

Coldwater Centennial Notebook
Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

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FROM THE MAYOR...

BEFORE THE BEGINNING

The town of Coldwater is located in parts of four sections. The legal description is the SW1/4 of Section 7, the NW1/4 of Section 18 in Township 32, Range 18 west; and the SE1/4 of Section 12, the NE 1/4 Section 13 in Township 32, Range 19 west.

There are several accounts of people in the area before it was chartered as the town of Coldwater. If they did not actually walk within what is now the city limits, they were close. In 1843, Col. Jacob Snively and 176 mounted Texans crossed from "the northern Oklahoma line to the Arkansas (river), in southwest Edwards County." He was in pursuit of Mexican traders who had robbed Texas citizens.

During the Kiowa and Comanche Campaign of 1860, Lt. J.E.B. Stuart and Companies F, G, H, and K of the 1st Cavalry crossed Comanche County. Stuart kept both an official record and an informal diary of the expedition. On June 6th their camp was in the vicinity of present Coldwater. 1860 has been chronicled as a dry year; Stuart noted that grass and water were scarce. George Bent, a mixed-blood Cheyenne, was trading in the camp of the Kiowa's and Prairie Apaches on Bluff Creek in the winter of 1866-67. He then moved twenty miles east of that location to a Cheyenne camp.

In the fall of 1868, Lt. Col. George A. Custer of the 7th Cavalry went from Bluff Creek across to the Medicine Lodge River and back. Troops operated from camps at various locations on Cavalry Creek. Capt. Albert Barnitz, in charge of Troop G, wrote several letters to his wife Jennie from "camp on Cavalry Creek" between September 27 and October 21. He mentions delightful weather, numerous buffalo, wild turkey, sage hens, and raccoon (for breakfast!); also several Indian skirmishes, a shortage of supplies, and Custer's dogs killing a wolf.

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George F. McClure, David Armstrong, and a surveying party of 14, ran sub-divisional lines and marked section and quarter section corners in February of 1871. On the fifteenth, they used a 15x10x5 inch limestone marker at the corner of sections 17, 18, 19, and 20 in Township 32, Range 18 west. The corner of sections 7, 8, 17, and 18 was marked on the sixteenth, "as per instructions": post set, charred stake deposited, raised mound with pits. Corners of the quarter sections were marked in the same manner.

On February 20th quarter section corners of 13, 24, and 12, 3 were marked in Township 32 Range 19 west. McClure's general description included the same remark for both townships: "There is no stone or timber in this township. It is better adapted to grazing than cultivation." This survey was made so the Osage Reserve and diminished Trust Lands could be opened for pre-emption to settlers. Before they finally came in large numbers, there were buffalo hunters, the military, and the cattlemen.

Henry Raymond was a buffalo hunter who kept a fine account of his activities. In July of 1873 he was camped on Bluff Creek, "below the mouth of main Kiowa." On Friday, August 1, he went to "Nuskatunga" (creek) on a scout to find buffalo. This was when the great herds had already been thinned out.

There are records of military scouts and marches from Fort Dodge and Fort Supply through the area in the middle and later 1870s. Mainly these were to scout for signs of Indians.

Cattlemen started coming to stay as early as 1874. In September of 1878 some Northern Cheyenne Indians left Fort Reno in Oklahoma, and started the trip that led to the "Last Indian Raid in Kansas". They entered the state on the southern border of Comanche County. Several cowboys died in this raid, including two from the Comanche Pool, organized in 1880 or 1881. The northwest corner of the area controlled by this group is where the Coldwater town site was later located.

C.M. Cade, George Vickers, Tim Shields, Sam S. Sisson, and J. Paul Grove left Harper County in the spring of 1884 to locate a town near the center of Comanche County. So many of the government surveyor's markers were destroyed that they started their survey from the Kansas state line. Worried about the danger of rattlesnakes, they partook freely of their "snake medicine." As a result they missed the center, then went east and found a township corner. C.C. Tincher, of the Nescatunga Townsite Company, joined them in a meal and the necessary snake medicine, and then joined them in their venture.

They found C.D. Bickford on Cavalry Creek about three miles southwest of their town site. He and D.L. Cline had already started a town, but gave it up and joined Cade's group when Bickford was allowed to name the new town Coldwater for his hometown in Michigan.

Accounts vary as to how far the earlier town had progressed. Some say a tent and supplies, one a tent and a building; another says three or four buildings. Bickford did construct buildings there later, as well as a 14x18 foot frame building where the Peoples State Bank now stands (1984).

IN THE BEGINNING

From a population of 15 on July 4, 1884, the thriving town grew to a population of 400 by August 16. Business places included a livery, a Coldwater-Kinsley hack line, a hotel, a bakery and restaurant, several contractors and eight doctors. There was a newspaper and at least four real estate firms. The "Land Office" sign was familiar and they were busy. It could literally be said they were doing a "land office business." By the end of 1885, licenses had been issued to at least 15 real estate firms.

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Lumber was hauled from Kinsley. By September, thirty homes had been put up. Others still lived in tents. When a public building was finished, it was the custom to hold a ball in it. Free lots were given to everyone who would put up a building at least 14 x 16 feet, as an inducement to settle. It was a time of rapid growth for the town, and it was a time of firsts.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The Western Star put out its first issue on August 16, 1884. Editor Cash apologized for afflicting Coldwater with a newspaper, said he was doing so in the interest of the county and himself, and "the only 'long-felt want' we hope for is to fill the pocket book of the proprietor." In booming Coldwater and the county, he said, "May they bloom like the rose." The paper was at first entered at Sun City post office until Coldwater received a postal appointment.

The first roads were simply mowed swaths from one location to another. In one instance a prairie fire burned off the grass and it was hard to find the road toward Kinsley. This road quickly became a "main-traveled" road. Some freighting was also done from Medicine Lodge. Stagecoach lines started and did a thriving business. One of the first was the Coldwater-Kinsley line, owned by Doak and Clinton. Soon Col. D.R. Green had his famous "Cannonball" stage line in operation between Kingman and Coldwater, giving daily service. The Coldwater-Nescatunga - Sun City - Medicine Lodge line started with Riley Lake as principal owner and R.A. Callaway as driver most of the time. Pat Gallagher also had a line Between Coldwater and Sun City. Later the "Western Stage Line" started between Coldwater and Ashland, stopping at Protection and Red Bluff. The following year, a stage line ran out of Coldwater to Avilla and Comanche City.

D.L. Cline began to serve as postmaster soon after the town was laid out. He handled the mail in a cracker box and cigar boxes, first in a tent, later in a frame building at the southeast corner of Main and New York.

The first city election was September 22, 1884. Tim Shields was elected Mayor. The charter of the town company was filed September 30, 1884. The directors were Tim Shields, C.D. Bickford, G.W. Vickers, and C.M. Cade of Coldwater, and Thomas Doak of Kinsley. Other members were Sam S. Sisson, H.S. Bennett, J. Paul Grove, C.C. Tincher, William Hungerford, H. Chapman, G.M. Norris, G.H. Lockwood, Dr. J.E. Sombart and D.L. Cline. Each held a \$300 share. The charter was surrendered in March of 1887.

Shields proved up on the four quarters of the four sections of the town site. C.M. Cade filed the papers at Larned and the city council later allowed the \$7 he spent for a filing fee but not his expenses of \$20. G.W. Vickers received \$100 for his legal services for city incorporation.

Books and the necessary blanks for running a city government were purchased from the G.W. Crane Company of Topeka. The cost was \$75 and the freight was \$5. S.W. McClure was appointed the first city clerk and J.M. Nichols treasurer. There were ordinances to pass and problems to solve.

L.S. Mead was elected Police Judge, and W.H. Clinton was appointed City Marshal. Within a year, five city marshals had been appointed and had resigned. The first calaboose (jail) was built by H.C. Rood, for which he was paid \$225. The first prisoner to be put in this jail was – H.C. Rood!

The lower half of the first city well was lined with heavy boards while the upper part was never walled. It was hand dug, between 65 and 70 feet deep, and located about the center of the Main and Central intersection. At times a line of 40 or 50 people waited to get water. This well had a wind pump. At one time the idea was advanced to use the tower for a lighthouse and the Star editor commented "...it will keep our citizens from running into the various man traps around town." Later Mabel Harding wrote, "Some wag seemed to think it a good joke and sawed it down on Halloween while a card party was going on."

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Within months two more public wells were dug. One was near the corner of the courthouse square, the other at the end of east Main Street. Most of the wells were equipped with buckets and pulleys. Abundant cold water in Coldwater may not have been a problem but clean water was. An ordinance was passed to keep hay from being stacked within one block of the town pump. Much later the council declared it a nuisance subject to fines to "put filth or animals, or wash or bathe" in the public trough.

The first marriage was that of James B. Jones and Miss Sarah Beymer. Rev. J.W. Phillips, a Methodist minister, performed it on September 16, 1884.

C.M. Cade, Jr., was the first child born in Coldwater. His birth date is recorded in the transfer of a piece of real estate his father deeded to him at his birth. He was born in a hotel on Main Street, September 28, 1884. Hungerford ran the hotel and later Pennington moved it away from Main and lived in it.

The death of Frank Hale occurred September 29, 1884 and is credited as the first death. He had been sick 23 days with typhoid. Mr. And Mrs. W.H. Hale buried him in the cemetery south of town.

One of the early ordinances dealt with the sale of intoxicating liquor. Druggists were licensed to sell liquor for medical, mechanical, or scientific purposes. Violators were fined \$50, but the council at times would declare the fine excessive and remit a part of it.

H.E. Ross wrote of walking about town and finding a well-equipped bar on one of the corners of the city square. It was complete with white-aproned bar tender - all in prohibition Kansas. Roy Stafford said there was a "jointist" on South Central who could not legally call his business a saloon, so he stretched up a canvas sign inscribed "Baloon." Thirsty tipplers made a beeline for his place.

Prohibition did not prohibit because it was never really enforced. In 1886 the Reeder paper noted that eight wagons loaded with beer passed through there on their way to Coldwater. Several paragraphs commented on the situation, concluding the law evaders had a lot of gall and that they were staunch Republicans.

The first Christmas an Oyster Supper and Festival was held on Christmas Eve. Over \$40 was collected for the benefit of the Sunday school. There was a program of declamations and readings. In between these, a band composed mainly of the Jennings boys played lively music. One of the Jennings boys, Al, was later quite famous for trying to rob trains. His father was the first probate judge and signed many final proof papers for early settlers. But some he did not sign. Cash Cade told that Judge J.D.F. Jennings was so busy he had his boys signing papers for him. A government investigator was sent out, and Jennings asked Cade for advice. Cade told him to tell the truth, but to wear his arm in a sling and tell the officials he had the boys sign in his presence because of his crippled arm.

Early in 1885 the county was organized and Coldwater was appointed the temporary county seat. Nescatunga wanted to be the permanent county seat and there was a lot of rivalry between the towns. It was claimed Coldwater had loaded the census that was taken for organization and also apparently served as a poll for the temporary county seat.

Mr. C.A. Fridley, an early settler, said that on his first trip to Comanche County, there was a sign some miles east of Coldwater that said, "Coldwater has yellow fever." A Coldwater editor commented that the only way Nescatunga could get to be the county seat would be to load their town on a few wagons and move it to Coldwater. Later, when the railroad didn't got through Nescatunga, houses were moved from both Nescatunga and Avilla to Coldwater.

