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# Ellsworth, Kansas : The History of A Frontier Town, 1854-1885

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ELLSWORTH, KANSAS: THE HISTORY OF A FRONTIER TOWN

1854-1885

being

A thesis presented to the graduate faculty  
Of Fort Hays Kansas State College  
In partial fulfillment  
Of the requirements  
For the degree  
of  
Master of Science

by

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Date

July 23, 1941

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DEDICATED TO

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AND

DR. FLOYD B. STREETER

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## INTRODUCTION

Frontier towns have developed along the same pattern. First, a lawless element ruled the locality with its threat of sudden death. Dead men, carried out with their boots on, gave mute proof to the skeptical that such threats were not idly given. Next, enterprising citizens, organizing in the dead of the night, brought some respect for decency and order by swinging one end of a rope over a projecting limb of a cottonwood tree and knotting the other end around the neck of a lawless ringleader. Then justice courts and law officers were introduced as the civilized--though many of them crude--means of establishing law and order on a more secure basis. Enforcement came with the flash of the six-shooter, and the man who could pull his pistol quickly had the respect of all men whether he was on the side of the law or against it. Gradually, out of all this, came the time when men resorted to fist fights alone or went to law courts and lawyers to settle their differences.

Ellsworth, Kansas, came through all of these stages and finally became a decent town in which a respectable citizen could hoe his backyard garden in peace and contentment.

The city of Ellsworth is located a mile or two north and west of the exact center of Ellsworth county on the north bank of the Smoky

Hill River. The site of Fort Harker lies on a tract of land approximately four miles east of the town. Fort Ellsworth was situated almost a mile southwest of Fort Harker, on the north bank of the same river.

The river itself runs through the county on a diagonal line. It enters the county on the western border a few miles below the northern line and flows southeast with many turns and bends until it leaves the county at the eastern edge a few miles above the southern border. Flowing down from the north into the river are: Buffalo, Oak, Clear, Elm, Mulberry, and Sand creeks in this order, reading from the west toward the east. South of the river, again reading from west to east, are: Turkey, Ox Hide, Ash, Thompson, Bluff, and Mule creeks. Only two of these creeks enter the river above or west of Ellsworth, Buffalo and Turkey creeks; the remainder are spaced intermittently along the main stream, eastward.

Gracefully rolling prairies extend northward from the river in the vicinity of Ellsworth and Fort Harker, while south of the river the comparatively level land suddenly loses itself in rather high but beautiful bluffs.

The purpose of this thesis is to catch a remnant of the patchwork history of the town of Ellsworth and set it down in concrete form for future perusal, so that those who read may think of the past and indulge in reveries as does a grandmother who fondly picks over familiar objects of the past--a quilt, a baby's shoe, a faded letter--and recalls the incidents connected with each object.

This story is not complete, nor can it ever be, but enough is

there, either for us to reconstruct the general picture of the circumstances that prevailed, or for some student of early history to build upon this foundation a better chronicle of early events in Ellsworth.

## EARLY ACTIVITY IN ELLSWORTH COUNTY; 1854-1866

Colonel Henry Inman, in an address delivered at Fort Harker, July 4, 1876,<sup>1</sup> tells of a military road which was built from Fort Riley to Fort Zarah, located one mile east of the present site of Great Bend, in 1854. This road crossed the Smoky Hill River near the place where Fort Ellsworth was later built. A wooden bridge which was swept away four years later was constructed on that site from lumber cut from the river banks. In order to prepare the planks a steam saw-mill had been transported all the way out there and set up in the wilderness.

In 1859, P. M. Thompson, Joseph Lehman of New York, D. H. Page of New Hampshire, D. Cushman of Michigan, Adam Weadle, a German, and Leverato, a Mexican, arrived near the southern border of Ellsworth County. They were a band of buffalo hunters intending to kill and load meat for the market on the other side of the Rocky mountains. After they had pitched camp, a band of Indians stampeded their oxen and left them without the means of transporting their meat. The affair angered Thompson so much that he swore he would not leave the country until he

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1. Compendious History of Ellsworth County, Kansas, From Its Early Settlement to the Present Time. Ellsworth, Kansas, The Reporter Press, 1879, p. 29.



had made something in order to square his loss.

He moved to the bank of the creek which still bears his name, planted corn, and raised a crop. Then the grasshoppers came and destroyed a part of it.

Lehman and Page settled at the Smoky Hill River crossing of the military road. There they built a log house and some outbuildings.

The third settlement was made in Ellsworth County in September of 1860. S. D. Walker of Wisconsin, J. J. and C. L. Prather of Kentucky, and Irwin and H. V. Faris of Ohio settled on Clear Creek where the military road crossed. They built a log house and a smoke house on this location. Buffalo driven there from Dickinson County by starvation were hunted and their meat smoked.

That same year H. Wait, who became the partner of Thompson, brought the first cows into Ellsworth County. He, however, disappeared the next summer.

December saw H. P. Spurgeon of Ohio come to the Faris settlement and saw D. Cushman leave.

A deep snow, two feet on the level, fell during January of 1861, and that spring everyone planted corn. The Farises turned under twenty acres of prairie sod; Lehman and Page also put in twenty acres of river bottom; and Thompson, too, planted an unstated acreage to corn. An immense yield was their reward.

The first white woman to touch Ellsworth County soil came that year. She was the wife of Thomas D. Bennett, a blacksmith, who became Thompson's partner. Mr. Bennett repaired guns and rifles, but he, together with his partner, owned a turning lathe used for spinning cords

into rope. The rope was made entirely of buffalo hair, and forty feet of finished rope were sold for one dollar.

Bennett and his wife remained for a year and then left. Spurgeon soon followed and the Prathers had already gone, earlier.

Furious windstorms struck the county at this period and blasted a huge prairie fire across the eastern half of the county. Even though it burned during the day, the smoke was as dense as the "darkness of midnight."<sup>2</sup> It burned so quickly and so intensely that even buffalo were killed by it. It travelled at the rate of eight miles in fifteen minutes. By some miracle the Faris home was saved. The fire split and even a haystack near the barn was not touched.

That fall and winter many fogs were prevalent in the county. Such weather was rather unusual.

Ellsworth county at this time was a hunter's paradise. Much wild game was to be found at every hand. There were buffalo, antelope, elk, black-tailed deer, rabbits, wild turkeys as tame as chickens, quail, a few grouse, and plenty of snakes.

The only animal seriously interesting the hunters was the buffalo. The hides had become a marketable commodity. The market price for dry hides was five cents per pound in Leavenworth. Teamsters hauled the hides to the Missouri River for \$1.25 per hundred weight if they had a load, usually lumber, going both ways, and \$1.50 per hundred weight, one way.

One more family came into the county before the final exodus began.

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2. Compendious History of Ellsworth County, Kansas. Ellsworth, 1879, p. 22.

James Lewis with his family arrived to become Thompson's partner. While they were living on the Thompson ranch the first white child to be born in Ellsworth County blessed their home. He was named "Ben Butler" Lewis after a Union general. The Lewis family remained only one year. Leverato, the Mexican, and Walker left soon afterwards.

The Kansas Stage Company, running a weekly stage from Junction City to Fort Larned, established a station at the Lehman (Lemon, Lemmon) and Page ranch located on the Smoky Hill River crossing. The few letters that went this far west were put up at Salina, a little hamlet "of three dwelling houses, one 'hotel' with one sleeping room next to the rafters, one store, one blacksmith shop."<sup>3</sup>

The two neighboring ranches were established on the Smoky Hill by the Faris brothers and by Page and Lehman as headquarters for their hunting and trading with the Indians. Buffalo and wolves were killed for their pelts. It is said that Joe Lehman "was an expert hunter, and a man who could take care of himself and party under all circumstances."<sup>4</sup>

Many times Page and H. V. Faris were left behind as housekeepers while the rest hunted. To drive away lonesome hours these two would visit each other or even trade work back and forth in order to enjoy human companionship. Friendly relations were also maintained with Thompson down the river near Thompson's creek.

The Indians and the bushwackers caused these hardy hunters to live uneasily during the years of 1862 and 1863. The Indians in the

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3. Kansas State Historical Society Transactions. Topeka, Vol. VII, p. 462.

4. Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 12.

early part of 1862 decided to chase out every white person in the Smoky Hill Valley, bringing about the first death of a white man in Ellsworth County. His name was Dutch Bill. The settlers found his body pierced by several arrows on Turkey Creek. He had ventured too far away from his buffalo hunting party. Several of the ranchers west of Salina were killed and the remainder fled into this settlement, where a stockade was erected to give the savages a warm reception, which caused the Indians to change their course without attempting an attack.

In the fall of that same year eighteen "Bushwhackers or Jayhawkers," as these renegade pro-slavery men were called, made a sudden and unexpected raid into Salina, catching the people totally unprepared. They met with no resistance and attempted no personal injury, but they entered houses, ransacked stores for powder, ammunition, arms, or tobacco. They destroyed firearms and everything else thought favorable for pursuit.

They arrived at the Thompson ranch just as Thompson and Page were coming in with a load of hay. The freebooters threw their guns on them and insisted that they must have everything in the form of weapons or animals. Thompson turned over a pony, a double-barrelled shotgun, four mules, and his pitchfork. They were reluctant to take the last article, but Thompson insisted that it was a weapon.

The Faris brothers' ranch was sacked but nothing was taken. Lehman and Page were hunting; the ruffians had no luck in finding anything at these hunting headquarters. They continued as far as Cow Creek, a distance of 60 miles from Salina, before they made camp.

The Eastbound Coach of the Kansas Stage Company also met this group. They took the mules, forcing the driver to hoof it in to the Smoky Hill

station with his one passenger.

That same fall crops failed; the Smoky Hill River became dry. This caused the settlers more trouble.

The following May brought an end to the early settlement of Ellsworth county. The Indians declared war in earnest. They killed D. L. Walker and kept the rest of the settlers in such a state of unrest that they decided to meet in a central location to stand them off. They gathered at Page's ranch and prepared for the attack. Sentinels were posted to avoid a surprise attack. The midnight watch suddenly sounded the alarm. He reported hosts of Indians coming over the hill. Feverish preparations were made to defend themselves as best they could. When they were ready to fire, Thompson shouted for admittance. The Indians had turned out to be the settlers Thompson and Lehman, who had come up the river to join the ranchers in their defense. The very next morning all of them left for Salina, abandoning everything they owned in Ellsworth County.

Shortly after the settlers left, Company H of the Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry was ordered in the late summer of 1864 to protect "the more removed frontier settlements and the construction area of the Kansas Pacific Railroad from Indian attacks."<sup>5</sup>

A fort was established on the north bank of the Smoky Hill River at the crossing of the stage road from Fort Riley, Kansas, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, on the site of the D. H. Page ranch located in section 35, township 15, range 8 West. The site was selected by General Curtis, who was then on an expedition against the Indians. A block house was built

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5. The National Archives. Letter to John F. Choitz, March 23, 1940.

on the location under the direction of Lieutenant Allen Ellsworth. General Curtis assigned the name Fort Ellsworth to this wooden block house in honor of its commander. The name was first heard by the soldiers when they were drawn up in ranks to hear a communication at Fort Larned.

The soldiers had been here for only a short time when all but five head of their horses were stampeded.<sup>6</sup>

In July, 1866, the Reverend L. Sternberg came out in a buggy to examine the country around Fort Ellsworth because of the enthusiasm of Dr. George Sternberg. Dr. George, and his brothers, Frederick, Edward, and Charles, all filed claims and sold dairy products to the fort. The same year a new site was selected for the fort a mile northeast on higher ground in Section 36. "By general orders No. 22, Department of Missouri, November 17, 1866, the name of the post was changed to Fort Harker. Lieutenant General William T. Sherman, then commanding the Division of the Missouri, had urged General Ulysses S. Grant on October 31, 1866, that the post be renamed in honor of Brigadier General Charles G. H. Harker, of 9th U.S. Infantry, who had been killed on June 27, 1864, at the battle of Kenesaw Mountain, Georgia."<sup>7</sup> The name changed in January of 1867 the old fort on the river was abandoned and in June, 1867, the buildings were ordered razed to the ground.

Major Henry Inman served as assistant quartermaster at Fort Harker from 1867 to 1869. Major Nelson A. Miles of the 5th U.S. Infantry was in command of the fort from 1869 to 1870.

The new fort was occupied by troops of the regular army until October 31, 1872, when it was evacuated by its garrison under the command

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6. Compendious History of Ellsworth County, p. 36.

of First Lieutenant Edward L. Randall, 5th U. S. Infantry, in compliance with "Special Orders No. 165, Department of the Missouri, October 14, 1872." "The post was temporarily reoccupied during the winter of 1872-73 by detachments of the 6th U. S. Cavalry, but these troops left the post in the early part of April, 1873."<sup>8</sup>

Fort Harker became the most important military post between Missouri and the mountains. It became a distributing depot for all army supplies required by the government in the western country and for the military posts along the Arkansas River and in the territories of Colorado and New Mexico. It also was used as the base of all expeditions against the Indians in the wars of 1868-69. Its importance ended with the completion of the railroad to Denver.<sup>9</sup>

The garrison provided escorts for mail coaches and surveying parties and served as a hospital center.

With the establishment of a military post near the present site of Ellsworth, D. A. Butterfield decided to use the Smoky Hill Valley as a stage route from Atchison to Denver, Colorado. Already in 1860 before the establishment of any military posts along this route, he had sent an expedition to measure distances, to check the availability of wood and water, and to determine the line the road should travel. In September the expedition reported to Mr. Butterfield that the distance from Atchison to Denver was 606 miles.

In 1865 an advertisement appeared in the Atchison Daily Free Press

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8. Archives letter, p. 2.

9. Compendious History of Ellsworth County, p. 38.

saying that the Butterfield Overland Despatch would begin to do business August 1.

Ellsworth was home and eating station number six on that stage line. The distance of Ellsworth from Salina was 29 miles.

Red Concord coaches, pulled by four horses, accommodated nine people. Each passenger was given "a Ballard rifle, two navy revolvers, two blankets tobacco, brier wood pipe, and a stout sheath knife."<sup>10</sup>

The drivers were changed every forty miles. Stock stations were twelve to fifteen miles apart.

No special rules governed the conduct of the driver. He was expected to get his coach and its load through to its destination and how he did it was his own business. Some drivers drank, some chewed tobacco, and their use of profanity was only matched or exceeded by the bullwhackers or the drivers of the ox teams.

The Butterfield Overland Despatch instituted triweekly passenger and express service. Altogether this was a very speedy service for those days. The trip from Atchison to Junction City was made in twenty-two hours, a rate of five and one half miles per hour.

The immense initial cost of such an undertaking may be seen in the fact that each way station cost from \$500 to \$9000. Oxen, used in the freight service, cost from \$160 to \$170 per yoke. The company owned twenty coaches and twelve hundred mules.

This venture lasted less than 18 months. It failed for two reasons. After the stages and freight wagons left Fort Ellsworth, they were travelling practically under their own protection. The Indians burned

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10. Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Vol. XXV, No. CCVI, pp. 137-150.



several stations and drove away the stock. The government did not offer the protection here that the military road along the Platte River enjoyed. Consequently the loss by Indian destruction became too great for the financial backers to bear. The bursting of the mining bubble in the Colorado mining district contributed toward the failure of the Despatch. Mine operators had ordered much heavy mining machinery hauled out from the east with a promise that they would pay the freight when it arrived. By the time it was delivered the mining bubble had already burst, and the machinery was left on the plains to rust out.

The Butterfield Overland Dispatch was sold then to Ben Holladay, who in turn sold it to Wells Fargo. Every outfit lost on it because of Indian trouble.

One more stage line was established in Ellsworth County before the coming of the railroad. In 1866 the Kansas City and Santa Fe stage and mail line moved stock and coaches from the old Santa Fe trail and connected with the railroad which had been completed to Junction City.

J. M. Coombs established a station at some point between Clear and Plum Creeks. Since he had full discretion in the matter, he left the old trail about June first, drove across country, and selected as his station a spot five miles east of the Smoky Hill River near a large spring and a small creek, and commanded that construction begin at once.

