

Wichita Stamp Club Newsletter



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Editor



"Go Fly A Stamp"



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[Travel Kansas](#)

This month we visit Keighley, Kansas

[Washington Irving in the "West"](#)

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TRAVEL KANSAS—NORTH TO SOUTH—EAST TO WEST by Neal E. Danielson

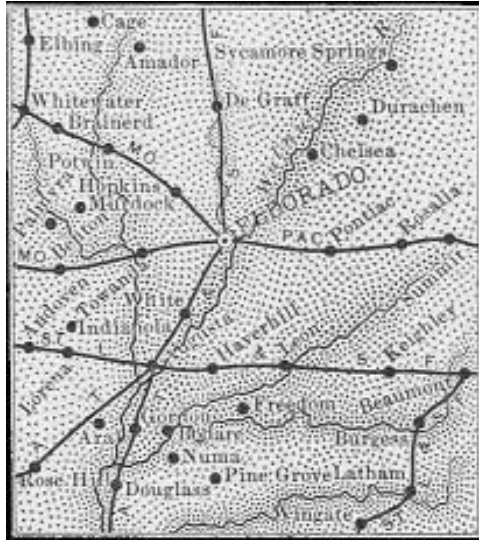


Figure 1
Butler Co. Railroad Map ca1899

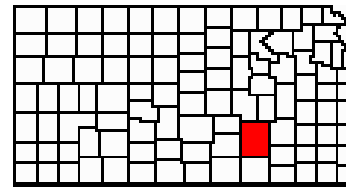


Figure 2
Butler County

Travel Kansas—Keighley located along the Saint Louis & San Francisco Railroad line in the southeastern part of Butler County (Figures 1 & 2) about 0.5 miles north of Story Creek Road on what is now U. S. Hwy. 400 & 96. Keighley was platted August 16, 1880 by a minister named Moses Turpin the name being derived from “Keeley Cure” that was known as a method to cure “Drunkards.” Today only one building remains and is considered a Ghost Town.

Butler County was established in 1855 shortly after the Kansas-Nebraska Act was signed in 1854 designating Kansas as a Territory with future prospects of becoming one of the states of the Union which followed in 1861. The County was named in honor of a U. S. Senator Andrew Butler (1796-1857) from South Carolina who participated in the development of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Although he was a strong supporter of having Kansas become a slave state that did not transpire due to some very dedicated settlers in the Territory that participated in several battles and dedication to establishing a state constitution as a Free State. The County Seat of Butler County is located in El Dorado where they have an interesting Court House designed with a Clock Tower (Figure 3).



Figure 3
Court House El Dorado, Kansas

The Post Office in Keighley opened 19 August 1880 and closed 28 February 1943. A Post Card (Figure 4) postmarked from Keighley, Kans. on Jun. 22, 1909 and sent to El Dorado, Kansas the County Seat. The Post Card is franked with a 1¢ Benjamin Franklin stamp (Scott #300) and tied to the card with a four-bar balloon cancel. The Post Card is addressed to a Miss Barr in El Dorado and sent by a Beryl B. of Keighley. She requests another friend to write. She indicates she was sorry she couldn't attend Normal.



Figure 4
Keighley, Kans. Post Card 1909

Normal would be referencing an institution dedicated to training teachers to teach. Normal schools train high school graduates to be teachers teaching standards or norms. In 1834 the first teacher training college was established in Jamaica by Sir Thomas Forwell Buxton. The first public Normal School in the United States was founded in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1839. Today it is Framingham State University. Baker Normal School was established in Wichita in 1858 now known as Baker University (Figure 5). The Kansas State Normal School in Emporia was established in 1863, now known as Emporia State University, which no doubt was the Normal referenced in the Post Card (Figure 6) ‘State Normal School, Emporia’.