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Coldwater won the county-seat election. Darcy Dunne said it was told that a ballot box full of votes, all for Coldwater, was prepared and put in place of the real ballot box while the board adjourned for supper. He said he couldn't vouch for the truth of the story, but it was a good story. Another account has it that the ones doing the switch got the boxes mixed up, and the real ballots were the ones that were counted; which makes an even better story.

The Indian scare of 1885 involved few, if any, Indians. A Cheyenne outbreak was reported a few miles south of Coldwater on June 27. About 4,000 soldiers were made available to put down any uprising. Four companies were camped at Deep Hole, south of Ashland in Clark County. They patrolled the border east to the Harper County line. 1,250 men were stationed in that county at what became known as Camp Crisfield. Vernon Wells later told that troops were stationed at Evansville.

At Coldwater forty or fifty guns were received, possibly more. The adjutant general came and organized a company. Mabel Harding wrote, "...the spectacle of the men of the town drilling in an awkward squad with their assorted fire arms might be a thing to laugh at now but it was serious enough to us children at the time." People came in from their claims and filled the town. On the 29th of June some men brought fence posts in from the Indian Territory and said the Indians were on the "war path" and headed for Coldwater. The Star reported this on July 4, and said that a friend of the men was told there really weren't any Indians but that the fence-post men made the story up to keep others from going into the territory after posts.

Along the border there was quite a scare when a lone cowboy rode through raising an alarm and saying their camp was captured and burned. His foreman ran across him and promised to cowhide him if he ever again did such a thing. The editor of the Republican viewed the whole affair as "malicious falsehoods on the part of some for their individual interests." He said most cattlemen were willing to accept settlement but others were "willing to do anything to retard settlement." As for the Indians, he felt they were scared worse than the settlers. The editor of the Star used the event to hold forth his opinions of Indians: "We do not recognize but one kind of an Indian and he is a dead one . . . They should be civilized, educated and citizenized or exterminated."

In later years Forrest Heintz said a newspaperman at Darlington, I.T., had been hired by cattlemen to create the Indian scare and drive out the sodbusters. The editor of the Coldwater Review wrote, "The effects will last for months. The check to immigration already made will not be recovered this year."

Coldwater's first sidewalks, made of wood, were constructed in the summer of 1885. They were first placed three blocks east and west on Main and two blocks north and south on Central. All were 12 feet wide. L.S. Mellinger "kicked" about the streets "or rather our bumpy mud puddles" and questioned the wisdom of the city council in laying aside applications for city marshal and street commissioner.

One man who did both jobs filled city marshal and street commissioner offices. Sometimes he was one awhile, then resigned and was the other. Maybe the men didn't like having to enforce laws on prohibition and killing loose dogs or something, but the office was quite often vacant. One marshal resigned and was shortly thereafter jailed for selling intoxicating liquor. The council saw fit to have him released, providing that he "go and sin no more."

Sometimes the office would be abolished and a constable appointed, with constables getting lower wages. Another time some citizens wanted the city to appropriate money for a band instructor which they had hired but had been unable to collect the promised money to pay him. The solution? Prof. Mel Klinck was employed as marshal so he could act as band teacher.

Bills and wages were paid in city scrip. After the canceled scrip had been recorded it was burned. Burning was discontinued in 1888 and canceled scrip was kept on file. There was a road tax, which could be "worked off" by doing work on the streets. Sidewalks were supposed to be built by the businessmen, but often the city wound up building them and charging the men for it.

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Literaries and church socials were popular entertainments. There were baseball games and glass-ball shoots, and many horse races. An unusual "entertainment" club was the Coldwater Canning Company. This was "not a vegetable concern but devoted to meat. Most of the range cattle being gone, it was Canine rather than Bovine meat." One comment about it was that they believed in a dog wearing a tin can on his tail instead of a tin medal on his collar. W.T. Snider took a photograph of the group in 1885.

At first the schools were subscription schools. Mrs. L.S. Mead, Mrs. S.N. Price, Miss Emma Brown and Miss Flo Chapman held them in various places at various times.

In the late fall of 1885, the first brick building in Coldwater was built. It was a schoolhouse, and in later years it was told that the brick was from the Coldwater brickyards, but the papers at the time said the brick was from a kiln 12 miles southeast of Coldwater. The floors were of hard, heart pine. Wainscoting reached 31/2 feet with plaster above. Rooms were 14 feet high with six windows each. The building still stands in 1984, south of the railroad tracks. Comanche County's first Normal Institute was held in this building in August of 1886. Fifty-one ladies and gentlemen were enrolled for the purpose of earning teaching certificates. The first appearance of the Coldwater Mokes, a hometown Minstrel Show, was in February of 1886. The acts included several by the Jennings boys and J.D.F., and the editor complimented Wilson Carson (colored) "the original colored gentleman" for his part.

According to Darcy Dunne some popular tunes of the day were: Little Annie Rooney, The Girl I Left Behind Me, and My Grandmother, She, at the Age of 83. A popular cowboy yodel was Say Joe, Here's Your Mule.

Rich's Opera House was built in the summer of 1886. The building, 50 x 130 feet, was said to be the largest in southwest Kansas. The drop curtain was a beautiful piece of city scenery surrounded by 20 advertising cards. There were 135 pairs of roller skates, as the hard maple floor was also used for skating. Roy Stafford wrote that it was the scene of some of the gayest of social festivities. Bobby Henkel was the dancing master, Dick Rich the roller skate tutor. It cost 35 cents an evening to skate and it required careful management on Roy's part to attend every night on his printing office salary of two dollars per week.

The first Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1886. The United Presbyterians built a church soon after.

Citizens petitioned city council that year to vote bonds for \$10,000 for a City Hall Building. Only two out of the 100 votes cast were against the bonds.

Perhaps one of those was the Nescatunga man who purchased Coldwater property so as to be able to bring an injunction against the city donating the building for a county courthouse. The courts in Coldwater refused to allow the action, so he went to Medicine Lodge to bring the injunction. He was unsuccessful in the matter but the final accounting of expenses for the courthouse included \$27 for an attorney to attend the proceedings in Medicine Lodge.

As had been intended from the beginning the building was turned over to the county October 26, 1886. The cost of this first courthouse was \$10,138.00. It was built throughout of soft pine. The form was that of a Greek X, 57 feet long, 52 feet wide. The height to the eaves was 30 feet. The extreme height was 93 feet, which included a mansard roof surmounted by a cupola and a 16-foot shaft. A hall extended the entire length of the first floor, where there were six large office rooms. The second story included two large offices and a courtroom 30 x 50 feet with a ceiling fourteen feet high. A small jail was built about 40 feet south of the courthouse. A good well was put down some 30 feet east, and trees were set on the four sides. In July of 1901, the bonds issued for the courthouse building were in default because the city was unable to pay the interest. Boardman Smith secured a judgment against the city. On April 1, 1901, the city issued refunding bonds for \$14,493 at six percent interest payable in thirty years.

Having been successful in the petition for a courthouse, the citizens petitioned for a Railroad Committee to get a railroad. The council granted the petition and went to work.

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An 1886 railroad bond proposition of \$140,000 that included a line through Nescatunga passed, but no bonds were issued. On March 21, 1887, township bonds were voted to build the Chicago, Kansas and Western; this later became the Mulvane Extension of the Santa Fe. The latter part of June 1887, 40 teams and 75 men started the grading through Coldwater and work on the depot foundation was started. After graders and bridge builders completed their work, track laying in the county began on August first. On Wednesday, August 24, 1887, cars pulled into Coldwater for the first time. The city was at last "connected with the outer world by bands of steel." Flags were flown and the band played. Jay Pepperd recalled his mother telling that the teachers at the Normal Institute waved and cheered.

Along with the railroad came telegraph facilities. John P. Jones of the First National Bank received the first telegram in Coldwater over the wires. It was sent from Kansas City and taken from the wires three miles east of town.

Three papers put in bids for the city printing at legal rates in 1887. The Council divided the city printing between them. The papers were the Western Star, the Coldwater Echo and the Coldwater Review.

By the end of that year seven papers had been published in Coldwater. Between then and 1936, eight more were published. The other papers and their dates of publication were: The Electric Light (1885), The Coldwater Signal (1885), the Republican (1884-1886), The Comanche County Farmer (1887), The Comanche County Sun (1888), the Coldwater Enterprise (1888-1894), the People's Advocate (1890), the Echo-Advocate (1891-1892), the Coldwater Voice (1891), the Stock Journal (1900-1904), the Free Knight (1904), and the Coldwater Talisman (1905-1936), which later dropped the "Coldwater" from its banner.

At a special election on August 8, 1887, there were 47 votes for the cemetery bonds of \$1,000 and 2 votes against them. In December cemetery grounds of 40 acres in the SE1/4 Of Section 8, Township 32, Range 18 west, were purchased from Mrs. Lottie Hutchins for \$800. The plat and survey were recorded in February of 1888 and the name was given as Crown Hill Cemetery. Blocks 1 and 2 were set aside as Potter's field.

A forty-acre tract of government land about two miles south of Coldwater was used as a cemetery before this. In March of 1887, the paper says it was filed upon, "and the city will be without a graveyard." Records show Eliza Hadkinson filed on this land June 22, 1887, in Larned. Early residents said 30 or 40 persons were buried there. Records show the removal to Crown Hill Cemetery of at least eight bodies. One of these was L.S. Mead, who was the first Police Judge. Another was Charles Bickford, one of Coldwater's founding fathers. His wife Jenny is not buried in Crown Hill although a plot was purchased for her there.

Information so far collected shows at least 19 other burials in the plot south of town with no record of their removal. Two of these were colored persons. Another was a railroad worker who was crushed by his mules while he curried them; there was also a railroad worker who was crushed between the cars of the first train to come into town. One young man was mangled to death when he tried to stop a runaway team; he was a cousin of Red Odem, an early butcher-turned-barber and a fugitive from the Texas Rangers.

On February 6, 1888, concerned citizens petitioned the council about a problem. They asked them to declare the privy of the C.K.S. railroad a nuisance and cause it to be removed. Council accepted, approved, and adopted the recommendation. It was not recorded how the railroad reacted to this. Another petition on the 18th of February asked the council to "take steps immediately to protect the city against fire." Recommended was the purchase of a chemical fire engine and hook and ladder truck. On February 18, 1888 the council ordered a 60-gallon chemical fire engine and one complete hook and ladder outfit to be delivered for \$900.

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About four o'clock Thursday morning, February 23, the fire alarm was spread. Not with fire bells, as there were none, but with six shooters and shotguns, which were equally effective. Every building on the south side of Main Street between Central and New York burned except two at the east end of the block. They were the Star office and the First National Bank Building. The total loss was estimated at \$50,000. Several managed to escape with only slight losses. Frank Hutchinson, a cigar manufacturer, had no insurance but was able to save his entire stock. Several had no insurance. After all but four cases had been adjusted the insurance companies had paid \$15,419.

Protection lost three houses by fire the same morning. At Nescatunga that same morning a store building and contents burned. Delivery of the hook and ladder truck was accepted in late March but the chemical fire engine was returned. Quarters built for the truck were 8 x 36 feet and cost \$78.

An ordinance dealing with houses of ill fame was passed in November of 1886. Newspapers noted enforcement on at least two occasions. In June of 1887 five people camped in a tent on the west end of town were charged with and plead guilty to being inmates of a house of ill fame. The names (no doubt fictitious) that they gave were John Doe, Richard Roe, Jennie Lind, Mercy Merry, and Hester Prym. After paying fines which totaled \$37.50 they left for Pratt Center. The other occasion was in April of 1888. The dive on west Main Street was suppressed when Marshal Dudley Murphy "moved the frail doves beyond the city limits."

