

## Pioneer Grocery Store

In 1878, Mr. and Mrs. A.C. Walker, two daughters and a son, came from Iowa in a covered wagon pulled by two mules. They brought with them their household goods. Mr. Walker drove his team and wagon to Sterling and brought back supplies with which to build the first building in what was to become the town of Little River. The building was where Cheryl's Café is today. The family lived in part of the building and the other part was a small grocery store. After the town was started, a doctor had his office in the Walker building, as it was called. The Post Office was here, court sessions and church services were also held in the Walker building. In 1880 when Mr. Walker's son-in-law arrived with supplies, they were added to the store and it was called "The Pioneer Grocery."

The group in front of the store is made up of students from the school along with their teachers Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ Johnson and his sister Miss Lottie Johnson.



## Railroad

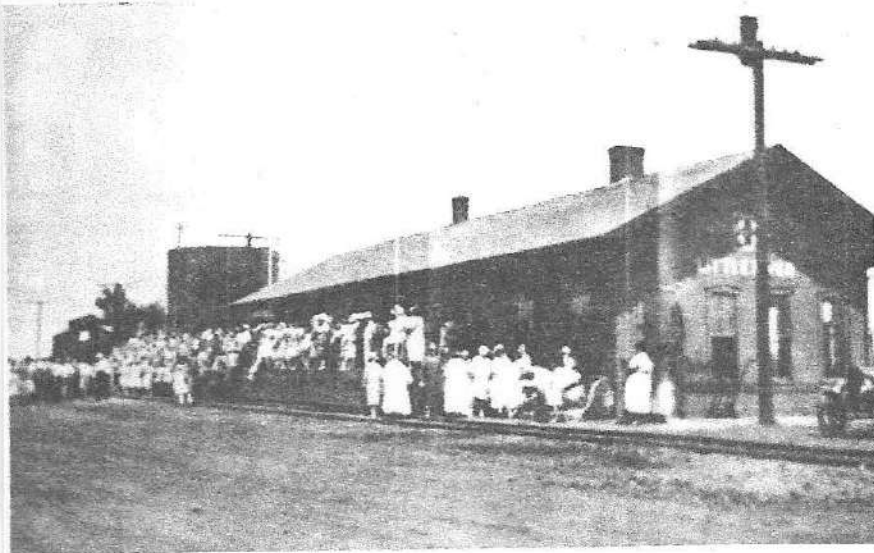
When the Marion and McPherson Branch of the Santa Fe Railroad reached McPherson in 1879 the officials of the railroad decided to extend the line to Ellinwood. A land company was formed and the town of Little River was laid out on land the railroad owned. It was laid out with the streets parallel to the railroad rather than the government surveyed section lines. Because the town was near the crossing of the Little Arkansas River it was named Little River.

At the time the railroad was built there was a camp set up for the railroad workers where the railroad crossed the river east of the present town.

