerable predicament, for the old vehicle filled with water and Mr. Bishop had fallen on top of Mr. Skanke. Mr. Seitz crawled out of the back window of the coach, and after a serious struggle with the watery element the other two passengers effected an exit (813).

(37) Various accounts of the actual arrival at the town site and

the location of the government stone exist. One of the more common tales is that of a handkerchief:

> The men tied a handkerchief around the wheel of the wagon and counting the revolutions of the wheel, drove a mile west. After a search of about an hour, the located the marker at the corner of what now is Main Street and First Street.
>
> From there it was simple. Still using the handkerchief as a measure, the men drove due south from the stone they had just found, searched less than half an hour, and located the stone at what is now Kansas and Main (Anson, "Handkerchief").

(38) Rowland states that the county surveyor at the time, J. D. Chamberlain, was hired to survey the site, lay out the town into lots and blocks, and make a plat of the town. For this he was paid $48 (9).

(39) Some discrepancy exists as to when the actual town company was formed and when the town of McPherson was founded. Information cited in the dissertation at this point is based on multiple sources of the time period which all corroborate the June founding of the town and the July incorporation with the King City organization. However one source, Jessie Hill Rowland, states in an article entitled "Pioneer Days in McPherson," published for the town's 75th anniversary, that on "May 28, 1872 the Articles of Incorporation were signed by the following 12 men (9)."

(40) The men who originally signed the Articles of Incorporation in 1872, thus creating the town company, were also foresighted enough to guarantee themselves a place in McPherson's future. The original minutes of a town company meeting held on July 6, 1872 contain information about naming the town's streets. The last twelve streets to be named were offered to the original twelve members of the town company (Rowland 15). Nine of the twelve selected their own names and three selected names honoring someone else.

(41) During the celebration marking the town's seventy-fifth year of existence The McPherson Daily Republican published an article tracing

its own history back to the Messenger. Included in that article were the names of additional newspapers. Among those not listed in the text of the McPherson chapter were the Champion, the Enterprise, the Press and the Vim. "The Vim was a comic weekly magazine in the early 90's and was printed on a lithograph press, which McPherson then boasted (10 May 1947)."

(42) Although no other mention of its existence was found during the research for this dissertation, a previous Greenback newspaper referred to as the Star was mentioned in the March 12, 1880 issue of the Freeman: "We understand that George McClintick has purchased the Greenback Star office.

(43) The following article from the February 27, 1879 issue of the Independent is a more complete listing of the county voting:

> The meeting was one of the largest held in this place and the shouts and cheers that rent the air showed plainly the happiness felt by the people of this county over the result. . . . McPherson Township had 318 votes for, none against. Some of the rest of the townships were just the opposite. 110 against none in favor, 104 against and 3 in favor of. Just depended on where they were at, pretty well divided. Total votes cast 2,803 with a 298 majority in favor of the bonds.

(44) The press in McPherson used the initials K. P. when referring to the Kansas Pacific, which was the state's portion of the national road, the Union Pacific.

(45) Governor St. John was invited to speak as was President Hayes who was to be in the area at that time (Freeman 12 September 1879).

(46) The Union Hotel was considered to be a "veritable palace on the plains, complete with steam-heat [and] electric lights . . . On the first floor, the hotel once had a 'Persian Room,' complete with a baby

grand piano and crystal chandelier (Seibel)." the 1887 Atlas of Kansas contains a drawing of the state legislature shown gathered around the dining tables at the banquet provided for them in February 1887.

(47) Calico balls were created to give women the opportunity to attend social dances in their more comfortable cotton calico dresses instead of the more attractive yet uncomfortable gowns required at "legitimate" balls.

(48) Necktie socials were a variation on the calico ball. At these dances women would bring a necktie fashioned from the same fabric used in the dress they wore to the event. Upon arrival, the men were "shown the neckties, each man put on the tie of his choice and discovered who his partner for the evening was by finding the woman whose gown matched his tie (Republican 10 May 1947)."

(49) The opera hall will be examined in the section of this chapter labeled "Prior Locations" and will be consistently referred to as the opera hall from this point forward in the McPherson chapter. The opera hall opened in December, 1880; the McPherson Opera House opened in January, 1889.

(50) The February 20, 1884 edition of the Independent reported that glass balls and 200 pigeons had been secured for the shoot.

