



Glen Elder, KS -- Heritage & History

West Hampton

The following information first appeared in the *Cawker City Ledger* (August and September issues, 1999) and was originally researched and compiled by the *Glen Elder History Book Committee*. Some adjustments for clarity have been made in this text.

Though one pioneer came in 1865 to 1866, however he did not stay long. The first real settlers began arriving in 1868, their covered wagons coming in just across Limestone Creek east of the present Max and Phyllis Porter home (located at the north side of Glen Elder, just north of present Highway 24) where they took homesteads close to the creek.

Truman Allen arrived with his family in May 1868, and settled on what is now the Max Porter home place. However, within a year, he moved north, about a mile further up Limestone Creek.

The Stinson brothers, George and Franklin, also arrived in 1868, with George homesteading the land vacated by Truman Allen and Franklin taking the adjoining claim on the south. They established the first two businesses, the "Log Cabin Home" and the "Panzy Bitter Saloon," which they surrounded with a stockade.

When Max and Phyllis Porter built their present home in the 1960's, a large rock sign, broken in two parts, was unearthed, with the inscription, "Glen Elder Log Cabin Home 1870". They had the sign cemented back together and it now stands in their yard. This perhaps being the only known artifact left from the original settlement of Glen Elder. >>>

The Panzy Bitter Saloon building later moved south and across the creek. An April 1896, *Glen Elder Sentinel* stated: "The old log house at the T. J. Porter place was destroyed by fire Sunday night. It was used for a smokehouse and contained 200 pounds of meat, which was also destroyed. The building was one of the oldest landmarks in this city. It was erected in 1869 by Stinson Bros., and was known in those days as the "Tanzy Bitter Saloon." (Later accounts sometimes show "Panzy" while others show "Tanzy.")



Newspaper articles, including the obituary of George Stinson, shows he named the settlement Glen Elder. A search of Post Office records from the National Archives in Washington, D.C., shows George Stinson was appointed as the first postmaster July 5, 1870, with the town name of Glen Elder. The earliest commissioner's records and minutes dating back to November 1870, show Glen Elder and Glen Elder Township, with a voting precinct for Glen Elder, at the George Stinson home.

These combined records, along with numerous stories written later by the original settlers for the local newspaper, establishes the fact the settlement just north of our present day town was called Glen Elder as early as 1870.

(Of interesting note: The June 1, 1870, census shows the following settlers in Range 9, the soon to be, Glen Elder Township: Truman and Emeline Allen and five children, Perry and Almaziha Rice and five children, David and Mary Anderson and son Alfred, George and Franklin Stinson, D. C. and Etta Everson, David McDaniel, James Winn, and John McCleary. A settler by the name of John Neve lived a little further north and west.)

Where was West Hampton?

Milton Spencer and John Neve came here and started a dam and sawmill on the Solomon River at the south edge of present Glen Elder. It is believed this was some time after June, 1870, since Spencer does not show in the census. Charles Davis came in 1872 and bought into the business, adding a gristmill, to be known as the "Empire Mills." All three of these families came from Cloud County, so undoubtedly knew each other before coming to Glen Elder. Commissioner's records show Empire Mills was added as a voting precinct April, 1872, in Glen Elder Township.

The Register of Deeds records show Charles and Margaret Davis, Milton and Adeline Spencer and John and Wealthy Neve platted a town on the site of "present" Glen Elder, going two blocks west, one block north, one block east, and two blocks south of the square. It was registered January, 1873, with the name of West Hampton.

Curiosity led researchers to discover when the two towns merged. Commissioner's records were searched from November, 1870, through 1879. The records continued to use the name of Glen Elder with no mention West Hampton being found.

A search of tax records in the courthouse, beginning 1873, reveals taxes listed for Glen Elder township for persons residing north and separate tax records for those starting to settle in West Hampton on that town- site. An additional search of postal records showed the post office started with the name of Glen Elder and continued with that name.

When did the two communities merge?

A search of records, including the Post Office, National Archives, Kansas State Historical Society, Courthouse, tax records, and numerous newspaper articles written by early settlers, provided no records or indication the settlement north of present Glen Elder, was ever known by any name other than Glen Elder. (If anyone has access to documents stating otherwise, city historians welcome the information.)

George Stinson owned property on both the west and east sides of Limestone Creek. The stockade was located on the east side. Its exact location is unknown. It is not determined if a town was ever platted north, or if the town was only called Glen Elder due to the Glen Elder Post Office name.

The most probable explanation found for the two communities merging into present Glen Elder is that when the railroad came through, the postal department wanted to move their office from out north, nearer to the railroad and did not want to change the name of Glen Elder. (The post- master appointments always show Glen Elder from July 5, 1870)

Register of Deeds Office Book N, page 553 and 554, records that on November 28, 1879, articles of incorporation were granted by the judge of the district court organizing the city of Glen Elder as a city of the third class. This incorporation included the entire south half of Section 27, superseding the town of West Hampton.

Where did they go?

George Stinson named Glen Elder while the town was still north of its present location. He was appointed the first Glen Elder postmaster July 5, 1870. He was also a Justice of the Peace, and became an attorney while here. He moved to Phillips County in 1873 where he remained a prominent attorney most of his life. In the process, he helped to settle Phillipsburg as the county seat. He died September 26, 1918.

John Neve and Milton Spencer started the original dam and sawmill in 1870. Charles Davis came here and bought into the business in 1872. And an ad in the Beloit Gazette, April 1873 shows "Empire Mills" with Neve, Davis & Co. as proprietors, operating as a sawmill and corn burrs, to begin grinding wheat February 1873.

Charles Davis succeeded George Stinson as Postmaster, November 8, 1872. He is noted in later newspaper articles as having started the first store in West Hampton on the north side of the square, selling the flour from the mill. He purchased the land of George Stinson (including the present Max Porter place) and resided there until two months before his death when he moved back to Clyde, KS, and died April 1, 1881.

Milton Spencer remained in farming in Glen Elder until 1887, when he returned to Cloud County. He is noted to have always done a good job in everything he did. He was janitor of Lincoln School in Concordia for eleven years, until his death March 14, 1916. At his funeral, the teachers had charge of the singing and the school board members were pallbearers.

David Anderson took his homestead in October 1869, north of Glen Elder, where he raised his family and continued farming until his death November 7, 1907. His wife, Sarah, remained on the homestead until her death November 12, 1938. D.C. Emerson practiced medicine in Glen Elder, later moving to Cawker City where he also operated a drug store. John and Wealthy Neve moved to Norton, Kansas, August 1873 and lived in Decatur County until 1882 when they moved to Colorado.

Joseph B. Allen, son of Truman Allen, came to Glen Elder in 1868 as a young boy. In later years, from his home in Spokane, Washington, he wrote to his pioneer friend, L.A. Breed, of Jewell County, recalling some of the trials and hardships of those early days at Glen Elder, but also of the wonderful peace of the Solomon Valley. He ended with "As the sands of my life are fast flickering out, I sit and think of the misty past. I cannot help the tear that drops for those that fell to make Kansas what it is today. They bled and they prayed, they strove and they starved for the land they loved. The years have come and gone and none but God the record keeps of all the heartaches and heartbreaks. Give us prohibition, peace and justice for all men regardless of creed, color or race or give us death." (Letter dated November 20, 1927)

By 1870, settlers were arriving by covered wagons daily. These families and individuals that were to follow to the present time, have all been parts of making Glen Elder what it is today.