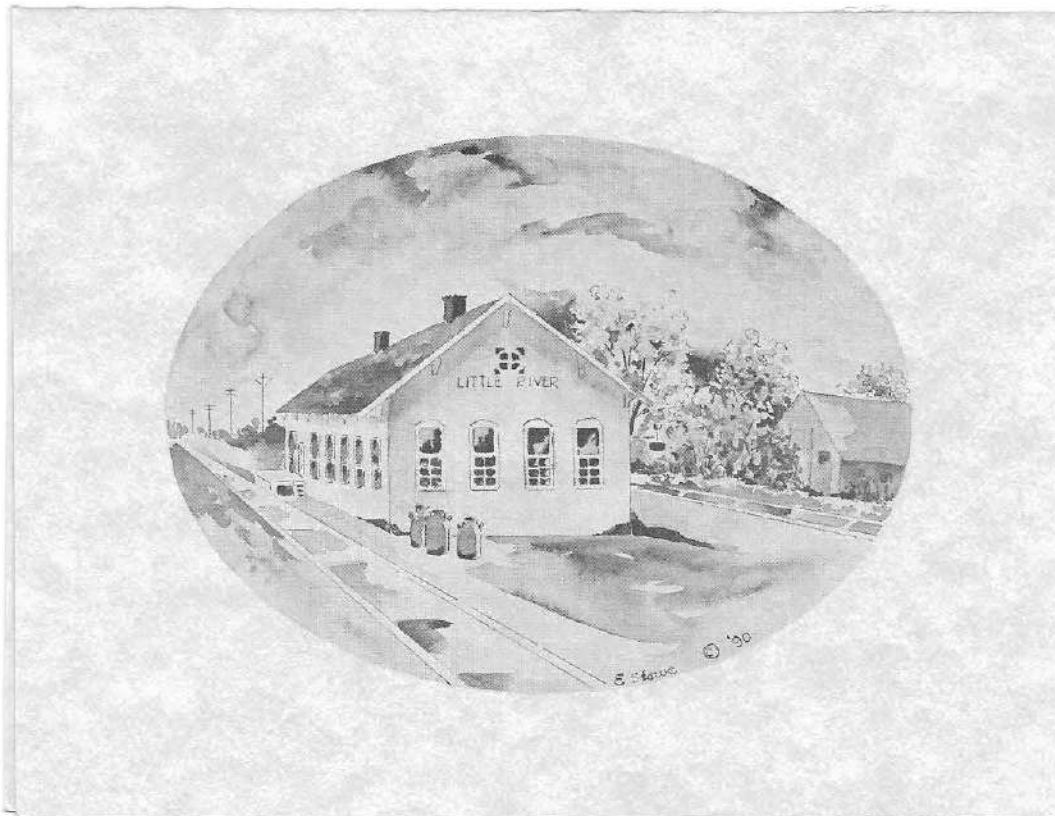


Santa Fe Depot completed in June 1880. The first train came through June 1, 1880.

Santa Fe Depot completed April 1910 following a fire that destroyed the original building July 14, 1909. This depot was razed in 1984.



Crowd at Little River depot. Notice the water tank and the coal chutes west of the depot. These were necessary to service the steam engines.



This is Main Street in 1892. There were hitching posts on both sides of the street starting with the hardware store. People rode or drove horses to town and they were tied to these posts.



1892



This is the only photo we have of the east side of Main street before the fire of 1898. The Hughes Barber Shop. seated Ed Frankeberger standing L. to R. Grandpa Frankeberger, Mr Hughes, Myrtle Frankberger (Hughes) and Leona Frankeberger



This is the East side of Main Street after the fire of 1898. Only the stone walls were left standing.

Notice the well with the hand pump in the middle of the intersection of Main Street and Greenwood Avenue. Have you ever wondered what the round patch of concrete was?

Water was pumped into the trough for horses that visitors rode or drove to town.

