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another season of dry weather and hot winds, which ruined the growing crops and left the settlers in bad financial condition.

After the drought, the grasshoppers came in 1874, devouring every green thing in sight. The hoppers came, millions, in great clouds, obscuring the sun and for a time the people did not understand what was darkening the sky. Trees were stripped, vegetables eaten, roots and all. Corn was devoured, stalks and all in many cases and nothing was left.

The following year in 1875, eggs deposited by the hoppers hatched but did not cause too much of a problem. They either took flight or died of starvation.

After 1875, both Kansas and the nation began to recover from hard times. The trickle of immigration soon swelled to a mighty flood again. Between 1874 and 1880, 11 new counties in the west were organized.

The 1880's brought more settlers and hard times. The largest employer in the area at this time was the old Wisser Ranch, north of Allen, which consisted of 6,720 acres. The owner, J. P. Wisser, Prescott, Ontario, Canada, was a wealthy distiller and a member of parliament in Canada.

The large stone building built for a distillery is a long standing landmark of the area. It is now owned by Theodore G. Coffman of Allen.

Mr. Wisser was a real benefactor to the settlers in the area. He gave work to hundreds, having them build a six-foot high stone wall around his land, 3½ miles long and 3 miles wide. The stone fence had only four gates in it.

After 1866 and prior to 1886, all materials and food in this area had to be obtained at either Emporia or Council Grove. This was prior to the coming of the railroad.

In 1886, the Council Grove, Osage City and Ottawa Railroad applied to the voters of Agnes City and Waterloo townships to allow the railroad to go through the north part of the county. The railroad's plan was for but two stations in northern Lyon County at Admire and Bushong. The people living in the vicinity of the Allen postoffice raised a protest. They had large shipments of cattle to make yearly and they wanted a half way station in the county.

The settlers, in June 1886, represented by Judge George DeCamp, took their protest in a form of a petition, consisting of 54 signatures, to the Board of Railroad Commissioners of the State of Kansas at Topeka, for a siding in Allen. The promise was made for a siding, but they would not swing north from the proposed route and demanded that the people of Allen would make the road bed for the siding. The farmers of the community donated their services, with teams and shovels, built the siding that remains today.

The Allen Town Company was formed on October 2, 1886. The Town Company was composed of John Grimsley, president; George Withington, clerk; R. A. Reaburn, D. W. Leavell, W. E. Rust, E. R. Marcey and Dr. Emil Shellack.

The first house in Allen was on East 5th street brought from a farm five miles north by E. L. Joyce. The first town meeting was held in it in 1885. Allen was on its way.

During May, 1886, the railroad was completed across Lyon County and the depot, a long narrow framed building, roofed with steel shingles and painted cream with brown trim was completed in August 1887.

It was a great moment when the first train came to town, bringing much needed lumber and supplies.

Allen grew rapidly during the first years as shown by the following: The first stock of groceries was brought to the new town by E. R. Marcy; the first stock of hardware by R. A. Reaburn; the first stock of dry goods by W. H. Crites.

A newspaper, the Allen "Tidings," was founded May 5, 1887, by Major A. Paul. The printing office was located across the street from the Romer building. The building was later moved and now is the residence of Walter Schlup, on West 4th Street. In 1894, Major Paul moved his paper to Emporia, and it later became the *Emporia Times*. The paper was then operated by Howard & Howard. It was called the "Herald" and was in operation until July 15, 1897.

The greatest number of buildings were frame construction, but the Skaggs and Bank buildings were solid stone.

The society of the town was quite like that of similar towns. The fraternal feeling of the people found expression in lodges of the following orders: IOOF and Rebekah's, Masons and Eastern Star, Knights and Ladies of Security, and the Fraternal Aid. On May 30, 1887, the first boy born in Allen, was appropriately named "Allen" Reaburn.

The firm of Marcy and Radcliffs kept a well stocked grocery and meat shop with fresh meat and salt fish.

S. A. Lanning originally operated a lumber yard in 1887 but sold out in 1892 when he opened a general store. His dwelling, now owned by Mrs. Venning, was the first built in the new town.

C. A. Sanders engaged first in general merchantile business with W. H. Crites in 1887. He entered the timber and lumber business in 1892 and had the only stock of lumber in town at that time. He also handled Derring harvest machinery.

The members of the firm, Bates' Brothers, were Riley F. and George F. Bates. They formed the business after George bought out Oliver Hinsley in 1891. They stocked dry goods and groceries.



Wisner Ranch in northern Lyon County.

p.m. in the loft of the old Gorman livery stable, operated by Vincent and after burning the residence of Mont Gray (Mrs. Oatie Wheat's father), south of the barn, it caught the Allen Hotel (operated by Mrs. Brock, Delsie Spade's mother) north of the livery barn.

The only business left on Main Street between 4th and 5th was the William Conrad building.

After the fire, Skaggs & Gorman dissolved partnership by mutual consent. Mr. Gorman retiring and Skaggs deciding to rebuild the burned building. It was completed in 1908.

Allen was incorporated as a third class city in 1909. James S. Barr was the first mayor, A. H. Smith the first clerk.

In 1916, an organization came into being known as the Farmers Union. It was very strong at Allen for a number of years. They had a grocery and dry goods store in the building rebuilt by Skaggs. R. J. Rees, Arthur Bates and Charles Day were all active workers. Hazel Estes Jensen worked as bookkeeper for several years. Later they built the big elevator which is now a beacon for all the surrounding countryside.

The Allen bank was robbed for a second time on Nov. 26, 1916. This time the robbers could not get into the center of the safe where the money was kept, but

still got away with \$900 in stamps. Again, the thieves were not caught.

In 1918, the city council visioned Allen's "Great White Way." R. M. Skidmore, mayor; Ira Stonebraker, clerk; H. A. Wilson, Burton Marcy and William Conrad started plans for a home owned light plant, which was put into operation. Howard Pace cared for the plant. Allen operated the plant until it was sold to K.P.L. on May 21, 1940.

Fire again struck Allen, this time, Aug. 28, 1918. Powell's Garage and the Morris Blacksmith Shop were totally destroyed within 30 minutes along with all contents. The loss was approximately \$5,000. Losses other than Mr. Powell and Morris, were to Chas Day, Ike Mann and Elisha Mounkes whose cars were destroyed. The hotel on the north owned by Mr. and Mrs. Sol Hicks, narrowly escaped destruction and building damage was around \$300.

Alfred Chapin, who had charge of the garage, was vulcanizing a tire, from which the fire originated. The building was rebuilt in 1919 by Powell and Edmunds.

Until a few years ago when Dr. E. E. Edwards retired, Allen has had a doctor since its founding.

The first doctor was Dr. Emil Schellack, who came in February, 1887, and stayed until 1897. He also operated the Palace Drug Store located where Pykiet's