Fort Ellsworth was too far away for the protection of this station, and so it was necessary for the men to stand guard continually. Most of the wood for this station came from the site of original Ellsworth. This station was complete by July. This was the last stage way station to be built in Ellsworth County.

Theodore R. Davis gives his impression of the plains in his articles for Harper's. "Leaving Atchison we journeyed out into the vast plains that never can be other than the vast wilderness that they are."<sup>11</sup>

Many people flocked into this "wilderness" for various reasons and "towns hatched in a night." The fort afforded protection to the freighter, the prospector, and the fortune hunter.

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11. Harper's Weekly. Vol. X, No. 486, pp. 248-50.

## ELLSWORTH ESTABLISHED AS A CITY: 1867-1869

A certain amount of land, in this case sixteen square miles, around the fort buildings was known as government reserve. No settler or traveller was permitted to remain there over night. Mr. Larkin holds the opinion that all people were asked to move on to the edge of the reservation because they gave too much liquor to the soldiers, causing them to drink on duty.

However that may be, the year 1867 saw the town of Ellsworth laid out on the western edge of the military reservation on the bend of the Smoky Hill River. According to Mr. Larkin the town divided itself into two groups of people. The one side gathered around a booze-seller by the name of Frank Melville, a painter by profession and a drunkard by habit who had put up his tent near a plum thicket on the bank of the Smoky to be entertained with liquor, noise, and gambling. The other group drew as far away from this place as possible. They cut holes into the banks and low bluffs and covered them with tin, hides, and lumber, anything that would keep the elements out and would give them a shelter for a season.

On January 23, 1867, the town of Ellsworth was laid out.<sup>12</sup> The

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12. Wilder, Annals of Kansas, p. 452.

townsite, located 220 miles west of Kansas City, was surveyed in the spring by William McGrath and Colonel Greenwood. H. J. Latshaw selected and laid out the town on the north bank of the Smoky, on a tract including the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter, a part of the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 28, and also a part of the northeast quarter of Section 29, Township 15 South, range eight west.

The plot and the certificate were filed for record in Saline County, May 8, 1867, because Ellsworth County was attached for judicial and municipal purposes. The state legislature defined the boundaries of Ellsworth County, March third.<sup>13</sup>

John H. Edwards, who later became the agent for the Kansas Pacific railroad, did not receive a very heartening impression of the country surrounding the site where Ellsworth was later located. He came out in the middle of February of 1867 with many hardships dogging his trip. After encountering flood, cold, a lack of food, and sleeping quarters, he finally arrived at Fort Harker. He writes:

Through the kindness of Captain Burr, post qua termaster, I was furnished with an ambulance to take me over to the proposed site of the new frontier town. If I had been already discouraged from the desolate and barren appearance of the country through which I had passed, I confess that I was now completely so; for a more discouraging prospect never greeted mortal eye. Turn which way I may, nothing but black hills and plains met my view....With the exception of a few ranches, at which cattle were kept or whiskey sold, there was absolutely not a human

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13. Ibid., p. 452.

habitation between Salina and Fort Harker, all appeared but one broad limitless expanse of desert.

In spring 1867, a large number of persons were drawn to the new town of Ellsworth from the fact of its being known that upon the completion of the railroad to that point, it would be the shipping point for the immense business between the states and New Mexico, among these were all classes and kinds--merchants, laborers, mechanics, doctors, lawyers, gamblers, and thieves. Warehouses and stores were soon in course of erection; saloons, restaurants, and gambling houses were improvised out of every conceivable material--canvass, lumber, earth, pickets, and everything that could be found, and by June, the town presented an appearance of life and vigor unparalleled in the history of the west.<sup>14</sup>

E. W. Kingsbury built the "Stockade," a store and hotel. Everyone believed that Ellsworth would be the western terminus of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. People flocked there by the dozens. Trains were running to Salina by April 29.<sup>15</sup> Excitement was running high.

Three months after the first house was built the following people were in business:

1. Lockstone and Phelps, groceries and provisions.
2. O. Hall, groceries and provisions.
3. Coffin and Harker, groceries and provisions.
4. J. L. Bell, tinware and stoves.
5. Arthur Larkin, hotel.

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14. The [Topeka] Commonweal, February 18, 1872.

15. Wilder, The Annals of Kansas, p. 456.

6. Geiger and Company, dry goods and clothing.
7. Robbins and Matthews, groceries and provisions.
8. H. F. Hoesman had a building but his stock hadn't arrived.
9. Vaughn and Sweezy, groceries and provisions.
10. Andrew Schmitt, boots and shoes.
11. Chick Brown and Co., forwarding and commission house.
12. Mr. \_\_\_ Nye, forwarding and commission house.

The population at that time has been estimated anywhere from a thousand to two thousand people. It was probably difficult to get a fair estimate of the actual number of people on the location at one time because they were constantly moving in and out. Dr. F. B. Streeter estimates that the population remained somewhere around one thousand.<sup>16</sup>

Then came a series of circumstances that almost wiped out the new-born town of Ellsworth.

All spring the Kansas City and Santa Fe stage lines had experienced great difficulties in transporting the mails and passengers across the Smoky Hill. The river remained very high and did not fall until the middle of the summer. Mr. Coombs, who was still in charge of the station, made a boat to carry the stage, passengers, and mail safely across, and he was such a success at it that he "never upset anyone."<sup>17</sup> On June 13 and 14 the river went even higher and flooded out the new town of Ellsworth. Four feet of water stood in the streets; houses were washed down the river. Everywhere could be seen the havoc wrought by the water.

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16. Streeter, F. B., Prairie Trails and Cow Towns, Boston, Chapman and Grimes, 1936, p.

17. Compendious History of Ellsworth County, p. 38.

Stocks of goods were rendered worthless or were destroyed completely. The flimsy structures employed by the storekeepers buckled and gave in to the waters which eagerly swept them along. The suitability of this site as a place of residence was completely destroyed by the flood of 1867. The townspeople immediately determined to move the townsite two miles to the northwest.

On the same date that the flood struck the town, the Indians began open warfare against the whites in the vicinity of Ellsworth. Indian raids were reported west of Fort Harker<sup>18</sup> on the day of the flood and by June 24<sup>19</sup> murders by Indians were daily reported. Troubles culminated in June in an attack by Cheyennes, Araphoes, and Kiowas on border settlements and upon engineering parties on the Kansas Pacific Railroad west of Fort Harker. Routes were almost abandoned.

Governor Crawford wrote to E. G. Ross in Washington, D. C., concerning Indian warfare in Kansas.

Topeka, Kansas,  
June 29, 1867.

Honorable E. G. Ross,  
U. S. Senator,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Our Indian troubles are growing worse every day. On Wednesday last a band of Kiowas attacked and captured a train between Harker and Larned, killing and scalping eleven of the teamsters (mostly Mexicans), burning the wagons and driving off the stock.

On Thursday they made another attack on the railroad men fifteen

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18. Wilder, Annals of Kansas, p. 457.

19. Ibid., p. 457.

miles west of Harker, killing one engineer and mortally wounding an employee. This almost entirely stops the work on the road...<sup>20</sup>

Fort Harker became the headquarters of General Hancock's Indian campaign. From that point he started for Denver to open the route for travel by subduing the Indians. He destroyed a village of 300 lodges at the Pawnee fork. This meant open war.

Lieutenant General W. T. Sherman authorized Governor Crawford to call out a volunteer battalion to protect the frontier. Under this authority "Governor Crawford issued a proclamation organizing eight companies of volunteer cavalry for six months, armed, equipped, and paid by the general government which should be mustered in by the first week in July if possible."<sup>21</sup>

A very notable figure made his appearance in and near Ellsworth at this time. James Butler (Wild Bill) Hickok was employed with the cavalry at Fort Harker for a period of about three months during the early part of the summer as an Indian scout by Major Inman. Colonel Hadley, who was stationed at Fort Harker at that time, states of him in reminiscences that he was the "only bad man who continually played to an audience."<sup>22</sup> He concedes, however, that he was a good horseman and an expert shot and he did not mind fighting or marching. He abandoned the scouting career in a few months and lived in railroad towns, where he was always the local lion.

Wild Bill was remarkable looking. He was over six feet tall, had

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20. Kansas State Record. Extra. Friday, July 5, 1868.

21. Andreas, A. T., History of the State of Kansas. Chicago, A. T. Andreas, 1883, p. 1274 (Wilder, Annals of Kansas, p. 457, says that four companies were raised for four months' service.)

22. Sidney [Ohio] Sentinel, July 19, 1906.



a perfect figure and a majestic bearing. He would have attracted attention in any crowd. His dress was equally eccentric. Colonel Hadley remarks: When I first saw him at Fort Harker in July 1867 he wore black broadcloth trousers without suspenders, a very fine white shirt freshly laundered, and a black silk "stovepipe" hat of the newest fashion. On high-topped Wellington boots he wore Mexican spurs with bells and long rowells. His light brown curling hair reached nearly to his waist and in his holsters were two ivory handled, silver mounted revolvers. One "butcher knife" was in his belt and the handle of another protruded from his boot leg.<sup>23</sup>

The same gentleman also relates that a gang of Kansas City ruffians beat Hickok up badly, breaking some of his ribs and taking his fine pistols from him.

Charles Sternberg, who as a boy lived near Fort Harker in Ellsworth County, tells this story which may be used in this connection.<sup>24</sup>

In July, 1867, owing to the fear of an Indian outrage, General A. J. Smith gave us at the ranch a guard of ten colored soldiers under a colored sergeant, and all the settlers gathered in the stockade, a structure about twenty feet long and fourteen wide, built by setting a row of cottonwood logs in a trench and roofing them over with split logs, brush, and earth. During the height of the excitement, the women and children slept on one side of the building in a long bed on the floor, and the men on the other side.

The night of the third of July was so sultry that I concluded to sleep outside on a hay-covered shed. At the first streak of dawn I was awakened by the report of a Winchester, and, springing up, heard the sergeant call to his men, who were scattered in rifle pits around the building, to fall in line.

As soon as he had them lined up he ordered them to fire across the river in the direction of some cottonwoods to which a band of Indians had retreated. The whites came forward with guns in their hands and offered to join in the fight, but the sergeant commanded: "Let the citizens keep in the rear." This indeed they were very willing to do when the order was given. "Fire at will!" and the soldiers began sending

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23. Sidney [Ohio] Sentinel, July 19, 1906.

24. Sternberg, Chas. H., The Life of a Fossil Hunter. San Diego, Jensen Printing Company, 1931, pp. 11-13.

leaden balls whizzing through the air in every conceivable arc, but never in a straight line, toward the enemy, who were supposed to be lying on the ground.

As soon as it was light, my brother and I explored the river and found a place where seven braves, in their moccasined feet, had run across a wet sandbar in the direction of the cottonwoods, as the sergeant had said. Their pony trails could be easily seen in the high, wet grass.

The party in the stockade were not reassured to hear the tramp of a large body of horsemen, especially as the Soldiers had fired all their ammunition; but the welcome clank of sabers and jingle of spurs laid their fears to rest, and soon a couple of troops of cavalry, with an officer in command, rode up through the gloom.

After the sergeant had been severely reprimanded for wasting his ammunition, the scout Wild Bill was ordered to explore the country for Indian signs. But, although the tracks could not have been plainer, his report was so reassuring that the whole command returned to the fort.

Some hours later, I spied this famous scout at the sutler's store, his chair tilted back against the stone wall, his two ivory-mounted revolvers dangling at his belt, the target of all eyes among the garrison loafers. As I came up, this gallant called out, "Well, Sternberg, your boys were pretty well frightened this morning by some buffalo that came down to water."

"Buffalo!" I said, "that trail was made by our old cows two weeks ago."

Later the general in command told me that they had prepared for a big hop at the Fort on the night of the fourth and that Bill did not report the Indian tracks because he did not want to be sent off on a long scout just then.

Charles Larkin, an old-timer of Ellsworth, tells that Wild Bill abandoned his wife, Annie Wilson, a Cherokee Indian squaw, in Ellsworth, where she died after serving as a charwoman in the Grand Central Hotel. She lies buried in a pauper's grave on a hillside east of Ellsworth.

Whatever may have been Wild Bill's vices or his virtues, facts seem to indicate that he took part in the Indian wars during the summer of 1867, which finally ended in a treaty made by part of the Indians (Cheyennes and Araphahoes) at Medicine Lodge Creek, October 21-28, and

Generals Sherman, Harney, and Terry.<sup>25</sup> Under this agreement the Indians were removed to a reservation bounded on the north by the Arkansas River. The 18th Battalion was then ordered to Fort Harker, October 29, to be mustered out. The Indians kept the treaty until the government had again supplied them with arms for the purpose of hunting the fast diminishing buffalo, and until there was plenty of grass for their ponies.

The Indians, however, molested the citizens in the neighborhood of Ellsworth only during the time that the railroad was being built. If the month of June in 1867 was a month of disaster and difficulty, the month of July brought some compensation for the reverses.

The new town, two miles northwest of the old site, was laid out into lots early in July. At the same time the rails were laid into the new town, which was then built up on both sides of the railroad tracks. The street running parallel to the track on the south side was called South Main, and the street running parallel to the track on the north side was called North Main. The two streets had only the railroad track between them. The buildings on North Main were located only on the north side of the street and directly faced the buildings located on the south side of South Main.

By July 5, the cars were running to Ellsworth.<sup>25</sup> July 9 the county commissioners held their first meeting.<sup>26</sup> The county carried the name of the old fort, which in turn had been named for Lieutenant

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25. Wilder, Annals of Kansas, pp. 462-3.

26. Ibid., p. 458.

27. Ibid., pp. 458-9.

Allen Ellsworth of the 7th Iowa Cavalry.

The mail was no longer detained at Fort Harker after the post office was established at Ellsworth, July 17, 1867.<sup>28</sup> The railroad company began building the depot in August.

On July 20, a bridge company was organized with \$30,000 capital for the purpose of bridging the Smoky Hill River. This bridge was to cross the Smoky where the bull trains crossed the river to go south to Fort Zarah. Loads of rock had been thrown into the water at that point in order to give some type of footing to the oxen and the wagons. Charles Larkin remarked that he often wondered why the wagons did not break up in midstream because of the roughness of the crossing.

Ellsworth was becoming a city in earnest. Many of her citizens were respectable people, but many drifted in on the news that Ellsworth would be a terminal of the railroad for the purpose of preying on the workers who were drawing hard earned pay for construction labor.

Wherever the terminus of the railroad might be, temporarily, a "city" was built of boards and tents. These were moved when the track advanced.<sup>28</sup> Ellsworth City was the first and the wickedest of them all. The others were in succession: Hays City, Coyote, Sheridan, and Kit Carson. The day the railroad offices were moved the whole town was moved. All the gamblers and cortezons of the western cities flocked to these places. They became haunts of the bad men, such as Wild Bill, Jim Curry, Charley and Frank Johnson, whose distinction lay in the

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28. Ibid., p. 459.

29. Col. James A. Hadley probably means that the floating population, made up of sharpers, gamblers, and their ilk, set up business in very temporary structures made of materials which were readily available. Then, as soon as the construction camp would be moved on, these men would pack their belongings and leave the town to go with the workers to their next camp. The permanent population, made up of respectable citizens, would remain on the location of the town doing business as usual. They were usually glad to get rid of the rough element.

number they had slain. Suicide duels were not uncommon, fought at point-blank range.<sup>30</sup>

Wilder (page 462) reports that on "October 3, 1867, two men were hanged by the Vigilance Committee at Ellsworth." So evidently law and order was just what the people could make it in the dead of the night. There seems to be very little evidence of any other kind of law enforcement.

