

Relics of North Lawrence by Phyllis Watkins

(In 1829 the area of North Lawrence was included in lands reserved for the Delaware Indians by a treaty with the U.S. Government. It was called Indian Country or Nebraska Territory. By 1854 the Kansas Nebraska Bill had opened the area to white settlers.)

The settlement which existed in North Lawrence was visited by scouts of the New England Emigrant Aid Society about that time. The purpose of the Society was to convince states to give aid to the Union in event of Civil War.

They chose the site of Lawrence as their western outpost and many members of the first party chose to live in North Lawrence.

One such person was John Baldwin. He first staked out a claim for the land which was to become the townsite of Lawrence. Baldwin operated a flatbed ferry drawn by a rope across the river. He built a log cabin for his business and home north of the river. It was located at the end of North Third St., near the river.

Most of Lawrence's supplies came by wagon train from Leavenworth. People forded the river with their supplies or crossed in Baldwin's ferry.

There were few trees in Lawrence at that time but many trees north of the river. Most of the timber for building homes and businesses came from North Lawrence.



In 1869 James Walker built the Lindley Building at 500 Locust. The P.O. was moved here and Walker became postmaster. It was a drug store for many years and also a library and meeting hall.



This building was built in 1879 as a boarding house for train passengers. It is one of the few that survived the 1903 flood. It is also one of the few wooden stores still standing in Lawrence. Many businesses have operated from this site, including an airplane wing factory, a mattress factory, an appliance store and now an antique store.

Written by Phyllis Watkins. Photos taken, developed and printed by Mrs. Morrow's sixth grade class. Flood photo courtesy of Spencer Research Library.

In 1856 Charles Bruce opened a saw mill and lumber business at North Seventh and Elm streets. He was very successful and soon moved his headquarters to Memphis, Tenn., where he became the largest dealer in hardwood lumber in the country.

In 1860 the United States granted 320 acres, including most of North Lawrence, to Sarcoxie, Chief of the Turtle Band of the Delaware Indians. In 1861 Sarcoxie's land was transferred to settlers and the Kansas Pacific Railroad Company. Thus in 1862 the little community was established and called Jefferson.

The first Post Office of Jefferson was located near the river and that location is now in the river channel.

In those days the main business streets were Bridge St. (Second St.) and Locust. There were many small shops, the largest of which was Dicker's on the corner of Locust and North Seventh St.

The townsite of Lawrence was a target of several pro-slavery groups in the mid-1800's. Jefferson escaped the effects of raids from such itinerants as Sheriff Jones, 1856, and Quantrill, August 1863. Although members of Quantrill's party did ford the river to Jefferson for food and horses, no buildings were burned and no lives were lost. (In Lawrence the entire business section and many residences were burned to the ground and 150 people were killed.)

In September 1863 the telegraph line of the Kansas Pacific was completed to Jefferson and on November 28, 1864 the first train came to Jefferson from Kansas City. The railroad company began to build a depot at Locust and North Fifth St. but in 1889, moved to the present location.

The legislature in 1865 formed Grant Township out of Sarcoxie's land which included the town of Jefferson. Grant Township then became part of Douglas County. The title of Jefferson was changed to North Lawrence in 1867. A bill passed by the legislature in that same year made North Lawrence a city of the second class with a population of about 2,500.

A petition was presented to the City Council of Lawrence on June 11, 1867 by some citizens of North Lawrence asking that their city become part of Lawrence. Another group of citizens presented a petition the next day saying they did not want to become part of Lawrence. The City Council did not join the two cities at that time.

Then on March 17, 1870 the citizens of North Lawrence voted to become part of Lawrence and four days later the people of Lawrence approved it.



The flood of 1903, looking north from the top of Boener Bros. Cigar Factory. The river in 1861 was about one-half its present width. The early 1900s brought a wet cycle that lasted 15 years. There were overflows in the lowlands around the river in 1901, 1902 and then in 1903, a big flood claimed about one-third of North Lawrence and many of the historical buildings.

One of the most colorful spots in Kansas was Bismark Grove.

Before 1870 a herd of buffalo used to graze in this area. They were tended by a man named Bismark. There were over 100 acres of land and 40 acres of woods filled with oak and walnut trees.

Then the Union Pacific Railroad Company received \$100,000 from the City of Lawrence to develop Bismark Grove. Many houses were built around Bismark Grove between North Seventh and North Ninth streets. A lake was made and stocked with swans. There were many shops, art galleries and exhibition buildings built at the grove.

State fairs, sponsored by the Union Pacific Railway began in 1881 and became a yearly event for nearly twenty years at Bismark Grove. Several musical extravaganzas were presented there as well as carnivals, large meetings, and Sunday horse races. One festival that took place at Bismark Grove was the Kansas State Musical Jubilee in 1881. Over 6,000 singers presented a concert to over 20,000 people attending the concert.