(51) The editor of the Independent offered the following explanation of the newest rage:

> "Mum sociables" are becoming very popular in the neighboring counties and in the eastern part of the state. The attendants are charged ten cents admission and five cents for every word spoken by them while at the party. A fellow can sit in the corner and hug his gal or bite her ear, but n'ary whisper must escape his lips (29 November 1877).

(52) In his book, Historical Atlas of McPherson County, Raymond Flory explains the

> early settlement of McPherson County was heavily influenced by Swedish Lutherans who settled in the northern townships and by Russian Mennonites who settled in the southern townships. . . . It is interesting to note that for most of the townships in the county the majority of settlers follow the normal migration pattern (32).

Flory continues to explain that "the demography of Kansas is significantly shaped by the movement of people from the states north of the Ohio River."

(53) Managers of the opera hall were Judge Handback and Col. Prouty. They announced the Union Lecture and Entertainment Course in November, 1881. This course was the package of entertainments that traveled the circuit among the following towns of central Kansas: Wamego, Junction City, Abeline, Salina and McPherson. Their hopes for McPherson as a member of the circuit were highlighted in the Freeman's November 11, 18881 issue:

> The managers, intend to arrange for the appearance, next season in the same circuit of Emma Abbott's Opera Company, or some other operatic troupe of equal celebrity and popularity. All these cities have fine opera houses and there is no doubt of the ability of Messrs. Handback and Prouty to affect what they promise in the line of operas. . . . They have engaged superior talent, and in making their selection have considered the taste of only the educated and the refined. Let us see if McPherson cannot be made the banner city in the support of Handback and Prouty's commendable efforts to properly entertain and interest the people.

(54) "The company had planned to sell 350 shares of stock at $100, but not all shares were sold, so $18,812 had to be borrowed from the bank (Mines 19-20).

(55) Deeds entered on January 10, 1887 recorded the sale of lots 7 and 8 of block 91 by C. and Mary A. Forrell to the McPherson Opera House Company for $3,600. Lot 9 of block 91 was sold to the company by A. H. and Mary Irvin for $2,500 on the same day (McPherson County Abstract Company 0007).

Abstract Company 0007).

(56) Schaffer's work was familiar to the McPherson community. He had built a house for E. G. Clarke as well as having designed the main building and a dormitory for the Brethren college in town.

(57) Included in the designs were the first plans for a building to be completely furnished with electric lights. Electricity was furnished to the entire community in 1887 (Republican 9 September 1887) but by the time the opera house opened, problems still existed. Each time the opera house powered up for a production, lights at the college would dim.

(58) The contract for the overall erection of the structure was awarded to general contractor W. G. Reynolds (Republican 15 June 1888). Ellison and Linn were awarded the contract for the stone basement (Democrat 20 April 1888), McPherson Planing Mill was awarded the "contract to make the doors, windows and frames for the new opera house (Republican 8 June 1888)," and Jake McKenzie was contracted for the brick work.

(59) Excavation was finished (Democrat 27 April 1888) or in the "finishing touches" (Republican 27 April 1887) by the end of April 1888 stage. The May 4, 1888 issue of the Republican announced that the "stone cutters [were] 'dressing' stone" and the Democrat stated the "stone work almost completed" in its July 13, 1888 edition. By July 6 the carpenters had begun their work and in the July 13 issue of the Republican notice was given of the "first floor joist of the opera house" being laid in place. Brick work was well underway by the printing of the Democrat's July 20 edition; "the newspaper duly noted the fancy brick, which cost as much as $6.50 each (Mines 20)." Final construction was completed in early January, 1889 as "W. G. Reynolds, Contractor, will complete his contract on the opera house this week (Democrat 4 January

ing in their January 11, 1889 issue: "Painting and frescoing will be completed today. Scenery and wings are in place. Railing around balcony and boxes is up. To be done - heating apparatus, lights, chairs."

(60) The June 8, 1888 edition of the Republican state that an "old gentleman is writing a 5-act drama for home talent. It will be done by the time the new opera house opens." The Republican reported that Emma Abbott would open the building (22 June 1888). During the confusion concerning the cancellation of Abbott's company due to a death, there was a report of the opera house being opened by Lizzie Evans (Republican 18 January 1889). However by the next week both Republican and Democrat were announcing the appearance of the Modoc Club of Topeka as the opening engagement(25 January 1889).