Frank A. Root<sup>31</sup> corroborates the general trend of Colonel Hadley's statement when he says, "[The town was] lively as long as it was headquarters and camp of the railroad builders, a typical western frontier town. Shooting scrapes were of frequent occurrence. 'Another man for breakfast this morning' was common talk on the streets and in a number of frequented resorts. I well remember a dreary night I passed there once in 1867 when it was virtually the end of the track on the pioneer Kansas road. The company had only a short time before laid out the new place. It was almost wholly a town of tents and small, rough, frame buildings, but one of the busiest little places I knew in the state. Everything appeared to be wild with excitement. There were "about a hundred business houses in the town, many of them carrying on their trade in tents. All business appeared to be transacted on the high pressure scale. It seemed as if nearly every other house in town was a drinking place, while gambling-halls and dance-houses and other questionable resorts were uncommonly numerous. Firing off guns promiscuously, and crowds filled with the vilest of liquor and yelling like wild, drunken Indians, were sounds frequently heard on the streets at all hours in nearly every direction. To sleep was an impossibility until nearly daylight, when the drunken revelry had in a measure died away. Much of the population was transient, made up largely of men who followed along with the railroad, and when the builders of the line would pull up stakes and push on to the next frontier camp, with no visible means left for support they were compelled to,

"Fold their tents like the Arabs,  
And as silently steal away!"

An interesting comment is made by Colonel Hadley about the rough element of those days, "Only a few of the more reckless cortezons

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30. Sidney [Ohio] Sentinel, July 12, 1906.

31. Root and Connelley, The Overland Stage to California. Topeka, Published by the authors, 1901, p. 443.

ventured to Ellsworth" and "No bad man was of recent foreign origin, those who were notorious bore names of Colonial days."

Ellsworth received one more heavy blow that same year. Asiatic Cholera, a malignant disease marked by diarrhea, vomiting, cramps, and usually followed by death struck the citizens. It was usually marked by a few hours of excruciating pain during which the victim screamed and rolled on the ground, perspiring heavily. Then death would mercifully relieve the patient. If the patient was able to endure the first hours of the attack he would have an opportunity to survive. Many did not. Charles Larkin tells that as many as forty soldiers were buried in one grave at Fort Harker. Men were busy day and night digging graves and carrying out the dead. The bodies were stacked up like cord wood.

Among the first cholera victims we find listed the wife of Doctor George Sternberg. She was the daughter of Robert Russell, Esquire, of Cooperstown, New York.

A Catholic priest and two Sisters of Charity also lost their lives ministering to the victims.

Cholera broke out at Fort Harker, June 26, 1867. First, a laborer in the Quartermasters department became violently ill. Next, a woman and her two children became victims of the disease. Then, the man who boarded with them was stricken. The following morning the woman's husband died of the disease. From that time until the sixteenth of July, the deaths ranged from two to twelve, averaging about six deaths per day. The victims were almost wholly citizen employees of the fort.

Two cases were reported at Ellsworth on July 12, and between that time and the sixteenth, seven deaths had occurred in the town.

A correspondent who signs himself H. in the Junction City Weekly Union summed up his idea in regard to the cause of the disease as follows:

From close observation and actual experience, I am satisfied it is caused by the water used for drinking purposes and badly prepared food.

The water is filled with impure vegetable matter. A bucket full left standing in the sun for half an hour will develop a large amount of animal life; not only that, but the stench arising from it is sickening. In the matter of food, there is so little attention paid to its proper preparation, especially by those who cook for themselves, that wonder is, the deaths have not been more numerous.<sup>32</sup>

Some people had the idea that the colored soldiers, stationed at the fort had brought the germ up from their previous camp. That idea was soon discarded because it was found that the negroes were no more subject to cholera than are the whites.

Mrs. W. E. Sheriff, whose father died of cholera in Ellsworth, believes that the overflow of the Smoky Hill river brought the cholera scourge to this vicinity. She remembers that so many fish were left on the land by the high water that an unbearable stench pervaded the air all along the river. At the time when she was traveling through Ellsworth with her family en route to Junction City, she said that they did not think much about it. Afterwards they felt that this desiccation of animal matter must have had a great deal to do with the causes of the disease. The date of the flood and the outbreak of cholera followed very closely upon one another. June 14 was the date of the flood and June 26 the first victim lay prostrate with the disease.

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32. Junction City Weekly Union. August 3, 1867.

All of these scourges together--flood, Indians, and cholera--reduced the population of Ellsworth to barely fifty people. But the town did not perish as did many of the early settlements. Even the hardships had no chastening effect on the population. The rough element was still there and it was determined to do business.

Ellsworth was incorporated as a village in 1868, and Charles C. Duncan, aged 24, a grocer, served as a member of the Kansas House of Representatives from Ellsworth.

E. W. (Cap.) Kingsbury was elected sheriff. Even though people liked him, he still had his hands full trying to keep order in the town. Colonel Hadley tells this humorous story about his attempts.<sup>33</sup>

Word went around that "Old Bill" Smith of the New York House was drinking his own whiskey. Men became alert. At 10:00 a.m. Smith stood in his door and began shooting at men on the street. The street soon was empty. Sheriff Kingsbury went over to the New York House and said, 'Bill, stop your damn fooling before you kill somebody.'

'All right, Cap,' grinned Smith, but he kept on drinking. By noon he was a dangerous madman.

'One sip,' it was said, 'of Ellsworth whiskey would make a man burn his wife's dress.' Men kept their hands on their pistols.

At one o'clock, Smith left the back of his place on horseback, and the timid, like quail, ran for cover. The sheriff, with revolver in hand, tried to intercept him.

Smith, who had been a cavalryman for thirty-five years, although sixty-five years of age, rode around the sheriff with a pistol in each hand guiding his horse with his knees. Kingsbury, also with a revolver in each hand, ignored the shots directed at him.

Now Smith left him and raced through town firing at everybody he could see. Guns empty, he came back sitting his horse straight like a veteran dragoon. At some point, unseen by Kingsbury, he exchanged an empty pistol for a full one. The sheriff tried to stop him. Smith warned him back. Kingsbury thought the gun empty and came on. Smith

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33. Sidney [Ohio] Sentinel, July 19, 1906.



began to shoot at Kingsbury's feet and legs.

It was an absurd duel with Kingsbury shooting over Smith's head and the latter shooting at the sheriff's feet at a distance so close, the smoke from the guns met and mingled in friendly fashion. Spectators howled with delight. Kingsbury was hit in the foot, and the shot broke the metatarsal bones. His boot soon filled with blood, but he rushed Smith and pulled him from his horse. His patience and coolness saved the lives of both.

Thus the frontier grew. Everyone was accustomed to hearing the guns bark, whether it was in deadly duel or humorous warfare. One type of news which always kept the frontier people at a nervous tension was the news about Indian wars. Again in this year the savages left their reservation. The situation grew so tense that in August 20, 1868, General Sheridan and Colonel Forsythe left Fort Leavenworth for Fort Harker. On August 23, the general announced that the Indians had killed twenty citizens and wounded many more. He directed that they must be forcibly removed to their reservation.<sup>34</sup> Evidently they did not listen very long to his direction because on September 14, Governor Crawford called for five companies of cavalry for three months' service on the frontier. These were sent to Salina. Each man furnished his own horse while arms and accoutrements were furnished by General Sheridan. By September 17, Colonel Forsythe was surrounded by Indians in a battle which lasted for eight days.

Early in August a body of about 225 Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and Sioux appeared among the advanced settlements on the Saline River, north of Fort Harker, Kansas. On August 10th after being hospitably fed by the farmers, the Indians attacked them, robbed their houses, and brutally outraged four females until insensible. Six houses were attacked, plundered, and burned.<sup>35</sup>

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34. Wilder, Annals of Kansas, p. 483.

35. U.S. Army, Military Division of the Missouri, Official Records, Chicago, 1882, p. 11.

These reports and stories added to these reports made life anxious for the people who lived in frontier towns such as Ellsworth. But the Indians seemed to have been successfully quelled until the month of October, when a new scare was thrown into the inhabitants.

In the military report<sup>36</sup> for October 12, Lieutenant Belger, 3rd Infantry, reported a party of Indians near Ellsworth, Kansas, where they killed one man and several were missing.

The Indians constantly kept on fighting against the railroad, the settlers, and the soldiers. They tore up track, killed train workers, drove off stock, took women into captivity, but they always found new localities to harass and to strike.

The train officials had a high respect for the Indians and for the prowess they showed in attacking trains. The schedule was so made that the train would remain overnight at Ellsworth. An account of such a stop-over says:<sup>37</sup>

At eight in the evening, the train arrived at Ellsworth. Farther west there might be Indians; and on this account, in the autumn of 1868, the Kansas Pacific ran beyond Ellsworth only in daylight. The passengers were accordingly, "booked for the night." Ellsworth boasted a hotel, the Anderson House, that could accommodate some of the passengers; others were billeted on the citizenry or sprawled out in the cars. Rudolph Keim, going westward to join Phil Sheridan, the commandant-general of the department, enjoyed room number one of the Anderson House, but he has left a doubtful endorsement: "After a supper on steak, antelope ham, soggy bread, and a cup of warm water, flavored with a grain of coffee or a leaf of tea, the passengers gathered in the hotel office, a small room eight by ten and furnished with a counter and several dilapidated chairs. The proprietor presided. Seating himself on a three legged chair and cocking his feet on the stove, "he entertained them with yarns laudatory of his own career, and bits of the red-rich history of Ellsworth in the

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36. Ibid., p. 14.

37. Branch, E. Douglas, The Hunting of the Buffalo, D. Appleton and Co., New York and London, 1929, pp. 131-2.

days when it was a railroad terminus. Since the railroad has pushed farther west, the town had--the landlord said--become quite orderly. Keim complains of "violent yells" and "salvos of uproarious oaths" throughout the night, but the landlord seems to have been right--there was no shooting.

At daybreak the train was ready to depart; that event was announced just in time to allow a last round of drinks, and "with a parting benediction upon the landlord's head, most of the passengers retired to an adjacent rum mill and stowed away a slug or two of mountsin dew to keep up their spirits.

The next year, 1869, saw the end of Indian hostilities in the vicinity of Ellsworth and people could settle down to what peace and quiet they could find in a frontier neighborhood.

People sometimes feel that stories of the old "suicide" pistol duels and the midnight hanging or necktie parties, as they are spoken of today by the old timers, are without foundation. Colonel Hadley<sup>38</sup> gives us a picture of life in Ellsworth in 1868.

Charley and Frank Johnson, two brothers, kept the Halfway House two miles from Ellsworth on the road to Fort Harker. It was a rough place.

Charley beat wagon master Sweringer with the handle of a revolver till he was carried out senseless. All knew that their first meeting meant death. One night at Coe's dance and gambling hall, Charley pushed his way to the front door and was going out. The place was crowded; tables were surrounded; the floor was full of dancers. Sweringer entered. When they were about ten feet apart, both stopped in their tracks and started shooting.

Some had already ducked earlier, others tried to get out of danger's way now as quickly as possible.

Johnson's gun flashed first; Sweringer's followed close upon it. The two made a prolonged report. People ran to cover; women screamed; both revolvers cracked till both were empty.

Sweringer sank first. Johnson was wearing a white shirt without a coat of waistcoat. This began to color at the first shot. Johnson staggered and was helped next door to the Marshall House with blood flowing from his mouth, nostrils, and five bullet wounds. He died

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38. Sidney Ohio Sentinel, July 19, 1906.

thirty-five minutes after the shooting. The wagon master, Sweringer, who died at dawn, was taken there, too. Neither man spoke before he died.

Sweringer's friend Charley Allen was on the way to Ellsworth from New Mexico with a Kitchen's wagon train. On the way in, he had a fight with the Indians twenty miles above Fort Larned. He came into town a week later and found out that his friend had died. He was immediately ready to go out and wipe out the Halfway House, but he was persuaded to fight Frank Johnson away from home. Allen was a slender, blue-eyed, mild-looking man. Johnson's friends laughed at the idea of a fight.

The one street of Ellsworth was very broad. Probably when Allen stepped out he could look freely in every direction and Johnson was pointed out because they were strangers. The saloon keeper knew that the time had come. He waited. A hundred men watched in the distance. Neither man spoke until they were close together, each taking in the other's movements. Each face was set and white. When they were only a few feet apart a sentence or so passed between them heard only by the two. Then together each pistol was out, flashing. Neither man fell when both pistols were empty. Johnson stooped as if to draw a knife from his boot, relaxed, and fell forward. Allen turned to go to the Larkin Hotel. He walked about thirty paces and sat down in a door. He asked if Johnson was dead and was told he was dying. 'I'm dizzy,' he said, 'help me to Larkin's.' He died from two wounds in a short time; Johnson's wounds were unimportant.

Even though Frank Johnson lived through this episode he died a violent death.

Colonel Hadley continues that Frank Johnson had a mean temper and it was growing worse. His neighbors did not like this and told him to mend it. They were told to "Go to hell." He closed his place one sultry night when he was called from the road. He stood in the door. A plausible excuse was given, and with a cocked pistol in his hand he went out. Men took him and carried him to the old cottonwood near the Marshall house and hanged him. Not a sound was made by men giving orders, and people sleeping in the Halfway House didn't hear a thing.

Even law officers were constantly in danger of their lives in those days. Often they were called upon to quell disturbances in dance or gambling halls. These disturbances were usually caused by people who

were intoxicated and looking for trouble. If the officer of the law then made his appearance through the front door at the wrong moment, he might be the receiver of the outlaw's bullet before the officer knew whom he was looking for. Thus a correspondent for the Kansas Daily Commonwealth of Topeka writes the obituary for a sheriff in a very few words:<sup>39</sup>

William Semans, popularly known as "Apache Bill," Sheriff of Ellsworth County and formerly a government detective, was recently shot and killed by a Texan. He was killed while endeavoring to quell a disturbance in a "dance-house." His reputation was very good here, and his loss is greatly felt as the citizens bear testimony of the value of his services. The Texan escaped, having been followed as far as Wichita.

So men lived life and lost it in the frontier Ellsworth of the railroad days. Such stories could probably be multiplied if someone had taken the pains to keep the records straight in those days. The abandon with which life was squandered, the disrespect for law and morality, and the disregard for human right was not destined to change for a time in Ellsworth. If anything, the situation was to grow worse because Ellsworth was becoming a cow town, the headquarters of the cattle market.

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39. Kansas Daily Commonwealth, November 24, 1869.

## ELLSWORTH BECOMES A COW TOWN: 1869-1875

Ellsworth was not an important cattle market during the years of 1869-70. Abilene was the destination of the cattle drives because of the efforts of Joseph McCoy during these years. Junction City, Solomon, and Salina received a share of the trade also.

The editors of the newspapers gave little or no space to the early Texas cattle trade, and even the Union Pacific railroad, the present owner of the Kansas Pacific railroad, can give no data on the extent of the cattle trade because (they say) the road changed hands so often in those early hectic days, that the records are lost.

Nevertheless, even during the interim between the building of the railroad and the coming of the cattle, law enforcement on the part of the decent citizens was as difficult as it was swift and sure, as this item from Doctor F. B. Streeter's article will show.<sup>40</sup>

A man named Fitzpatrick, who had been warned out of Sheriden, Kansas, came to Ellsworth and secured employment in a saloon. On May 11, he went on a rampage, firing his gun in the street, threatening people with death. After he had fired a shot through a car of the eastbound train, he went back to the saloon where he was employed.<sup>41</sup>

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40. Kansas State Historical Quarterly, Topeka, The Kansas State Historical Society, 1935, p. 388.

41. This portion of the account has been condensed.

He found a man named William Bryson asleep in the room. He shook the sleeping man and when he awakened asked him how he got there. Bryson, in the habit of sleeping there, answered that he came in through the window. Thereupon Fitzpatrick struck him on the head with his revolver, and when the man tried to escape he fired a shot, striking him in the groin. The victim died about eight o'clock the next morning.

The coroner's jury found Fitzpatrick guilty of murder in the first degree. The news spread through the village. At one o'clock that afternoon, the citizens turned out en masse, took the murderer from the jail to the river bank, and hanged him to the historic old cottonwood which became famous because of the number of persons who were strung up on its branches by vigilance committees.

