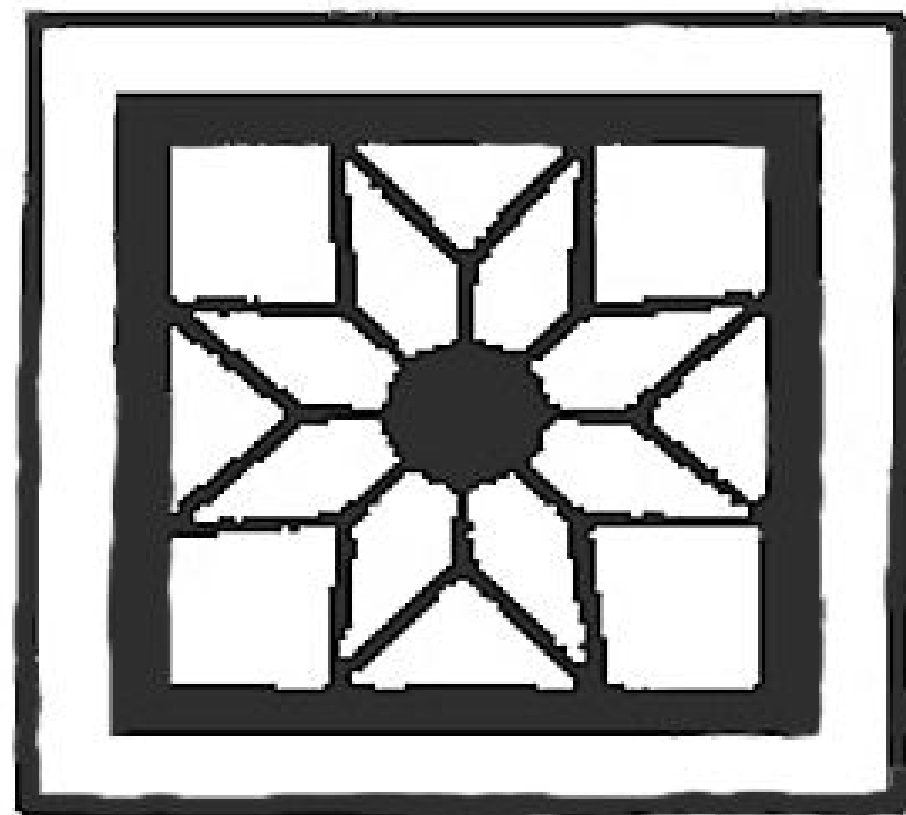


BLOOMINGTON

Established 1871

Kansas Sampler



Eight Rural Elements

Architecture

Ag & Educational Landmarks

The 1917 Page-Koesling Grain Elevator was built by William Page and later operated by his nephew Max Koesling. The wood-and-tin structure is a classic example from the 1885-1920 first

era of woodframe structure grain elevators.

The Bloomington One-Room Schoolhouse, District #10, was built in 1879 of local Fort Hays Limestone. School was held in this building from January 1879 to May 1898.

The George Melton Barn is located on the southeast edge of the townsite in the southeast corner of intersection of First & Washington Streets, is believed to have been built around 1900 and was put together with square wooden pegs—not a nail used in the construction except in the roof.

The Medicine Creek and Kill Creek Reinforced Concrete Bridges are located southwest of Bloomington. Built in 1930 and 1936 respectively, the bridges are considered classic examples of their architectural style.

History

From Tilden to Bloomington

On April 1, 1870, Dr. Daniel Tilden and family staked out a homestead in what is now Osborne County, KS. In 1871 he laid out the townsite of Tilden on his homestead. Tilden was officially platted on May 14, 1873.

The Tilden Post Office opened May 30, 1872, with Cyrus C. Tilton as the first postmaster. Tilden ran fourth and then third to rivals Osborne City and Arlington in the first two elections for the permanent county seat.

