



Glen Elder, KS -- Heritage & History

Ernie Norris / Castle Service Station



Norris Garage c.1924

In 2011, the building was severely damaged by a storm resulting in its demolition.

The son of Lylburn and Carrie Norris, Ernest (best known as "Ernie") was born July 17, 1888, in Cawker City, Kansas. Coming from a family with interests in equipment business, Ernie continued this tradition in 1916 by constructing, then operating a garage and service station (see at left) which was located just south of the current Wayne's Sporting Goods store, approximately 300 feet north of the bridge spanning the Solomon River. The building was special for its time as it was built with a heating system in its shop which allowed for year round comfort for employees.

Several years after, Ernie acted on a dream that he had had since being in the military during World War I -- constructing a service station (see below) that resembled a castle he'd observed in Luxemburg. The project was started and completed in 1926. Well-constructed, the structures pilings are sunk 15 feet into the earth, and it is said that each stone was cut to fit. The building still stands today as a reminder of a man who served his country during the First World War and returned to his hometown for the betterment of the community.



Castle Service Station -- c. 1930

The Castle Service Station building has since been occupied by many businesses. Most recently, owner Dan Winkel, has converted the landmark into a lodge.



Ernie Norris - WW1



Old Landmark Is Gone

Scene of Many Years Trading Makes Way for Modern Filling Station

The old frame store building on the northeast corner of the square has been torn down. The building and site was acquired last year by Ernest Norris, and he is having it razed to make way for a modern filling stations.

The building was put up by Perry Rice over forty years ago, and has been occupied continuously since as a general merchandise store. Practically all the older generation in the surrounding country has traded in the store from one time or another.

It had stood up well during the years and was still but was still in a bad state of repair when torn down. White pine shelves recalled the day when that lumber was cheap and common. The original building has been built on to three different time, as the country became more settle and more room for goods was required.

Perry Rice kept store in the building for a number of years; the place was rented to John Sutton and Tim Clover who were in partnership together. They sold the store to James Barnes who continued to run the store for a few years. Other people who have had the store are Applegate, Tom Sullivan and F.P. Nash.

John Allen bought the store goods from a man named Star. Mr. Allen kept the store about three years. He sold the stock to Grover from Beloit. Mr. Grover sold to E.F. Pound who has had a general merchandise store in the building since February 1896. Some regret to see the old building torn down but the new filling station will certainly add to the looks of the town.



(N.B This is not as complete a write up as we would like it have. We are trying to get a more definite history of the building and would appreciate any help from the old timers--Editor--)

E. W. Norris New Service Station

The new service station being erected where the old Pound building stood, by E. W. Norris, will be of native stone. The building was designed by Architect Frank A. Slack, of Beloit and when completed will be, without a doubt, the prettiest building of its kind between Kansas City and Denver. The building will be 30 x 50 feet with basement underneath the south portion. The large archway will extend toward the north, the driveway being east and west. A large and commodious ladies rest room will be at the south end of the structure with walks leading in from the sidewalk on the west. Three stone masons and assistants are busy working on the building and work will be pushed steadily until the station is completed. Mr. Norris expects to have the station ready for opening by June 10.

Norris Station Opens Saturday

Glen Elder's Finest Landmark on Federal Highway No. 40

The Norris Filling Station will be open for business Saturday, and to all patrons of the station buying 5 gallons or more of gasoline, Mr. Norris will give a pair of pliers and to all the boys and girls he will give ice cream cones. The new structure is completed or will be by Saturday, and it stands as a landmark for tourists as well as local people as one of the finest, if not the finest edifices, of its kind along the entire span of Federal Highway No. 40. According to tourists who have traveled the trail from east to west, there is nothing to compare with it.

It is built of native stone and has a span of three archways. When E. W. Norris was asked where he got his idea for the structure, he said, from a castle in Germany where he was stationed with the Army of Occupation during the winter of 1919. He took a crude drawing to Architect F. A. Slack of Beloit and told him he wanted something like that. The structure on the northeast corner of the square is the result.

The interior walls are painted a pea green, excepting the ladies rest room which is a snow white. The finish and the floors are in oak and stained in the natural colors. The archway is finished with colored stucco that gleams and glitters in the light of the electric lights like a thousand crystals. Chas. Eby of Beloit had charge of the interior work while E.W. and L.O. had actual supervision of the stone work. The statement that every rock was cut to a perfect measure is not an exaggeration but a fact.

When asked why he built such an expensive structure when a more economical building would have served the purpose, Mr. Norris replied, "I never expect to build another building and I want4ed one of which I can always be proud."

Cawker City Ledger, Thursday, August 27, 1970

Accident Kills Ernie Norris

Ernest Norris, 82, Glen Elder, died Saturday of injuries suffered when he was run over by his own car at the land fill north of Osborne.

Mr. Norris was found Saturday afternoon with his arms pinned beneath one of the wheels of his car. Officials said he apparently had gotten out of his car. The brakes failed and the vehicle struck him.

He was, taken to the Osborne County Memorial Hospital where he died several hours later.

Ernest W. Norris was born to Lylburn and Carrie Norris July 17, 1888 at Cawker City. Kansas and departed this life at Osborne County Hospital on August 22. 1970 at the of 82 years, 1 month and 5 days.

Mr. Norris made his home in the Cawker City and Glen Elder communities where he operated an implement business and service station. He served his country during W.W. I and was a member of the Glen Elder American Legion and Masonic Lodge of Glen Elder, Kansas.

Survivors include his niece Louise Echenlaub of Columbus, Ohio, other relatives and friends. Wayne Barnett accompanied by Mrs. Max Porter sang "In the Garden" and "Beyond The Sunset." Casket bearers were Max Eberle, Maurice Gish, Al Kiener, Warren Wright, Floyd Noller, and Preston Lowdermilk. Burial was in Glenwood Cemetery, Glen Elder, Miller Funeral Home had charge of the service.

Cawker City Ledger, May 1971

Norris Auction A Success

...a four-day auction was held to dispose of the many (Ernie Norris) collectibles. Local as well as buyers from many states attended. Everything from antique automobiles, popcorn and peanut machines, cigar store Indians, extensive gun and coin collections, and enough other collectibles to fill a 28-page announcement were sold. The sale was one of the largest ever held in the Glen Elder area...



Castle Service Station -- c. 1990s