The citizens were determined to have law and order, but it was going to be a hard fight to get and keep it in the face of the incoming cattle trade. But even the prospect of having a trade which was usually difficult to handle did not deter the authorities from borrowing trouble. A controversy over a question of jurisdiction flared in the newspapers of the time. Several articles on the subject appeared in the Commonwealth of Topeka.<sup>42</sup>

A United States deputy Marshal went to Ellsworth to arrest a man. When he approached the house in which the man was, the culprit, together with two of his friends, proceeded to beat the marshal very badly. The officer escaped from the fracas with his life, but he did have a two-inch cut on his forehead and several in his scalp. He had been sent by the United States Commission to get his man and so applied to the soldiers at Fort Harker to assist him in doing his duty. With the soldiers serving as his posse, he arrested his man, placed him in an ambulance, and delivered him to the United States Commission.

H. L. Pestana, an Ellsworth attorney, applied to Judge Miller for a

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42. The Commonwealth, July 14 and July 25, 1871.

writ of habeas corpus directed to Captain Snyder, commanding Fort Harker to bring the man who had been arrested before him. Captain Snyder did not make his appearance but sent Lieutenant Randall with an endorsement or "return" on the habeas corpus explaining why he did not appear. The court would not accept this return and sent Randall back to the fort with the demand that the prisoners be brought before him by four that afternoon. Again Captain Snyder did not appear because the prisoners had been sent on by twelve, noon, under a strong guard.

Captain Snyder placed the question before the War Department whether he should appear. The Secretary of War referred the matter to the office of the Attorney General, who gave out the following communication:

Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C.  
June 19, 1871

Hon. W. W. Belknap  
Secretary of War

...at the request of the United States Marshal for the district of Kansas arresting three men on charge of obstructing and opposing the said marshal while attempting to execute a process of the court of the United States, and assaulted him while so engaged.... Prisoners were afterward turned over to the U.S. Marshal by Captain Snyder....General Wipple advised General Pope that the process need not be obeye .

B. H. Bristol, Solicitor General and Acting Attorney Gen.

Captain Snyder did not go before Judge Miller, but he cleared himself by pointing out the fact that it was the marshal who was doing the arresting all the time with the soldiers giving him support as a posse. As long as no resistance was shown by those who were arrested, the marshal was in reality the only man taking any part in the procedure.

The matter soon disappeared and nothing was heard from it any more.

In 1869 and 1870 prior to the influx of cattle into Ellsworth, we



find the following men in the various business houses and filling the various professions:

Perry Hodgden, postmaster; attorneys were M. Newton and H. L. Pestana; blacksmith, A. W. Bayer; boots and shoes, Andrew Schmitt; druggist, Oscar Seitz; dry goods and clothing, Perry Hodgden; U.S. Express Company, Perry Hodgden, agent; freighter, A. W. Bayer and D. and B. Powers; general dealers, John L. Bell, J. Beebe, Nathan Dreyfoos, and Lockstone and Phelps; harness maker, P. McLaughlin; hotels, Anderson House, John H. Edwards, Proprietor; United States Hotel, S. C. Long, proprietor; insurance agent, H. F. Hoesman; real estate agents, H. F. Hoesman, agent for the Kansas Pacific Land, and James Miller; nine retail saloons and one wholesale liquor house; U.S. Commissioner, James Miller; Justice of the Peace, M. Newton; The Episcopal church, C. E. Griffith, rector.<sup>43</sup>

The county census for 1870 revealed that 1,350 people resided in Ellsworth County, and that there were 2,449 acres, which amounts to three and three-quarter square miles or sections, of improved land in the whole county. The value of these farms was given at \$111,390. Settlers were not so plentiful in those days.

The Kansas Pacific Railroad had inaugurated through traffic from Kansas City to Denver by August 15<sup>42</sup> and Salina was even shipping beef to New York in refrigerator cars.<sup>45</sup>

Ellsworth was added to the Eighth Judicial District under the jurisdiction of Judge William H. Canfield.<sup>46</sup>

The dawn of the cattle era brought a quickening pace to life in the city of Ellsworth. In 1871, it became a third class city. The mayor, W. Hoesman; the city council, W. Phelps, Frank Graham, Leo Herzig, George Seitz, with W. L. Pestana, city clerk; and the marshall, C. B. Whitney,

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43. Compendious History of Ellsworth County, p. 47.

44. Root and Connelly, The Overland Stage to California, p. 401.

45. Wilder, Annals of Kansas, p. 522.

46. Andreas, A History of Kansas, p. 274.

began to function in July. The Texas cattle trade shifted to Ellsworth about this time. In these cow town days a thousand people lived here. Main street ran on both sides of the railroad. The business section was three blocks long. One-and two-story store buildings with porches on the front lined the streets.<sup>47</sup>

The city council went to work in its regular August 4 meeting and passed several ordinances. The meetings from now on were held the first and third Wednesdays of every month. Ordinances regulating the duty and pay of the officers, governing the use and abuse of deadly weapons, and restricting drunks were passed in this meeting. The clerk was also instructed to get suitable books and papers for the use of the city.<sup>48</sup>

An ordinance was passed August 29, 1871, assessing a general tax of ten mills and a street tax of five mills against all the property within the city limits of Ellsworth.<sup>49</sup>

With the increase of the cattlemen came the increase in saloons and dram shops. A special committee of the council was appointed in a special meeting to draw up an ordinance governing all dram or liquor by the drink shops.

The permanent population of one thousand was now doubled by additional impermanent population--a typical cowtown collection of saloon keepers, gamblers, harlots, cattle traders, sharpers, gunmen, cowboys, and thieves. For a time the legitimate business man was in the minority.

Many of these shady characters lived in a village by themselves. A

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47. F. B. Streeter, Prairie Trails and Cow Towns, p. 103.

48. Ellsworth City Council, Proceedings, p. 1.

49. Ibid., p. 4.

conglomeration of brothels, saloons, and gambling joints had sprung up mushroomlike southeast of Ellsworth along the river bank. This was called Nauchville. Most of the evil afflicting the town had its roots here. Every known kind of 'skin' or confidence game flourished here. Even a horse racing track had been laid out nearby on the flats and there was some kind of racing every day.

All of this was brought to Ellsworth by the coming of the cattle trade. During the year 1871, the Kansas Pacific Railroad transported a total of 161,320 head of cattle.<sup>50</sup> Ellsworth shipped a total of 1,900 carloads of longhorn cattle. Figuring about 18 head to a car, this would be a total of 34,200 head which were shipped to Kansas City, Leavenworth, St. Louis, and Chicago.

The longhorn has been called the clown of the bovine family, the most weird specimen that ever lived. His legs were too long and too bony. His tail was too long, and his body was thin and so long that often he was sway-backed. In color the longhorn was unpredictable, sometimes brown, sometimes dun, red, or black, occasionally yellow, and often an indiscriminate combination of all colors. His horns were a trageous and unbelievable. Out and up, on either side of his head they curved, sometimes almost corkscrewing, making a prodigious sweep, polished white or blue and tipped at the end with points as sharp as stilettos. The longhorn reached his full growth when he was ten years old, but not so his horns. Year after year they continued to lengthen and spread as long as the animal lived. Old steers often carried horns that measured seven feet from tip to tip, and there

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50. Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. IV, p. 389.

is a record of eight feet, nine inches.<sup>51</sup> The Ellsworth Reporter  
remarks on this subject:<sup>52</sup>

Last fall during the shipping season, three steers were found with horns of such enormous length that they could not get into a car with a five foot door 'til after five inches was sawed off of each horn.

The longhorns were driven from Texas by trail. The approximate cost of driving the cattle to Ellsworth was estimated at \$1 to \$3 per head. Two men were usually employed to every hundred head of cattle in the drive. Each man usually had two horses. Fifty dollars was the average amount paid to the drivers. The owners expected to lose from five to ten per cent of their herd in the drive.<sup>53</sup>

600,000 head arrived in Western Kansas in 1871.<sup>54</sup> It was a rainy season; the grass was coarse and spongy and furnished no nutrition. Numerous storms caused stampedes. There were only a few buyers and, consequently, 300,000 were put out in winter quarters; of those, 140,000 grazed on Kansas Pacific railroad land.<sup>55</sup> Of this number 80,000 head grazed on the 640,000 acres of grazing land in the county.<sup>56</sup> The winter was also bad. A rainstorm pelted down and ice froze on the prairie two and three inches thick. A cold gale blew for three days and nights, causing men, horses, and cattle to freeze where they stood. Several hundred cow ponies and a quarter million cattle died.<sup>57</sup> The Ellsworth Reporter states that 13,000 hides were shipped north.<sup>58</sup>

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51. Kansas City Times, December 12, 1940.
  52. Ellsworth Reporter, December 21, 1871.
  53. Ellsworth Reporter, January 8, 1860.
  54. Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. IV, p. 389.
  55. Ibid., p. 389.
  56. Ibid., p. 390.
  57. Ibid., p. 390.
  58. Ibid., p. 390.

With the cattle trade increasing every year, Ellsworth was growing up. In December, 1871, a newspaper was established. The Ellsworth Reporter made its first appearance at that time and remained to grow up with the city and to watch it become respectable.

A frontier newspaper had many functions and did things in an interesting way. Sometimes it served as a monitor or conscience for the locality which it served. In Ellsworth the gamblers were warned, in a very interesting way, to keep good order.

#### Nobody Killed Yet<sup>59</sup>

If the Knights of the Cloth of Green desire to continue their business in this city, they should use their influence to reserve good order.

Fire hazards and narrow escapes brought their words of advice. An editor wanted to know whether Ellsworth could not use some preparation in case of fire. He was even so bold as to suggest that they should have two or three fire extinguishers and a hook and ladder company on hand so that they would be prepared for the worst.

The paid advertising often brought much humor to the readers of those days. Sometimes there was the deliberate attempt at being humorous as this one will show:

#### Swimmers Come Forth<sup>60</sup>

All you gentlemen who desire at any time to invoke the god of the sea to wash away your sins--call on him in the rear of Nick Lent's Billiard Hall and you can be gratified to your heart's content.

Baths! Baths! Baths! Hot, cold, medicated, and vapor baths.  
Sic Transit Gloria Mundi.

Sometimes the printing brought the humor as is the case with,<sup>61</sup>

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59. Ellsworth Reporter, July 3, 1873.

60. Ibid., August 6, 1872.

61. Ibid., June 27, 1872.

Harker is going to celebrate the  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

Again the very conglomeration to be found on sale in a frontier store brings a smile to us, even though the people of those days took it pretty much in their stride. An advertisement that would bring a ripple of amusement today is the following:<sup>62</sup>

Jewelry  
Watches  
Clocks  
Chains  
Solid &  
Plated Ware  
Pistols  
-----  
Fine Cutlery  
Fancy Goods  
Accordeons  
& Toys  
Musical Instruments  
Of All Kinds  
Cash paid for  
Hides, Furs, and Pelts

B. W. Applebaum

The high-flown language would seem out of place in the modern newspaper of today, even in an up-to-date weekly. But here we find it in all of its glory in the paper which served Ellsworth in its early days.<sup>63</sup>

It is rumored that an ingenious citizen undertook to attach a discarded tin pan to the caudal appendage of a strange canine and in consequence was obliged to go to bed, while his estimable and sympathizing wife constructed a new foundation for his trousers.

And marriage notices looked like this:<sup>64</sup>

Married

At Fort Harker, Kansas, Sunday, December 24, 1871 by Chaplain W. Vaux,  
Mr. Geo. K. Beede and Miss Theresa Newton, both of Ellsworth.

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62. Ibid., December 28, 1871.

63. Ibid., December 21, 1871.

64. Ibid., December 28, 1871.

"Leaf by leaf the roses fall."

...May the wife continue as sweet as a tub of roses swimming in honey, cologne, nutmeg, and cranberries; and may the husband ever feel as if something were running through his nerves on feet of diamonds, escorted by several little cupids, in chariots drawn by angels, shaded with honey-suckles, and all spread over with melted rainbows.

The local items contained many things that were odd and also newsy.

A group of them gleaned at random from the files of the Ellsworth R.porter of this period brought the following facts to light:

A list of marriageable males is published for the benefit of the Eastern lady readers. This list was published periodically.

Fifty dollars worth of ice cream was consumed in Ellsworth during July of 1872.

The election was very spirited. Whiskey ran free and money changed hands without consideration.

The opening game of Baseball will be played Friday, May 10.

James Robinson Circus will exhibit in Ellsworth, May 18.

Martha and another sable sister followed a colored woman whom Martha charged with burning her home to the edge of town where a pitched battle took place. Afterwards the two came and complained against themselves and were fined one dollar each. The victim resembled a large tar pot painted red.

The costs in the four contested election cases will amount to nearly four hundred dollars and is taxed up to the parties who came out second best.

Ellsworth is rather quiet now winter; The trade has not subsided so much in the city as in Nauchville. The sound of the harp has died out, the violin ceases its vibration, and the feet of the dancing maidens have taken themselves to Serman and other places.

Dr. F. Sieber killed two black-tailed deer last week, the largest weighing 160 pounds.

The social ball at the Marshall House last Thursday evening was a very pleasant affair.

Cold nights have put a stop to the gate sparking. If she doesn't invite you to come in now, you had better quit. It shows that her affection for you is second to that for coal oil.

Girls in their gigglehood are eloping lively just now.

A young man told the editor the other day, "I can drink, or I can leave it alone." We know you can drink; now prove that you can let it alone.

Charivaris cost Beede and Graham both twenty dollars in drinks.

Prize Fight.

Combatants--Beebe's billy goat and a large cur dog, Bing, in front of the Marshall House. After considerable fancy sparring on both sides, Billy let out a 'feeler' with his head, upon the nose of Mr. Cur, the seconds threw up the sponge, and Billy placidly walked off on his ear.

P.S. Not any cash ventured upon either side.

In this manner the people kept abreast of the times with their newspaper. National affairs were also treated to a very limited extent on the second page. The front page was usually given over to some type of entertaining stories and also to advertising. The price of the Ellsworth Reporter for a year's subscription was two dollars.

Ellsworth was preening herself for her biggest years. Various circumstances made her the principal shipping point of Texas cattle on the Kansas Pacific railroad.

In February, 1872, a circular prepared by the enemies of Abilene, Kansas, and her cattle market was sent to Texas suggesting to the drovers that they should not return to that city.<sup>65</sup> This was the death blow to an already dying trade because Abilene was being settled by farmers who were not in favor of having herds of longhorns graze near their places. Another factor favored the moving of the market farther westward. Homesteads farther south blocked the old trail and forced the drovers to seek new paths through territory which had not as yet been claimed. Then, people were getting tired of the trade in Abilene and longed for a more respectable method of making a living. Business men wanted to send for their wives and children back east. Respectable men and women longed for the day when they could go out upon the streets and walk unmolested and free from insults. The Kansas Pacific did not care. They could easily move the trade to another town farther west, and Ellsworth was ready to take over where Abilene had left off.

The stockmen and the cattle trade sponsors did not have everything

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65. Ibid., p. 390.



their own way in these early cattle years. Several protective associations were formed by the farmers and settlers for their mutual protection. Too many times the Texas cattle brought what was known as Texas fever with them and spread that among the stock cattle of the settlers. The results were usually disastrous to the herds of the local man.

March 9, 1872, a group of people met in the Thompson creek school house and formed the "Ellsworth County Farmers' Protective Society." They were definitely indignant over the liberties taken by the Texas drovers. The president, the Reverend Levi Sternberg, stated:<sup>66</sup>

Farmers and drovers cannot pull in the same traces. Farmers must have their vocation which is the life blood of every country or community and the germ of civilization. Give this country into the hands of the herdsman and you will make it half civilized or barbarous country without schools or churches--and controlled by a few large stockmen having many poor illiterate men dependent upon them for support.

This was the driving force which later enacted the herd law in the counties of Kansas. Ellsworth did not have real enforcement of the law until May, 1875. The owner of cattle was forced to keep them on his premises, and if they wandered to the neighbor's field, whether it was fenced or not, the cattleman was responsible for the damages. Impetus for the enforcement of such a law came from such protective societies.

People were bent on staying in this country, raising domestic cattle, and tilling the soil. So far they were still in the minority, but the trend was evident.

In this year on March 6, Ellsworth became a part of the 14th judicial district under Judge J. H. Prescott.<sup>67</sup>

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66. Ellsworth Reporter, March 14, 1872.