Figure 5
Baker Normal School, Wichita

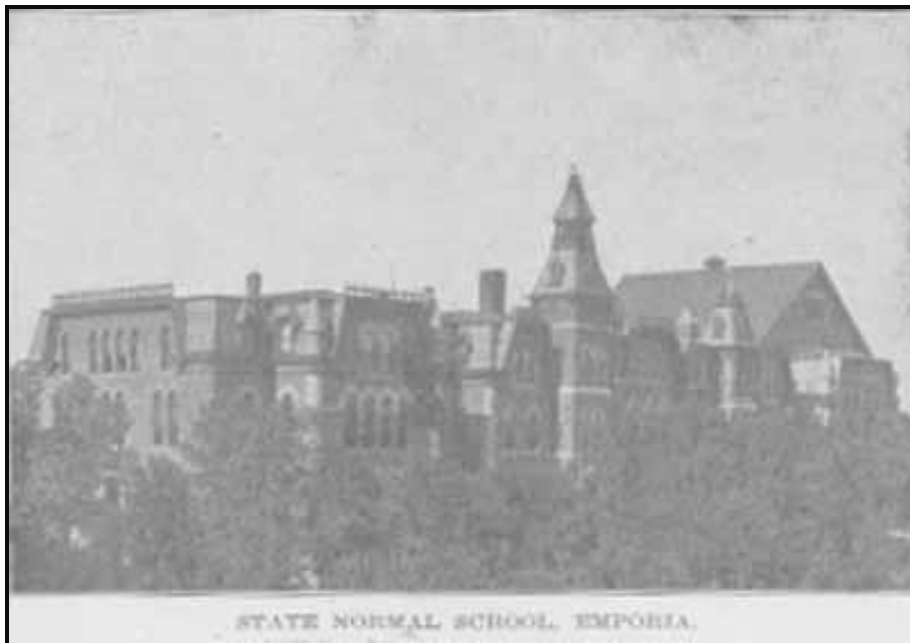


Figure 6
State Normal School, Emporia

The State Normal School was established for the purpose of teaching the art of good common school education to both male and female. With instructions in the mechanic arts; the arts of husbandry and agricultural chemistry; and the fundamental laws of the United States, as to the rights and duties of citizens. In 1906 Joseph H. Hill took over as President of the school and by 1910 student enrollment was at 2,224 with a teaching staff of 71 in seven buildings.

On 25 June 1894 the village of Keighley located along the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad was struck by a cyclone (tornado) around 7:30 (Figure 7) that destroyed the telegraph office in order to communicate the event. Communications was transmitted to Leon a short distance west of town by a courier on horseback. Several businesses along main street were destroyed. One person lost his life along with three horses when a barn collapsed on them. S0069 boxcars were overturned and tracks lifted up.



Figure 7
Cyclone (Tornado)

References:

Kansas Trails-Butler County Kansas Keighley Genealogy Trails –

<http://genealogytrails.com/kan/butler/keighley.html>

Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, counties, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc. Standard Pub. Co. Chicago: 1912 “State Normal School, Emporia.

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WASHINGTON IRVING OUT WEST by Jeff Lough



Figure 1
Washington Irving



Figure 2
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Washington Irving is a renowned American writer (Figure 1) who wrote *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (Figure 2) and *Rip van Winkle* and many other historical novels and essays. He was a mentor for Edgar Allen Poe and a good friend of Charles Dickens. Irving was also a fairly significant diplomat for the United States government.

Washington Irving was part of a military expedition that traveled to the frontier area of eastern Oklahoma in the early 1830s. The diary completed at that time became an extremely popular book entitled *A Tour of the Prairies* that helped to re-establish his reputation among the American reading public after he had returned to the U. S. after a lengthy stay in Europe.

