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Go to [kawcitymuseum.com](http://kawcitymuseum.com)  
for updates or call:  
Dorothy Smith (580) 269-2085

## Museum Memberships

Kaw City Museum is a tax-exempt non-profit 501c3 organization operated by donations of time and money. Memberships, purchases and 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 |

Please mail your tax deductible donations and dues to Kaw City Museum, PO Box 56, Kaw City, OK 74641.

## Tell Us Your Story

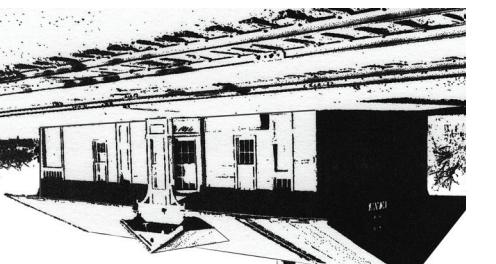
Kaw City Museum is dedicated to preserving the history of the old town and the people who lived in the Kaw area. If you have stories to tell from the "good ole days", please write them down and mail them to us. We'll place them in the museum's files for future research.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Kaw City, OK 74641-0056

PO Box 56

Kaw City Museum Inc.



# Kaw City Museum News

A PUBLICATION OF THE KAW CITY MUSEUM

SPRING 2022



## Kaw City's Main Street Prior to Oklahoma Statehood

Kaw City, established in 1902, rapidly became a thriving community in Northern Oklahoma. Its downtown area was positioned for growth with a Main Street wide enough to allow north and southbound traffic to pass, even with horses and buggies lining both sides of the road.

By 1906, businesses filled the four blocks of Main Street stretching from the train station on the north to the residential area on the south, and to both the east and west for several blocks. In addition to dry goods stores and banks, there were saloons, churches and a large city park. Raised wooden plank sidewalks were constructed along Main's storefronts and cement walkways stretched between the street corners to keep pedestrians out of the mud when it rained. Power lines were erected, allowing residents to update gas lanterns to electric lights.

On November 16, 1907, Oklahoma became the 46th state to join the Union and voted to become a dry state. The saloons disappeared from the streets of Kaw City, but the business of bootlegging came into being.

Steady growth continued until 1920 when oil was discovered in the Burbank Oil Field east of Kaw City. The small country town pictured above quickly changed into a bustling Boomtown filled with newcomers and new businesses related to the oil industry.

## Kaw City Museum's Annual Reunion Scheduled

Sunday, May 29 from 11:00 am-5:00 pm - 910 Washunga Drive, Kaw City, OK

The Kaw City Museum Board is pleased to announce this year's Annual Reunion will take place on the Sunday of Memorial Weekend. Board members and volunteers will be on hand to greet local residents 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.

## Four Entrepreneurs Establish the Kaw City Townsite Company

Eight years after the Cherokee Outlet was opened for settlement, the Fifth Territorial Governor of Oklahoma Territory, Governor William Jenkins, and three of his associates believed the land in the big bend of the Arkansas River, known as the "Ox Bow Bend", would be an ideal location for a new town, so they organized the Kaw City Townsite Company.

The location, east of Ponca City and Newkirk, was in the midst of fertile and productive farm and cattle country. Fine building stone, an inexhaustible supply of water, and a natural gas well were all nearby. It was south of the Kaw Indian Reservation, west of the Osage Indian Reservation, and in addition to the potential trade opportunities, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company was building a route stretching south and east from Newkirk through their proposed townsite, then on through the Osage reservation south to Pauls Valley in Indian Territory.

Jenkins and his partners, N.F. Frazier, C.W. Carey and W.E. Brown, printed a small booklet with pictures and information about the new townsite which was mailed to people around the country. A town plat was drawn up, oat fields were graded into streets, and lots for businesses and residences were laid out and marked. A small office was set up across the street from where the City Park would be located, and W.J. Krebs was hired to oversee the sale of the lots. He would later become the owner and editor of the town's first newspaper.



H.E. Guy's Grain Elevator which was eventually purchased and operated by W.T. Conklin.