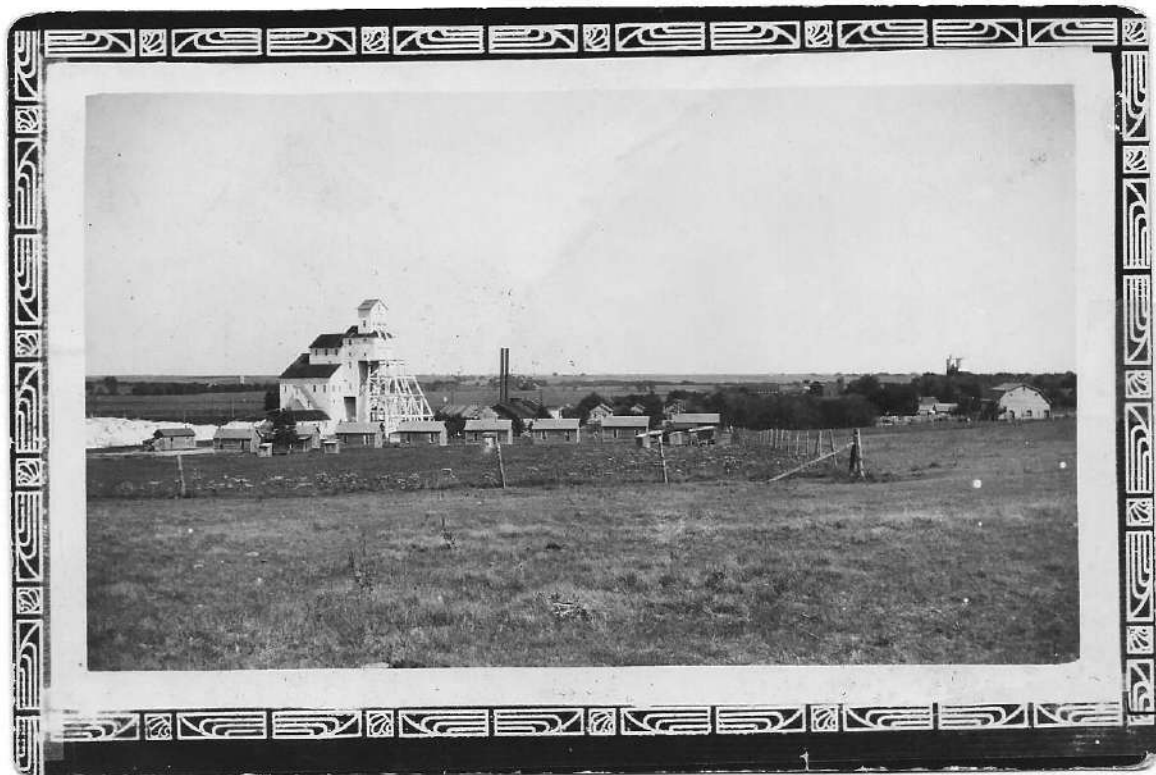


The East Side of Main Street after the 1898 fire. Only the stone walls were left.

Notice the well with the hand-pump in the middle of the intersection of Main Street and Greenwood Ave. at the time of the 1898 fire .

Young Historical Library

A salt plant was erected west of the end of Kansas Avenue and was in operation from 1899 until 1939. Between 35 and 40 men worked there. First picture is of the plant and the second one is of the company houses where workers lived.



This picture circa 1910 is of The Inn, the building that had formerly been the Pioneer Grocery. On Halloween night in 1910, some young men broke into the Salt Plant, stole dynamite, and set it off at The Inn. The building was blown to bits and had to be picked up in pieces and hauled off.





The street in town was dirt and the ruts grew deep. Together with the horse manure, rain, and snow, the street became a good breeding place for flies and bad odors. The city decided the hitching posts should be moved. In May of 1916, the Lucky Bill/Honest Bill Circus was in town with an elephant. The city fathers decided to make use of the elephant to pull the posts. The work attracted a large crowd that marveled at the ease with which the elephant pulled the large posts. The posts were reset on the side street starting at the bank corner and going west. This street was called "Hitching Post Street."

Paving of the streets was started in 1923.

When sidewalks were constructed they were 12 feet wide. No horses or cows were allowed on them. If such an incident happened, and there was damage, the owner of the animal was required to pay a fine, OR fix the damage, OR wear a ball and chain around his ankle for a day to let everyone know of his guilt.



## Hardware Store and Lumber Yard Opera House

When the railroad company decided to extend the line from McPherson to Ellinwood, it formed the Arkansas Town and Land Company to dispose of railroad land and to locate towns along the railroad and sell lots in the towns they platted. As mentioned before, Little River got its name because of its location near where the railroad crossed the Little Arkansas River.

W.R. Edwards was a partner in the lumber and hardware company of Edwards and McCulloch Lumber Co. located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He followed the progress of railroads across Kansas and established lumber yards in what he thought would be good locations. He bought the north half of Block #4 on the west side of Main Street in what was to become the town of Little River. In partnership with D. J. Fair of Sterling, he built the Lumber yard and Hardware store on the north half of the lot. The business was opened in 1879 and was the second business building completed in the yet to be town, the first being The Pioneer Grocery.