67. Andreas, A History of Kansas, p. 1275.

In the regular meeting of the city council held March 13, two ordinances were passed; the one was the long debated dram shop ordinance, the other an ordinance designating the places for holding elections.<sup>68</sup> The same month a petition came in asking the council to drain and fill up F. Street. A committee of council members was selected to determine the most suitable system for draining the street and the cost.<sup>69</sup> Next came the township trustees with a proposition to sell the township jail to the city. Councilmen Phelps and Seitz were delegated to see the jail building, ascertain the value, and report at the next meeting. Two problems of a growing town are evident. Ellsworth was expanding and needed more room. The lawless element was growing worse and the council needed a place to cool heels.

The city fathers decided that they could not root out lawlessness (they did not try too hard); so they were going to make all of the vicious vocations contribute to the maintenance of law and order. The entire sum of municipal expenses was paid from licenses and fines. The Topeka Commonwealth printed an article saying in part:<sup>70</sup>

The city realizes three hundred dollars per month from prostitution fines alone.

... The city authorities consider that as long as mankind is depraved and Texas cattle herders exist, there will be a demand and necessity for prostitutes, and that as long as prostitutes are bound to dwell at Ellsworth it is better for the respectable portion of society to hold the prostitutes under the restraint of law.

Over thirty names of such loose women may be found in the police

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68. Ellsworth City Council, Proceedings, p. 8.

69. Ibid., p. 12.

70. The Commonwealth, July 1, 1873.

records dating back to these early cattle years. They were haled into court on various charges and paid fines ranging from five to thirty dollars.

The crimes for which the men were brought before the police judge most often were drunk and disorderly conduct and carrying or discharging the deadly weapon known as the revolver or the six-shooter. However, a man received a greater fine for failing to clean up his premises than if he were drunk and disorderly. They paid the city marshal \$125 per month and the fee from each arrest he made to keep the order in the city of Ellsworth.

The stage was all set for a riotous and profitable season in the principal shipping point for Texas cattle. The prices were pretty good, with buyers offering \$19-\$22 for beeves; \$15-\$18 for three-year-olds; \$9-\$10 for two-year-olds; \$12 for cows; \$6 for yearlings.<sup>71</sup>

Ellsworth was facing a building boom. Twenty carloads of new material had been unloaded for a hotel building. A new business house, a blacksmith and wagon shop, two store rooms, and a large stable were in the process of erection. People were coming from every direction. The Ellsworth Reporter predicted that half of Abilene would be in Ellsworth within two months.<sup>72</sup> The citizens were not only expending their money on business buildings, but they were also putting up residences. A two-story house had been moved from North to South Main, and many other improvements were presenting themselves.

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71. Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. IV, pp. 395-396.

72. Ellsworth Reporter, March 21, 1872.

The town was full of strangers hunting homes; rent rose to \$15 and \$20 per month for three or four-room houses, and they were hard to find. Twelve hotels, including the tent houses and restaurants, where people were fed and lodged, were filled to capacity.<sup>73</sup>

Earlier the Reporter had remarked editorially:<sup>74</sup>

Let the Town Company sell at reasonable prices and good terms, lots, to laboring men who desire to build homes, while at the same time they refuse to sell to those who only buy to hold for a rise. Thus can we make Ellsworth a large rich and thriving city.

The first three droves of longhorns, numbering one thousand head each, arrived in June, 1872. Two weeks later twenty-eight herds had arrived, numbering from one thousand to six thousand head of cattle in each herd. This brought the total number of cattle to 58,850. Adding to that number the 40,000 head which had wintered in the county brought the total to almost 100,000 head in Ellsworth County at that time.<sup>75</sup>

That season 40,161 head or one-fourth of the total marketed over the Kansas Pacific railroad were shipped from Ellsworth. During the months of June and July about 100,000 head of beef cattle changed hands at Ellsworth. Buyers who were waiting for the drovers to arrive gave them a chance to sell out early at a good price and go home.<sup>76</sup>

When the cattle started to come to Ellsworth, some of the business men who had catered to the cattle trade in Abilene moved their business to the new market. J. W. Gore and M. B. George tore down part of Drover's Cottage and moved it to Ellsworth. Jacob (Jake) Karatofsky, the young

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73. Ibid., June 27, 1872.

74. Ibid., December 28, 1871.

75. Ibid., p. 395.

76. Ibid., p. 395.

Russian Jew (owner of the great western store, Cedar and Texas Streets), went to Ellsworth with a stock, May 1. J. W. (Brocky Jack) Norton, who came from Abilene, became a peace officer. Gamblers and toughs also came from the same place with these business men.<sup>77</sup>

Ellsworth reminded some of the people of early day California. Men gathered here from every state, nation, and profession. There were Texans, Mexicans, emigrants, homesteaders, stockbuyers, drovers. The shady group of society were especially well represented in the dead beats, "cappers", pickpockets, horsethieves, scores of the demimonde, and at least seventy-five professional gamblers. Whiskey selling was the most profitable business, but many honorable business men were enjoying a heavy run on the commodities they had on sale. The saloons and gambling houses kept open all night. During the first seven months thirteen dram shop keepers were licensed and doing business. They paid every year \$500 for a city license, \$25 for a government license, and \$10 general business tax. Some wag remarked that since whiskey was an antidote for snake bite, nobody there would ever be bitten by a snake because so many saloons existed.<sup>78</sup>

Life was not always peaceful, and incidents like this one could probably be multiplied without number if the saloons and gambling places had recorded their blazing histories.

Olive and Kennedy were playing cards in the Ellsworth Billiard Saloon and Kennedy was losing. Kennedy walked around the bar, pulled out a revolver from under the counter, and advanced on Olive. The unarmed Olive threw up his hands, but Kennedy demanded that he turn in his checks and

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77. Ibid., p. 390.

78. Ibid., p. 392.

fired five shots in his direction. Someone in the crowd fired at Kennedy, wounding him also. Both men recovered and Kennedy was later arrested as the aggressor, but someone helped him out of jail and he departed for parts unknown.

The cattle began coming to Ellsworth early in the year 1873. Already on April 28, herds numbering from two to ten thousand head each were reported on their way to Ellsworth. The largest herd was being driven through by W. S. Peryman and Company. Allen and Bennette came next with 8,000, Millett and Mabry, 6,000.

Cattle piled up thick and fast. May 29 the local paper reported that 100,000 head had arrived. By June 5 the number was placed at 125,000 head, and a week later, it was reported that 143,500 head had made their appearance. The 100,000 first reported belonged to 55 cattlemen; among whom were listed Colonel O. W. Wheeler, L. B. Harris, J. L. Driskill, Major Seth Mabry, Colonel James V. Ellison, who usually drove from 4,000 to 12,000, had just arrived with 7,000 beeves. Colonel J. J. Reeves, who never drove fewer than 4,000 longhorns, was on the trail with 27,000.<sup>79</sup> And so the numbers could be multiplied.

Altogether a group of excursionists representing "Cattle Trails," a publication in Kansas City, about July 1, reported 56,000 head of longhorns at Wichita, none at Great Bend, and 135,000 at Ellsworth. The press reported 140,000 head by mid-July with more expected. Half a million head of cattle were driven to Kansas that year and thirty per cent arrived at Ellsworth.<sup>80</sup>

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79. Ibid., p. 396.

80. Ibid., p. 397.

The town boasted that its stockyards under the management of Colonel R. D. Hunter were the biggest in the state. The pens made of unpainted lumber covered several acres. Seven loading chutes were located up the railroad tracks in the Western part of the city. Two hundred cars could be loaded in a day from these yards modelled after those in Chicago.<sup>81</sup> Cattlemen registered their brands in Samuel G. Jelley's office.

Cattle buyers appeared at the Ellsworth hotels from Colorado, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Missouri, and Iowa.

In 1873 D. W. Powers opened his "Bank of Leavenworth" for the accommodating of merchants, stock dealers, and the Texas cattle trade. The American House Hotel enlarged, remodeled, and refurnished its place of business. J. C. Veatch enlarged and improved his hotel and restaurant before the season opened. The Ellsworth Reporter of March 6 predicted, "Ellsworth will be the liveliest town in Kansas this year." The Leavenworth Commercial retorted to this, "Yes, in flea time." Both predictions came true.<sup>82</sup>

Ellsworth also boasted of a new cattle trail surveyed by the Kansas Pacific railroad, which shortened the distance from Texas to Kansas thirty-five miles. It was called "Cox's Trail" or "Ellsworth Cattle Trail." The survey party included William M. Cox, general livestock agent for the railroad company, David Hunter, brother of Colonel R. D. Hunter, T. J. Buckbee, Howard Capper, and J. Ben George, well-known cattlemen. They left Ellsworth April 16 and completed their survey by May 1. All except Cox waited at Sewell's ranch for the first herd to come through.

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81. Ibid., p. 394.

82. Ibid., p. 396.

Their aim was to select a route that had abundant water for the cattle en route.

This trail left the old trail at Pond Creek ranch, turned left, and bore a little west of north along Pond Creek to the head waters of that stream, then west of north to Cox's crossing of Bluff Creek (one-fourth mile west of north fork), then by way of Kingman and Ellinwood to Ellsworth.

Three stores furnished supplies along this route. The first was at Sewell's ranch and store east of Pond's Creek crossing; the second, C. H. Stone's store at Cox's crossing at Bluff Creek; the third, E. C. Morning's store at a place "called Kingman," one and one-half miles east of the crossing of the Minnescah.<sup>83</sup>

The people of Ellsworth and the Kansas Pacific railroad made every effort to bring the cattle trade to Ellsworth.

Articles in newspapers set forth all the advantages of the new trail and of Ellsworth as a market. These pointed out that Ellsworth had the best railroad facilities, the largest cattle yards, the best hotel accommodations in the state. Extravagantly correspondents wrote to the Commonwealth:<sup>84</sup>

From Ellsworth County  
Long Horn Betropolis-----An Army of Texas Beeves-----Improvements  
.....  
Long horns cover the hills....Other towns may claim big trade but  
Ellsworth has it.

This was followed a month later by:<sup>85</sup>

Ellsworth  
The Model City of the Plains  
Business, Life, and Excitement

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83. Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. IV, p. 394.

84. Kansas Daily Commonwealth, June 2, 1873 and June 4, 1873.

85. Ibid., July 1, 1873.



The Great Cattle Market of the West  
A Frontier Theatre, Metropolitan Hotels. Metropolitan People and Metropolitan Manners.

Enterprise and Progress.

Probably no place in the world offers better facilities for the cattle business than Ellsworth. It is situated on the Kansas Pacific Railroad. It has a permanent population of 700 or 800, several large and well-kept hotels, surrounded by unlimited grazing ground.

Flies, ticks, and mosquitos...are not to be found on the verdant prairies surrounding Ellsworth.

It seemed that once the imagination of the scribes representing the cattle industry allowed their imagination to graze on the verdure of Ellsworth County, they could only gallop in headlong stampeded through every descriptive adjective they knew.

The new trail also came in for its fair share of rich praise. It did have fewer annoyances than any other trail because as the guide map of the Kansas Pacific Railroad stated, "It ran west of the settlements of Kansas."<sup>86</sup>

The Ellsworth Reporter published a table showing distances and describing the route, streams, crossings, camping grounds, and trading posts.

The Kansas Pacific railroad issued a pamphlet and a map called "Guide map of the Great Texas Cattle Trail from Red River Crossing to the old Reliable Kansas Pacific Railway."<sup>87</sup>

When the cattlemen and their herds came to Ellsworth they found a railroad cow town laid out along the tracks. A few brick structures were to be found, but, in general, the business houses were built of lumber. Most of the business places provided benches under wooden awnings

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86. Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. IV, p. 395.

87. Ibid., p. 395. (Streeter only located two editions, the 1872 and the 1875.)

for the loafers along the wooden sidewalks. Hitching posts for the farmer's teams and for the cowponies lined the streets. Some of them were occupied at all times, day or night. Dust lay deep in the streets, and when it rained the mud was even deeper, in spite of the grading and draining ordered by the city council during these cattle trade years.

Cowboys inspecting the town found various firms doing business. At the west end on South Main stood Drover's Cottage, a three-story hotel with 84 rooms. This hostelry was owned and operated by J. W. and Louisa Gore and M. B. George, who had followed the cattle trade from Abilene and had taken a part of the cottage along. Also on South Main were Powers Bank, Mimick and Hounson's brick drug store, and John Bell's Great Western Hardware Emporium. Still on South Main but east of Douglas stood Jake New's saloon. John Kelley's American House, for all, but especially for Texas drovers, was next. Then came Nick Lentz's saloon where strong drinks, hot and cold baths were served. A double building housed Jerome Beebe's general store (he had branch stores in Wilson and Brookville). He sold high grade groceries, wines and liquor for medicinal purposes, Kirby's reapers, and Moline plows. Joseph Brennan's saloon stood east of Beebe's. Whitney and Kendall owned a furniture store a half block east of Lincoln Avenue. Whitney was the silent partner in this venture. The railroad station stood directly in front of Beebe's store.

North of the tracks, on North Main two blocks east of Douglas, there stood the courthouse and jail completed in June, 1873, at the cost of \$5,000. The Ellsworth Reporter of June 26, 1873, stated that it was the most comfortable place in town but warned that not too many should crowd into the place at once.

Toward the west end of that block and back from the sidewalk, old timers will point out to you the spot where Wild Bill Hickok's shack stood. Somewhere in that vicinity Kuney, Southwith, and Company had a lumber yard. The Grand Central Hotel, built by Arthur Larkin of good red brick, was hailed as the finest and costliest house west of the Missouri River outside of Topeka. The cost of the hotel and furniture came to \$27,000. It had one other distinction. The best sidewalk in Kansas was built along the front of the Grand Central, a slab of magnesia limestone twelve feet wide. Ellsworth was proud to boast of it. Close against the hotel on the east stood the Ellsworth Reporter office. Somewhere along this street a cabinet shop had also been established.

In the next block west, opposite the depot, Arthur Larkin owned a dry goods and clothing store. During the year of 1873, the city council rented a room on the second floor of Larkin's Dry Goods Store for its police court at \$15 per month. The J. C. Veath Hotel and restaurant was next. Nagle's livery stable occupied the next space, and next came a gambling place, the United States Post Office, and on the corner of Douglas stood Seitz's "oldest established drug store in Western Kansas."<sup>88</sup>

In the spring of this year much of the sinister element arrived. Dr. F. B. Streeter, who has thoroughly investigated the events occurring in Ellsworth during that summer has given a very clear account in his book.<sup>89</sup>

Ben and Billy Thompson arrived in Ellsworth, dealt in livestock, and ran a faro gambling game. Cad Pierce and Neil Cain, two handsome but wild boys, spent much of their time in Ellsworth gambling. John Sterling, another gambler with considerable money, was also in town. He usually won whether his bet was a good one or not.

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88. Ibid., pp. 391-392.

89. Streeter, Floyd B., Prairie Trails & Cow Towns, pp. 105-142. A condensed account appears here.

Good order was maintained by the authorities, and Ellsworth's police protection was adequate unless a violent form of lawlessness broke out in the city. All the officers were brave and experienced men. Chauncey B. Whitney, Sheriff of Ellsworth County, was a Civil War veteran. He in turn had been Deputy Sheriff, City Marshal, and was elected Sheriff in 1872. Ed. O. Hogue had served as policeman in 1872 and was promoted to the office of City Marshall which he held for two months. He was retained as a policeman later.

At the opening of the shipping season, the city police force consisted of a marshal and four deputies, appointed by the mayor with the approval of the council. John W. (Brooky Jack) Norton was city marshal, and his policemen were: Ed. Hogue, John (Long Jack) DeLong, John (Happy Jack) Morco, and John (High-Low Jack) Brauham. Each policeman was assigned a regular beat and rather definite duties.

All summer nothing more serious than an average of one violation a day of the drunk and deadly weapon ordinance occurred. Vincent B. Osborne, police judge, passed judgment in more than sixty cases in his court room over Larkin's store. Bill Thompson was arrested twice that summer, paying a fine of twenty-five dollars in each case. [Ben Thompson was arrested once.<sup>90</sup>] In these cases the charges were drunkenness and carrying a deadly weapon.

Friday, August 15, a tragedy occurred. Sheriff Whitney stayed in town even though his family was having a picnic.