A Tour of the Prairies resulted from the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that established a federal policy for the removal of all Indian tribes from the Eastern states to country west of the Mississippi river. By 1835 more than 30,000 Indians, principally Creeks, Choctaws, Cherokees and Shawnees, had been re-settled in what is now eastern Oklahoma. Congress passed another law “to regulate trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes, and to preserve peace on the frontiers.” The establishment of Fort Gibson in what is now Oklahoma was one result. This military camp had an early post office that is documented with the accompanying rare cover with Scott #114 bearing a simple circular cancellation with the date of June 2, 1870 and location of Fort Gibson, Arkansas and a likely postmaster made killer (Figure 3.) Fort Gibson later was located in the Indian Territory and is today in Oklahoma. The picture postcard in Figure 4 illustrates a modern reconstruction for tourists of Fort Gibson.



Figure 3
Fort Gibson, Ark Cover

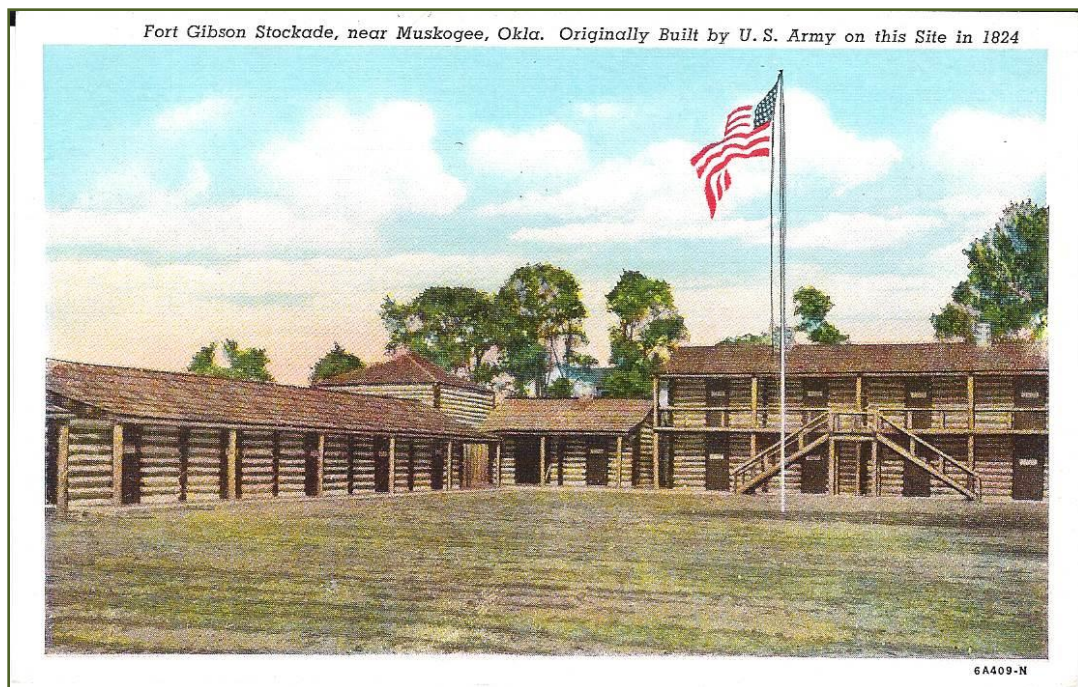


Figure 4
Fort Gibson Post Card

Irving had a style that combined highly sophisticated language and unique insight into the human condition. During one part of his *Tour of the Prairies* he describes an area of prairie woodlands that were virtually impossible to go through. These were the cross timbers. The “cross timbers” is a significant ecosystem that stretches from the Dallas-Fort Worth region into the southern Kansas Flint Hills. It is characterized by low-stature, slow-growing trees, many of which predate the birth of the United States including 200 to 400 year old post oak and red cedar trees over 500 years old.