The second brick schoolhouse was built in 1889. According to Frank Kimple, some of the bricks used in this building were from the kiln south of Coldwater.

Information from newspapers in 1887 located J.E. McDougall's brick yard three-fourths of a mile southwest of town. On April 30 he had 20,000 bricks molded and expected to fire a kiln of 50,000 soon. He had an order for 250,000 and expected to sell all he could burn that summer. A.E. Wheeler's place, also a short distance south of town, was turning out 6,000 a day and expected to fire a kiln of 75,000 the next week. Wheeler's assistant was Charles Welch, recently moved to Coldwater from Comanche City.

Early in May, McDougal had a kiln of 400,000 ready to fire. He was to furnish brick for all the new brick business houses. The first of that month brick haulers struck for higher wages. They hauled 11/2 miles for 85 cents per 1,000, but could only haul 3,000 a day. The price was raised to \$1 per 1,000.

THE NOT-SO-GAY NINETIES

The Gay Nineties were not so gay in Coldwater. It was in fact a decade of much tragedy and despair, but there were some light moments.

In January, the U.S. Supreme court ruled in favor of C.E. Lewis in the matter of the fraudulent bonds. Issued in 1874 and legalized by Governor Osborn, they were held by Lewis until the actual organization of Comanche County in 1885.

Looking North on Central circa 72 years ago. From page 2 of the Diamond Jubilee souvenir program.

Looking North on Central circa 72 years ago

(Source: Diamond Jubilee booklet, published 1959. Note the "J.E. Sombart, Druggist" building.)

Sunday's Tragedy was the slaying of Wilford Dudley Murphy at the intersection of Main and Central on on January 25, 1890.

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Murphy came to Coldwater in its early days, left in the fall of 1885, and returned after his marriage to Carrie Mahan in January of 1886. He was city marshall for about a year. He left his wife and daughter in Coldwater when he was in Oklahoma the summer of 1889, and had returned about three weeks before the slaying.

The paper reported that on Sunday evening, between five and six o'clock, Murphy started home from the Lockwood drug store. When he was about half way across the street, Dr. J.E. Sombart came out of his drugstore, raised a shot gun and fired both barrels at Murphy. Witnesses said that after Murphy fell, Sombart reloaded the gun and fired two more shots, then drew a revolver and shot three times.

One witness at the preliminary trial stated he heard Murphy, in Mrs. Murphy's presence, tell Sombart he would kill him. Another said he heard Murphy request money to send Mrs. Murphy back east; also that Murphy was attempting to blackmail him.

Still another told that a man named Tank Kee (alias Bailey) said Murphy was going to kill Sombart. Kee was a visiting lecturer on China. when this witness told Sombart, he said to find out where Kee got that information. About noon the witness spoke with Kee, who said it was the general talk of the town, he'd heard it from a dozen sources. The witness himself was unaware of such talk but repeated Kee's talk to Sombart, and also said he felt if Murphy said he would kill someone, he would do so.

About five or ten minutes later, Murphy lay breathing his last.

Witnesses told the wind was blowing hard from the north. Some said Sombart called to Murphy to go back and Murphy made no reply. Most witnesses agreed that Murphy had a sack in his left hand. (It is later written the sack contained rice he had just purchased.) It was also agreed that he had his right hand under his coat about hip level. (Perhaps implying it appeared he held a weapon there?) None seemed in agreement as to the number of shots, but all did agree Sombart used two guns, and used a post to aim the pistol. One said that there was a dog than ran around Murphy everytime Sombart shot.

One man, behind Sombart, said, "MY GOD, Doc, think what you are doing." Another started to go to Murphy after the first shots, but backed off.

This was Dr. G.W. Pritchard. He was the first to reach Murphy. H.G. Taggart turned Murphy over. He seemed to smile and blew, and froth and blood came from his mouth and he blew it out. Dr. Pritchard testified to the location of all wounds. Five were mortal, and there were a total of fourteen.

Judge Widaman admitted Sombart to bail of \$10,000. On March 5 his attorney asked for a change of venue. The State's attorneys wanted the judge to review the case and if evidence seemed to show first degree murder they wanted the accused held in jail without bail.

The next day Judge Price said he had to power to review the case after bail had been set, accepted bail and granted the change of venue to district court in Clark County. Sarah Murphy, sister of the deceased, walked over and slapped Judge Widaman three times "with no weapon save her bare hand."

Records show this sister paid for Murphy's burial. His funeral procession was half a mile long.

On March 8, about twenty prominent ladies of Coldwater called on Mrs. Murphy and invited her to leave on the next train. She promised to leave Monday, as she needed to pack, but did not leave until Wednesday.

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John Curran later wrote that the reason the women invited her to leave town was because all the men had important business to look after. But they did stop long enough to peek around the corner while the women took care of the business at hand.

Curran said the town was badly divided over the matter. Darcey Dunne wrote that a great many believed that there was some connection between this killing and the next one, which took place May 1, 1890.

About eleven o'clock that night, S.W. Miles, a lawyer, struck Dr. G.W. Pritchard "with some blunt instrument." He died the next day of a skull fracture. This killing took place about ten feet from where Murphy was slain. H. Chapman said the men had quarrelled over a point of law regarding the Sombart case. Others said Chapman was a particular friend of Miles and there was no quarrel.

Sheriff McIntire ran after Miles and got close enough to identify him, but Miles escaped. McIntire later arrested him at Englewood after U.S. Deputy Marshall Edwards captured him at Beaver, in No-Man's Land. Miles did not know of Pritchard's death until after his capture.

This case was tried at Meade Center. Curran said Miles's defense was given by his brother, a U.S. District Attorney for the Eastern Iowa District. He had great forensic power, and stayed up all night practicing his speech.

Both trials were long. Sombart was acquitted on February 21, 1891, and Miles had also been acquitted by then. The Western Star was glad the trials were over, and hoped there would be no more of the same character. (It was just over 34 years before there was another killing on Main Street; it did not provoke the division the earlier slayings did.)

Darcey Dunne wrote that Sombart's trial divided neighbor against neighbor for years and entered into the politics of the county. It is not clear whether he meant there was some political reason for Murphy's death, or that factions set up by the death became political.

There was a lot of political strife at the time. For five years Comanche County fought against paying the bonds legalized by Governor Osborne following the "fraudulent" organization of the county. The original amount of these bonds was \$72,000. In January of 1890 Judge Brewer of the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Charles Edward Lewis of England that the county must pay the bonds. Although the courts settled the matter in 1890 and the county paid a total of \$396,530 by 1941 when the bonds and refunding bonds were retired, the matter is not forgotten. Reading the information available raises more questions than it answers. The first one is why the organization and bonds are always referred to as fraudulent when the courts ruled them to be legal. The second is why didn't the courts rule the bonds and the organization fraudulent.

Free range versus herd law was still something of an issue at this time. Names of sixty persons that signed free-range petitions were also found on remonstrance petitions of the herd-law men. The commissioners ruled "no election until the free-range men can make a better showing." Another struggle at the county level was over the Register-of-Deed's office. In November of 1889 Frank Meyer received the majority of votes. John Deniston, the incumbent register, declared there was some irregularity in the voting; maintaining that he was still the Register of Deeds, he seized the office by force. Judge Price held that Deniston could hold office until the matter was settled.

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Meyer took the matter to Topeka and got a writ ordering Deniston to turn over the keys and other things. The case brought on by Deniston was before Judges Widaman and Stipp in May. Deniston asked the case be dismissed and Meyer entered the Register's office to take charge. While Meyer and Deniston were in the vault someone said, "Take him out." DeGarmo moved so as to prevent the crowd from getting Deniston. Kern took hold of DeGarmo who then struck a farmer who struck DeGarmo about the eye.

At this point the marshal stopped proceedings, a warrant was sworn against Meyer, and he was removed from the vault. N.S. Mounts replaced him but was removed by Deniston's friends; this left Deniston with the key.

Meyers eventually resigned and the commissioners appointed S.D. Stipps, but Deniston again refused to give up the office; he claimed he was elected and would stay until it was proved to the contrary. The Attorney General's opinion in July was that he could be ousted using proper proceedings.

In November of 1890 D.L. Cline was elected but Deniston still refused to give up. In May of 1891 the State Supreme Court finally decided the case in favor of Deniston. The Star felt that G.C. Clemens, a Topeka attorney hired by the county, did very little except draw his pay, but conceded that if Mr. Deniston was legally entitled to the office "and the Supreme Court says he is—he ought to have it—and has got it, for that matter."

Darcey Dunne later wrote that the whole thing was based on the votes of eighteen cowboys from Gorham's ranch a few miles south of the state line. Deniston contested these. Another wrangle ensued when N.S. Mounts, editor of the Advocate, charged County Treasurer H.O. Holderby with crookedness in office. Mounts newspaper office was broken into and type carried away and scattered over the ground. There was some talk that Mounts had hired the job done to make his charges stick. Whatever the real truth, Holderby was found not guilty, but actually \$1.60 ahead in his accounts. A libel suit was brought against Mounts but he too was found not guilty.

By 1892 many businesses had come and gone.

One of these was T.H. Bale's gristmill. Located on North Central in 1886 it had two sets of burrs for grinding corn. There were two large wheels 20 feet in diameter run by wind. The Star bragged that Coldwater had the only cigar manufactory west of Wichita or east of Denver. Perkin and Wilson manufactured the "Inspector" in 1887.

In 1888 the Star announced that Mrs. J.W. Harding had her greenhouse in order; if she did not have what you wanted, she would order it.

E.C. Freeman opened a broom factory in 1888. Located in the east part of the city, it was said to turn out brooms by the hundreds.

A Magnetic-Silica Polish was manufactured in 1890 and the Coldwater Roller Mill was completed. R.O. Frank, assisted by Mr. Freeman, placed the mill in position. The cost was between \$7,000 and \$8,000. It started grinding sometime in April. Mr. Duckworth was so anxious for some flour from the new mill he got 15 or 20 pounds, the first that came through; the first full sack was sold to H.H. Bennet. The flour was called Sunshine, Eclipse, and Comanche Chief, and sold for \$1, \$1.10, and \$1.40 per sack. This mill was destroyed by fire in the fall of 1891, at which time H.W. Ranney and W.H. Hobart owned it.

Fire was discovered between the old Sombart drugstore and the Chapman building between four and five the morning of March 6, 1892. A stranger noticed someone in the Sombart drugstore apparently setting flames to the cellar. The fellow was later arrested. George Sombart and Emil Bowers furnished his bail of \$500.

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The whole block burned. This was the north side of the first block on Main Street, west of Central. It included a 25 x 60 foot two story frame, known as Sombart's old drug store, and Chapman's small one story frame. The Sombart -Miller brick block stood west of these. It was a two story brick with metal roof. The fire lasted two and one-half or three hours. By a strange coincidence the name of the stranger who discovered the fire was G.R. Thomson; it was a stranger named William Thomson who first noticed the 1888 fire.

The Canning Club earlier used tin cans as a means of stray dog control. Stronger measures were taken after a mad-dog scare in June of 1894. A rabid dog bit nine or ten dogs, probably more, before it was discovered and killed. The dogs it bit were also shot. All dogs running around without muzzles were to be shot by the marshal. Records show others too were paid for killing stray dogs for a while; the going rate seems to have been fifty cents apiece.