(61) The following architectural students prepared studies of the McPherson Opera House as partial fulfillment of requirements in their plans of study: James A. Gustafson, "The Opera House Block; McPherson, Kansas"; Kevin Greischar, "The McPherson Opera House"; and Kevin Miller, "The McPherson Opera House."

(62) The following firms have prepared reports for various groups interested in preserving the McPherson Opera House: Woods and Starr, Associates, Architects/Engineers, "Feasibility Study on the McPherson Opera House, McPherson, Ks."; Fox & Company, "Proposal from Fox & Company To Serve as Feasibility Consultants for the McPherson Opera House Committee, McPherson, Kansas, March 1982"; and Osborne Consulting, "Community Support, Feasible Uses and Perceived Inherent Value of the McPherson Opera House - A Market Analysis for: The McPherson Opera House Preservation Company."

(63) The basement of the opera house was connected by an under-

ground tunnel to the Merchants Hotel (Ward 27). This tunnel would allow for the performers at the opera house to arrive for their performances without being detained by the curious locals. It also allowed for a hasty retreat should the performance not live up to the expectations of the audience.

(64) Heithecker had been the manager of the first opera house prior to undertaking the new McPherson Opera House.

(65) Records show little activity by those countries claiming rights to the land until 1720 when a Spanish contingency from Santa Fe was dispatched to drive French Canadian trappers from the northern plains. There are reports that the band of forty-two men crossed the Arkansas River close to the site of Garden City (Grimsley 57).

(66) The 1886 Directory of Finney County contains a succinct history of the various treaties in which the land now covered by Garden City was involved:

> The territory embraced in the limits of Finney county was once a part of two republics. As a member of the commonwealth of Kansas, all that part lying north of the Arkansas river was a part of the Louisiana Purchase made from France, April 30, 1803, by President Jefferson. . . . This purchase included all of Kansas . . . except that part lying west of the 23rd meridian (which passes north and south just east of Dodge City) and south of the Arkansas river. This part so situated was ceded to and became a part of the Spanish possessions in North America. When Mexico became independent in 1824 it became a part of that Republic, and when Texas gained her independence in 1836, she claimed it as a part of her domain, and this claim was confirmed by treaty between the United States and Mexico in 1848.
>
> It was finally purchased from Texas by the United States in 1850. Thus while that part of the county north of the Arkansas river became part of the United States in 1803, that south of the river belonged successively to Spain, Mexico, Texas, and finally was made a part of the United State, only in 1850 (14-15)."

(67) The trail reached the Arkansas River at 270 miles from Independence, MO (Brown 29). It was the sight of a large campground

known as Big Bend in reference to the "big bend" in the Arkansas River. Today it is a portion of the southwest corner of Ellinwood, Kansas (Franzwa 100).

(68) The roadbed of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was identical to that of the Santa Fe Trail once it left the cut-off point for the Mountain branch.

(69) The 1886 Directory of Finney County stated that the "first settlers were in nearly every case in the employ of the railroad (Directory 17).

(70) Blanchard gives a brief description of the description of the land grant passed by congress that induced so many settlers to venture into western Kansas:

> It may be stated that the heads of families, or persons over 21 years of age, were entitled under the acts of congress to 480 acres of land, 160 as a homestead, 160 as pre-emption, and 160 as timber claim. Only 320 acres, however, could be entered at the same time. Five years' residence was required on a homestead claim before patent could be issued. The settler had six months after he filed on land before establishing a residence and commencing his improvements. He might also be temporarily absent six months. Pre-emption required immediate settlement. After six months, by paying $1.25 per acre, patent could be secured. Within limits of railroad land, $2.50 per acre was paid. No settlement was required under the timber culture act. The claimant was required to break five acres of land during the first year, five acres during the second year, and cultivate the first five, and the third year plant five acres to tree, tree seeds or cuttings. All this could be done by an agent, a non-resident could acquire title to land under the provision of this act. Since there was only one timber claim in each government township, and it could be owned by a non-resident. this class of claims were soon all taken up. But the job of plowing and cultivating the timber claims supplied some of the settlers with money so they could stay on their homesteads. In many cases, in lieu of payment for their labor, they were given title to the timber claim.

(71) Rice County is the first county to the west of McPherson County in central Kansas, with Sterling being located in the center of the

county along the southern border.