Irving writes:

“The Cross Timber is about forty miles in breadth and stretches over a rough country of rolling hills, covered with scattered tracts of post-oak and black-jack; with some intervening valleys, which at proper seasons, would afford good pasturage. It is very much cut up by deep ravines, which in the rainy seasons, are the beds of temporary streams, tributary to the main rivers, and these are called “branches”. The whole tract may present a pleasant aspect in the fresh time of the year, when the ground is covered with herbage; when the trees are in their green leaf, and the glens are enlivened by running streams. Unfortunately, we entered too late in the season. The herbage was parched; the foliage of the scrubby forest was withered; the whole woodland prospect, as far as the eye could reach, had a brown and arid hue. The fires made on the prairies by the Indian hunters, had frequently penetrated these forest, sweeping in light transient flames along the dry grass, scorching and calcining the lower twigs and branches of the trees, and leaving them black and hard, so as to tear the flesh of man and horse that had to scramble through them. I shall not easily forget the mortal toil and vexations of the flesh and spirit that we underwent occasionally, in our wonderings through the Cross Timber. It was like struggling through forests of cast iron.”

In Kansas a surviving example of the cross timbers is found at the Cross Timbers State Park near the city of Toronto in Woodson County. The thousand acre park is in the hills of Verdigris River valley. This region was a favored hunting and camping ground of the Osage Nation.

Toronto was founded in 1869. It was named after the city of Toronto in Canada. The name is derived from the Mohawk word *tkaronto*, meaning “place where trees stand in the water.” Toronto has a noteworthy Italian restaurant. The latest Federal census noted 281 people as living in Toronto. The town and the park are near the popular state fishing Lake Toronto. Above please see a nice early cover from Toronto (Figure 5). Toronto’s post office was opened in June 2, 1870 and its first postmaster was Seth R. Kellogg. The cover has a three cent pale green George Washington Scott #147 stamp marked with a circular town and date postmark and a target killer.

Sources

Irving, Washington. *A Tour of the Prairies*. (Edited by J. F. McDermott). Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956.
Wikipedia articles on Washington Irving; Toronto, Kansas; and the Cross Timbers. August 9, 2014

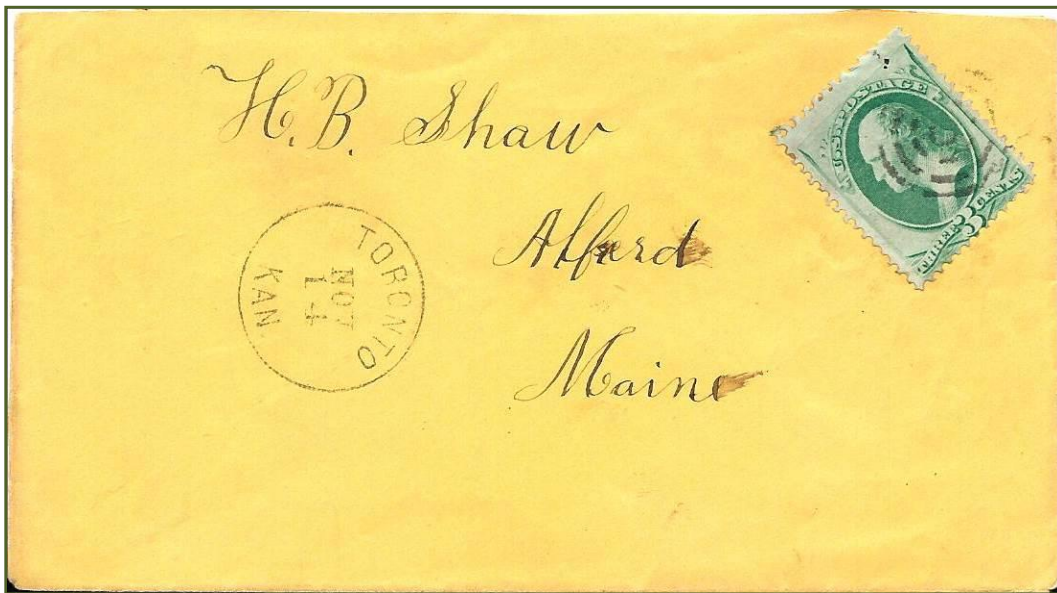


Figure 5
Toronto, Kan. Cover

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