The building was where Rice County Builders is located today and is owned by Russell and Chad Stephenson. It is the only building in town still standing that has been continuously occupied by the same type of business. It was two stories high with an upstairs called "Fair's Hall", which held the first Christmas service in Little River. A Union Sunday School met there in 1880-1881 and church services were held at different times. The Masonic Order held its meetings there.

In 1886 Mr. Edwards with James Zent as partner, built a building south of the Lumber Yard office. This building was 100 feet front on Main Street and 80 feet deep. It was a two story building with a full basement and was built of native sandstone quarried on the Charlie Wilson farm. There were four rooms on the ground floor and one room on the second floor.

Mr. Zent owned the south half of the building and in 1887 operated a furniture store and undertaking parlor.

Even before the building was complete, there was pressure to finish the upper story as an Opera House. A stock company was formed and the work was completed. The first entertainment in the new hall was a play by the Ruby La Favette Company on July 7, 1887. This was followed by entertainment by many touring companies. A weekly dance also became a feature.

Since this was the largest meeting room in town, it was used for all large gathering for many years. When other buildings were constructed, each one took

some of the meetings away from the Opera House. Owners of the first floor rooms partitioned the second floor rooms to match the lower rooms. Business and professional people used rooms for business or as living quarters.

The building still stands in 2016. The Senior Center owns the south room. The next room north is owned by Brandon and Chazney Teeters, the next room north is occupied by Continental Technologies owned by Donnie and Dalene Teeters, the north room is occupied by 212 Main and is owned by Brandon and Chazney Teeters. Now, it looks like the "rooms" are separate buildings but they are all part of the larger building. You can tell when you look at the huge structure that it's one large building divided into "rooms" or divisions.



LITTLE RIVER LUMBER CO.

1892

LITTLE RIVER, KANSAS

Interior of the hardware store in 1892. It was owned and operated by Edwards and McCulloch.

When a new community was formed, the first thing people did after they built their homes was to form churches and schools. Church services were held in various buildings in town, including the depot and the lumber company.

There is no exact date but several sources say the first church erected in Little River was the United Brethren Church. It was built by the Brethren Congregation of Sterling and was located across the street west of the present day Catholic Church. After a few years, the congregation decided to go back to Sterling and the school used it for classes for several years. Later the building was sold to Mr. D. H. Heinly who moved it one and one-fourth miles south of Little River. After changes were made to the building, it was used several years as the family home.

No picture is available of this church.

In 1876 a missionary from Sterling went to the North Fork community and the people established the North Fork Congregational Church. Meetings were held monthly. On July 31, 1880, it was voted to change the name to Little River Congregational Church and move the church to town. A church was completed in July 1883. The church was used by the Methodist congregation on alternate Sundays until the Methodist Church was built.