A group of noted gamblers were playing cards in Joe Brennan's saloon. Ben and Billy Thompson did not seemingly sit in on the game, but both were watching, and Billy was drinking heavily. Neil Cain was dealing monte and Cad Pierce was betting. Cad had considerable money and wanted to bet more than Neil wanted to take. Pierce wanted someone to take his overbets. Ben called to John Sterling, who replied, "Ben, I'll take him for all Neil don't want, but say, Ben, if I win, consider yourself one-half in." Sterling drank until he lost control of his senses. After he had won over a thousand dollars of Cad's money, he put it in his pocket and started off.

About three in the afternoon, Ben Thompson, in the presence of Happy Jack Morco, asked for a settlement on the money won in the card game. This made Sterling angry, and knowing Ben was unarmed, he struck him in the face. Thompson started for Sterling, but Happy Jack stopped him with his six-shooter. Sterling and Happy Jack went in the direction of Jake New's saloon: Thompson consulted Cad Pierce in Brennan's saloon. Sterling and Happy Jack then appeared at the door of Brennan's, well-armed, and challenged the Texans to a fight. The challenge created quite a stir, and Ben asked for a gun. Not finding one, he dashed to Jake New's saloon and got his own pistol and Winchester rifle, ran out the front door intending to shoot it out on the railroad tracks so the bystanders would not get hurt.

Billy Thompson also rushed to New's saloon and grabbed Ben's double-barreled, breech-loading shot gun. He handled it so carelessly on the street that one barrel went off, discharging the buckshot into the sidewalk. Ben, who had come over beside him, started to take the shells out of the gun when someone said,

"Look out, Ben, those fellows are after you!"

A crowd gathered, and excitement ran high. John Sterling had slapped Ben Thompson's face, and he was on the warpath.

Ben shouted a dare from the railroad tracks. Brocky Jack Norton started out to arrest Ben and Bill when Sheriff Whitney stopped him saying,

"They will shoot you. I will go; they will not harm me."

Whitney convinced the Thompsons that he would protect them, and they went toward Brennan's saloon. Just as they were entering, someone called,

"Look out, Ben; here they come with guns!"

Ben whirled, saw Happy Jack coming with one or two six-shooters. Ben started toward Beebe's store with the sheriff close behind him. He stopped near the alley between the saloon and Beebe's, hailed Happy Jack, and asked what he was doing. Jack dodged into Beebe's store. Ben fired at him, hitting the door casing. When Ben fired at Jack, Billy came to the door of the saloon, and fired his gun, hitting Whitney, who was about ten or twelve feet from him. The gun was loaded with buckshot and the charge was emptied into Whitney's right arm, shoulder, and breast. The Thompsons claimed that the gun went off accidentally. The local paper and many Ellsworth people said that Bill pointed the gun at the Sheriff, who made two attempts to get out of the way and said,

"Don't shoot; it's Whitney."

He was taken to his home, where everything possible was done to save his life by the two local doctors and the post surgeon from Fort Riley. His pierced lung produced an internal hemorrhage. He died three days later of blood poisoning.

When the disturbance began, the crowd melted away. The Texans, who usually stuck together in a Kansas Cow Town fracas, remained in the Grand Central Hotel.

A few moments after the shooting, Ben went across the street to New's saloon to Grand Central; Bill went into Brennan's saloon and out the back door to New's saloon, where he got a horse. He rode up to the Grand Central, where he exchanged guns with Ben, and someone gave him a pistol and a hundred dollars. Bill was told to go out to one of the cow camps until the thing blew over. He evidently was in no hurry because evidence produced at his trial later pointed out that he remained in town for a while before

he decided to ride away. Ben remained in the Grand Central Hotel for at least an hour fully armed.

Judge Miller, the mayor, came down to investigate the disturbance, and he became very impatient with the police because no arrests had been made. Ben made a bargain with the Judge that if Happy Jack, John Sterling, and others were disarmed he would give up his weapons also. This was done, and Ben turned over his weapons to Ed Hogue and hostilities ceased. He was charged in police court with shooting at Happy Jack, but that gentleman refused to appear against him and the case was dropped.

A posse set out after Billy, but they never found him (some say they didn't try very hard because of Bill's reputation).

Ed Hogue was appointed city marshal, and Brocky Jack Norton lost his job after a stormy city council session.

Bad feeling had been engendered and bitterness was intensified in the next few days. Citizens and Texans threatened open war. A vigilance committee adopted a system of warnings to leave town called "white affidavits." Ben Thompson left town when he heard of the formation of the committee.

Cad Pierce, Neil Cain, and John Good were told that "white affidavits" had been issued for them. They went to Hogue to find out. At this point another tragedy occurred. After an argument, Ed Crawford shot Pierce in cold blood.

That day or the next, Happy Jack leveled his two pistols on Neil Cain, and it was only through the intervention of the city marshal that his life was spared, and he left town.

The cold-blooded killing of Pierce aroused a squad of gunmen to the point of wanting to burn the town.

The citizens were now thoroughly aroused, and they held a meeting in which the resolution was passed that "all gambling shall be suppressed." They searched for arms and caused a "dozen or so hard cases" to leave town. They raided the Grand Central and took the guns of the Texans.

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91. At this point, Stuart M. Lake in his book, Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931, pp. 76-94, introduces Wyatt Earp as the hero of the day's fracas. According to his account "yatt was "marshal of Ellsworth for one portentous hour." Mayor Miller was supposed to have pinned Brocky Jack's badge on Wyatt's shirt front, and he, single handed, walked out and arrested Ben Thompson, who was backed by the hundred or more half-drunken cowboys. This seems to be based on both garbled and slender evidence. One dare not, in the interest of truth, give it too great credence.

The governor of the State heard about the trouble and offered State Government aid if necessary. Attorney-General Williams came out to look the situation over. The city council decided to discharge the entire police force. Richard Freebourn was selected as marshal, and he appointed as his assistants, J. C. (Charlie) Brown and John DeLonz. In the fall Charlie Brown succeeded Freebourn and served well for two years.

Happy Jack and Ed Crawford met with violent deaths because they dared to return to Ellsworth after they had been chased out of town.

Bill Thompson was brought back to Ellsworth for trial in 1877. The proceedings lasted nine days, from September fifth to the fourteenth. The jury, after deliberating one hour, pronounced him not guilty. The trial cost the county \$3,500, and Ben Thompson spent all the money he had.

A story in the Commonwealth of Topeka gave the picture of conditions in Ellsworth in this trying summer. Veritas, as he signed himself, was very careful that he gave everyone the correct impression. He wanted it known that it was not the legitimate drover who had caused the trouble, but the camp follower who usually tried to prey on honest business and make money come his way without working for it. The picture as he gave it follows:<sup>92</sup>

#### Affairs at Ellsworth

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Exodus of the Roughs and Gamblers  
No apprehension of further trouble.

Presuming that the recent murderous proceedings in our town have attracted the attention of your readers, we naturally conclude that they are anxious to know the condition of affairs to this date.

The civil authorities, the "law and order" party, are masters of the situation--have complete control, and if they exercise their brief authority with that discretion which characterizes men of sense and good judgment, there will be no more trouble. Whenever any man or set of men usurp more authority than has been given them, and act in a domineering and tyrannical manner, they should be displaced at once and others of cool, mature judgment put in the position. This is one of the complaints made of our police force and not without reason.

Our recent troubles were occasioned by the too great forbearance of

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our municipal authorities and their endeavors to conciliate and coax the desperado not to "make a disturbance." The error was not discovered until we had lost one of our citizens in the most shameful, murderous manner. The shooting of Whitney opened the eyes of our people, and after the shock of the terrible affair had passed off, all could witness the deep, resistless determination of our citizens to show the gamblers and roughs that they could not run the town. Right here, we want it distinctly understood that the "Texas cattle men" proper are not and have not been participators in or agitators of these dark deeds of blood and crime. It has been the gamblers, the frequenters of houses of ill-fame, the desperadoes who flock in crowds to any mart where money is plenty, to ply their nefarious vocation, who have been the occasion of this trouble. At a meeting of the citizens on the night of the 20th inst. the stern resolve depicted on every face, together with the resolution that "gambling shall be suppressed," was taken as a warning, and that class of persons commenced looking after their carpet bags, and the next train that went east on the K.P. was freighted with more infamy than is usually transported on one day. The 21st of August will be remembered in Ellsworth for the exodus of the roughs and gamblers. But the Texas cattle men, known and noted for genuine frankness and liberality, coupled with gentlemanly deportment, are here yet, and will remain until their herds of cattle find a purchaser. They unite with our people in preserving order, and all the people of Ellsworth will do as much to protect them and see that no harm befalls them or their property; for they have been invited here and are in a measure our guests, and we desire to treat them as such in an honorable manner.

Much complaint has been made of our municipal authorities for the manner in which our affairs have been managed, and no doubt errors have been made, but they have now come to their senses and realize that a great responsibility rests upon them. The security of our property and the lives of our citizens as well as those of our Texas friends who are for a short time sojourning with us are in their care, and with a judicious ministration of authority all will go well. In this connection it is well to say that many people think that one of the police lacks discretion and ought at once to know that we have not employed him to disgracefully taunt everybody with his authority. He should be taught to do his duty without the use of abusive declarations; his words do not make a brave man nor do they deter bad men from the acts of violence. Hot words only make a "bad matter worse," and he can do his duty without any such braggadocio and all will think better of him.

Since the departure of the 21st all have quietly settled down in the regular channels of business, and with a nightly detail of twenty reliable, substantial citizens, who patrol the town to see that no conflagration is kindled, and to see that disorder is at once suppressed, there is no further apprehension of trouble.

Veritas.

The social life in Ellsworth centered around the hotels. The Ellsworth Dancing Club sponsored balls in the Grand Central, holding



the first one March 6, 1873. Numerous dances were held at Drover's cottage during the winter and spring. The Catholic Church and the Masonic Order put on a benefit dance. The former collected \$500 and the latter, \$750. The last meeting of the Ellsworth Dancing Club was held May 29, with Messrs. Parkhurst, Bradshaw, Skyrock, Savage, Whitney and Hoesman functioning as the committee in charge. A large crowd danced until morning and some of the Texas gentlemen seemed to like the Ellsworth girls.<sup>93</sup>

Time and talent was also spent in bringing the theatre to Ellsworth. In February the Fort Harker cavalry boys put on an amateur play at Drover's Cottage. The hall was crowded and all who saw it were pleased.

Then came the announcement, June 5, that Ellsworth would have a professional theatre. A week later it was announced that Ellsworth had a theatre. Two men, McClelland and Freeman, had fitted up a building for the purpose of holding shows. Ned Campbell was named business and stage manager.

Talent was to come from St. Joseph, Kansas City, and St. Louis. Such plays as "Shakespeare Dislocated," "The People's Lawyer," a farce, "The Brown Family," together with a variety of songs and dances by a troupe consisting of first-class artists were offered for the general admission price of fifty cents. Seats in the private box cost one dollar.<sup>94</sup>

The frontier theatre was a low one-story building, seventy-five by twenty feet. The doors opened at nine in the evening. Patrons were en-

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93. Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. IV, p. 393.

94. Ellsworth Reporter, January 8, 1880.

ticed inside by orchestra music produced by such instruments as a violin, violoncello, guitar, and cornet. What it lacked in harmony it made up in volume and spirit.

The room itself was unplastered and unpainted except for the proscenium and the drop curtain. The stage was opposite to the entrance. Plain pine benches afforded a seating capacity for one hundred fifty patrons. At the right of the entrance was a bar for dispensing "cholera medicine." At the left of the entrance stood a monte gambling table.

To the left of the stage was the box which extended outside like a bake oven. The capacity of the box was usually twelve, made up mostly of "ladies," though a long-haired gallant from the sunny south was frequently seen sandwiched between the gayly decorated and dashing "ladies."

A drop curtain was ornamental as well as suggestive. A gay cattle herder dressed like a Spanish don, with a crimson jacket, gold lace, huge plumed, Castilean sombrero, and ponderous spurs, riding a furbous, awe-inspiring horse, covered one side. On the other side of the same curtain was pictured a huge roped longhorn attempting to escape. Between the herder and the beast a gigantic gold and silver lone star glittered. This theatre catered to the Texans.

On a typical night there were fifty patrons--young men mostly--on the pine benches. Seven or eight "ladies" together with three or four "gentlemen" were in the "bake-oven" or box. Boys with waiters or trays circulated through the crowd, crying "liquors and cigars." Incense from numerous Indian weeds rose and mixed its fragrance with exudations of the cattle herders. "Mac," the bartender, kept time with the orchestra and the jig dancers with the mixing and shaking of drinks. Herders guffawed,

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"ladies" giggled, monte-players cursed, orders for cigars and drinks were uncasing, and the singing, dancing, and theatrical performance progressed.

There was a "green room" back of the stage. To certain patrons this was the sacred realm. Here scores of herders drank wine and liquor and indulged in familiar pleasantries with the stage girls. The Ellsworth Reporter of January 8, 1880, said, "It is the acme of a herder's ambition to obtain accession to the 'green room' and crack a bottle of wine with the girls. The visits to the green room frequently cost a dozen head of steers, but Texas is able to stand the damage and don't care for the expense.

An evening's program follows: <sup>95</sup>

Ellsworth Theatre

which is "open every night" for the amusement and delectation of the Ellsworth sovereigns and the temporary sojourners from the land of Sam Houston. The following programme of a recent performance at this establishment will give the uninitiated some idea of its character:

ELLSWORTH THEATRE

McClellan, Freeman & Co. - - - Proprietors  
Ned Campbell, - Business and Stage Manager.

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THE POPULAR RESORT.

Our Attendance Increasing Nightly!

The reason why is obvious. We produce nothing old and stale, but every act is a gem, and our talent is the most versatile in the west.

Tonight, June 24, EVERYTHING

NEW!

Examine the Programme Carefully!

FIRST PART:

Overture.....Orchestra  
The Wicklow Girl.....Dan Hart  
Little Maud.....Miss Hallie Norcross  
Ka-mo-ki-ma.....Harry Traynor  
Kiss me goodbye..... Ned Campbell  
Finale.....Company

Overture.....Orchestra  
MR CHARLES VINCENT, in his old man specialty  
50 Years Ago.

POPULAR SONGS - - - - Miss Hallie Norcross

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SHAKESPEARE DISLOCATED

Dramatic Author.....Ned Campbell  
Amateur Jake.....Harry Traynor

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Overture.....Orchestra  
La Zingarella.....Miss Amelia Dean  
Lively Feet.....Charles Kelley

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The People's Lawyer

Lawyer Sheepface.....Mr. Charles Vincent  
Judge Mutton.....Ned Campbell  
Old Snarl.....Dan Hart  
Sarah Jane Wool.....Harry Traynor  
Policeman Fivestars.....Charles Kelley

Dance of the Thistle,....Miss H. Norcross

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PLANTATION PASTIMES

Mr. Charles Vincent and Miss Amelia Dean

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GO and imbibe with "Mac" while the Band Plays

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After which the screaming farce entitled the

BROWN FAMILY!

Mr. Brown.....Ned Campbell  
Mrs. Brown.....Miss Amelia Dean  
Jake.....Dan Hart

General admission, 50 cents; seats in private boxes, \$1; admission to wine room, \$1. The bar will be stocked with the choicest ales, wines, liquors. Any inattention or overcharge on the part of the ushers or waiters should be immediately reported to the proprietor.

Other forms of diversions were found in scores of gambling halls about which it was said that "the banking business [was] extensively followed in this city though it was all confined to the discounting and exchanging branches [such as] faro, keno, monte, etc."<sup>96</sup> The whiskey

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96. Ellsworth Reporter, January 8, 1880.

shops were also going full blast. Strange as it may seem, there was little drunkenness and disorder seen because of the perfect police regulations. Saloons were licensed; gambling houses and houses of prostitution were virtually licensed because prostitutes and gamblers were forced to pay a monthly fine.<sup>97</sup>

Ellsworth was progressing in another direction about this time. The citizens were not all of the type who inhabited the saloons, the gambling halls, and the green rooms. There were also progressive far-sighted builders among the people. During this prosperous time when the cattle business was at its height, a new two-story schoolhouse was built at a cost of \$10,000.<sup>98</sup> Professor Goodwin was at the head of the school when the corner stone was laid, August 12, 1873. Someone was so optimistic about the permanance of this structure that he declared that "copies of the Reporter and other articles were deposited (in the corner stone) to be opened, perhaps, a thousand years hence."<sup>99</sup>

Orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, and arithmetic were the chief subjects taught in a school at that time. The school board could ask for other subjects to be introduced. Even German could be taught upon proper petition of enough people.

