



~ **Part 8** ~

**Reflections on a Common Theme
WPA Projects**

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WPA Projects

CLOUD COUNTY by Joan Nothern

Day Athletic Field in Glasco

The WPA project that stands in Glasco is at the high school football field on the northwest edge of town. Erected in 1935 of native red sandstone, it is comprised of the gate pillars, marking the entry to the ball field, two curved walls that define the southwest corner of the field, and a freestanding building which served as a concession stand and housed public restrooms.

The inscription on each gate pillar reads: "DAY ATHLETIC FIELD, G. R. H. S., 1935."

This inscription bears history predating the WPA work. Bert and Leta (Day) Nicol presented the athletic field to the Glasco schools in memory of the Day family. Leta was the daughter of Owen and Amanda Day, who homesteaded north of the future Glasco in 1872. They were among the early families settling in the Solomon Valley after the Civil War.

It is remarkable that the Day name is prominently displayed, for it recalls the dynamic post-Civil War history of the community. Owen Day, born in 1841, was a resident of Missouri when the war broke out. His parents were slave holders there. Consequently, he served in Confederate ranks from 1862 until August 1865, when he was among those surrendering at Austin, Texas.

Owen Day, a Confederate veteran, became a successful businessman in Glasco and was appointed postmaster during Cleveland's second administration. His successor in the Glasco hardware business in 1900, was James A. Nicol, whose son, Bert, went on to help establish the J. C. Penny Co.

James's son, Bert, and Owen's daughter, Leta, married, and later donated the memorial athletic field. Leta Day was one of the four first graduates of Glasco Rural High School in the class of 1898!

MITCHELL COUNTY by Bill Hagman

Beloit a WPA Beneficiary

When Beloit was still known as the "Queen City of the Solomon Valley," it saw some of its fine structures constructed. The Municipal Building (above), located at 119 North Hersey Avenue, was dedicated in the fall of 1939 and was built at a cost of \$135,171. The expenses were paid by a few long term bonds and WPA. Trojan Field, located on the north end of Hersey Avenue, is a football field that opened in 1940 and is named after Beloit High School's mascot. It includes a native-stone stadium and a quarter-mile track. Originally a \$55,000 project, it was made possible through a building fund with WPA assistance. The track was boasted to be one of the finest in the state when initially finished.

OSBORNE COUNTY by Laura McClure

Osborne Scout Cabin

In January 1938 the west portion of the Osborne Boy and Girl Scout Cabin was completed. "The Scouts themselves have some arranging of bunks and assembling of furniture that will have to be done before they will be holding their regular meetings there."

We believe the cabin may have been both a WPA NYA (National Youth Administration) project. The WPA employed millions to carry out public projects. Most adults who needed a job were eligible to do at least some of the work for the WPA.

The NYA was established due to the large number of unemployed young people. It was believed that living in poverty and being jobless would undermine their faith in America's democracy. The NYA program fought the problem in two ways: it provided grants to high school and college students in exchange for work, and combined economic relief with on-the-job training which would provide them with a marketable skill for the future.

The Scout Cabin is used to this day for Scout meetings, community gatherings, and lodging for pheasant hunters. It has a "fireman's pole" you can slide down from the second-story bunkhouse, a huge fireplace to make fantastic s'mores, a large meeting area, and restrooms with showers. If you would like to rent the Scout Cabin for a meeting, retreat, or getaway call Rex Brown, 785-346-2082, for reservations. The money goes to the Scouts. Information provided by the Osborne County Farmer, 1938, and the Leaves of Lineage (Osborne County Genealogical and Historical newsletter, December 2010.)

ROOKS COUNTY by Roger Hrabe

Stockton WPA Heritage

Stockton has a very good representation of WPA structures, and they are all still in use. On December 5, 1939, the Stockton City Commission approved \$7000 to help pay for a WPA building which was going to house the fire department and the water and light offices. At least that was the original intent of the building. On November 5, 1940, the city commission approved another \$3000 to complete the building. Then, on December 3, 1940, the commission approved another \$2000 to complete the assembly room (the auditorium in the rear of the current building). The stone outside of the building says it was completed in 1940, but that was most likely the main part of the building. The commission meeting minutes allude to the fact that it may have been more like February 1941 before the entire structure was completed. As time went by, the building became the city hall and city jail.

An impressive display of WPA buildings is also found on the fairgrounds at the south end of Stockton. The large grandstand, exhibit building (McCaslin Hall), and several of the livestock barns are classic examples of WPA limestone structures completed during the 1930s. The largest of the structures, grandstand (right), was completed as a WPA structure in 1937.

GRAHAM COUNTY by Alan LeSage

Hill City WPA City Hall

The City Hall WPA project was started in the fall of 1937. The building is 37 feet wide and 65 feet long and originally had 11 rooms. It has native green rock on the front and native gray-colored rock on the sides and back. It cost approximately \$22,000.00 to build with about two-thirds of that cost spent on local labor. Located on the first floor were the library, Hill City fire department room, an eight-foot by ten-foot city jail, city council room, water and light room, and restrooms. The floor in the hallway and the library room was made in Tulsa, Oklahoma, constructed from marble chips of various colors, each color coming from a different state in the United States.

When completed in February 1939, it was heated by oil burning heaters in each room; however it had been piped for gas to be used whenever it became available to the city.