

# Kaw City Museum News

A PUBLICATION OF THE KAW CITY MUSEUM

SPRING 2019



*Horses and wagons were the main mode of transportation in 1903 as seen on the Main Street of Kaw City.*

## A Town Is Born

What a difference a century makes! The street scene above is not from a western movie set. It is Kaw City, just one year after it was established by the Kaw City Townsite Company in 1902.

William Jenkins, Fifth Territorial Governor of Oklahoma Territory chose the 480 acre site for the town because of its fertile soil and fine grasslands. The business buildings, as stated in the Townsite Booklet, were to be located on "land as level as a floor with gently sloping upland for residences".

W.J. Krebs erected a small building on Main Street and set up shop to sell lots and publish the city's first newspaper. Within a few months, there was a bank, two lumberyards, a mill, at least a dozen substantial business buildings and over 300 residents.

Nearby country schools opened their doors to the growing number of children moving into the area until Kaw City built one of its own. The first school was a one-room building on the north end of Main Street

across from the park. It was quickly outgrown and replaced by a two-story frame building constructed a few blocks west of Main. In 1910, even that school wasn't adequate, and a large two-story brick building was built.

Kaw City soon became an important shipping point to outside markets when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway built their line through the town. Herds of cattle were shipped in to fatten on the tall grass of Oklahoma before being sent to market. Texas cattle were unloaded from the rail cars on the east side of the Arkansas River bridge where they were herded in the Saldina Stockyard and run through baths to kill the dreaded Texas ticks before being let out to graze on grass lands.

In the 1970s, much of that fertile land was lost when it was covered by the waters of the man-made Kaw Lake after the Corps of Engineers built a dam across the Arkansas River.

## Kaw City Museum's Annual Reunion

Sunday, May 26, 2019 1:00-5:00pm

The public is invited to attend Kaw City Museum's Annual Reunion on the Sunday of Memorial Weekend. Board members and volunteers will provide refreshments and look forward to meeting and greeting locals as well as visitors from across the country. Whether you grew up in old Kaw City or you are new to the area, you're sure to enjoy the countless displays of historical artifacts, photographs, maps, books, name bricks, furniture and even the names and plot locations of Grand View Cemetery. Admission is free.

## Early Records Digitized

Last September, museum board members assisted two local missionaries affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as they scanned some of the early records at the museum. The historical records included tax assessment books from 1895 to 1974 and voter registration books from those years as well.

Several years ago, the books which were originally located in the County Courthouse, were discarded when someone decided to clean house. Fortunately, they were discovered by Mrs. Ford, and donated to the Kaw City Museum for safekeeping.

The scanned digitized records will go through a review process, and then will be indexed into the website for the LDS Church.

The free website containing the LDS Church records is [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). It contains photographs, records with information about probates, marriages, divorces, births, deaths, school enumeration records plus much more. It is a valuable source for people interested in genealogy or who are searching for information on their family history.

Within a year the Church has committed to give digital copies of all the museum records they scanned to the Kaw City Museum.

## Museum Projects

The museum's faithful board spends many volunteer hours keeping the museum in tip-top shape as well as taking turns opening it for visitors. This year, they were busy caring for and repairing the buildings and grounds. Some of their projects included:

- Cleaning carpets and tile floors, requiring many cases to be unloaded and moved
- Purchasing a glass top to protect the Clubb Hotel's large library table often used for meetings and events
- Repairing a large water leak on the north side of the Brill Building that occurred when a copper water line deteriorated
- Repairing the front steps of the Depot Building
- Repairing the rock on the Depot's retaining wall
- Updating the PA system
- Adding a notification system to sound an alert when anyone enters the Brill Building entrance
- Placing protective coverings on windows in the Name Brick Passageway to shield the graduating class pictures, dating from 1923-1970, from light damage
- Hosting the LDS Missionaries



Main Street Parade - March 3, 1920. A parade advertising the upcoming Moose Lodge Carnival pauses on Main Street for the marching band to perform for the gathered townspeople.