The 1890s were not only years of tragedy and strife, but also years of destitution. Frank Kimple wrote: "The country was on the verge of starvation. Year after year the hot winds destroyed practically all crops and made hard times inevitable. People in the East heard and shipped in carloads of provisions for free distribution. Everybody was ready to go somewhere—just any old place—so the Oklahoma opening pretty well depleted Coldwater and the county of inhabitants. I recall when one opening took place—I think 1893—there was just one man and about 200 women left in Coldwater."

S.M. Jackson, real estate agent and postmaster, wrote hundreds of letters trying to sell land or trade it. With hard times and Oklahoma government land \$1.25 an acre no one wanted to pay that much for land here; but no one wanted to sell at that price, either. At times he would advise a client to purchase a piece of land because "You can sell the fence on it for as much as it costs you."

At one point the city was taking up "discarded sidewalk" on the west side of Central to use in repairing other sidewalks.

An amusing event during this decade was the election of 1896. The Star noted that, as a usual thing there was not much interest in elections; this one was expected to pass with little excitement, as there was only one ticket. A few citizens, not satisfied with it, put up a woman's ticket. Though they did not make much effort they made a good race.

According to council minutes, Miss Adela received only three votes less than Walter Meers for Mayor. Four men received highest votes of 23 and 24 for councilmen and the fifth one received 21 votes. Miss Ella Doig and Mrs. Ella McCune were close to this with 20 votes each. Mr. and Mrs. H.J. Williamson both ran for Police Judge, but were defeated by S.M. Jackson with 26 votes—only six more than Mrs. Williamson received but 25 more than Mr. Williamson did. The paper said the ladies actually received more votes than the men but had failed to put the cross mark by the names written in and these tickets were thrown out.

Coldwater ladies had been voting since the April election of 1887. The Star beamed that "the colored troops fought nobly—both sexes were fully represented. . . a lady received the second largest vote for office of mayor." Council minutes show the same—197 votes for H.H. Rich and four votes for Carrie Overman.

The final blow of this disastrous decade was a tornado. Like the rest of the decade it left "Death, Destruction and Desolation" in its path. Hitting on May 9, 1899, it left six buildings a total wreck, including City Hall and eight barns. Nine houses were blown off foundations or badly twisted, two buildings unroofed, four badly damaged, and many smaller buildings and sheds were completely destroyed.

Emil (Joe) Bowers, in a north room of his house, was carried off with the timbers and found 50 yards from the building. His skull and face were badly crushed and he lived only a few minutes after they found him. His wife and daughter, in a southwest room, were "considerably mixed up with the debris" but had no injury except the shock.

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The tornado struck about 10 p.m. and lasted about five minutes followed by a 15-minute downpour. It was very local covering an area about six miles long and from one-half to three-fourths mile wide.

AS THE CENTURY TURNS

The first decade of the new century was one of growth: increased building, cement sidewalks, cars, increasing population, and telephones. Phonographs became popular, but slowly. One reluctant man finally agreed to listen to one. He seated himself across the room. The machine was turned on and a loud march blared forth. He rushed from the room shouting, "Ye Gods, here comes a brass band and I left my mules untied."

Early Day Fourth of July Celebration in Coldwater, Comanche County, Kansas. Photo from the Diamond Jubilee Historical Souvenir Program. Coldwater, KS: Western Star, 1959.

An Early Fourth of July Celebration in Coldwater. (Source: Diamond Jubilee booklet.)

C.Q. Chandler and Waldron Chase of Medicine Lodge built a telephone line from Medicine Lodge to Coldwater. It was connected at 4:30 on September 30, 1903. The offices moved from Dr. Northrup's restaurant to the post office building about a year later and Crail Pennington was in charge. In 1905 the Coldwater Telephone Company was organized. Apparatus was at first ordered for a system of fifty telephones. By 1911 Volney Barber owned the telephone plant. He built a two story brick building and housed the telephone company there. (1984 owner, Paul Flowers)

The city council was petitioned in 1903 to declare breeding mares in a certain stable a public nuisance. After several discussions and many months, Ordinance #127 was adopted limiting the standing of stallions and jacks to livery stables. It was published on April 15, 1904 beside an ad for "King" a mammoth jack, and "Duke" a dapple bay Belgian horse.

The council was later petitioned to remove the hog pen of the man who petitioned to get the stallion-standing ordinance. The State Health Department got in on this. Their letter to Dr. Crawford was put in the paper. It said 50 or 60 hogs were kept in the pen and fed slops and other waste material. Several dead hogs were in the pen and they were concerned the other hogs were eating these.

Automobiles in 1906 were something new and the Star was proud that one of Coldwater's physicians was getting one. However, livery barns were still in business. In February Kimple's Star Barn and the Overland Livery and Feed Barn advertised camp houses for travelers, fitted with bunks, mattresses and a stove.

In 1906 a member of the traveling Meistersinger's Male Quartette got sick following a performance. He was diagnosed as having smallpox and put in a small house in the west part of town. Another member of the group stayed with him to care for him. The citizens helped these quarantined men as much as possible while they were in this "Pest House." The mayor later sold it.

The Southeast corner of Main and Central, Coldwater, Comanche County, Kansas, after 1910.

The southeast corner of Main and Central, Coldwater, Comanche County, Kansas, after 1910.

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The building of cement sidewalks began in 1906. A 1909 ordinance made it unlawful to ride a bicycle or roller skate on the sidewalk. It was also illegal for minors to be in or around pool halls and bowling alleys. There was a speed limit for automobiles and motorcycles: by 1915 signs cautioned drivers to slow to 15 mile an hour when entering the city.

Ordinance #140 made it unlawful to spit or deposit saliva or mucous on floors, stairways, or other parts of theatres or public buildings or on any sidewalk next to them and on any public street or alley or lane within Coldwater. It was also unlawful to throw paper, tin cans, broken glass or other rubbish in any street, alley, or vacant lot.

The special election of May 3, 1910 resulted in 134 votes for bonds to erect a Light and Water works. Citizens had petitioned in February for the election. Bids were accepted in late March of 1911. In July Mayor J.T. Botts signed the contract with Fred M. Clark for installing the plant. Edwin Fisher was appointed Superintendent.

For many citizens, windmills had soon replaced the town pumps as a source of water. There were said to be as many as 75 of them before the city put in the water system. The water tower (sometimes they were called stand-pipes) was built in 1911 on Brooklyn Avenue between Maple and Cleveland. It is 125 feet high. The tank, from Des Moines Bridge and Iron Company, is 20 x 25 feet and has a 50,000-gallon capacity.

Some interesting ordinances were passed in 1911. Ordinance #160 made it unlawful to labor or to cause anyone else to labor on Sunday except for "the household offices of daily necessity, or other work of necessity or charity." The fine was not to exceed \$50, or five days in jail. It was also unlawful "to sell or to expose for sale on Sunday" the following: ice cream, soda, coca-cola, lemonade or any form of soda water; also cigars, plug or other chewing tobacco. Places that served meals seven days a week could serve the forbidden items with lunch or regular meals and quantities of ice cream or lemonade over one pint could be sold if they were to be taken from the premises for consumption. Fines and confinement were the same as for illegal Sunday labor.

Extreme weather came again in the winter of 1911-1912. There was a snowfall of 15 inches in December. Additional snow fell in January, as did the temperature. Trains arrived late, or not at all, and large numbers of passengers were stalled in the town.

In November of 1912 the city purchased a ladder and fire truck from the Eureka Fire Hose company. The cost was \$1,050. There had been another bad fire in May of that year. The Masonic building and the Holland and Pennington building and all their contents were completely destroyed. Dr. J.S. Halliday and R.S. Bennett built the buildings in 1888. A large department store in the Harbaugh building (Peoples State Bank in 1984) had a great loss from water damage. Dave Phillips' Drug Store and Roberts Phebus Hardware had only slight losses, and those were from removing and replacing some of their fixtures and goods.

By 1913 citizens wanted day current. Mr. Baldwin estimated the use would be about 46 hours per user per week. This allowed eight hours a week for 30 irons, eight hours for two electric washers, and 30 hours for 29 electric fans. He figured it would cost \$48 to \$50 a month and revenue would be about \$52 a month. He was authorized to put on day current at 10 a.m. each day.

Mel Klinck organized a 33-piece band in 1914. An earlier band was that of the Jennings brothers right after the city started. Klinck had a band in 1888. Other bandleaders from 1888 until 1914 were Jakey Young and Mr. Brown. J.M. Goddard succeeded Klinck and Ward Butcher organized a band in the 1920s.

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The Tabernacle Meetings of 1915 were undoubtedly a great evangelistic campaign. Nearly fifty men reported for work early Tuesday morning according to the Star of February 5. They had teams, saws, and hammers. By 5:30 p.m. the building was practically completed. Located in the street east of the Holmes-Ferrin store the building was 60 x 80 feet and could seat an estimated 800 people. On one Saturday evening 900 people were present, 939 on Sunday, and 1,000 on Monday. Conversions numbered 53 on Saturday, 82 on Sunday, and 73 on Monday, making a total of 207 for those three evenings. The total number of conversions for the whole campaign was nearly 385 and 40 or 50 more renewed their church obligations. The membership of each church nearly doubled as a result of the meetings.

Water Work Extension Bonds of \$16,000 were approved and issued in 1914. This included a single-cylinder DeLaVergne engine Type FH that was received in October. It weighed 63,000 pounds—or 31/2 tons. The ten-foot diameter flywheel weighed nine tons and made 200 revolutions per minute. It was fueled with crude or other cheap oil.

In 1914 the ladies of the City Library asked for the use of City Hall for a library. Permission was given. At first the library was funded by donations and fund-raising events. Later the city budgeted money for its expenses. In 1932 it was constituted as a city library under State Statutes and so remained until the organization as a township library in 1944.

Cemetery improvements in 1915 were a windmill on a 24-foot tower with a 10-foot wheel and a 10 x 8 foot storage tank. There was also a cement-block house ten feet in diameter.

Coldwater's first Chautauqua was very successful. About ten years earlier people welcomed the Lyceum Lecture Courses. The 1913 Chautauqua was another opportunity for education and entertainment. There were seven days of entertainment: six different lectures and eight music groups. Pamahisika's Pets were amusing for everyone. About 585 tickets were sold; 60 of them were children's. When the question of a Chautauqua the next year arose pledges for 606 season tickets at \$2 each were given in a short time.

The Chautauquas ran for many years. They were held in a tent north of the courthouse at one time and later in the block where the library (1984) is. A local girl, Agnes Harley Murray, was a talented reader and spent many years on the Chautauqua circuit.

The Lyceum Courses were held in the winter in the Opera House that was upstairs over the Harbaugh Building. A favorite entertainer was Blind Boone, a Negro. Although Negroes were not allowed to stay in Coldwater overnight, he stayed in several homes, one of which was Hod Rich's. Ruth Botts remembers that she crawled around under her mother's piano while he tuned it when he stayed at the Botts' house.

During this time there was a Recreation Program for children in the summer. Supervisor L. L. Dyché directed swimming, other sports, and children's educational activities for 2 1/2 months in 1915. His report of the summer's work showed an average daily attendance of 54 girls and 93 boys.

TEEN – AGE TURMOIL

Improvements continued during Coldwater's adolescent decade. There was increased use of autos and other new wonders. There was also a time of "teen-age" turmoil.

Photo from the Diamond Jubilee Historical Souvenir Program. Coldwater, KS: Western Star, 1959.

