



Glen Elder, KS -- Heritage & History

Our Early History

While there is no way to determine the many details of the earliest settling of Glen Elder, local researchers spent nearly a year going through court, land and tax records, including commissioners records dating from 1870. Many hours were spent reading old newspapers, beginning in 1880. It would be impossible to provide all the information that was uncovered, as space does not allow. Hopefully, the following will give insight to some of the earliest happenings pertaining to our town of Glen Elder.

When the Civil War ended and the government opened up for settlement the territory now known as Kansas, a whole new way of life on the plains was about to begin.



The wide open prairies were Indian Territory. Waconda Springs, located three and a half miles west of Glen Elder, was a special place of worship for several tribes. Buffalo roamed the land by the thousands, along with deer, antelope and other wildlife.

The Indians killed buffalo only as needed for food, shelter, clothing and other necessities of life. However, their way of life was soon to change. As the white settlement began, big time game hunters also came in,

killing the buffalo and other game in large numbers for sport, until within a few short years, the buffalo was gone, as well as the Indian way of life.

Some of the Indians and early white settlers were able to make friendships, however, as could be expected, it was also the start of many conflicts, with both Indians and white settlers losing their lives. In May 1870, near the bluffs on the south edge of Glen Elder, five settlers, John Geer, Solomon Miser, William Kenyon, Scott Guffy and a young boy about 17 years old, Heugh Nesbit, were planting corn on the south side of the Solomon River. Caught unaware and unable to reach the guns they had left at their dugouts by the bluff, Indians attacked, killing Geer, Kenyon and Miser. Guffy and Nesbit made their way downstream, hiding in brush, and eventually reached the fort on the George Stinson property in old Glen Elder, located on the east side of Limestone Creek from the present Max Porter home place.

The Indians soon were forced to move further north, giving up their land to the newly forming white settlement.



It was later reported the earliest pioneer, Mr. Smith or Mr. Decker, arrived here in 1866, made a dugout on Limestone Creek by the present Porter home place (just across US Hwy 24 on the north end of town), planted a garden, but did not stay.

The first known settlers were the Truman and Emetine Allen family in May 1869. They first occupied the dugout mentioned above, however, within several months, moved on up the creek about a mile and a half north, onto what was later the Anna Winkel farm.

George Stinson then homesteaded the land the Allen's had vacated and his brother Franklin took an adjoining claim to the south which is now within the city limits of Glen Elder. This was before the county or Glen Elder Township was formed.

George Stinson started the Kansas Bitter Saloon which was soon surrounded with a stockade as protection against the Indians and was located east across the creek from their dugout. He also started the Log Cabin Home, reported to be the first hotel in Mitchell County. When Max and Phyllis Porter built their new home, while digging for the basement, an old rock sign with crudely carved lettering "Glen Elder Log Cabin Home 1870" was uncovered in two parts. The Porters had the sign cemented back together, and it now sits in their yard. It is believed to be the only artifact from the original town of Glen Elder. >>>>



Don Peaslee settled about three miles east of the present town of Glen Elder in May 1870. His wife, Elizabeth, along with his father and a brother, arrived shortly thereafter. Land had been surveyed several years earlier to form a county, however, a census was necessary to determine the number of residents within the area before it could become a legal county. Don was appointed to assist with this first census. Mitchell County and Glen Elder Township were formed in 1870.

George Stinson is credited with naming this early settlement Glen Elder. National Archive Postal Records show Stinson was appointed the first Glen Elder postmaster on July 5, 1870, and he was also the first justice of the peace.

Horace Vallette came from Randolph, Kansas, taking his homestead in August 1871, about one-fourth mile east of the newly forming settlement. In an interview with the 50th anniversary edition of the Beloit Gazette in 1921, he stated at the time he came to Glen Elder, the town consisted only of the Kansai Bitter Saloon, a stockade, Log Cabin Home, Red Cloud Saloon, John Allen Feed Stable, a blacksmith shop and a few log structures. Valletta started a general merchandise store in a building owned by Snits, however, he moved his business to Athens within a couple of years, later returning to Glen Elder and starting a store on the present Glen Elder site.

John and Wealthy Neve and Milton and Adeline Spencer took homesteads about this same time and started a sawmill on the Solomon River near the bluffs, on the south edge of present Glen Elder. Many of the first frame structures were built with lumber from this mill.

By 1872 Charles and Margaret Davis moved here from Cloud County, Kansas, taking the homestead of George Stinson as the Stinsons moved on to Phillips County. Davis succeeded Stinson as postmaster on November 8, 1872, and purchased an interest in the mill. A gristmill was soon added, and it began operating as the Empire Mills.

West Hampton

John and Wealthy Neve, Charles and Margaret Davis and Milton and Adeline Spencer platted a town site on the present Glen Elder business district. A petition was submitted to the court on December 25, 1872, to have this town named West Hampton. Charles Davis opened the first known store in West Hampton, on the lot just east of where Vicki's Beauty Shop is now located, selling flour from the mill.

By now settlers were arriving almost daily, taking homesteads, working farms, and starting new businesses. The railroad came through in 1879 and by now it was time for the settlers of both the north and south locations to merge into one town. Several versions have been told of how the present name of Glen Elder was chosen, however, the most commonly reported was the postal department, wanting to be nearer the new railroad line and not wishing to change their name, played a major role in keeping the name of Glen Elder.

Glen Elder was incorporated on November 28, 1879, and registered as a city of the third class, the city limits superseding all of West Hampton.

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