County Institutes for teachers were rather haphazard affairs until 1876 when the legislature passed a law requiring them to meet for a period

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96. Ibid., January 8, 1380.

98. Ellsworth County Clippings, Volume I, State Historical Society Building, Topeka.

99. Compendious History, page 45.

of four weeks in the summer time. Previous to that time, Teachers' Institutes were held during the school term for a period of one week. During that time the pupils were dismissed and the pay of the teachers continued. It was the duty of the teachers to attend Teachers' Institutes or else they must present to the County Superintendent satisfactory reasons for not attending. The following "programme" of exercises was offered:<sup>100</sup>

#### Morning Session

Roll Call; Scripture Reading; Prayer; Singing  
Lecture--Upon Theory and Practice; by H. S. McCarty.  
Class Drill by Prof. Hamilton -- Subject, Readings.

#### Afternoon Session

Class Drill -- Conducted by A. Sheldon -- Subject, Arithmetic.  
Lecture -- By William Bishop -- Subject, Bible in Public Schools.

A. Hounson, County Superintendent

People lamented that not enough interest was shown in the school. The district hired a competent man to teach the school. He expected his public to come and see the work that he was doing. When the patrons of the district did not come around as they should, he lamented that fact to the newspaper man, who in turn carried that complaint to the people. Much expense and pain had been expended in providing for a school. Why not take a look at it occasionally? Parents and others should go to the school and show the children that they were interested in their educational development, and, he adds, "it will encourage them in their studies and deportment."<sup>101</sup>

The Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Baptist churches maintained organizations in Ellsworth, but only two, the Episcopal and Roman

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100. Ellsworth Reporter, June 6, 1872.

101. Ibid., December 28, 1871.

Catholic, owned buildings. The Reverend Dr. Sternberg preached in the school in Ellsworth. A Sabbath School was organized at the school house. Mr. D. L. Beach was selected as superintendent; the Reverend Mr. Connor and Mrs. M. C. Davis were his assistants. Mr. Cole was selected as the secretary, and a number of able teachers were selected. Mr. Minnick was to produce a library, and the Ellsworth Reporter<sup>102</sup> suggested that that was "a place for young ideas to learn to shoot."

Holidays were special occasions. Christmas trees were put up in the church for the benefit of the children. The parents came to see what type of program the children could put on. Presents were distributed to the children at the end of the service. For an Easter service, the camp chaplain from the fort was called in to deliver a special message. Services were called for 11:00 a.m. with Chaplain Vaux in charge. The announcement that appeared in the local paper stated, "All are invited."<sup>103</sup>

Looking back over the spring, summer, and early fall of prosperity brought to Ellsworth by the cattle trade, we can see why people felt that everything was going just as it should. The trail they had sponsored was turning one-third of all the salable cattle in the state to their market. Buyers and drovers brought business to the local merchants. Money flowed freely and people were happy.

Then came the crash. The financial dream castle tottered and trembled. Buyers became fewer and fewer because of a short corn crop. Financial reverses which had wiped out some very important banking and credit houses in New York and other parts of the East paralyzed business

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102. Ellsworth Reporter, May 9, 1872.

103. Ibid., March 28, 1872.

in Kansas in October. Cattlemen, unable to borrow money, threw more and more cattle on the open market, demoralizing the industry and depressing the price. Drovers, traders, and shippers lost much money and went bankrupt. Forty per cent of the cattle were put in winter quarters on the grazing land in and around Ellsworth. Thousand of these were killed for their tallow. Others were bought at depression prices by ranchers and feeders. Indians stole some and a few were consumed by settlers and butchers.<sup>104</sup>

The outlook for the Ellsworth cattle market looked still more gloomy. A new market for Texas cattle was opening up at Wichita, at least a hundred miles nearer. This cut almost a week from the driving time.

Neither the citizens of Ellsworth nor the Kansas Pacific railroad permitted such lucrative trade to leave them without a struggle. They made a supreme effort to keep the cattle trade from Wichita. In 1874 either the citizens or the Kansas Pacific railroad enlisted the help of Abel H. (Shanghai) Pierce, a part owner of the Rancho Grande in East Texas. One hundred thousand longhorns grazed there and his big steers were called "Shanghai's sea lions." He was a good story-teller and it is said that his voice could be heard nearly half a mile even when he whispered.

He worked very hard, backed by the press, the civic leaders, and the Kansas Pacific railroad. His efforts were rewarded. May 25, 1874, 42,572 longhorns had already arrived at Ellsworth, and 60,372 had passed Sewell's ranch headed for the same direction. But the effort was not enough to keep business up to the standard of 1873. Only 18,500 head

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104. Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. IV, p. 397.



were shipped from Ellsworth's stockyards, 12,000 fewer than the year before.<sup>105</sup> By 1875, Ellsworth had ceased to be an important cattle market. Wichita took the trade, the toughs, and some of the merchants. The stockyards weathered for a few years and then were removed. Fires destroyed some of the leading business places; only the Grand Central Hotel remained, and even it was altered.<sup>106</sup>

That same summer the plague of grasshoppers, or Rocky Mountain Locusts, struck Ellsworth County. During July and August the pest swooped down out of the Northwest and destroyed all the growing crops. Conditions grew so bad that the few settlers who had homesteaded in the county were wiped out completely and had to send to the state for aid. Three hundred women needed clothing, as well as two hundred men and three hundred children. Three hundred persons were in need of rations. A ration for one person amounted to one pound and six ounces of flour or one pound and four ounces of meal, one pound and four ounces of salt or fresh beef, twelve ounces of pork or bacon. To every one hundred rations, fifteen pounds of beans or peas; ten pounds of green coffee, fifteen pounds sugar, three pounds and twelve ounces of salt, four ounces of pepper, and one quart of molasses were added. The group of nine counties to which Ellsworth belonged received the most help from the State of Kansas. Relative prices of the commodities distributed were:

Flour	\$1.75-2.00	per 100 lbs.
Corn Meal	\$1.60	per 100 lbs.
Beans	1.87	per bushel
Salt pork	7.50	per 100 lbs.

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105. Ibid., p. 398.

106. Ibid., p. 398.

Salt Beef	4.00 to 4.50 per 100 lbs.
Sugar	.08 per pound
Salt	2.50 per barrel <sup>107</sup>

Even though disaster should have discouraged the whole population and convinced them that this was not a suitable place for them to make a living, it did not have that effect. The grasshopper plague did not chase the settler away, and the loss of the cattle market did not cause the merchants to lock their shops to follow the cattle to Wichita. Instead, the settler was more determined than ever to stay and make something of the country, and the merchant believed him and invited other settlers to join him in the new country of the middle west.

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107. Fourth Annual Report, State Board of Agriculture, pp. 31-34.

## ELLSWORTH TURNS TO AGRICULTURE: 1876-1886

The cattle trade was gone, and citizens of Ellsworth roused themselves to meet the problem of making a living, not by trying to restore the extinct cattle business as they had done, but by turning toward a new activity, attracting the immigrant. Acres upon acres of good land were selling at a low price. The Kansas Pacific railroad had their agents advertising land in every newspaper in order to lure prospective settlers to the counties along their right of way. Business men paid the newspaper to publish glowing accounts of the locality in which they were selling their wares. Horace Greeley's dictum, "Go west! young man, go west, and grow up with the country!" was still echoing in the ears of the people of the more settled regions. The Philadelphia Centennial made room for exhibits sponsored by the various states. Kansas spent \$38,625 in one year advertising itself. The main purpose of the expenditure and the exhibit as it was reported to the state legislature was to attract settlers from other states and foreign nations. The Soldiers Homestead law also caused men who had fought in the Civil War to seek homes in new territory.

All of this activity, together, caused the North American Review to say:  
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Kansas is an empire; a giant still in its cradle. And what kind of a State is this new and immense region called Kansas?

The writer then proceeded to describe the general topography of the country.

Ellsworth accepted a program of advertising herself to the potential settler with zeal and vigor. It was true that settlers had been welcome in the past, but now their favor was deliberately courted. Promoters pleaded, cajoled, offered, and even deliberately lied to get people to come to the new country to settle. A brilliant description of the city of Ellsworth and the surrounding country has been preserved. It reads:<sup>109</sup>

...Ellsworth, the county seat, is situated in a valley encircled within a ridge of these miniature mountains that appear as inanimate spectators of the city below....More sunshine is found here than elsewhere. The twilight melts into a delicious half-obscurity, and in the night the moon comes fresh out of the mint and scatters the silver dust of her coinage around promiscuously.

People began to feel ashamed of the past history of the town. To quench the fears of the newcomer, the local paper of Ellsworth and the advertising printed elsewhere about Ellsworth assured everyone of the fact that the old order was making way for the new. Enemies of peace and good order were gone and the knights of law and order, the settlers, could come in and take possession. The Compendious History of Ellsworth County said:<sup>110</sup>

Time at intervals, savage, yet kind, has formed a remarkable contrast in social and political spheres of this section, the egress of the cattle herders, the Indians, and the numerous caravans of roughs and rowdies attendant upon these enemies of peace and order, on the one hand, and the ingress of that class of citizens who promulgate the doctrine of allegiance to law, build schools, and traverse the legitimate avenues to honor and fortune, on the other hand.

Especially did the cattle trade come in for its share of abuse.

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109. Compendious History of Ellsworth County, p. 10.

110. Ibid., p. 6.

When the luscious profits became "sour grapes" because business men could no longer have them, and even the slightest expression of regret over the loss might turn a potential settler away from Ellsworth County, the newspaper denounced the Texas drovers and their kind bitterly.

111 For years cursed, like Sinbad, with an immense weight that was gradually crushing out her vitals, she merely staggered along, without any really vigorous prosperity until with one mighty concerted effort of the people she shook off the bad, and now begins to feel the healthful reaction. The Texas cattle trade was the "Old Man of the Sea" that virtually crippled all her resources and held her under an almost hopeless bondage for years. Then ...her magnificent surroundings began to attract the immigrant, until, in only that short space of one year, her population increased seventy-five per cent and is continuing in about the same ratio.

The emigrants were advised to come in the spring if they had no money, otherwise they might come in the fall. In February the farm work began. The ground was prepared for spring wheat, which was planted in March. In May corn was put in the ground. The demand was greatest for manual laborers, men who could work hard. Back breaking labor and patience were necessary to develop a farm in Ellsworth County. After the first payment of ninety-six dollars or one-fifth of the purchase price of one hundred sixty acres of land was turned over to the agent of the Kansas Pacific, it was necessary to improve the land. First, a house or a shelter was built. This was erected quickly. The farmer had a choice of building materials at hand. He could dig into a convenient bank and construct a dugout as many who settled among the creek and river banks did. In some localities stone was available for construction purposes, but lumber was the most convenient. In a few cases log houses or sod houses were built. After the housing problem had been met, the new owner

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111. Ellsworth Reporter, September 28, 1876.

found it necessary, if he already owned domestic animals, to prepare a stable or suitable shelter for his horses or mules, cows, and in some cases, sheep. Then came the problem of fencing the farm. The first piece of barbed wire was sold in the United States in 1874, but it did not come into general use until about 1876 or 1877. Hence we find that the majority of the fences were made of rails even though wood was scarce and could be found only along the streams. An agricultural report for 1875 gives a summary of fences for Ellsworth County as follows:<sup>112</sup>

Type	Number of rods	Value
Stone	1,210	\$ 2,420
Rail	18,211	27,316
Board	4,759	7,852
Wire mostly smooth	2,300	2,242
Hedge	1,755	965
Total	28,235	40,795.

After the adoption of barbed wire as a universal means of fencing, the settlers and farmers did not have such a difficult time settling and improving their land.

Windmills, too, helped in the development of the land. Previous to their invention the farmer and the stockman dared not get too far away from the stream or a spring in order to have plenty of water for his stock. After the well driller came into a neighborhood to drill wells for the water supply and set up windmills as a source of power to pump that water to the surface, there were very few places that a farm could not be located because with very few exceptions good water could be found in Ellsworth County within fifty feet of the surface.

Sod breaking operations were next begun on the homestead. The tough

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112. Kansas State Board of Agriculture, Fourth Annual Report for the Year ending November 30, 1875, George W. Martin, Public Printer, 1875, p. 270.

buffalo grass sod had to be turned under to prepare a seed bed for wheat, corn, and other cereal crops. A special plow had to be used, one that was substantial enough to bear the strain of two or three horses' pulling with all their might on the plow beam.

All of this hard work required men who were willing to stay in spite of the hardships. It required young men who were willing to sacrifice all in an effort to establish a new home in the wilderness, men in their prime with families to support, who were willing to labor from dawn until dusk, doing their chores by lantern light, in order to have a home they could call their own, old men who had lost their fortunes and wanted to make a new start. All these from the middle and eastern states found their opportunity in the sparsely settled county of Ellsworth. A group from Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Samuel Killian, settled in the western part of the county. Many came from Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri and settled other parts. Together with these came Swedes, Bohemians, and Germans to take advantage of either free or cheap land in the country of unlimited possibilities.

The wants and necessities of all these settlers formed a source of income to those who could supply the need. The greater the population, the greater the need for groceries and staple dry goods. The more numerous the farms, the more numerous were the sales of farm machinery and equipment. The business men depended upon the prosperity of their constituents and the trade that they could build in competition with their fellow tradesmen to bring them profit and wealth. For that reason they advised young men to settle up the country in ever increasing numbers. The lure of easy money was placed before those who wanted to become clerks rather than

farmers. The Ellsworth Reporter advised: <sup>113</sup>

There are a great many clerks from eastern cities passing through our city every week on their way to Colorado expecting to make a fortune when they arrive there. Boys, stop your foolishness. When you get as far west as Ellsworth County, go to work for some good farmer and learn the business. Get you a piece of land as soon as you can and in less than ten years you will be worth more than if you clerked fifty years.

All of the efforts expended on advertising the county were bearing fruit. The population soared quickly. After 1875 the population of Ellsworth County increased by 1225 on the average every year. In 1879 the population of the county was listed at 6,741 whereas in 1875 it had been 1,758. By this time Ellsworth boasted three church edifices, a graded school, a brick court house, several limestone buildings, a two-story brick hotel, two four-story flour mills, three steam grain elevators, one iron bridge over the Smoky Hill river, two newspapers, the Times and the Reporter.<sup>114</sup> Coal cost three dollars per ton brought from one of the coal banks in the vicinity. The largest mine was producing two thousand tons per year by 1882. Seven in all were working; most of them were located on the south bank of the Smoky Hill.

Ellsworth was striking an era of improved business conditions based upon a successful system of agricultural expansion with some emphasis on sheep raising and wool growing. Wheat growing compelled the erection of the flouring mill which had a capacity of one hundred barrels of flour a day.

Within the period from 1875-1880, wheat production and yield rose from 17,352 bushels harvested from 9,810 acres under wheat cultivation in

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113. Ellsworth Reporter, June 2, 1881.