THE TRAIN BRINGS NEEDED HARVEST HANDS TO SAVE THE WHEAT CROP

Coldwater Centennial Notebook
Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

(Source: Diamond Jubilee booklet.)

As the use of automobiles increased ordinances on speed and parking were adopted. The wide streets just invited center parking and eventually it became legal.

In 1916 the Star told about R.W. Scott hauling fat hogs 24 miles to town in his two-ton Denby motor truck. Several trips were needed to haul the two train-car loads so he hauled oil cake to the ranch on return trips. His total hauling cost was \$24.76.

A Community Building was built in 1916. The first entertainment held there was a school operetta, "On Plymouth Rock." It was used for gatherings of all kinds, basketball, and at one time the library was in one part of it.

A brilliant light was placed on top of the water tower in January of 1917. "Coldwater Shines, Day and Night," ran the caption. The light was plainly seen at Protection and at points 15 or 20 miles in other directions.

New buildings in 1917 to replace existing ones included the Coldwater National Bank (still used in 1984) and the Perry Johnston Elevator.

Wheat was produced in the county even earlier than 1887; Tim Shield's 60 acres produced 2,500 bushels in that year. In 1891 there were about 16,500 acres of wheat, compared to 6,000 acres in 1890. Reports in 1892 showed yields from 12 to 30 bushels per acre, the average running about 20 bushels.

Work on W.H. Kimple's earlier elevator started in late March of 1903. Its capacity was about 3,500 bushels. W.A. Clark and George W. Crowell of Alva also made plans for a grain elevator at that time. In August of 1903 Perry Johnston started work on a new elevator with a capacity of between 5,000 and 6,000 bushels. This wooden elevator had a belt capacity of 3,500 bushels per day and was located north of the railroad tracks about a block east of the depot. The new one that replaced it in 1917 had 17,000 bushels per day belt capacity. The dimensions were 24 x 32 x 38 feet; the cupola was 13 x 24 x 22 feet with a man lift. Auto trucks were fast coming into use and there was a special overhead dump to accommodate them. The structure was wood covered with galvanized iron and the capacity was 30,000 to 35,000 bushels.

Another earlier elevator was the Farmer's Elevator. It was built in 1908 on the west side of New York Avenue near the depot. From June 1910 to June 1911 it handled 386,207 bushels of wheat; the previous year 120,000 bushels were handled.

Silent movies were run in the Opera house, over the Peoples State Bank. Dale Mark ran the projection machine for L.L. Reed about 1911 through 1917. There was a fireproof projection booth and the first machine was run by hand. Then there was a new electric machine but the owner wouldn't use it, nor would he allow Dale to. The big machine was a Fox Movie Tone. Reed had some health problems and when he was in bed a lot the shows ran about every night. Later on, open-air silent movies were held in the summer. The Sky Dome was located either where the museum is (1984) or west of it. In July of 1919 the Star noted that Religious Union Services held there on Sunday evenings were popular.

Opera House Notes for 1916 included such titles as "A Stolen Voice" and "After Dark Papers." Movies ran four nights and a Saturday Matinee--no Fridays. Admission was 10 and 15 cents. The 1915 sinking of the Lusitania made war seem inevitable. Europe was writing World War I for us; we heard the prelude in such films as "The Campbells are Coming." This four reel military drama "created a tremendous sensation and aroused intense patriotism."

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The real event was not so glamorous. The United States formally declared war on April 6, 1917. Men enlisted, men were drafted. In 1918 the local Board reported 63 in Class I who asked no exemption. One Protection man wrote across his questionnaire, "I am ready to go whenever they want me." There were ten agriculture exemptions.

Red Cross activity increased in 1917. Under law the emblem had been set apart for the work of relief and mercy. There was growing misuse of it and a warning was issued against using it to stimulate sales of magazines, songs, postcards, or other items under guise of patriotism. A special attraction at the Fair in 1917 was an airplane flight. Mr. C.V. Cessna's machine was the exact type in use on European battlefields. "Nothing should be so interesting to the children as an aeroplane. . . the eyes of the army." Free tickets were issued to every child in the county.

Influenza in Coldwater and in the armed services was a fact of life. It was also a fact of death and many died during the epidemic.

Some other wartime facts of life were meatless Tuesday's and wheatless Wednesday's for hotel and restaurant operators. They were expected to fill out questionnaires and sign pledges. As substitutes, fish, chicken, or plain Kansas rabbit could be served on meatless Tuesday, and Kafir, Indian corn, or rye bread on wheatless Wednesday.

Coldwater adopted a six-day week for school students so the boys could get to work on the farms earlier in the spring. This began in January and was to be done as long as possible with the fuel shortage.

The coal shortage resulted in shorter business hours--10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Picture shows were reduced to twice a week; Lodges were permitted only one meeting each month. About half of the offices at the courthouse were to close. Thursdays and Sundays were to be observed as Lightless Nights.

The coal shortage in 1918 was general. Coldwater had received six cars earlier, before a storm that kept trains from arriving for four or five days. In January they reportedly had no coal and two cars were all they expected until after the middle of March. The U.S. Fuel Administration designated January 30 as "Tag Your Shovel Day." The object was to save a shovel-full of coal each day. They furnished tags to be fastened to the shovels by school pupils. The three pupils in the county who tagged the most shovels received a government thrift card with eight stamps, worth two dollars.

The war ended on Monday, November 11. In Coldwater there was a prolonged shriek of the fire whistle followed by the ringing of all the church bells. People rushed to their telephones but all they heard from the Central office was "A truce was signed last night; the war is over." Flags were flown and there was general rejoicing. A program in the Community Building featured patriotic music and speeches. The United War Works Fund was begun and donations were close to the \$2,600 quota. The high school students put on a stunt showing the crimes of the Kaiser and showing him turned over to the German people who drove him forcibly from the scene.

A rousing bonfire in the street followed this. The war was over as far as armed hostilities were concerned but widespread hatred of Germans and those of German ancestry still colors the lives of many.

City Hall bonds for \$10,000 and Water and Light Special Improvement Bonds for \$35,000 were issued in September of 1919. Asplund Construction Company was awarded the contract for the sewer, complete at \$58,495.30. The bonds for this were approved through a citizen's petition and mass meeting.

The Diamond Star Milling Company began operation in August of 1919. The entire stock of \$10,000 was subscribed. Officers and members were Walter L. Cook, J.W. Hoberecht, Crail Pennington, B.F. Arnold, C.A. Griffith, Parker Wright, and Charles Myer. The mill later closed for some time and then on August 5 of 1929 an ad announced it had reopened, making "Belle of Coldwater flour. . .has that same rich, nutty flavor." J.W. Hoberecht was the manager. It closed again sometime before 1934.

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Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

THE (SLIGHTLY) ROARING TWENTIES

Perhaps the 1920s were not “roaring” in Coldwater, but they did sizzle some at times. Clarence Martin and Albert Oller built an ice plant in 1921. Martin purchased the Protection plant and, in partnership with Oller, one entirely new plant. Plans included the manufacture of six to eight tons of ice per day and cold storage capacity of 50 to 100 tons of ice and refrigeration. It was located in the west side of the Martin Motor Company building.

The 1886 Comanche County Court House, destroyed by fire in November 1921. Photo published 21 Nov 1921 in The Western Star, courtesy of Shirley Brier.

At left: The 1886 Comanche County Court House. Photo published 21 Nov 1921 in The Western Star, courtesy of Shirley Brier.

Fire fighters were in no hurry when the fire alarm sounded at two a.m. on November 1, 1921. There had been a false alarm earlier, the result of Halloween “fun.” But this was the real thing. The courthouse was totally destroyed. The fire started in a pile of cobs and kindling. Everyone was impressed at how fast it spread. In a short time it was out of control. Flames reached a height of 50 feet or more at times. A few fixtures in an office on the east end of the first floor were saved but nothing else was, except the contents of the vaults. About 14 tons of coal in the basement were destroyed. The jail, about fifty feet away, was undamaged.

The only mayor to die in office was James C. Doig on February 14, 1924. Acting Mayor Walter Cook issued a proclamation closing all businesses on the day of the funeral.

Two grocery owners had a problem. Their delivery trucks were hauling groceries so fast that there were numerous complaints to city council. The grocery owners got letters of warning and were told if there were complaints after that the drivers would be deprived of the right to drive any car in the city limits.

Railroad signals consisting of a bell on east Main and a bell and Wig-Wag system at the main yards and downtown crossing were approved in December of 1924. Later that month there was a freight wreck in town. The westbound freight of 35 or 40 cars left most of the cars on the track in the east part of town. Six or seven cars were unloading freight at the depot. Suddenly the cars that had been left behind came down the track and crashed into the refrigerator car being unloaded. It was scattered in all directions. The trucks of another car were thrown from the track and damaged. The eastbound passenger was delayed for some time while two teams, the freight engine, and the big army truck of the county cleared away the debris.

Coldwater has always been a good lodge town. About 1900 there were eight lodges including the Anti-Horse Thief Association.

A secret society of the 1920s was the Ku Klux Klan. News items tell that the fire alarm turned in on July 4, 1923 turned out to be the burning of a large cross wrapped in oil-soaked gunnysacks. A speaker on the courthouse grounds later that month explained the Klan’s ideals and attitudes of Americanism. He was evidently an influential speaker as a later item tells of visitors watching (from a distance) the initiation of about 60 candidates. The writer thought about 200 Klansmen were Coldwater residents and Protection was said to be about 60 more than that. A Klan Karnival there in September of 1924 was said to have a crowd of about 5,000. As it is a secret organization no one really knows everything. One man said all he knew of them doing was burning a cross in the yard of a married man who was ‘fooling around’ with another man’s wife. Another said about all they did was told you how to vote at election time.

Coldwater in 1924 had an ice plant that made seven tons of ice a day. Some other things it boasted of were a flourmill, a bottling works that made 13 flavors of carbonated beverage, the Albert Pike Highway, the Midwest Highway, and the Coal-Oil-Hi-Wa. There was also a racetrack with a good grand stand.

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Fourteen sections of the water mains were frozen by extreme cold weather in December of 1924. The two inch mains, buried 20 to 30 inches, had never before frozen. Plumbers were kept busy and Ralph Murray, superintendent of the water and light works, rescued the workers by using electricity. City current was attached to the frozen sections, using two transformers and a water rheostat, which sufficiently thawed the ice in a block of pipe in about 2 1/2 hours. That spring the council had a request from a man who wanted to put a fence around the city dump, install a gate, and graze it at night. He was allowed to do so.

A new fire truck was delivered to the city in December of 1924. It was mounted on a Ford chassis with a special built body. The equipment included two 35-gallon chemical tanks, chemical hose, and other equipment. It had room for the entire fire company to ride and an electric heater so the engine would start immediately in cold weather. The cost was \$2,175. Beginning in April of 1926 a Time Whistle was blown at seven in the morning, twelve noon, and six in the evening. Residents were cautioned to get used to it and not get excited but to remember one long whistle was a time whistle. The fire whistles would always be more than one blast.

The city still (1984) places a Christmas tree where it was placed in 1926. At that time, however, there was also a flagpole in the center of the intersection of Main and New York streets.

A mass meeting of voters and taxpayers in January of 1928 moved to accept the proposal of Western Light and Power to purchase the light and water plant. An election on March 26 granted the franchise by a large majority. They took over the plant on April 12, 1928.

With prohibition came stills and bootleggers. According to the paper the biggest haul of "contraband wet goods" ever made was in a canyon in the southeast part of the county. Officers from Comanche County and Woods County, Oklahoma, found 24 barrels of booze and arrested two men who were fined \$250 each and sentenced to six months in jail. Some people who are today highly respected can remember relatives who were at odds with the law over prohibition.