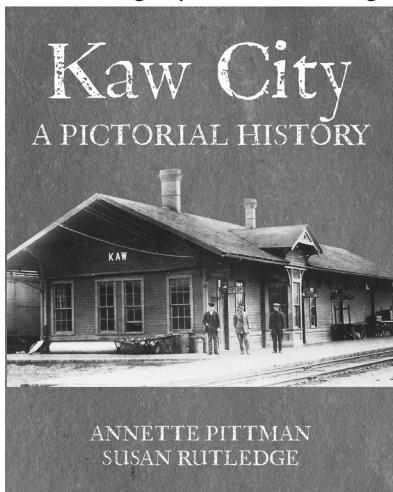
*Wolf Grocery and Dry Goods Store on Kaw's Main Street in June 1913. Photo courtesy of Carolyn Godberson.*

### **Book Release Timed for Reunion**

*Kaw City - A Pictorial History* will be released at this year's Museum Reunion. Written by Annette Pittman and Susan Rutledge, this book features photographs from Kaw City dating back to the late 1800s. Visitors can receive a paperback copy with a \$20 donation to the museum.

Bob and Annette (Cline) Pittman began collecting, copying and classifying photographs from Kaw Citians over fifty years ago. They spent hundreds of hours and their own money amassing a pictorial history of the town they grew up in. Last year, great-grandchildren Madelyn and Nicholas Ray began the arduous project of digitizing over 2,000 photographs and negatives. Daughter Susan (Cline) Rutledge developed a numbering system and organized the images and

documentation into a data base filing system that can easily be searched for names, events and buildings. The digital files will be donated to the Kaw City Museum and made available to anyone who wants to research Kaw City or their own family history.



### **George Catlin Stories**

George Catlin was an American painter who specialized in portraits of Native Americans in the 1800s. Tommy Dennison donated a collection of Catlin's prints which are on display in the Brill Building. A new binder has been added this year, recounting the stories Catlin wrote about his subjects as he painted them. It can be found on the table in the museum with school annuals and reference books.

### **Want More Stories & Pictures?**

Now that the historical pictures are digitized, new posts will be added regularly to the museum's website, featuring images and stories from Kaw City's past. Subscribe to [kawcitymuseum.com](http://kawcitymuseum.com) and receive updates every time a story is added. At the top of the left column on the website's home page, enter your email address and click "follow".

### **Sale Items Benefit Museum**

A special Museum Cook Book and Kay County history books are among items for sale at the museum. All proceeds help with the maintenance of the museum.

Do you have photographs from old Kaw City that should be included in the Kaw City history files? If so, please contact Annette Pittman at [annetepittman@mac.com](mailto:annetepittman@mac.com) or 580-716-4959 for more information. We accept scanned photographs or will scan and return originals to you.

## 2019-2020 Board Members and Officers

President - Jack Godberson  
Vice President - Rick Fleharty  
Secretary - Pilar Burgert  
Treasurer - Carolyn Godberson  
Historian/Editor - Annette Pittman  
3-Yr. Term: Jack Godberson, Dorothy Smith, Carolyn Godberson. 2-Yr. Term: Pilar Burgert, Rick Fleharty, Jim Deakins. 1-Yr. Term: Ray Russell, Barbara Stevens, John Stevens.

### Museum Hours:

#### Memorial Weekend:

Saturday, May 25 - 1pm-5pm  
Sunday, May 26 - 1pm-5pm  
Monday, May 27 - 1pm-5pm

#### Regular Summer Hours:

June 1 -Labor Day  
Saturdays and Sundays - 1pm-5pm

*To request an additional time, contact:  
Carolyn Godberson (580) 763-2223 or  
Dorothy Smith (580) 269-2085.*

Location: 910 Washunga Drive in Kaw City, OK

Website: [kawcitymuseum.com](http://kawcitymuseum.com)

### Museum Memberships

Kaw City Museum is a tax-exempt non-profit organization operated by donations of time and money. Memberships, purchases, donations are vital to the operation, upkeep and future growth of the museum and its grounds. Thank you for your continued support.

Family Membership.....	\$10
Donor Membership .....	\$25
Founder Membership.....	\$100
Patron Membership .....	\$200

### Available for Purchase

The award-winning two-volume Kay County history book is out of print so be sure to get yours before they are gone. The history of each town is well documented with reference guides for further information. Family pictures, Kaw area photographs and stories are included. You can also buy the Museum's popular cookbook, postcard size pictures of Kaw City, and DVD's of old photographs. All proceeds go directly to the museum.

### ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Kaw City Museum Inc.