(72) A description of the first claims filed on the Garden City site appeared in the Directory of Finney County from 1886:

> James R. Fulton settled on the southwest quarter of section 18, township 24, south of range 32, west of the 6th principal meridian.
>
> W. D. Fulton located on the southeast quarter of section 18, township 24, south of range 32 west.
>
> J. A. Stevens' homestead was on the northeast quarter of section 18, township 24, south, range 32 west. About the same time Chas. Van Trump, a surveyor at Dodge City, filed on what he supposed was the northwest quarter of the section. His filing, however, was on the J. A. Stevens' quarter. The summer following a Mr. Corse took the southwest quarter as a timber claim.
>
> In the early spring of 1879 C. J. Jones arrived and obtained possession of the Van Trump-Corse quarter. In the spring of 1878 other settlers arrived and settled near the town (17-18).

(73) The area of Sequoyah county was 864 square miles with a population of 568 in 1880 (Directory, 19).

(74) Holly Hope included a concise history of the irrigation canals around Garden City:

> In southwest Kansas, though, it was the businessman, rather than the inventor, who, by concentrating on the consumption of available water rather than the production of new water, would win the patronage of farmers and a name for Garden City as an irrigation center. As early as 1879 the first canal was built along the Arkansas River. Other canals followed, extending for ten, twenty, and even forty miles. . . . They were not very successful: the crude canals clogged with weeds, much of the water evaporated, and the flow of the river was inconsistent--from the flash floods to a modest stream. To make matters worse, by 1902 farmers upstream in eastern Colorado had started irrigating their crops with water from the Arkansas, lessening the flow even more. . . .In 1905 the U. S. Reclamation Service approved a major project to pump the water underneath the riverbed out into the ditches. By 1908 a central power station and twenty-three pump stations, placed at thousand-feet intervals, were in operation. Elsewhere in the area windmills flecked the landscape, pumping water from as much as ninety feet below and putting the tireless wind to use (12-13).

(75) A lengthy description of Jones' Block appeared in the 1886 Finney County Directory. Portions of that description follow:

This magnificent structure is built of limestone having a marble whiteness. One hundred feet of the building is two stories in height, and the remaining one hundred and twenty five feet is three stories, and is known as the "Buffalo Hotel." This hotel contains 80 guest rooms, all well lighted and ventilated. An interior plan, unique and ingenious, is the characteristic individuality and most striking feature of the Buffalo house. The broad and easy main stairway, ascending from the street, opens on the second floor into a court fifty feet in length, sixteen feet in width and thirty-five feet in height to a glass roof, through which a flood of light pours into and permeates the entire interior of the house. This spacious and beautiful court is surrounded on both floors by guest rooms,the windows of which open into it, and these rooms are again surrounded by a spacious corridor entered on the second floor from both ends of the court and on the third floor by stair ways running up from the court center to the right and left hand. A stairway leading from the court to the dining room, and also affording direct communication with the office, is a great convenience. Outside of the corridors come the rooms with windows which look to all parts of the compass, commanding an extensive view of our prairie landscape. The court and corridors thus provide a very light, airy, cheerful and accessible interior, many guests preferring the rooms lighted by the court, and which in the evening especially, seem cozy and homelike to a degree seldom experienced in hotel life. A roughened glass section of the court floor, successfully lights the interior of the large billiard room in the rear of the office on the ground floor. The court has marked accoustic properties, and on occasions of social festivities, which the hotel will doubtless frequently witness, this center with its surrounding rooms and adjacent corridors, will afford a novel and brilliant promenade.

Double parlors, furnished in Body Brussels carpets, silk plush and hand carved cherry sets, and curtains to correspond, look out upon Grant avenue, and provide a suitable salon for guests and callers. The rooms are supplied throughout with new carpets and furniture, the Queen Anne style prevailing, and the entire cost of furnishing them foots up about $10,000. The cost of the building is $40,000, and adding the value of the real estate the entire building and furniture of the hotel can be reasonably estimated at $50,000.

The first floor is occupied by the main stairway, office, dining room, billiard hall and sample room, kitchen, laundry, and several large stores. The dining room is a beauty, finely lighted from the south and west, and supplied with entirely new furniture and table service throughout (57 & 59).