Rodeos were popular in the twenties as they still are. If you had to remember one name connected with rodeos in Coldwater it might well be John Burnett. Events advertised at rodeos were much the same as they are now with the possible exception of cowpony races and a buckboard team race.

Darlene Harding at the McLain Roundup, Sun City, Barber County, Kansas. Photo courtesy of Betty McClain.</p>

At left:

Darlene Harding at the McLain Roundup rodeo, Sun City, Barber County, Kansas.

Photo courtesy of Betty McClain.

Coldwater could boast of not one, but two, excellent cowgirl performers. Darlene and Malee Harding both started performing when very young. Malee was a featured performer by the time she was eight.

Paul Gossett built the movie theater building in 1928. A 28 x 100 foot brick it boasted a ladies rest room, 200 upholstered chairs downstairs, and one hundred chairs in the balcony. There was a good stage with two dressing rooms and a central air and heat system. The admission for all children old enough to walk was ten cents.

Coldwater Centennial Notebook

Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

In 1929 Gossett bought equipment for talking movies. Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Bosley remodeled the former Opera house with talking movie equipment. This movie theater was called the "Pleasant Hour;" admission in 1931 was 10 cents and 40 cents.

Some later owners of the Pike Theater in the Gossett building were Donita and Vic Stark, and the Bernard Starks. It was called "The Comanche" when Starks ran it. Later Sol Frank owned it and called it "The Chief." Buildings on both the east and west side of it burned at different times. More recent owners and managers were the Porter Smiths and Joe Sunderland. (1984)

Proposed plans for a swimming pool were accepted in 1928. It was built at a cost of \$3,692.62. A fence was placed around it before it opened in 1929. Plans had been made but not carried out several times beginning in 1925 or earlier. Before that there was a small pool about 20 x 20 feet on west Main by Henry Bean's shop.

The new courthouse was dedicated in 1928. There was a large gathering of residents and former residents, a sort of homecoming. A register, as complete as possible, was made of those present. The building cost the county \$104,858.14; no bonds were issued to build it.

As automobiles became more commonplace, there were all sorts of problems. One man presented the council with a bill for car repairs when he ran over a traffic sign. It was rejected.

In 1929 the city limits were extended to include the Western Light and Power Company. Earlier additions, now vacated, were Jones, Darrow's, Miller's, and Grant's. Cade's, Bale and Wiley's and Parker Wright's have remained.

After the "Battle of 1919" Wallace Case was still Mayor. There were two tickets, the Citizens and the Peoples. The Citizens caucus met Monday at the courthouse. Only two of their candidates had ever held city office before. The Peoples party held an impromptu affair at a local garage on Tuesday night. The Citizens party had nominated two of their nominees. Each had to decide on which ticket he preferred to run. The Coldwater Talisman said, "The opening guns have not yet been fired. . .but nominations have been made and campaign headquarters will be established at once."

The two candidates chosen by both parties were elected: Wallace Case, mayor, and W.T. Maris, councilman. Of the remaining four councilmen, one was from the Citizens party and three belonged to the Peoples' party. The Star termed it "A lively city election," and said a very large vote was cast: 438 compared to 110 the last election. Between 85 and 90 percent of the voters took part indicating there was considerable interest in the outcome. The Talisman said, "It's all over now. . .and thus closes a 'warm' city campaign. Just what was the issue we have been unable to learn."

City council adopted ordinances in 1929 that provided Coldwater with natural gas from the Watchorn Well northwest of Protection. One assigned a natural gas franchise to R.B. Newbern; another conveyed "right, title, and interest" in this franchise to the Public Service Company of Kansas.

THE THIRTIES--DIRTY AND OTHERWISE

The thirties brought dirt storms but during these years many improvements were made with government aid. Before that the council had to deal with some-law-and-order problems.

Coldwater Centennial Notebook

Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

The Police Judge, after relating some of his court experiences, asked that some thought be given the subject of a salary for Police Judge. An increase of petty larceny cases brought about a need for a night marshal. The current day marshal was changed to night duty and another man put on as day marshal for \$40 a month. Council also adopted an ordinance declaring it unlawful to resist an officer in discharge of his duties.

Things were bad. The county made "A Move Toward Economy." The commissioners reduced wages under their control about 25 percent, making them \$100 a month for tractor operators to \$150 for county engineer. Bridge gang labor was 30 cents an hour, and a road-patrol man with four horses made 55 cents an hour. Those getting hourly wages were not to exceed eight hours a day. Prisoner's did not fare so badly: there was no cut on the 25 cents an hour they got for roadwork and they had room and board furnished.

In the summer of 1932 the Demuth Ice Company advertised, "Depression Sale of Ice." The special for July was 500 pounds for \$3.00. Purchasers got one free ticket with each 500 pounds; prizes if you had a winning ticket ranged from a grade three ice refrigerator down to a 500 pound ice-coupon book.

By August the home Demonstration Agent was asking people with a surplus of vegetables or fruits to tell the Farm Bureau office. Many families had little employment during the year and were practically destitute. At Christmas the editor asked, "What of the Future?" He said one of the principal causes of the so-called depression was the unusually low price of farm and range products for quite some time. In January of 1933 people were told that nearly everyone could and should help in some way to provide needed food and clothing for the worthy poor. "Are you helping to the utmost of your ability?"

City council looked into ways to get relief funds. One was the Kansas Federal Relief fund. The county was allotted about \$3,600 for 1933 to be spent for hand labor or local projects. Street repairs and work on the city dump were planned. The wages were \$1.50 for an eight-hour day. There was a real "holiday" in financial circles when bank-closing orders came on Mach 4. The holiday began to be called off by the 13th, and Coldwater banks re-opened the 15th. The Star noted that each bank received many deposits of money, including some gold coins.

The Star practically predicted the dirty thirties as early as 1923 when the editor wrote, "There are many quarters of land in the county which have been sown to wheat every fall for 30 years. The time will come, and before long, when nature well rebel and refuse to produce anything like good crops on those farms."

Some captions for dust storm stories were "Dust", "A Worse Dust Storm," and "The Most Severe Storm Yet." "Another Dust Storm" was proclaimed in early May. It was so dark lights had to be turned on for two hours or more in the middle of the afternoon and chickens went to roost. To quote the news, "There certainly was a lively exchange of real estate."

On May 22, after more storms, still another dust storm hit. It was followed by an hour of rain about 7:30 p.m. People rejoiced that the dust was settled but about 10 p.m. a large cloud of fine dust came in, leaving a thick layer on everything.

Relief work continued. Some of the projects were the new schoolhouse, work on country schools, the Farm Housing Survey Project, and the Rural Sanitation Project for rural schools and homes. Four new road projects were planned.

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Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

In mid-November the news was that the relief work in winter would be only for those who were destitute. Later the caption was "Everybody to go to work." There were 140 men in the county who were working, and 352 were registered for work. The government telegraphed that the number of jobs would be increased and pay would go to 40 cents an hour. People were advised only one in each family could be employed, every man who works must register and be willing to answer all questions, and he must follow his work order. "If you are told to bring two horses, do so — whether you have four horses or have none."

About 300 persons were registered at the re-employment office in early December. Two weeks later figures showed 500 men and women were registered in addition to those working.

About twenty teams and drivers and some hand laborers began work on Highway 160 in Coldwater in February of 1934. This was to include a twenty-foot concrete slab in the middle.

In late April people rejoiced because the streetlights were on again. They had been off for several months except in the business section as the money in the light fund was low.

Public drinking fountains were installed in the summer of 1935. One was on the southwest corner of New York and Main; another was on the northwest corner of that intersection.

As the depression slowly lifted, city council turned to other problems – dogs running at large, car dealers using streets to display used cars, adding land to the park area, radio interference, and the beer problem. This they resolved in 1937 by passing Ordinance No. 285 regulating license fees and selling of cereal malt beverages. Also that year the Volunteer Fire Department got new hats and coats. The city clerk wrote, "Their appreciation was manifest."

" . . . WAR AND RUMORS OF . . . "

In 1939 it was decided to pave Main Street between Chicago and Boston. Bonds of \$11,345 were issued. The job was finished in 1940. In 1940 this area had increased light when the "White Way" was installed.

The next year city clerk William Brumbaugh died while in office. He had been city clerk for thirteen years.

Council decided in 1941 to purchase a car for the use of the city marshal. The cost of it was not to exceed \$200.

Bonds of \$4,000 to enlarge and improve the city park were issued after an election in 1941 approved the issue. There were only ten votes against it. The pavilion was planned in 1942 at a cost of \$477.

Once again the war clouds gathered. Pearl Harbor was attacked December 7, 1941. By the 29th Coldwater had a tire rationing board organized. There were four districts in the city with a chairman for each to see that data was collected on the supply of foodstuffs on hand and to be produced.

Coldwater Centennial Notebook

Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

Comanche County led the nation in collecting scrap iron. Junk Rally Day was August 28, 1942, and “everything was locked up tighter than Easter slippers.” The result was 375 tons of scrap iron. Added to the 442 tons gathered earlier it made quite a collection. Included in it was a 37-millimeter German Howitzer, a souvenir of the First World War belonging to the American Legion. House Bill No. 2104 authorized the donation of this cannon to Coldwater.

New times brought new ordinances. In August of 1943 a curfew ordinance was adopted. For those under eighteen years of age the hours were 11 p.m. from March 1 to September 3, and 10 p.m. from October 1 through the last day of February. Another ordinance regulated operation and ownership of pinball machines.

Some other events of this period included a problem with water contamination in 1944 and a scarlet fever epidemic in 1945. There were several attempts to establish a city airport over the years. In December of 1944 the Stark airport opened to the public, “the same as a drugstore, lumber yard, or other privately owned concern.”

Victor Stark, operator, owned three planes at the time: two Piper J-3 two passenger cabin models, and one Taylorcraft two-passenger plane. By February 15 he had soloed 19 local students. Quite a number of local men were involved in aviation in WW II. After the war there was a G.I. training Program and you could get a private license. Vic ran this.

The Star was a mirror of the war years. There was a column with news of the men and women in service, there were letters they wrote, and there were the captions. Some were of happy events such as brothers or friends meeting each other half way around the world, and “Local Girl Weds Sailor.” But there were the others, too: wounded in action – missing – prisoner of Germans – shot down over Pacific.

The final victory when Japan surrendered was preceded by victory in Europe and by the use of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima. Countrywide, radio listeners had their ears glued to receiving sets. When Frank Weber heard the news he stepped out the back door of his shop at 6:02 a.m., August 14, 1945, and emptied his six-shooter. This verified news of the war’s end to the telephone operator who sounded the fire whistle in a long continuous blast. There was a mild demonstration of motorists blowing their horns on Main but many remarked quietly how wonderful it was.

A celebration was held in the school auditorium with appropriate songs, poems, and speeches. The only decoration on the stage was a basket of beautiful roses from the Coldwater Memorial Rose Garden.

Located in the southwest corner of City Park, this garden was dedicated September 12, 1944. There were originally 152 colored roses in the four corner beds. The center bed surrounding the flagpole contained 38 white rose bushes, each dedicated to the memory of a Comanche County war casualty.

The American Legion Memorial Shaft in Crown Hill Cemetery, Comanche County, Kansas. Photo by Bobbi (Hackney) Huck. At left: The American Legion Memorial Shaft in Crown Hill Cemetery.

