

VIEWS OF THE PAST



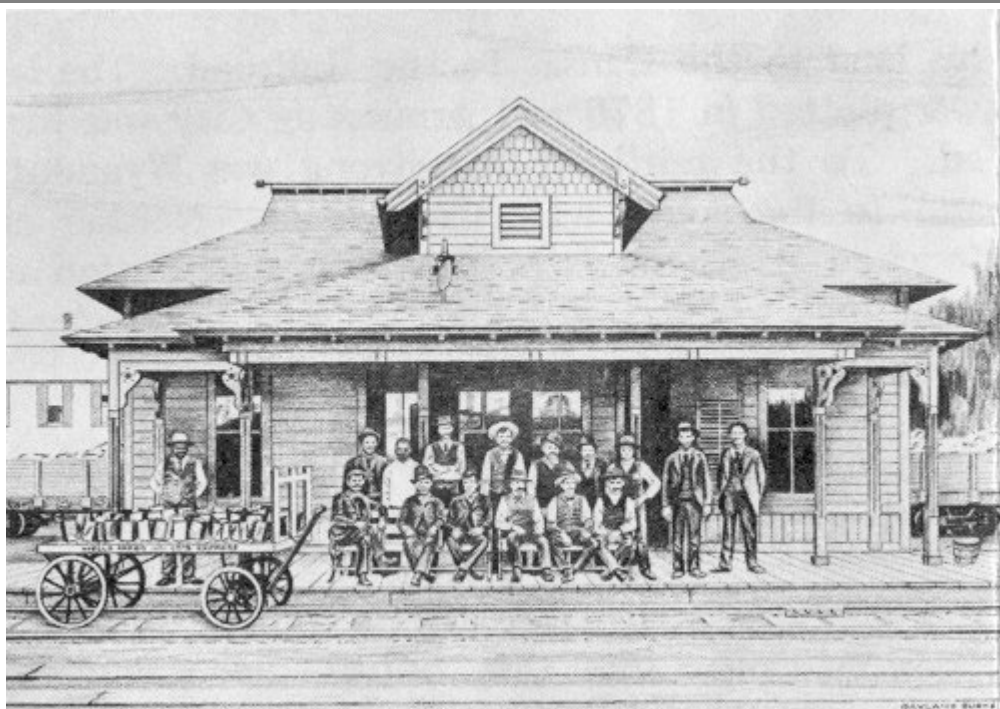
The History of Kansas City, Kansas in pamphlet series

Series 2: "ANNEXATION OF RIVERVIEW, OLD WYANDOTTE CITY, ARMOURDALE AND ARMSTRONG"

Sponsored by the Kansas City, Kansas Bicentennial Commission

"OUT OF MANY ... ONE"

The text of this series on annexation was written in part by Bicentennial staff member Orrin Murray. A teacher, farmer, author of one book and numerous articles on the history of Wyandotte County, Mr. Murray also is a knowledgeable speaker on just about any subject -- except astrology!



This drawing shows the Argentine railroad depot at the north end of Spear Street in 1892. Over \$40,000 of silver bullion awaits shipment from the smelter. It was a common sight to see the precious metal sitting on an unguarded loading dock.

THE FIRST COMMUNITIES

The city of Kansas City was plotted in 1868. Called the First Ward, this bit of land was the first Kansas City. Today it is known as the West Bottoms. On the west side of the Kaw River, the Wyandots began to plot and lay out their streets. Now known as the northeast area, this land was then called "Wyandotte City".

To the northwest of Wyandotte City, another community, Quindaro Town, could be found. This town site was purchased from the Wyandot tribe by Abelard Guthrie, a white man who married Nancy Quindaro Brown, daughter of one of the Wyandot chiefs. The land was named Quindaro in honor of Mrs. Guthrie. (Quindaro means "little bundle of sticks" in the Wyandot language.) In present-day terms, Quindaro was bounded on the north by the Missouri River, on the east by 18th Street, on the south by Brown Avenue, and on the west by 42nd Street.

Quindaro was plotted in the 1850's and annexed by assumption in the 1880's. A ferry built from Parkville to Quindaro, and the good harbor added to the desirability of settling in this hilly and wooded area. Many Quindaro lots sold at a premium to people coming in from the East to settle. Quindaro was visioned as a great metropolis.