Before  
1913



1956

1966

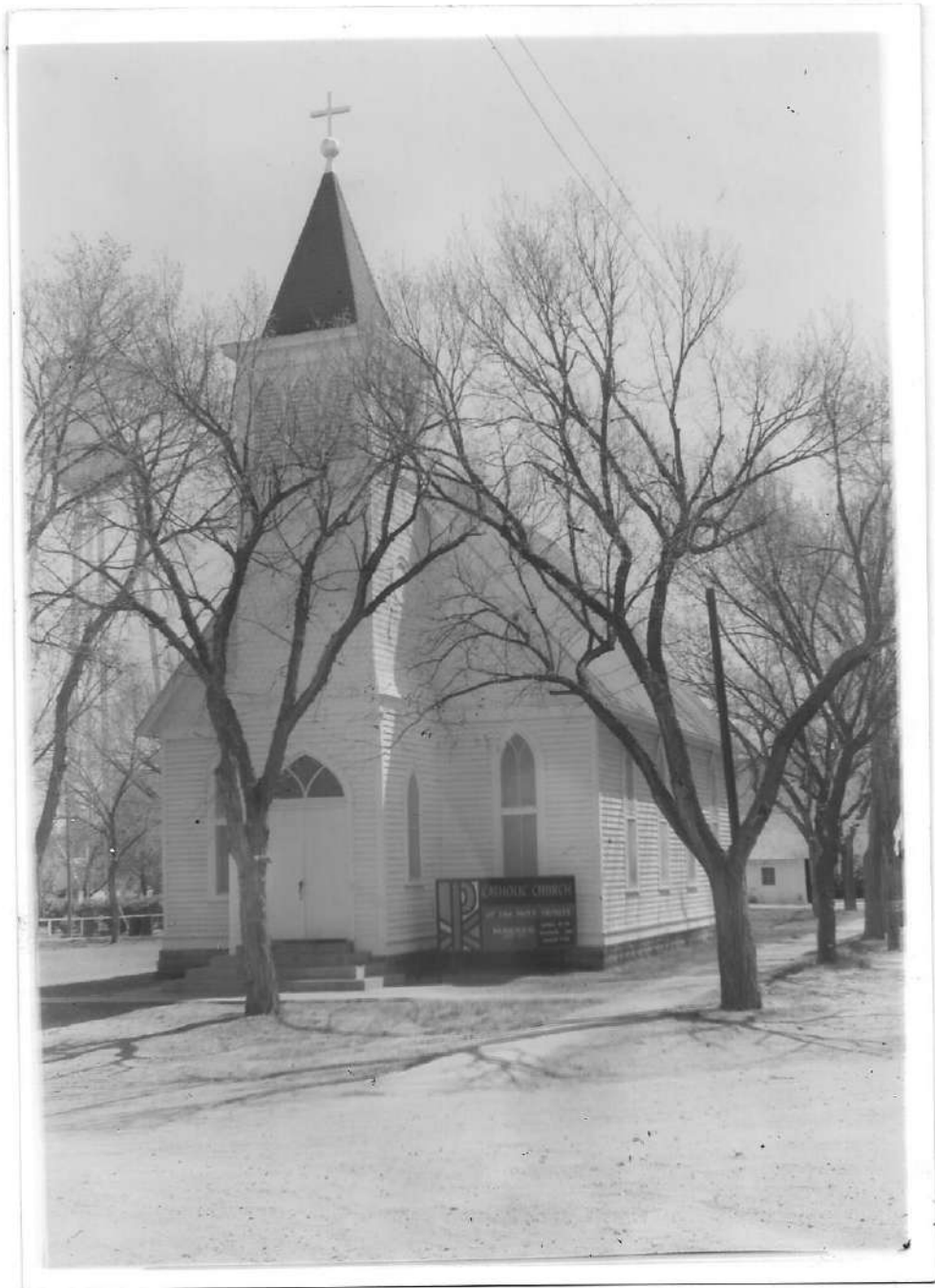






1884/1885

Holy Trinity Catholic Church



*Built 1909*



*Holy Trinity 1968*



Christian Church 1908/1912  
Leland + Kathy Young live at this location.  
Note Catholic Church at left of photo