People from all over Lawrence traveled to Bismark Grove by mule cars. These cars traveled on small rails which fit the wheels of the cars. They were pulled by mules and operated from 19th and Massachusetts.

When the fairs were discontinued in 1899, Bismark Grove was sold to a man who raised shetland ponies. During WWI the ponies and some mules were shipped to the Army. He was said to be the largest supplier of ponies in the country.

Bismark Grove was located around the area where FMC chemical plant is now standing at North Ninth and Maple. There are no trees, lakes, or animals left.



This building, 1872, was a broom factory, operated by James Caravan. He operated the factory for more than 30 years and his brooms were known for their high quality.



The depot was built in 1888 and parts of it remain today.

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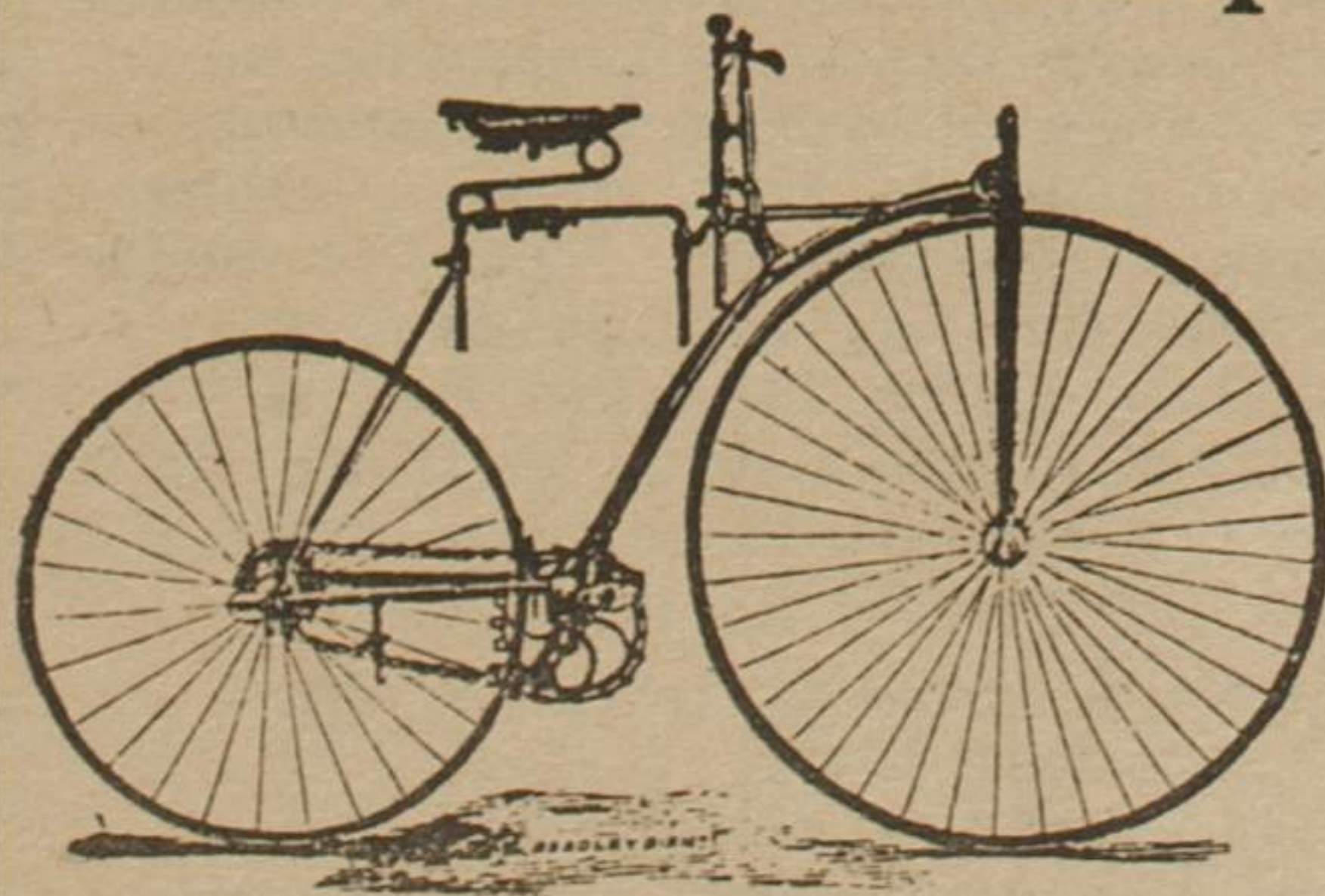
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