By July of 1902, people began to appear from everywhere and building progressed at a rapid rate. One of the first people to purchase land was Henry Diamond, a harness maker from Michigan who knew people would need his services. G.D. Rohr and C.L. Shidler soon followed, both establishing lumber yards. E.B. Eastman of Newkirk established the Bank of Commerce with J. S. Eastman as cashier and general manager, and John E. Hoefer as the assistant cashier. Within three months after the first lot was sold, Kaw City had a bank, a newspaper, two lumber yards, a mill and a dozen or more substantial business buildings filled with goods.

Continuous growth included a drugstore owned by Ed Lewis, Frank Randall's livery barn, B.F. Smith's hardware store, barber shops opened by A.H. Eudaily and John Pierce, the Hutchison Brother's meat market, A. Gumbiner's clothing store and T.E. Smith's dry goods store. Later, C.F. Kneedler opened a restaurant, H.E. Guy a mill and grain elevator and W.S. Cline of Newkirk built several business buildings.

Kaw City's success meant the demise of Longwood, a nearby community established during the Land Run of 1893. Its three merchants, G.H. Pellman, C.B. Bendure and Jack Frost relocated their buildings and goods to Kaw City. Woodman Hall, a two-story frame building used as a lodge hall for the Woodmen of America, followed in short order. Dr. J.B. Irvin also moved his office to Kaw City and became the town's first physician.



Woodman Hall (center building) was moved from Longwood to Kaw City on logs soon after Kaw City's town lots began to sell.

## W.T. Conklin Brings Moving Pictures to Kaw City

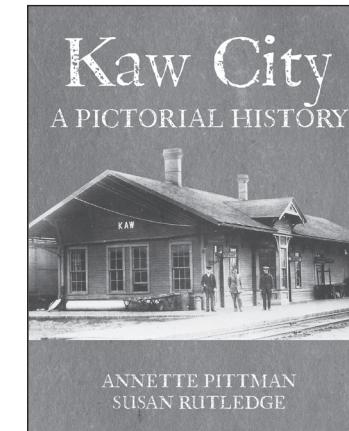
The first movies brought to Kaw City were shown at W.T. Conklin's outdoor theater situated on Main Street on a vacant lot between two buildings, across the street from the City Park. The entrance and projector rooms were attached to the front of the two buildings on each side, and the stage and screen were attached to the rear sides of the buildings. This was before Kaw City had electricity, so W.T. strung a cable from the gas-powered engine at his grain elevator all the way to the theater so they could operate the movie projector.

W.T. also placed a piano near the stage and hired a pianist to accompany the silent movies with background mood music. Folding chairs were set up for adult seating and benches were placed near the front for the children. Moving pictures were in their infancy and quite a novelty to watch, especially for a town that had no electricity.

When the electric power plant was built, C.F. Kneedler and his son Jack opened the first indoor theater. The Gem Theater was located in a building on Fifth Avenue where wallpaper and paints were sold during the daytime.

In the early 1920s a new theater was built on Main Street next to B.F. Hutchison's grocery and dry goods store. Named the Kaw Theatre, it operated until the latter part of the 1930s when another movie house, The Tivoli Theater opened. The Tivoli was built diagonally across the street from the Kaw Theatre, on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Main Street, next to E.S. Shidler's bank. It remained open for many years in that location and was the last movie theater to operate in Kaw City.

## Historical Resources and Gifts Available for Purchase



*Kaw City - A Pictorial History* can be purchased from the museum for a donation of \$20 or more. Written to benefit the museum by native Kaw Citian Annette Pittman and her daughter, Susan Rutledge, this one-of-a-kind pictorial history includes 200 photographs that span a dozen decades, collected from Old Kaw City's residents. Worn and aged, each image provides a glimpse of Kaw City's early days.

The award winning two-volume Kay County history book, *North Central Oklahoma, Rooted in the Past- Growing for the Future*, can still be purchased



The featured movie on the marquee at the Gem Theater is "The Town That God Forgot".

from Kaw City Museum while supplies last. It is out of print, so order yours before they are all gone! In the two books, Kay County's town histories are well documented, the large genealogy section provides the history and pictures of hundreds of Kay County families, and many Kaw City area photographs and stories are included.

Also available are the museum's popular cookbook, a selection of postcard-sized pictures of Old Kaw City, and a DVD presentation of old photographs copied from private collections or from donated pictures. All proceeds go directly to the museum. For ordering information please contact:

Annette Pittman  
(580) 716-4959 or  
[susanrutledge@mac.com](mailto:susanrutledge@mac.com)  
(shipping charges apply)