(76) The editor of the Cultivator & Herdsman, Judge L. D. Bailey, was highly respected and was praised as "a believer in the west as an

agricultural country, and with his Kansas Cultivator is doing much for the farmers of Finney county and western Kansas generally (Directory 42)."

(77) Today Sherlock is known as Holcomb, Kansas and is located approximately five miles to the northwest of Garden City along the Arkansas River.

(78) The following note appeared to substantiate the record numbers of people migrating to Garden City and other point to the south and west:

> As in evidence of the tremendous immigration to this country, from the 24th of September to January 31st there were 3000 persons registered at the Kankakee House. Considering that this is only one of five good hotels besides restaurants, boarding houses, lodging houses, etc. it is plain to be seen that there have been a few people in town lately (Irrigator 9 January 1886).

(79) "C. J. Jones one of two men going to Oklahoma to bring back some of the 500 people that were there trying to get lands (Sentinel 25 March 1885)."

(80) John A. Stevens was involved with a number of businesses in Garden City during the boom years. He and

> W. E. Dabney have pooled capital and experience and will build a large hot house on north Main Street. . . . They will also lay off a handsome half acre park, which will be cultivated and made altogether lovely. The hot house will be 20 by 40 feet. . . and as soon as completed it will be occupied by Mr. Dabney with his flowers and plants, to which will be added a far greater variety, including some tropical plants. . . . He proposes to go into the nursery business quite extensively and will establish the "Garden City Nursery" (Irrigator 29 May 1886).

With the completion of the opera house block near, Stevens formed a partnership with Levi Wilkinson and Mr. Nelson to begin a dry goods business that was located in the northern of the store fronts on the street level of the opera house (Irrigator 18 September 1886).

(81) The Jones referred to here is a man who was the postmaster for Garden City, not C. J. Jones.

(82) The following was the notice that appeared in the Sentinel after the second Jubilee Concert:

> The Jubilee Concert given on Thursday evening by Prof. Ward and the children of our city was a great success. The audience was a large one as well as an enthusiastic one, and they are . . considering the brief drill and training that the young folks had received they acquitted themselves admirably. That there is a great deal of musical talent among them all who heard them will justify. Those who attended were delighted with the entertainment, and thoroughly satisfied that they got the worth of their money. Prof. Ward certainly has the faculty developed in a high degree of training children to sing and his efforts in this instance have been remarkably successful (9 December 1885).

(83) A number of sources made note of the amount of wild game available in the area:

- "Antelope are plentiful six miles north of this place. (Paper 3 April 1879)."

- "William Moore, living north of town, seeing several buffalo not far from his house, got his shotgun and shot one of them, then the buffalo turned and run him into the house, and then walked quietly off (Paper 5 June 1879)."

- "A great many antelope are being killed and brought to town (Paper 4 September 1879)."

(84) The ball and reception, given by the Sequoyah Club last evening, was the finest society event which has ever occurred in this city. The elegant rooms of the club were filled to overflowing. Among the guests were Governor Martin and other visiting State officers. Dancing began at 9 o'clock and continued until a late hour. Supper was furnished by the Sequoyah Hotel, situated across the street, and was a miracle of culinary art (Sentinel 13 October 1886).

(85) The following is representative of the types of literary programs presented by the society:

> Garden City now boasts a Literary Society and a Lecture Course. The former includes debates, orations, declamations, essays, readings, music and a circulating library. Here is presented a field broad enough to give free scope to the diverse talents of our little city. The Society meets on Monday evening, at he Congregational Church and one can spend an winter's evening there with pleasure and profit. The Lecture Course is to be run by home talent, which is an excellent idea, as it will be the means of drawing out and developing much latent talent here abouts.
>
> The Course was inaugurated two weeks ago at the Congregational Church, by Elder McKeever, in a lecture of much force, harmonizing Moses' account of creation with the science of Geology (Sentinel 4 February 1885).

(86) The following are notices for two scheduled meetings for literary societies. Are they the same group?

> The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle will meet at the Kankakee House this evening. A full attendance is requested as an interesting time is anticipated. A full program has been prepared. They will commence promptly at 8:00 (Sentinel 28 April 1885).

> The Chautauqua Literary Circle met in the residence of the Coverdales (Irrigator 16 January 1886).