Photo:

Bobbi Huck

Another memorial to war casualties is the American Legion Memorial Shaft in the center of the circle drive at Crown Hill Cemetery. This shaft was the first of its kind to be built in southwest Kansas. At the dedication in November of 1945 about sixty veterans of World Wars I and II were present and there was a crowd of three or four hundred.

Coldwater Centennial Notebook
Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

The Protection Historical Society began in 1945. Ida Bare later visited with Kansas State Historical Society members and they recommended a county historical society. On December 18, 1950 at a special meeting the Comanche County Historical Society was organized. Their first meeting was November 5, 1951. On September 18, 1968, the J. T. Botts building was purchased. It was used as a museum until the present building (1984) was bought in 1978. In 1980 they began work on the "Comanche County History," organizing a committee of members and other interested persons. It was finished in 1981.

An earlier museum was that of John P. Jones. He was involved with the Comanche County State Bank, forerunner of the Coldwater National Bank, and had apartments over it in 1888. A reporter at that time wrote that Jones' collection of Indian relics and other objects was the largest and most valuable in Kansas. Artifacts ranged from the Atlantic to the Pacific and some European relics. He also had a library of every obtainable work relating to the Louisiana Purchase and copies of all the important documents relating to it. The Wichita Eagle in 1890 said he never failed to correct them when they were guilty of errors in accounts of the early history of this country.

Some major events of the later forties included construction of the new sewer system. State Health authorities had been after the city for five years to do something about the "antiquated drying beds." They were astounded that there had been no epidemic, considering the highly contaminated water that ran free for twenty years.

The new plant consisted of one Imhoff sludge tank, two sedimentation tanks, pump house, and trickle filter. The entire filtering cycle took about two and one-half hours; the former one, nineteen minutes. The contract for \$41,184.66 was with the Dobson Brothers Construction Company of Lincoln, Nebraska.

New fire fighting equipment was purchased in 1947. The public was told of some of the dangers of getting too close to the high pressure equipment and warned they would be fined \$5 or more for driving over the hose and breaking it.

C.E. Demuth's ice plant was destroyed by fire in 1948. Flames reached heights of 75 feet and the heat was so great that large steel pipes bent over like fountain straws. Everything was lost, including an old delivery truck, tools, and office equipment.

Other events of the forties included an ordinance against depositing paper, trash, rubbish, and other wastes on the streets. The fine was \$50 and/or thirty days in prison.

N.W. Bransom entered city affairs as one of the judges of the 1949 election. Other events that year were "Emergency Parking Only" spaces marked in front of the doctors' offices, 69 street markers placed by the Lion's Club, and an election to determine the sale of liquor by the package. It was determined "NO" by 24 votes.

Another war memorial, built in the fifties is the Veteran's Memorial Building. Bonds of \$25,000 were voted for in a close election on September 19, 1951. There was only a four-vote majority. The new building was immediately put to many uses, including dances and Girl Scout meetings. The city council held their first meeting in the new building on November 10, 1952.

Comanche County Hospital, Comanche County, Kansas. Photo from the Diamond Jubilee Historical Souvenir Program. Coldwater, KS: Western Star, 1959.

Comanche County Hospital, Coldwater, Kansas.

Another addition to Coldwater was the Comanche County Hospital. It was formally dedicated on August 12, 1950. A Hospital Auxiliary was organized in 1957. The building was expanded in 1964.

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Earlier hospitals included a clinic started in 1908 by doctors Myers, Clapp, and Dodge, and the Moon Hospital, run by Mrs. Moon. Its location was where Bill and Leola Sanders now live (1984). There were also the office hospitals of Dr. Holcomb and Dr. Shelly.

The city fluoridated the water supply in 1955. Package liquor sales were again voted down that year by a majority of 245 votes.

Southwest Bell Telephone Company changed to the dial system in 1957. The telephone office, which had been at 107 North Central for so many years, moved to the building where it is located in 1984.

Horace Rich started the Rich Rose Ranch in 1957. By 1971 the ten-acre garden produced 4,000 roses and 3,000 dahlias yearly and attracted 10,000 visitors. Rich didn't operate it as a profit-making venture but because he wanted to see what western Kansas could do. He said, "I like people; some of my most interesting friends I met when they visited the roses."

A large signboard was erected in 1969 at the east side of the Main and Central intersection. It reads, "Welcome to Coldwater, Rose Capital of Kansas." (1984). Scores of sports events and dates of other events are posted on it as well as congratulations and other messages of interest to the public. The base originally contained rose bushes. This sign has been sort of a memorial to the man who created the rose capital.

About 44 blocks of streets were paved in 1959. The original contract was for \$121,000. City council received a protest petition after paving.

DIAMOND JUBILEE AND OTHER SUCCESS STORIES

Front Cover artwork: Coldwater Diamond Jubilee Committee. Diamond Jubilee, Coldwater, Kansas, Aug. 30-Sept. 2, 1959. Historical Souvenir Program. Coldwater, KS: Western Star, 1959.

At left: Front Cover artwork: Coldwater Diamond Jubilee Committee. Diamond Jubilee, Coldwater, Kansas, Aug. 30-Sept. 2, 1959. Historical Souvenir Program. Coldwater, KS: Western Star, 1959. Diamond Jubilee! The celebration of celebrations! Beards bristled, skirts swished, and toes tapped. Former celebrations paled in comparison, and they were very good.

In 1885 "guns began to boom at early dawn" in celebration of the Fourth of July. People poured into town from all directions. The program started with music by the band, located under the shade of the great flag. This flag was twenty feet in length. Made by Mrs. Shank and others, it was hung from a line that ran from the wind pump tower to the comb of the merchant's Hotel.

Other events of the day included amusements of various kinds, a fireworks display, and a ball. A later celebration on the Fourth in 1903 included a Calithumpian Conglomeration. In 1905, Charles Cleo's "Slide for Life" was from the top of city Drug Store to across the street.

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But the Diamond Jubilee is still the celebration everyone remembers. "Celebration Eve" (August 29, 1959) was the ball honoring Miss Comanche County, Dana Mills, and the Jubilee Princesses. Sunday featured an Old Fashioned Religious Service at the High School. Monday was Pioneer and Homecoming Day and started off with a Chuck Wagon breakfast. Other events of that day included a mule-shoeing exhibition, a parade, and the first performance of the "Pageant of the Prairie." Tuesday was Agriculture day and there was a horseshoe tournament, horse and cattle shows, a livestock parade, and the second performance of the pageant. Wednesday was "Ladies and Youth Day." Features included a parade, fashion show, beard contest, speed-shaving contest, and the final performance of the pageant.

A special exhibit was the Santa Fe Railroad's famous Cyrus K. Holliday train, Engine no. 1, built in 1880. It is now in the Kansas Historical Society Museum.

The sixties started with a "splash" when the new swimming pool opened in June. Voters heartily approved bonds of \$85,000 for this in 1959. Ultra-Modern of Wichita built the pool. Council minutes in 1961 note that the Girl Scouts from Junction City will be allowed to use the pool, including the colored girls.

Coldwater has never had large numbers of any ethnic group. The Review mentions a "delegation" of colored men who came out in 1885 that included "two No. 1 Blacksmiths." They sent back to Harper for their families. Later that year eight masked men went to the residence of one Negro and told him if his daughter did not quit her efforts to claim land they would have him "look up a pole." The same threats were made to a male friend of the family.

Frank Kimple, in 1931, wrote that no colored person had lived here long enough in the last forty years to be called a permanent resident. He told of the colored families that lived here earlier and their businesses. Henry Earl was a barber, Tobe Morris and Harry Clark ran a blacksmith shop, Willis Cox was a cook at the Merchant's Hotel, and the Carson and Weyems families ran a laundry.

Mayor Don Booth ran un-opposed in 1963. He served six terms as mayor, from 1955 until the election of Warren Bransom in 1967.

Pioneer Lodge, a care center for elderly and other disabled persons, was built in 1964. The cost was \$310,000. It is a licensed intermediate care facility.

Coldwater's new high school building was completed in 1964. Earlier buildings still in use in 1984 are the Junior High building, first used in 1926 as the high school, and the grade school building and auditorium built in 1939.

Comanche County's Bi-Centennial Celebration was held in Coldwater on June 5 and 6, 1976. Memorable events included the parade downtown and a program at the football field, sponsored by the Coldwater Apollo Music Club. It was "America's History in Song and Dance," with over fifty acts and over a hundred performers. Souvenir plates were sold and other fund-raising events were held. Microfilm of the newspapers and microfilm readers were purchased and placed in the libraries at Protection and Coldwater.

In November of 1977 city council reviewed N.W. Bransom's first ten years as mayor; they cited not only his better-known accomplishments but all the work he had done that the public rarely hears about. He received a 10-year tie clasp. In 1984 he has served almost another ten years. These years too, have been full of one thing after another accomplished for the good of Coldwater. Looking at the work of mayors and city council members one wonders just what the business world would be like if employees worked even half as hard, and these officials are not even paid.

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Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

A former Coldwater mayor, Harold Herd, began practicing law in 1946. Beginning in 1954 he served four years as County Attorney and in 1957 prosecuted the county's first homicide case to receive a guilty verdict. Entering politics in 1960 he was elected State Senator from southwest Kansas and held the post eight years, the last four as Minority Leader. After a very narrow defeat in 1972 he went back to full time law practice until 1979. On March 3 of that year governor John Carlin appointed him to the Kansas Supreme Court where he is still serving (1984).

The Coldwater Clinic was built at a cost of \$114,000. Jim Herrington and Muriel Gregg decided to supply the needed facility even though there was no doctor available when they began the building. Dr. Donald Goering was president of the Kansas Medical Society in 1979 when he came to Coldwater and opened the Clinic for use on March 19, 1979. In 1908 rooms were made available for part-time use of the Iroquois League for Human Development so help would be available to those with mental and emotional problems.

Myrtle Clinesmith began work at in August of 1944. She was appointed Executive Vice-President at Hobart Mcmillen's death in 1963. She held this position until 1969; she continued work as Cashier with Garth McMillen as President. On May 12, 1977 Myrtle received the Arthur W. Kincade Award and a check for \$10,000. This award is given to a Kansas banker "who has best exemplified the extension of credit on personal character and performance rather than material collateral." The nomination, in writing, is not to contain more than 300 words. Garth McMillen wrote the nomination; corroborative material included letters from Mayor N.W. Bransom, James Herd, Jr., John Robertson, Dr. Ronald McCoy, Alvin Elliott, Clair Parcel, Walter Male, Vernon Huck, Harold Herd, and Judd Durner, Bank Examiner.

James Herrington, President of the Coldwater National Bank, is another Coldwater citizen who achieved high honor in banking circles. He began work at the bank in 1951. Later he served as Director and Vice-President of Region VI of Kansas Bankers. He has been very active in the Independent Bankers' Association. He served on several committees including the Chairmanship of the Agriculture-Rural America Committee and several federal legislation committees, one of which he still serves on. He was Second Vice-President in 1981, First Vice-President in 1982, and in March of 1983 he became President of the Independent Bankers Association.

Another project started in the 1970s was low-income housing. Several attempts to get funding failed. In 1980 a Local Housing Authority was created with the following members: Ruby Booth, Cleo Bliss, Gordon Harness, Myrtle Clinesmith, and Louise Haas. Federal funding of \$514,000 was approved in 1981. LHA had to raise \$25,000. An appeal was made in June and by October over \$22,000 had been donated. The twenty-unit complex was finished in 1982 and move-in date was September first, a short time after the Open House. The name chosen from those submitted to the committee was Prairie Plaza Apartments. In June of 1984 there were 21 residents.