However, the boom of Quindaro Town was short-lived. It is thought that the rough terrain, the men leaving to join the Union Army and their wives returning to the East, added to the demise of Quindaro. Also, the Kansas Pacific (now the Union Pacific) built a bridge across the Kaw, making access easier to Wyandotte City than to Quindaro. Now, the area is known only as the "Quindaro Ruins".



The Union Pacific Railroad depot located east of Seventh Street in Armstrong in the 1900's.

The youngest of the three towns that formed the consolidated city of Kansas City, Kansas, was Armourdale. Boston capitalists in 1880 incorporated the Kaw Valley Town Site and Bridge Company and obtained a large tract of land in the Kaw Valley. A portion of this land was platted into a town, which was called Armourdale in honor of the Armours of packing house fame. The town grew rapidly and was incorporated in 1882. The boundaries extended southward from Kansas Avenue to the Kaw, and west to 18th Street. A very level plot of land, and well suited to industries, Armourdale became the home of many meat-packing plants. Home of the operations of the Big Five Packers, this city became the second largest meat packing center in the United States in the early 1880's.

The village of Armstrong was controlled by Silas Armstrong, a Wyandot. This land, on the west side of the Kaw, extended from Riverview on the north to the present Kansas Avenue on the south, and westward to the hills. Armstrong sold his land to the Kansas Pacific Railroad. The land was plotted in 1870 and Armstrong City was formed. To the north of Armstrong was Wyandotte, and to the south was Armourdale. Neither city touched Armstrong's borders, but its location was such that when consolidation came, Armstrong became part of the new city.

Between Armstrong and Wyandotte, the edition (sic) of Riverview was founded in 1879. Fifth and Central Avenue was the center of this area. In 1880, the community of Riverview petitioned for annexation into old Kansas City, but the plea was turned down. In May of 1881, however, Kansas City, Kansas, passed an ordinance for annexation of Riverview.

In 1886, the county clerk of Wyandotte certified to Kansas Governor Martin that Wyandotte had a population of 12,086; Kansas City had 3,802; and Armourdale had 1,582 residents. This figure was more than the necessary population of 15,000 required to become a city of the first class. On March 6, 1886, Governor Martin issued a proclamation consolidating Wyandotte, old Kansas City, and Armourdale into one city of the first class -- Kansas City, Kansas.

Extending from the Kaw on the west and southward in an irregular line to the hills on the south was Argentine. Silver was being mined in New Mexico and Arizona in the early 1900's, and it was discovered that the smelting could be done more efficiently in this part of the Wyandotte area. So, the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe Railroad laid a line into this area. The name "Argentine" which means silver, explains why Argentine was known for many years as "Silver City".

Soon Argentine became a thriving and industrious city, but also very corrupt, with its saloons and other places of corruption.



Looking east on Minnesota Avenue around 1900.

Over the hill to the south of Argentine, sprung up another town. Early settlers found wild roses growing on the many hillsides and gave the town the name of Rosedale. Plotted in 1872, Rosedale became the home of the Frisco and Katy Railroads, flour mills, grain elevators and

many other industries. Argentine and Rosedale were the last two plotted areas to be annexed as a part of Kansas City - Argentine in 1909 and Rosedale in 1922.

A large L-shaped spot of land in the north-northeast part of the city was called "Slough" or "Goose Island". Willard Breidenthal and Arthur Stanley recognized that this land could become very valuable. With the help of the Union Pacific Railroad, these men set about to reclaim this dumping ground. They began by pumping sand from the river, which served two purposes: the river channel was deepened, allowing heavier river traffic; and the sand fill made the land useable.

Soon, industries began to build in this area, which is known today as the Fairfax Industrial District. This land was named after Fairfax, Virginia, a wasteland made useful by similar dredging methods.

In the late 1950's and 1960's, the city began making its expansion moves.

Turner, an area just west of Armourdale, was annexed in 1966. On the west side of the Kaw River from Turner, is the town of Muncie, named after the Muncee Indian

band. Previously, Muncie had been called Secundine. North of Muncie was the Bethel area, and west of Bethel and extending to Leavenworth Road lies a settlement which was started by the Delaware Indians, who named the area White Church.

Just east of the Wyandotte County Lake dam, is a forgotten farm town called Pomroy.

Welborn is a community located at 51st and Leavenworth Road. This area was at one time known as the Six Mile Corner, because it was located six miles from the court house, at Fourth and Nebraska.

So we find that Kansas City, Kansas, the little city that once was seated between the state line on the east and the Kaw River on the west, is now composed of many communities that began as independent settlements.