(87) Early in 1886 the Garden City and Foster's Celebrated New York Circus were in negotiations for the circus to make Garden City its winter home. If a contract had been finalized the circus would have built a number of new buildings for their purposes and would have shared them with the city. The following is a brief section of the notice that appeared in the January 20 and 27 issues of the Sentinel:

> The seating capacity will be 1,300 and the ring for performers will be 40 feet in diameter. There will be a portable stage 29 feet square, and a cage room 40 x 24 feet. The kitchen and bedrooms for the accommodation of company and employees will be 40 x 24 feet, and the stalls for the ring stock will be the same size. The expenditures of the company will amount to $1,200 to $1,400 all of which will be expended in our city for provisions, and the hay, grain and meats for the use of animals. The people which it will bring in will not expend less than $40,000 to $60,000, which will also be distributed among our people. The institution will be

> properly heated and well ventilated, and will give exhibitions twice a week, making a great attraction. . . . The agents of the circus and museum property offered the use of the amphitheater, if erected here, to the public for church services, and Sabbath school use; also for lectures; meetings of all kinds when educational or public interests are at stake.

(88) The following appeared in the Sentinel the week following the close of the exposition and summarizes the magnitude of the event:

> People found that the crowd in Garden City on Wednesday was astonishing, but the number of people who crowded the streets and exposition grounds yesterday, may well be considered enormous. Every hotel, every boarding house, every vacant room in the city was crowded by the influx of strangers to the city on Wednesday night's trains. The corridors in the hotels were lined with cots, beds were placed in sample and billiard rooms, and three in a bed was a common thing. Everything in the shape of a bed was in high demand and many men were glad to get tables to lie on. The scene on the streets throughout the day, wherein the sidewalks were jammed with people on the streets with vehicles, was a site which even Garden City never expected to see. Every means of conveyance in town was pressed into service to carry the people to the exposition. The streetcars were loaded down all day, many of them with 8 or 10 men on the roof. Drays fitted up with seats along the side were packed full of men and women bent on getting to the show. Transfer wagons filled with men and boys standing up and holding fast to each other to keep from falling out, farmers wagons, hacks, stages, omnibuses, surreys, carryalls, spring wagons and dog carts, all crowded with people, made a perfect string to the exposition grounds, and ground the road into a seemingly bottomless abyss of dust. A careful estimate, made from data from the best sources, placed the number of visitors who have come to the city since Monday morning at 25,000 people. The result of bringing so many thousands here at this great gathering will be felt for good years to come (20 October 1886).

(89) The machinery used to control the gas in the opera house fascinated the public. The following notice appeared in the September 1, 1886 issue of the Sentinel:

> The combination gas machine for Stevens' Opera House is an immense affair. Its motis operandi as we understand it is as follows: A cylinder filled with water is kept turning by means of heavy weights which are wound up. The cylinder forces air through a pipe to a large tank of gasoline, which is embedded in the ground 30 feet from the opera house. This generates gas which passes out of another pipe into the gas mains in the building. The gasoline tank is about four

> feet deep and eight feet in diameter, though it is never kept filled, as it requires a large vacuum above the liquid to form the gas. The weight which runs the machine is a large drum filled with stone weighing nearly eight thousand pounds. When wound up the machine will run through one evening. Cases have been known when these machines have been neglected and the gas has gone out in the middle of an entertainment. It is to be hoped that no such occurrence will happen at the Stevens' Opera House.

(90) The April 24, 1886 issue of the Irrigator recorded that a local firm, P. H. Hall Construction Company, received the bid for everything on the opera house except the stage "which will be built under the supervision of competent authority without regard to cost."

(91) Larry Fowler conducted an interview with P. A. Burtis on July 20, 1969 for his master's thesis History of the Stevens Opera House, Garden City, Kansas 1886–1929. Burtis was the son of A. H. Burtis, third owner of the Stevens Opera House. All further information credited to Fowler is from the interviews he conducted with Burtis.

(92) New stage scenery cost approximately $800 and was described in the 18 October 1886 Daily Irrigator:

> L. T. Close and Company, celebrated scenic artist of Kansas City are the designers and have displayed their usual good taste and ability. Mr. C. L. McFarland who is representing the firm here and superintending the placing of the scenery says that Garden City without a doubt has as fine a setting of scenery as there is in the state it being equaled by only one other house, that being the Crawford in Topeka. There are twelve complete settings as follows: horizon, wood, landscape, garden, cut wood, parlor, chamber, oak chamber, kitchen, prison, and rocky pass. By combining these over one hundred different scenes can be presented and much credit is due to Mr. McFarland for the excellent manner in which he has accomplished his portion of the work. There is no play, be it ever so difficult and scenery so gorgeous that can not be placed on the boards at Stevens Opera House in a satisfactory manner.

