

La Cygne Journal, Dec. 26, 1947

Across the Years

A History of La Cygne - By W. E. Baer.

On April 30, 1892, J. J. Starks announced that he was determined to retire from active business as soon as possible, and would close out his entire stock of drygoods and clothing at special bargains. This being the third time that Mr. Starks has closed out and positively quit, we are becoming suspicious of the gent's sincerity, but will continue to report each forthcoming close-out until his case is disposed

The fine residence on the Black ranch north of town was built during the summer of 1892. According to the account given, the house covers 68x44 feet. Unusual features include 38 windows and 33 doors. It does not state the number of rooms in the house. It was built by or contracted to G. W. Goodlander, of Fort Scott, at a cost of approximately \$4,000. At completion of the new home, an afternoon party was given on August 11, with games on the lawn, followed by a dance in the evening, the guests remaining for supper.

New furnishings for the Citizens bank arrived and were installed during July, 1892, some three months after the bank opened for business in the new building. A long and handsome counter was made especially for the new bank, the wood being antique oak, with appropriate screen work, wickets, and marble slabs on which to handle coins. After a hard day arranging the new equipment, Mr. Turner was greeted at home by a surprise; Mrs. Farmer had invited as dinner guests some of his friends—R. W. Blue, A. Friedman, A. W. Hall, Daniel Underwood, William Henderson, J. R. Clark, A. G. Walley, Fred Cary and Clark Cary.

The first of the old board walks around town were replaced by stone sidewalks during 1892, and no doubt the rest of them disappeared rapidly

thereafter, as the turn of the century eight years later looked back on the vanishing board-walk with a relief that the danger was about over. Nails have been generally successful otherwise, but they would never hold a board-walk together.

As early winter settled over the valley things really began to look tough. Hard times was the chief topic, and everybody seemed discouraged and despondent. News items dwindled gradually until the Journal became almost a blank. A campaign was put on to secure subscribers, the Journal offering \$100 in prizes for sending in names at \$1.50 each. This was followed by a pathetic appeal to arrears subscribers to pay up, and a proposition made to accept corn at the market price on subscriptions. Then on November 19th: "The Journal's cash prize offer, announced in this paper for several weeks, is hereby withdrawn. It doesn't seem to have been tempting." C. L. Shrake, an employe of the Journal was then sent out to canvass the homes, but collections were impossible.

The Journal then threatened to raise the price of printing. Something had to be done, so they turned the paper completely wrong side out, placing the local items on the back cover for the first time, editorials on the front page along with country correspondence, and the world news and fiction on the inside sheets. It made an odd looking newspaper. Everything indicated that Kenea and Lane were fighting a losing battle, and it looked like they were ready to withdraw their ever staunch support when this appeared: "It must be that the hens have joined the McKinley bill in the interest of the Kansas Farmer. Eggs in La Cygne were 27 cents a dozen. If this keeps up, with the high price of pork and beef, the farmer seems

La Cygne Journal, Nov. 7, 1947

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The town of Boicourt probably enjoyed its most sensational boom in the spring of 1891. This boom was a result of the promise of great coal industry, and what took place may surprise most of you. Following is the account, direct from the field of action: "There are some improvements going on here at Boicourt. Six prospect holes have been sunk, and lumber received for cribbing a new coal shaft. A new lumber yard has been started, the first invoice covering seven cars of lumber, one car of lime, brick and hair, and a car of sand. Messrs. Bradley and Vernon are enlarging the old hotel, making it more than double the size it was. A contract has been let for ten or more new houses, so it looks like there will be considerable improvement in the next sixty days. Col. J. F. Harrison, of La Cygne, has been engaged to make a survey of the town, set stakes on all corners and lay out a new addition. It is evidently intended that old Barnard shall boom."

Mr. W. O. Fuller, having lost his wife, decided to return to his old home in the east, and Mr. A. Mitzel was elected president of the Linn County Bank on February 14, 1891, to replace Mr. Fuller. The Fuller stock in the bank, amounting to controlling interest, was purchased by Benjamin Ellis and G. R. Saunders, of Pleasanton, who were formerly owners of the bank, hence they still regarded it as good property.

On February 28, 1891, the Wuttke families engaged in business in La Cygne, buying out the business of the La Cygne Alliance Exchange. The new firm of Wuttke Brothers was composed of A. J. Wuttke, of Iowa, and his brother, C. C. Wuttke, already a resident of La Cygne.

The Nivison family, reluctant to give up their home in La Cygne, (the Morrison property) but always

able to do better in a Kansas City hotel or boarding house, had been plying back and forth between the two places for a number of years. This item announced their return to Kansas City once more, on April 18, 1891: "Mr. and Mrs. G. T. Nivison, Mrs. E. Ryerson, and Miss Annie Winters have returned to Kansas City, after a sojourn in this city. The Nivisons will open a boarding house at 111 West 12th street, where they will be able to accommodate one hundred day boarders and about twenty lodgers." The location, 111 West 12th is where the Muehlebach Hotel now stands.

On April 18, 1891, the death of J. B. Grinnell was announced. Mr. Grinnell, one of the founders of the town, and also the founder of Barnard and Fontana, had long since returned to Iowa, where he became United States Congressman. Fontana came near being named after him. George Wynkoop, resident manager of the Blaker firm for several years and also a partner in the firm, died on April 29, 1891, after a short illness of erysipelas. He was 32 years of age, and had been a natural leader in the town since his arrival in 1883.

At a directors meeting of the Citizens Bank on May 6, 1891, it was definitely decided to erect a bank building, two stories high, 25x80 feet, at the corner of Broadway and Market streets. La Cygne Lodge No. 66, I. O. O. F. and La Cygne Lodge No. 61, A. F. & A. M., agreed to joint ownership of the upper story, to be used as a lodge room for both organizations. The lower floor has changed ownership several times, belonging at present to Claude Buchanan who operates one of our leading grocery stores. As far as I know, ownership of the upper story is still vested in the two lodges, both of which still hold their meetings therein. The building was designed by

George P. Washburn, an architect from Ottawa, and stands today a substantial and credible building. The west and south walls are built of pressed brick, with a corner entrance on the ground floor, and a stairway on the north, leading to the lodge hall.

Memorial Day, 1891, probably reached an all-time high in observance of such an occasion in La Cygne. A quarter of a century had elapsed since the close of the Civil war; the ranks of the veterans were thinning rapidly and the town was in proper spirit to pay homage to the loyal dead. The services were under the auspices of Robert B. Mitchell Post No. 170, G. A. R. At eleven o'clock the members of that order, in blue clothes and brass buttons, joined the Odd Fellows in full regalia, marched from Post headquarters under the National Colors borne by J. E. Beckum, in procession, preceded by the La Cygne Cornet Band, the members of which were attired in handsome uniforms. Entering the hall, the soldiers took seats in front, and the big hall was filled to overflowing. On the stage were Post Commander Charles Mitchell, Adjutant E. P. McCarty, the Reverend D. F. Holtz and Samuel Hymer. The program included numbers by the orchestra and the choir and a sermon delivered by Rev. Holtz. In the afternoon a big crowd followed the parade to Oak Lawn cemetery where an impressive outdoor service took place. All business houses were closed and the entire day was devoted to observance of the occasion.