The townsite was officially platted with the new name of Bloomington on May 10, 1873, and the post office name was officially changed to Bloomington on January 1, 1874. It was thought that with such a name the town would be destined to grow to great heights. Bloomington



A view of the Bloomington Post Office and Lafe Boultinghouse's restaurant as they appeared on Main Street in Bloomington in 1930. These buildings still stand. To the left can be seen the Bloomington General Store, the top floor of which was a dance hall.



A circa 1895 photo of the Howard Ruede sod house southwest of Bloomington made famous in Ruede's book Sod & Stubble. From left to right are George, Howard, and Ruth Ruede.

School, District #10, was organized in May 1873. At its peak around 1930 Bloomington had about 75 residents and boasted a bank, grocery store, telephone company, restaurant, lumber yard, stockyards, and two churches. It never incorporated and the post office was closed on August 31, 1955. The school district held on until 1968, when it was disbanded and the students then sent to school in nearby Osborne.

Commerce

Wealth of the Land

The people of Bloomington and the surrounding region derive their wealth from the rich farming and ranching that has been the staple of the region for well over a century.

Art

The Crop That Made Kansas Famous

The wheat design painted on the Mid-Way Co-op Elevator depicts the deep association the Bloomington area has with the land and its bounty.

Cuisine / Customs

Fishing and Harvesting

The low-water bridge across the South Fork Solomon River a half mile south of town has long been considered an excellent spot for fishing. In June-July the area's annual wheat harvest and the annual corn and milo harvests in September-November provide the sights and sounds that define modern agriculture in rural America.

Geography

Fear of Storms? Move to Bloomington!

Before Dr. Daniel Tilden decided on the final location for his new town in 1871 he consulted with local natives as to the best spot. He laid out his town on the site that the local Indians said was legendary for having always been avoided by tornadoes and other violent storms. Time has indeed borne out this claim. An excellent view of the valley can be seen from Bloomington Cemetery, located 1½ miles northwest of town.