(93) Garden City's opera house manger, Will Burgess, was elected president of the new association that served the following towns: Newton Hutchinson, Kinsley, Kingman, Anthony, Harper, Caldwell, Wellington,

Winfield, Arkansas City, Larned, Dodge City, Garden City and Great Bend (Sentinel 1 December 1886).

(94) The former circuit had been headquartered in Topeka with L. M. Crawford as the manager (Sentinel 17 November 1886).

(95) By 1901 twenty-three such towns dotted the main east-west line of the Santa Fe Railroad.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

List of professional acting companies which performed in Olathe, McPherson and Garden City.

OLATHE

Enoch Arden Combination
May 17, 18, 19 & 20, 1876
Two Orphans
Enoch Arden
Fanchon, the Cricket

Simon's Comedy Company
December 1 & 2, 1876

The Globe Theatrical Company
May 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11, 1877
Lucretia Borgia
Man and Wife

Golden's Grand Dramatic Troupe
March 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, & 21, 1878
Our Boys
Divorced
Rose Cottage, or The Beautiful Fiend

The Carrie Plunkett Troupe
December 16, 17 & 18, 1878
A Celebrated Case
Rose Cottage, or The Beautiful Fiend

The Western Theatre Company
February 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 & 27, 1879

Forbes' Dramatic Company
November 3 & 4, 1879
Uncle Tom's Cabin
Black Diamond

Mitchell's Grand Dramatic Company
January 12, 13 & 14, 1880

The Wallace Sisters' Combination
January 17, 1880

The Alvin Joslyn Comedy Company
April 11, 1880

The Gulick Blaisdell Company
September 29, 1880
HopScotch

The Roshelle Dramatic Company
October 4 & 5, 1880
Ingomar
Love or Honeymoon

Forbes' Dramatic Company
December 1, 1880
Black Diamonds

MCPHERSON

Pardey's Comedy Company
December 12, 1879

Beedle and Prindle Dramatic and Humorous Company
October 31 & November 1, 1881

The Louie Lord Company
November 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 & 26, 1881
The Celebrated Case
The Dainties
For-Get-Me-Not
Hazel Kirke
Uncle Tom's Cabin
Ten Nights in a Bar Room
M'liss

S. Draper's Magnificent Company
January 20 & 21, 1882
Uncle Tom's Cabin

The Carner Herkimer Comedy Company
October 11, 1882
November 14 & 15, 1882
Rose Dale or The Gypsy Secret

The Louie Lord Company
October 30, 31, November 1, 2, 3 & 4, 1882
The Hidden Hand
Lea, the Jewish Maiden
Our Boys
East Lynne

Mason's and Morgan's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Company
November 25, 1882
Uncle Tom's Cabin

Emma Leland Company
November 30, December 1 & 2, 1882

May Wheeler Comedy Company
January 25, 1883

The Chicago Comedy Company
March 30, 1883
Black Diamonds

Claire Scott Troupe
April 20, 1883
Lucretia Borgia

The Chicago Comedy Company
June 28, 1883
Divorced

John Dillon
November 14, 1883
State's Attorney

Mattie Williams Troupe
November 22, 1883

Whitley's Original Hidden Hand Company
November 30, 1883
The Hidden Hand

Jennie Woltz Troupe
December 24, 25 & 26, 1883
Josephine, the Daughter of the Regiment
Dora
Josh Whitcomb

Louie Lord Company
January 28, 29 & 30, 1884
Linwood Case
Mad Cap Peg
For-Get-Me-Not

Robert A. Neff's Original Chicago Comedy Company
March 14 & 15, 1884

The Double Mammoth "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Company
March 26, 1884
Uncle Tom's Cabin

The Edwin Clifford Troupe
March 27 & 28, 1884
The Galley Slave
The Planter's Wife

The Edwin Clifford Troupe
May 16 & 17, 1884

June 4, 1884
Black Diamonds

Waite's Union Square Comedy Company
September 5 & 6, 1884
My Partner
Mountain Rose