114. Compendious History of Ellsworth County, p. 12.



1875 to 597,740 bushels raised on 54,340 acres, an increase of 44,530 acres planted to wheat in a five-year period. Corn raising was also extensively increased at this time. Dairy products were placed on the market in quantities. The wool clip of 1878 amounted to 13,668 pounds in the county. And more than thirty-three thousand dollars were invested in agricultural implements at this time. Seven ranches included one-tenth of the area of the county. The Elkhorn Ranch owned by Mr. H. C. Adams contained 4,000 acres on which 5,000 sheep grazed. The Eden Ranch, belonging to Mr. Collins, contained 9,000 acres under fence along the Smoky Hill river. He raised cattle, exclusively. Captain Millett, who formerly had driven his cattle up from Texas, owned the Idaville ranch on Bluff creek and the Smoky Hill. Four or five thousand head of cattle usually grazed on its 18,000 acres. There were White Bluffs Ranch on the Smoky owned by Richardson and Bates with three thousand head of cattle on three thousand acres of land; Black Walnut Ranch on Thompson creek owned by H. B. Clark, who had seven thousand sheep and two hundred fifty cattle on 5,500 acres; Monte Cenario Ranch, Mulberry and Alum creeks, with nine thousand sheep on seven thousand acres under fence. Mr. Wellington, the owner, paid sixteen thousand dollars for fences and buildings, and eight thousand dollars for the house. There were several smaller ranches containing from one to two thousand acres, each. <sup>115</sup>

Wage scales were not high when compared with those of today, but they permitted people to live; averages in the various brackets were: <sup>116</sup>

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115. Andreas, A History of Kansas, p. 1275.

116. Kansas State Board of Agriculture, Fourth Annual Report, p. 271.

Farm Labor	\$15. to \$25. per month
City Labor	\$ 1. to \$ 1.50 per day
Skilled Labor	\$ 2. to \$ 3.00 per day
Clerks	\$50. to \$75. per month
Teachers (male)	\$57. (female) \$31. per month average.

All of these things, added together, began to bring prosperous business to the merchants and professional men of Ellsworth. The city began to grow in size and beauty. New streets were laid out and improved; beautiful homes were built; business places were improved; and Ellsworth was becoming civilized.

The merchants recognized the importance of the agricultural interests. As early as 1875 an "Ellsworth County Agricultural Society" was formed. The first officers of this organization were Z. Jackson, president, and W. E. Fosnot, secretary. The purpose of the society was to sponsor a county fair. The first one met with great success, and the decision was made to have one every year. "We have paid our premiums in full," boasted the secretary. He expected the organization to grow even larger and better under the direction of a few good men at the head. This was a definite turn from the old lawless days of the cattle trade to the new era of law and order. More and more people came to settle and make homes in the new country; fewer and fewer of them came just to make money by fair means or foul.

Another straw in the wind to show the moral tendency of the people may be found in the increase in church membership and in the number of denominations. The Catholic church, at one time, intended to build an academy and a hospital at Ellsworth. The Reverend Mother Alfred bought 160 acres adjoining the city limits on both sides of the river. The merchants were to donate ten acres just north of Court street for the

Seminary, which was to be built at once at the cost of \$30,000. J. A. Wiggin donated the property.<sup>117</sup> Why these plans did not materialize is not quite clear.

In 1878 the church statistics for the county were:<sup>118</sup>

Denomination	Membership	Property Value
Baptist	75	
Episcopal	8	\$ 500.
Lutheran	100	2,000.
Methodist	112	600.
Presbyterian	75	
Roman Catholic	300	1,000.

Schools were also increasing. In 1876 there were 765 pupils in twenty-two school districts in the county, and in 1878 that figure had risen to 1302 pupils in forty-five school districts. Teachers' Institutes were held regularly. Two of the graded schools were said to compare favorably with any school in the country. The one was located in Wilson and the other in Ellsworth.

Everything went along so smoothly that a community gathering was planned and carried out in 1879. Everyone in the whole county was invited to attend the big "Fourth of July Celebration" at the county seat. Two thousand people, who had come in carriages, spring wagons, buggies, carts, on foot, and on horseback, marched from the court house to the grove. With impressive ceremony, the flag was raised to unfurl majestically in the breeze. A cornet band furnished music. "Turner Society" put on tumbling acts, children performed and marched, and speakers held forth on the glories of liberty. At twelve dinner was served from deep, well-filled

117. Ellsworth Reporter, September 28, 1876.

118. Kansas State Board of Agriculture, First Biennial Report, Topeka, Kansas, State Board of Agriculture, 1878. p. 212.

baskets. Neighbors chatted about crops and financial conditions. A few recalled old times until the band drew the whole crowd together at two o'clock. Mr. Z. T. Cason, Esquire, impressively delivered the Declaration of Independence. He was followed on the program by the orator of the day, Colonel H. D. Falmer. (Since this is all of the program offered from two O'clock until the supper hour, perhaps we may infer that the speaker held forth at great length.) The bachelors were given quite a thrill. The girls invited the boys to eat supper with them. Many a shy bachelor became nervous as he partook mincingly of the evening repast beside a young lady who was blushing sweetly. Both knew that people were observing them closely. After supper Mr. Hoesman won the glass ball shooting contest, which was followed by pedestrian contests and gymnastics by the children. The evening was spent in watching the fireworks, rockets, and balloon ascension. A good time was had by all.<sup>119</sup>

Ellsworth continued to grow, and by 1885 she, like the rest of the United States, stood on the threshold of a boom. The railroad was bringing more and more settlers out into this plains territory and increasing its revenue from the merchandise shipped by these settlers and from land sales. Plenty of money in the east was looking for investment in the west. Indians had been subdued and sent to their reservations. Ranges were fast being fenced and grabbed by farmers and stockmen alike. These conditions opened the way for the establishment of a boom town on the site of old Fort Harker. This caused a feeling of uneasiness to sweep through the people of Ellsworth, because it brought a sudden rise in the price of farm land and town

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119. Ellsworth Reporter, July 10, 1879.

property. Kanopolis, as the new town on the site of Fort Harker was called, was one of the most extensive "paper" towns every conceived. It was founded in May, 1886, and printing presses were kept busy night and day for a time by promoters, getting out advertising for what they claimed was going to be a great city by 1900. The site was laid out on a scale suitable for a city of 150,000 people. Four blocks were reserved for a "State House Grounds." Lots sold as high as one thousand dollars.

The history of Ellsworth has been filled with turbulence through all of its growth. Even the name has been subject to discussion. One said that Ellsworth was named after Alen Ellsworth; another said that Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth was the honored gentleman who gave his name to the town.

Evidence seems to bear out the contention that the town as well as the county was named after Lieutenant Alen Ellsworth, Secretary F. G. Adams of the Kansas State Historical Society wrote a letter to Lieut. Ellsworth asking him about the matter of naming Fort Ellsworth. The reply he received reads:<sup>120</sup>

Elden, Iowa, February 20th, 1878.

F. G. Adams. Sir:

Some time ago I received a letter from you asking for information concerning the history of Fort Ellsworth. You are correct as to the Adjutant's report. I was mustered in as Second Lieutenant, Company E. Seventh Iowa Cavalry., July 13, 1863, at Davenport, Iowa. I was in service in Kansas, and I am the man who established Fort Ellsworth, in June of 1864. I was stationed there with about forty men, and built that block-house. General Curtis gave it its name in July of the same year, when he came upto the Fort. He was then in command of that division. We were ordered out on an Indian expedition. I had about twenty men, and a company of the 15th Kansas was with us. At Fort Larned, while on dress parade, General Curtis read the name of Fort Ellsworth.

Alen Ellsworth.

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121. Compendious History of Ellsworth County, p. 19.

Major Henry Inman insisted that the town was named after Col. E. E. Ellsworth, but H. V. Faris discounted that idea with his statement to the editor of the Agriculture Report:<sup>121</sup>

I notice you are in doubt as to the origin of the name of this county. In 1864, a fort (now demolished) was built in this county by Lieut. Ellsworth, of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, and he gave the fort his own name, and from the fort the county took its name. I am the only settler left in the county that was here at that day, but I know whereof I speak. Major H. Inman says that the town of Ellsworth was named in honor of Col. E. E. Ellsworth, but I incline to the opinion that it simply took its name from the county.

No other evidence has come to hand that a special effort was made to name the town after another man. Major Inman is the author of the idea that the city was named after Col. E. E. Ellsworth, but the idea proposed by Mr. Faris seems to be the more reasonable and plausible.

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121. State Board of Agriculture, Fifth Annual Report, Topeka, George W. Martin Kansas Publishing House, 1877, p. 147.

## CONCLUSION

From this time forward, Ellsworth became a peaceful gem of the prairie. Her citizens, intent on amassing a fortune in the natural channels of trade, settled down quietly to build homes and to rear children. The population remained stable. Why Ellsworth did not become huge and prosperous as did Wichita and several other cities who rivalled her in the early days must remain unanswered for the present. Somehow it was never the lot of Ellsworth to spread and sprawl along the banks of the Smoky Hill river. Natural resources such as oil, salt, and coal were not to be found in any large quantities in her vicinity. Agriculture alone furnished the income for the merchants; and after the surrounding had been completely settled, only a fixed number of people were needed to furnish the farmers with supplies; the rest could not find work. On the other hand, Ellsworth became a decent place in which to live and to rear children. She became sedate, quiet, and respectable. She fulfilled the wishes, in that respect, of those who fought for law and order in those early tough and wild days.

For some of the young fellows Ellsworth has become too tame. They have left home to find new worlds to conquer and new thrills to stir them. The girls dream of a handsome cowboy who will come riding into their lives

on a magnificent horse to carry them away into the land of the sunset. The old men sit in their creaking rocking chairs and dream of the "good old days." Little boys ride their stick horses and play at being cowboys and Indians when they are not thinking of "cops and robbers" in the modern fashion. Grandmothers, who know of the early days, sigh happily and smile in peace, and life moves on, sometimes faster and sometimes slower, like the water which flows past the threshold of Ellsworth between the banks of the Smoky Hill River.



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Andreas, A. T. History of the State of Kansas. Illustrated. Chicago,

A. T. Andreas, 1883. 1616 p.

This huge volume furnished quite accurately a detailed account of the early history of every county in existence up to the time of its publication.

Blackmar, Frank W. Editor. Kansas; a Cyclopedia of State History.

Two volumes. Chicago, Standard Publishing Company, 1912.

944 and 955 p.

Very valuable for checking information on individual subjects.

Compendious History of Ellsworth County, Kansas, From its Settlement to

the Present Time. Ellsworth, Kansas, The Reporter Press, 1879. 49 p.

A pamphlet published for the purpose of luring the immigrant and the settler to Ellsworth County. An address by Major Henry Inman setting forth the early history of the county is included within its pages. Some of the material in the pamphlet is exaggerated.

Douglas, E. Branch. The Hunting of the Buffalo, New York and London,

D. Appleton and Co., 1929. 240 p.

Pages 131-132 tell of the arrival of a train in Ellsworth and of the accommodations which the town could give to passengers who remained overnight.

Kansas State Historical Society. Collections, Topeka, State Printer,  
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One article in each volume referred in a casual way to Ellsworth. Volume VII contained the article: Tisdale, Henry, "Travel by Stage in the Early Days," and Volume IX, the article: Mead, James R., "The Saline River Country in 1859."

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. The Kansas Historical Quarterly.

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The article: Streeter, F. B., "Ellsworth as a Texas Cattle Market," is very valuable and accurate on the cattle trade.

Kansas State Board of Agriculture. Report, 1872-1885. Topeka, State  
Printer, 1872-1885.

These reports not only furnished crop and agricultural data, but also various other interesting items. They contain statistics from each county and whatever else is of importance at the time the report goes in.

Root, Frank A. and Connelley, William Elsey. The Overland Stage to  
California. Topeka, Published by the Authors, 1902. 603p.

A description of the hardships of the stage companies who built their lines across the country. Mr. Root remembers the wild and roaring days when Ellsworth was the end of the Kansas Pacific railroad line.

Lake, Stuart N. Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal. Boston and New York.  
Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1931. 392 p.

A biography of Wyatt Earp, a marshal of Dodge City. Contains a number of anecdotes which disagree with newspaper accounts and facts verified by historians. The shooting of Whitney is treated in this book with Earp appearing as one of the chief characters. No other evidence can be found to corroborate this statement, but much material supports a contrary view of the author.

Sternberg, Charles H. The Life of a Fossil Hunter. San Diego, Jensen Printing Company, 1931. 286 p.

The author grew up on Ellsworth County. In the introduction to this book he tells several episodes from his early life.

Streeter, F. B. Prairie Tails and Cow Towns. Illustrated. Boston, Chapman and Grimes, 1936. 236 p.

The section on Ellsworth is very valuable in giving background material and the accurate and detailed account of the shooting of Sheriff Whitney by Bill Thompson in the summer of 1873.

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A valuable document, located in the State Historical Society Library, for the determination of dates on which the various military movements occurred.

Webb, Walter Prescott The Great Plains. Boston, New York, etc. Ginn and Company, c.1931. 525 p.

Mr. Webb shows how much influence the invention of barbed wire and the use of windmills had on the progress of settlement of the plains section of the United States. The facts he produced are corroborated by the reports of the Kansas Board of Agriculture Reports.

Wilder, Daniel W. The Annals of Kansas. Topeka, Geo. W. Martin Publishing House, 1875. 691 p.

Dates are faithfully set down for the early events in Kansas history.

#### B. Magazines and Newspapers

The Ellsworth Reporter. December 2, 1871 - December, 1885.

A weekly publication. Files are located in the Reporter office and in the Kansas State Historical Society Building in Topeka. This was one of the most valuable of sources for the local history of Ellsworth

throughout this period. The paper was published on Thursday.

Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Vol. XXXV. No. CCVI. pp. 137-150. 1867.

Gives an account of the hazards of a stage ride across the prairie in the early unsettled times. Eastern writers, in those days, thrilled their readers with horror stories from the wilderness.

Harper's Weekly. Vol. X, No. 486, pp. 248-50. 1866.

A series of articles by Theodore R. Davis who made a trip across the continent by coach to find out what it meant to go across the country in those early days. This is good background material.

Kansas City Times, December 12, 1940.

A good description of the longhorn family was given on the book review page.

Kansas State Record. Extra. Friday, July 5, 1868.

An extra newspaper gotten out because of the Indian troubles in Kansas.

#### C. Letters, Clippings, and Records

National Archives. Letter to John F. Choitz, March 23, 1940.

This was a letter in answer to one I wrote to the Secretary of War, Harry Woodring, asking about material in the hands of the War Department on Fort Harker, Indian Raids, and Fort Ellsworth.

Ellsworth County Clippings, Vol. I. State Historical Society, Topeka.

This is a volume of newspaper clippings gathered by the Society from various sources. Here I found the clippings from the Sidney Ohio Sentinel in which Col. Hadley describes life at Fort Harker and in Ellsworth.

Ellsworth City Police Court Records, 1871-74.

These records are on file in the vault of the city hall in Ellsworth. They go back to the early history of the town. They are valuable because they permit one to check on the accuracy of the newspaper accounts.

#### Ellsworth City Council Records. 1871-74.

These minutes tell of the struggle of the council with the problems of building and guiding a city which threatened to get out of hand. The facts are sometimes terse but the story is quite clearly told. Very valuable as source material.

#### Fort Hays Kansas State College Library. Copied Newspaper Accounts from

various newspapers throughout the state on file in the Kansas Historical Society Library. Accounts about Ellsworth County.

This file contained reports about Ellsworth found in The Commonwealth of Topeka, a daily paper quite widely read in Ellsworth at this early time, and accounts from the Junction City Weekly Union. It was Dr. Streeter's idea to gather newspaper accounts about many of the Western Kansas towns so that students could use that material without going to the historical society for it.

#### D. Personal Interviews

Larkin, Charles. Ellsworth, Kansas. August 28, 1940. June 28, 1941.

Mr. Larkin took me over the location of old Ellsworth, Fort Harker, and the new city of Ellsworth. He pointed out many of the locations of the business places, the ford, the old cottonwood, and the other places of interest. He also checked the accuracy of the details of the thesis facts. He is an old timer who came to Ellsworth as a child and spent all except some of the active years of his life in the city.

Sheriff, Mr. W. E., Ellsworth, Kansas. June 28, 1941.

Mrs. Sheriff remembers some of the things about Ellsworth as a child. Other things were told by her mother. Her account of the cholera epidemic was especially good. Her father was one of the victims who succumbed at Ellsworth.

Streeter, F. B. Hays, Kansas. Unscheduled.

Dr. Streeter, who is a student of Ellsworth history, first suggested this thesis subject to me. He has been very helpful in directing me to valuable source material and also has shown me how to interpret the facts. His books and articles have heightened my interest in early day history.