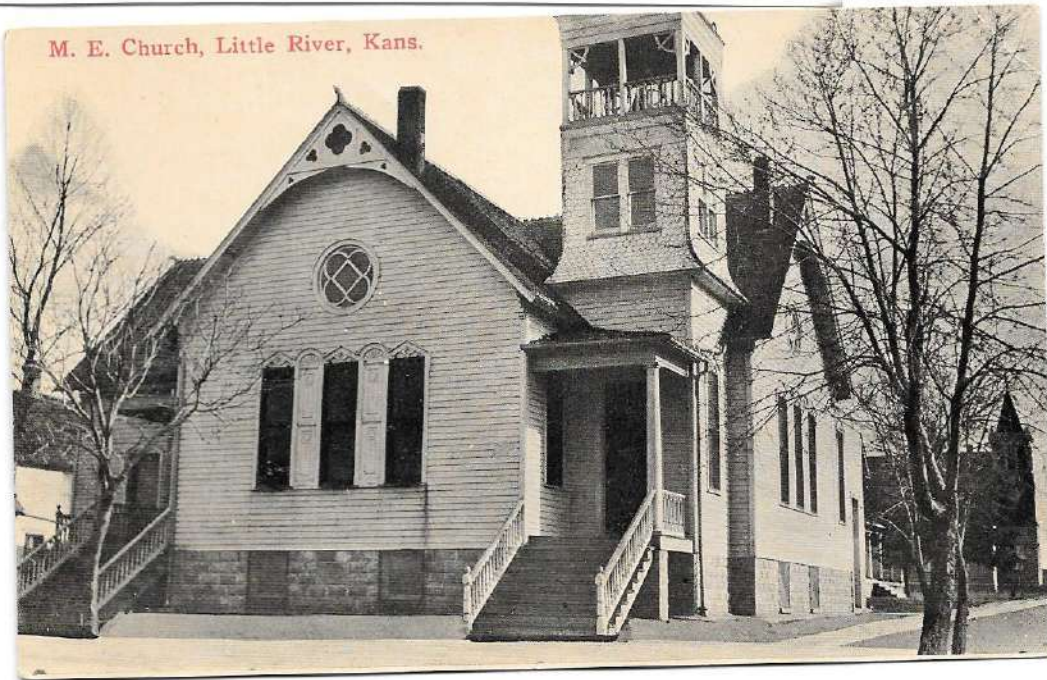
E. Church, Little River, Kans.