The Edwin Clifford Troupe
September 29, 30, October 1, 2, 3 & 4, 1884
The Planter's Wife
Davey Crockett
Peril, or Love at the Long Branch
The Vigilantes

The Boston Theatre Company
October 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18, 1884
Miss Multon

The Louie Lord Company
November 6, 7 & 8, 1884
A Member of Congress
Galatea
Comrades

The Jennie Bowen Opera Company
November 25, 26, 27, 28 & 29, 1884

The Maude Atkinson Dramatic Company
December 4 & 5, 1884
The Lady of Lyons

The Bartley Campbell "Galley Slave" Company
January 3, 1885
The Galley Slave

The Faye Templeton Company
January 24, 1885
Mascot

The Boston Double "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Company
February 7, 1885
Uncle Tom's Cabin

The Louise Sylvester Company
February 27, 1885
Little Ferret

Graves and Kempton's Comedy Company
March 28, 1885

McCord's Comedy Company (The Plain Every Day Comedy Company)
August 24 & 25, 1885
M'liss, or The Judge from Arkansaw

Maude Atkinson and Her Challenged Dramatic Company
September 28, 29, 30, October 1, 2 & 3, 1885
Fanchon, the Cricket

Robert McWade Company
October 8, 1885
Rip Van Winkle

The Louise Sylvester Company
October 10, 1885
A Hot Time

Laura Dainty
October 14, 1885
A Mountain Pink

The Golden Company
November 26 (?), 1885

The Double "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Company
March 25, 1886
Uncle Tom's Cabin

The Little Nugget Company
April 12, 1886
Little Nuggets

Payton's Challenge Comedy Company
May 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 & 29, 1886
Joshua Whitcomb
Colleen Bawn
Two Orphans
Fanchon, the Cricket
The Octoroon
Kathleen Mavoureen

Barlow Dramatic Company
September 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18, 1886
A Mountain Pink
Bob, the Newsboy
Miner's Wife
John Logan's Curse
Hazel Kirke

Andrew's Opera Company
September 24, 1886
Mikado

The Madison Square Dramatics Company
October 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9, 1886
Danites
Two Orphans
Peck's Bad Boy

The Chicago Comedy Company
November 1 & 2, 1886
The Octoroon

The Louie Lord Company
November 24, 25, 26 & 27, 1886
Linwood Case
Member of Congress
A Modern Godiva

The Clare Patie Dramatic Company
December 5, 6 & 7 1887

Louise Litta Company
December 29, 1887
Chipsa

The Spectacular "Hidden Hand" Company
January 4, 1888
The Hidden Hand

C. A. Gardener's Company
February 13 & 14, 1888
Only a Farmer's Daughter
Moriarty the Corporal

The Madison Square Dramatics Company
April 30, 1888

The Adelane Payne Drama Company
May 31, 1888
Wages of Sin

The Modoc Club of Topeka
January 28, 1889
The Chimes of Normandy, or The Belles of Corneville

GARDEN CITY

The Chicago Comedy Company
April 4 & 5 1884
Van the Virginian

The Tally Ho Company
December 11 & 12, 1885
Tally Ho

The Simon Comedy Company
February 25, 26, 27, March 1, 2, & 3, 1886
Baron Ludwig, or The Female Detective
Oliver Twist
Rip Van Winkle
De Force, or Lost and Won
Toby Twinkle the Conjurer
Martha Gibbs the Factory Girl
My Mother-in-Law

The Little Nugget Company
March 9 & 10, 1886
Little Nuggets

The Simon Comedy Company
March 22 & 23, 1886 (held over to April 3, 1886)
The Octoroon
Damon and Pythias
Under the Gaslight

McFadden's Boston Double "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Company
April 12 & 13, 1886
Uncle Tom's Cabin

Mr. & Mrs. George S. Knight and Co.
May 15, 1886
Over the Garden Wall

The Bella Moore Company
June 23, 1886
A Mountain Pink
Danites

Andrew's Opera Company
October 6 & 7, 1886
Mikado

The Louie Lord Company
October 11, 12 & 13, 1886
For-Get-Me-Not
The Linwood Case
A Modern Godiva

The Chicago Ideal Opera Company
October 14, 15 & 16, 1886
Fantinitza the Sorcerer
Chimes of Normandy
La Mascotte

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