People

Homesteaders, Hunters, Spies & Writers

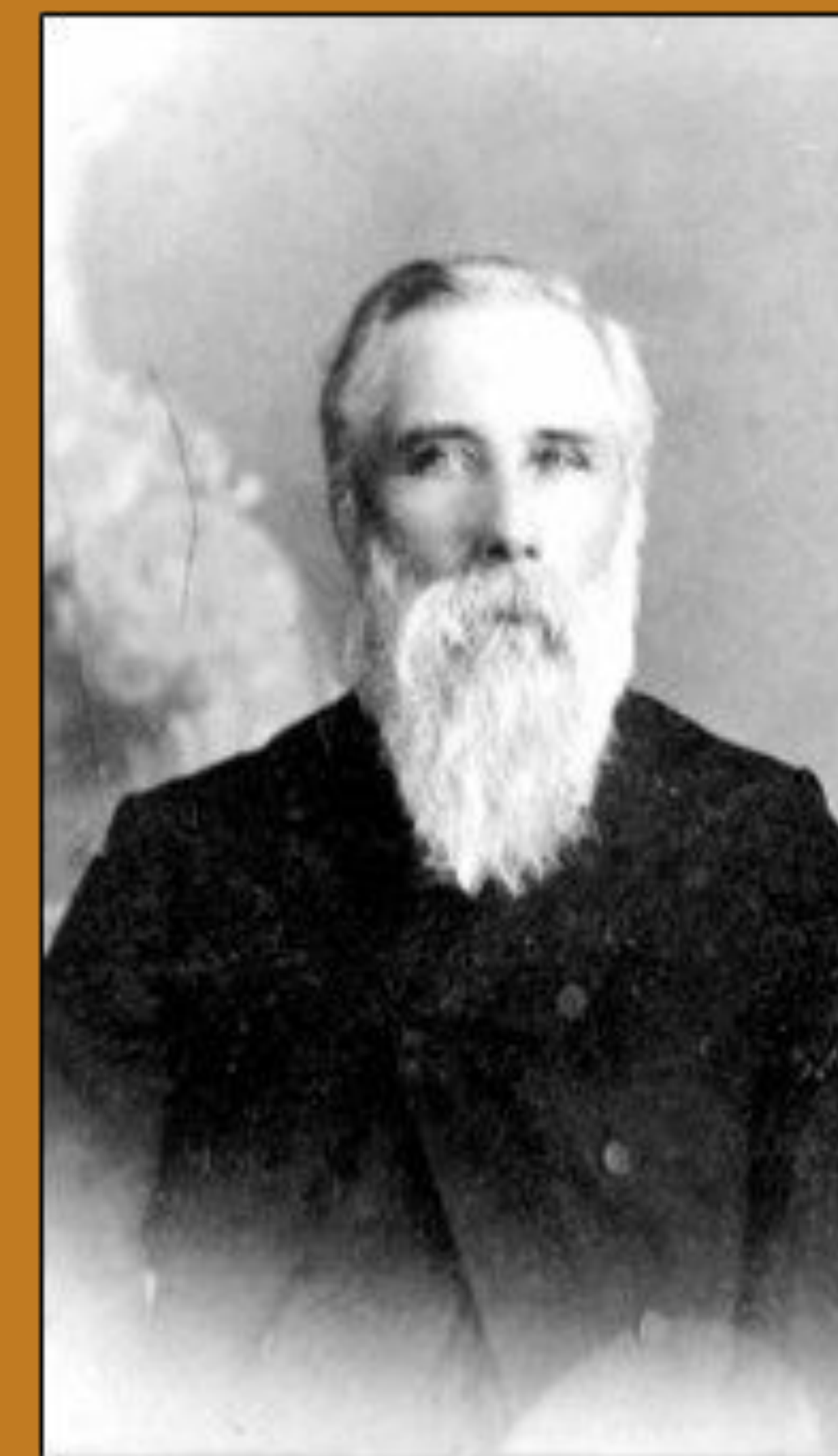
At age 21 Howard Ruede claimed a homestead in what

is now Kill Creek Township in Osborne County. Over the next year he developed the homestead and faithfully wrote home to his family in Pennsylvania of his struggles and experiences. He died at age 83, and in 1937 his letters home were posthumously published under the title *Sod-House Days: Letters from a Kansas Homesteader 1877-78*. Still in print, it is considered to be one of the greatest works ever written concerning the homesteading period. A historical marker 11 miles southwest of Bloomington honors the site of Ruede's homestead, with another monument 1½ miles further south marking the site of the Kill Creek Store and Post Office.

Charles and William Bullock arrived in March 1870 to make the first permanent settlement in what is now Osborne County. Their half-sod, half-log structure was known far and wide over northern Kansas as the "Bullock Brothers Ranche."

Charles Jesse "Buffalo" Jones homesteaded southwest of Bloomington in 1872 and to earn money took up buffalo hunting, a trade common to the area. By 1876 he realized that the American bison was being hunted to extinction and to the consternation and ridicule of his neighbors he began saving and raising buffalo calves. A marker located four miles west and south of town marks the site of his 1872-1876 homestead.

Benjamin Franklin Matchett was born in 1839 in Rumford, Essex County, England. In 1861 he entered the Union forces in the American Civil War as a spy, his English accent allowing him to move freely in and out of Confederate lines "searching for his missing brother." He arrived in Bloomington in 1885 as an ordained Christian Church minister and founded the Antioch Church of Christ. Five years later he was elected to the Kansas Legislature, where he served one two-year term and in that time was elected Speaker of the Kansas House Pro-Tem.



English-born Benjamin Matchett lived in the Bloomington area from 1885 to 1897. A spy, a minister, and a member of the Kansas Legislature in 1891-1893, Matchett's life was one of variety and fulfillment.

Charles "Buffalo" Jones, American adventurer and the Savior of the American Bison, homesteaded near Bloomington in 1872-1876.