Methodist  
Episcopal  
Church

1906

M. E. Church, Little River, Kans.



Remodeled  
1910



Methodist  
Church 1957

Now known as  
United Methodist  
Church

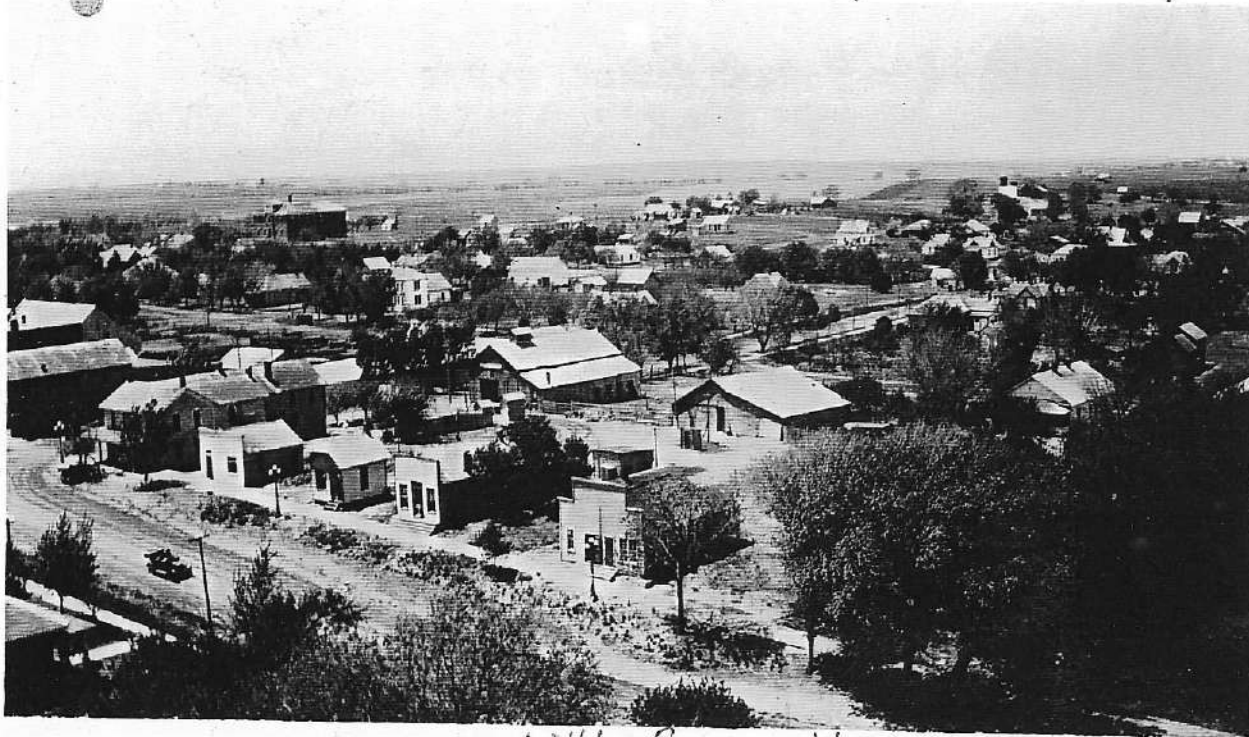


Looking North East Side Main Street, Little River, Kans.



1908

View to Southwest-(from grain elevator)



1912

Little River, Ks.

1912



1916



1921



Bird's eye view, c. 1925.







1. Aerial view of the town and harbor.









*East side of Main - no date*



*West side of Main - no date*



Little River's first school building completed in the summer of 1882. It was on the site of the present building.



A north wing was added in 1898. This two story, four room building was used until the brick building was built in 1908.



Red brick building built in 1908.



New building completed for the 1938-1939 school year and has been in continuous operation since then. Several additions and modifications have been made over the years. All buildings were re-built on the site of the first building.



The skating rink, built in the 1920's, was used as the school gym from 1922-1938.



Harvest pictures through the decades of 1930-1980



Early 1930's



1938

WHEAT TRUCKS. LITTLE RIVER, KANS.

BARTON  
- PHOTO



1942



1950

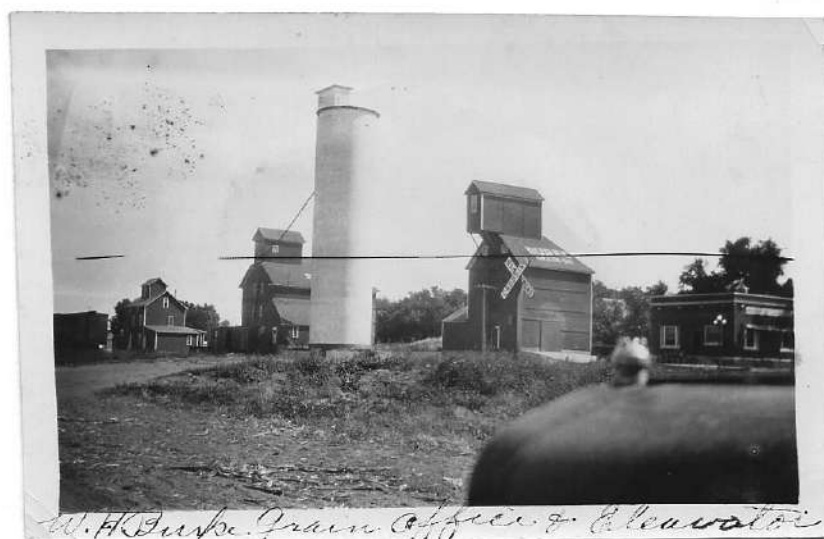


1979



1985

There were several grain elevators before W. H. Burke built his. There are no dates on these pictures.





The Hotel de Depot, The Fishel House, Little Valley Hotel, Avenue Hotel, Commercial Hotel, Tremont House, Santa Fe Hotel, Cairo Hotel, and The Cottage House were all hotels that preceded the Burke Hotel. In 1921, W. H. Burke and H. C. Hodgson built this hotel and named it The Union Hotel. H. C. Hodgson sold his interest to W. H. Burke and it was renamed The Burke Hotel.



Union  
Hotel  
1922



Burke Hotel  
1924

Burke Hotel now owned by Jason Young.