The seventies saw the beginning of several projects that were not finished until the eighties. In 1978 planning began for a library building, the result of a legacy of \$100,000 from Faye Carthrae. Frank L. Dale donated lots next to the city building for a location. As the money was left to the city and the library was organized as a township library, the planning and building were to be done by a Library Building Committee composed of Jay Pounds, Jim Herrington, Wendell Brown, Charlie Jackson, and Garth McMillen. Control of the building would then pass from the city to the library district. In making sure everything was legal, Mayor Bransom discovered everything was not legal. The legislature had abolished portions of certain library legislation believing there were no libraries that would be affected by their actions. One statute that was abolished was the one under which the Coldwater Township District Library had been organized. The legislature was in its final meeting days. It was necessary that either a citizen-sponsored bill be introduced which would again give the library legal standing or that the whole organization process be gone through. Opting for the bill, Bransom wrote one out that added an amendment to an existing statute and provided a legal basis for the library. When the bill was presented, board member Ruth Bird helped to explain the necessity for passage. The bill was passed and Coldwater-Wilmore Regional Library was given legal status by KSA 12-1231, as amended by House Bill No. 3266.

This achieved, plans and building proceeded rapidly. The building was finished and in use by late November of 1980.

Coldwater Lake, USGS aerial photograph, 1 April 1996. [CLICK HERE](#) to see the full image.

Coldwater Centennial Notebook

Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

Coldwater Lake, aerial view on April 1, 1996.

Source: USGS Photograph

Voters in 1970 approved a \$250,000 bond issue for a lake. Work on the Lake Project, which was by far the greatest undertaking in the city's history both financially and in public impact, started in December of 1973 with groundbreaking ceremonies. It was built in three phases at a total cost of \$1,021,858. Water was running over the spillway by May 25, 1978. The formal dedication was July 13, 1980. Coldwater's share of the cost was a little over \$500,000. The park area is 930 acres and the lake surface is 250 acres with a watershed of 27,766 acres. An early editor asked "Why not make an artificial lake west of town on Cavalry Creek?" Nearly a century later our city officials and others echoed, "Why not?" and created Lake Coldwater. The latest annexation to Coldwater was the lake property and adjoining land. The city limits had been enlarged in 1962 to include the property on the northeast part of the NW1/4 of Section 7, Township 32, Range 18 east.

City council adopted a zoning ordinance in April of 1980. R.D. Mark was appointed building inspector. Members of the Appeal Board were Ron Lehl, Jay Pepperd, Myrtle Clinesmith, Lottie Mills, and Steve Prusa.

In 1982 cable television became available in Coldwater. Larry D. Hollingsworth, president of Cable TV Corporation, received a ten-year franchise. The rate was two percent of gross receipts and charges were not to be changed without consent of City Council.

Virgil McIntyre has served as Coldwater's postmaster since 1961. The first one was Daniel Cline whose official appointment was October 17, 1884. He served before that. Other postmasters and the year they were appointed were Abraham Darroch (1889), Lewis M. Rich (1893), Samuel M. Jackson (1897), Zelma P. Jackson (1903), Lewis Rich (1916), Henry A. Replogle (1919), Orange J. Mark (1924), Eyman Phebus (1934), Jack Vance (1949), and Fred Anderson (1961).

At first the mail sacks were brought in and sent out by stage, or hack, line. Later the train moved them. This was discontinued in 1959 and dispatch is now by mail truck.

At present the post office is at 206 East Main. Before that the location was on the northwest corner of Main and New York (1958-1976) and the west side of south New York in the first block (1917-1958). Locations before that included the building housing Gwen's Tot and Teen Shop in 1959.

CENTENNIAL COUNTDOWN

Several years ago it became necessary to find a new location for an airport. The Comanche County Airport Authority was created. Frank Horton donated sixty acres, more or less, south of town. The airport built there has a 3,300 foot long paved surface runway that is lighted. There is an office building and a hangar that houses four planes. Fuel is available and the airport is open to the public. The formal dedication was held Saturday, June 30, 1984 at two in the afternoon during the Centennial Celebration.

As a new century beckons, Coldwater takes a look backward with a Centennial Celebration. Looking even further backward were the archeologists and others involved in the 1984 dig on the Bell site near Wilmore. The Kansas State Historical Society and the Kansas Anthropological Association sponsored this. They used the Comanche County Museum in Coldwater for the seminars on excavation, survey, re-construction, and Kansas Pre-History. Personnel included State Archeologist Tom Witty, archeologists Don Rowlinson, John Reynolds, Diane Good, Randy Theis, and Martin Stein. KAA President Neil Rogers and other KAA officers and members also helped make the two weeks a memorable event.

Coldwater Centennial Notebook
Compiled and Written by Evelyn Reed

There is a century of history behind Coldwater and a lot of history beckons.

COLDWATER MAYORS 1884 – 1984:

Tim Shields September 22, 1884

ONE-YEAR-TERM:

Cash M. Cade 1885

A.M. Merryman 1886

H.H. Rich 1887, 1888

A.M. Merryman 1889

D.C. Kelly 1890

William D. Weiler 1891

Dr. J.S. Halliday 1892, 1893, 1894

Walter Meers 1895, 1896

Boardman F. Smith 1897

George H. Torrey 1898

James G. Doig 1899

J.S. Halliday 1900

L.M. Rich 1901, 1902

Eugene Ferrin (resigned November 6, 1903) 1903

L.M. Rich (Special election November 30, 1903) 1903

J.H. Allderdice (Acting Mayor) 1904

TWO-YEAR TERM:

N.A. Lytle 1905

Stephen Knecht 1907, 1909

Jay T. Botts 1911

N.A. Lytle 1913

J.B. Eaton (resigned May 5, 1916) 1915

H.N. Marshall (Acting Mayor) 1916

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C.E. Allderdice 1917,1919
S.J. Gilchrist 1921
E.E. Pounds (resigned immediately after election) 1923
J.G. Doig (Acting Mayor) (died February 14, 1924) 1923
W.S. Cook 1924
John Burriss (resigned November 9, 1925) 1925
C. Gardiner Lyon (Acting Mayor) 1925
Wallace G. Case 1927,1929
Eyman Phebus 1931
F.L. Holcomb, M.D. 1933
Earl Martin 1935
R.A.J. Shelley 1937
A.L. Parsons 1939,1941,1943
E.L. Orr, 1945,1947
Harold Herd 1949,1951
H.S. Schulz (resigned) 1953
W.L. Carrither (Acting Mayor) 1953
Don Booth 1955,1957,1959,1961,1963,1965
Warren Bransom 1967,1969,1971,1973,1975,1977,1979

FOUR-YEAR TERM

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INFORMATION SHEETS:
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Elizabeth Hackney
INTERVIEWS:
Ruth Bird
Ruth Botts
Warren Bransom
Bernice Hough
Dale Mark
Carl Paavlik
Betty Smith
Vic Stark
Vernon Wells
SPECIFIC SOURCES (Other than newspapers):
Page 1: Kansas Historical Quarterlies; J.E.B. Stuart (book); George Bent (Hyde); Life in Custer's Cavalry (Barnitz); 1871 Survey Field Notes.
Page 2: Fifty Thousand Acres (Gates); Kansas Historical Quarterly; Microfilmed Army Reports (Ft. Dodge/ Boot Hill).
Page 3: Coldwater City License book

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Page 4: Charter of City of Coldwater; Records of City Council.

Page 5: Records of City Council

Page 7: Vernon Wells, conversation pre-dating 1984.

Page 8: Records of City Council

Page 9-11: Records of Coldwater City Council

Page 12: Records of Coldwater City Council; Cemetery Records (Swarner); Numerical Land Records, Comanche County

Page 13: Records of City Council

Page 15: Cemetery Records

Page 20: S.M. Jackson journal of real estate transactions; Records of City Council.

Page 21-3: Records of City Council

Page 23-5: Information from Centel Office

Page 25: Interviews: Ruth Botts, Dale Mark

Page 26-7: Interview, Dale Mark

Page 30: Records of City Council

Page 31: Interviews; Records of City Council

Page 32: Interviews: Bernice Hough, Vic Stark, Betty Smith

Page 33-7: Records of City Council

Page 37: Interview, Vic Stark

Page 39: Personal knowledge

Page 40-1: Records of City council

Page 41: Interviews: Dale Mark, Carl Pavlik; Kansas! (magazine)

Page 42: Diamond Jubilee Material

Page 43: 1976 Bi-Centennial materials; personal knowledge

Page 44: Comanche County History, 1980; Jerry Allen information.

Page 45-6: Elizabeth Hackney information; Records of 1980 library building; Interviews: Ruth Bird, Warren Bransom.

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FROM THE MAYOR . . .

This fall, 40 years ago, we arrived in Coldwater to take charge of the local J.C. Penney Store. For 11 years, I was the manager. The store was closed in 1955. We immediately opened our own store under the trade name of Warren's. We sold out in 1975.

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We did not leave Coldwater when the Penney Store was closed, because we felt then and still do that Coldwater was one of the best places in the world to raise a family.

The community has been good to us. Through hard work by Mozelle and our girls, Pat, Sandy and Dorothy, we prospered in a small way in our chosen field of endeavor. In return, we hope that we have been of some service to the community.

There are a few 'bouquets' that I would like to hand out at this time. To Myrtle Clinesmith for her counsel and advice over the almost 40 years that I have known her. In my opinion she is one in a million.

To Justice Harold S. Herd, for without his advice and guidance, Coldwater Lake and park might not have been a reality.

To Garth W. Mcmillen who was always ready and willing to serve and act in the best interest of the community and has been an inspiration to me. He once chartered a plane to bring me back from Texas to help settle a problem that occurred during the construction of the concrete spillway. (Garth was Acting Contract Officer during my absence.) He was available to go with me on many trips during the preparation of the Architect's plans for the Faye Carthrae Memorial Library Building. Garth was also available to go with me to Topeka to get a law passed so the Library would be able to make a tax levy to have funds to operate with the next year. He was instrumental in the promotion and development of the Prairie Plaza Apartments. I truly miss him.

Our Thanks:

To Ralph Hooper, President of the Council: he was always available to preside at council meeting during my absences and also sign checks and papers when I was away. Also for 'taking care' of the city pool and park.

To Karel Pavlik, "Senior Member" of the council and John Booth who assumed the responsibility of the installation of the electrical work of the Recreation Area around the lake. We were in a bind because the work had to be done by a certain time to qualify for matching funds. John and Karel took the job at the Engineer's estimate. Some of the funds were returned to the City along with the donation of the GMMC pickup that city employees are now using. Of the above mentioned Councilmen, Karel was the only one elected to start his career as Councilman. John, Ralph and Garth were all appointed by the Mayor to fill unexpired terms. Paul Kropf, ex-councilman, for his donation of the Chevrolet truck chassis that the oil distributor is now mounted on – we thank you, Paul.

I have had a long and pleasant association with Vertis J. Swarner, whose dedication to public service and his generosity has made Crown Hill Cemetery a place of beauty. Some people are not aware of it, but the Mayor is automatically a member of the Cemetery Board.

To Bonnie Parcel, county Clerk, who has always been ready and willing to assist with information and advice on city budgets and other matters for the City, I extend my sincere thanks.

To Evelyn Reed, Local Librarian, for many hours of research of old city records that help bring our history up to date, we thank you.

N.W. Bransom, Mayor, City of Coldwater