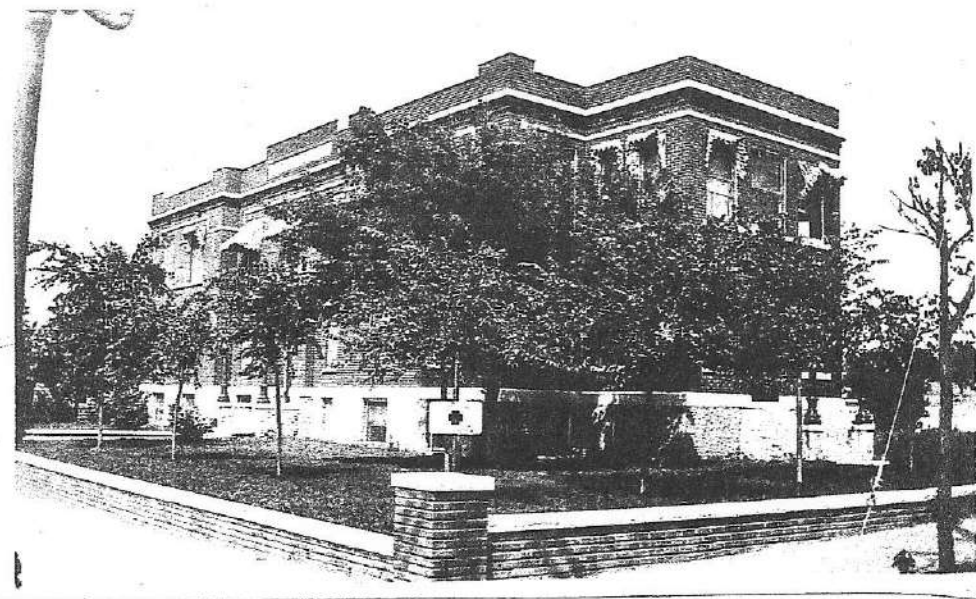
From *The Little River Monitor*, May 18, 1916: "Hoffman Memorial Hospital opened for inspection Saturday, May 13, at noon, and while the afternoon and evening was rainy and disagreeable, more than four hundred registered and a goodly number were present who did not register.

*The building is the gift of George M. Hoffman, one of our most highly respected citizens. He is one of the oldest settlers of Kansas having come to the state when only a boy.*

*The building is 38 x 90 feet, three stories high, contains over 40 rooms, and is heated by steam. The building will be deeded to the city in such a way that it will be held in trust for the good of the community in general. It will be an open-door institution, that is, any physician here or elsewhere will have the privilege of bringing patients there and directing or doing the operation.*

*The hospital will be governed by a board of five directors."*

An earlier issue of the paper stated that the contract let for the building of the hospital - complete structure - unfurnished, was \$16, 771.00. According to his will, he left \$60,000.00 for the upkeep of the hospital. The hospital closed in 1971.





Memorial Park, commonly known as the ball park, is a fitting memorial to the Gold Star servicemen and honoring all the home town service men and women who served in World War II. At the end of WW II, the community was involved in supporting an athletic field to be called "Memorial Park". Money was raised to buy 15 acres at the southeast edge of town and many people volunteered equipment and labor to complete the park.

The entrance gate was designed by Charles Wilson. It was constructed of sandstone by Fred Cavanee of Lyons. The gate features two bronze plaques, one with the name of the park and the date it was established, the other bearing the names of the 13 men who lost their lives in service or as a result of World War II. Inside the gate are sealed documents containing the names of the 260 Little River area men and women who served in the armed forces during that war.

The next time you go to the ball park, as it is commonly known, stop for a minute and look at the gates and the plaques.







## Bean Memorial Cemetery

Benjamin L. Bean, a Civil War veteran and member of the Grand Army of the Republic, was an early settler in Rice County. He and his family filed a claim on a quarter section of ground north of what was later to be the town of Little River. He died May 24, 1879 at the age of 55. His family buried him near the southeast corner of his farm. His widow offered to donate about 4 ½ acres of ground for a community cemetery. An association was formed and the cemetery was named Bean Memorial Cemetery.

Several years ago, the Union Township Board erected a memorial building that houses a directory of the graves in the cemetery. Those interested in researching pictures of gravestones at Bean Cemetery can go to the website [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)