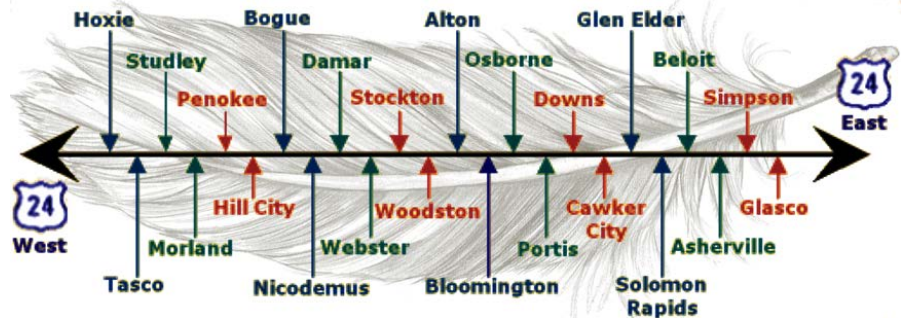
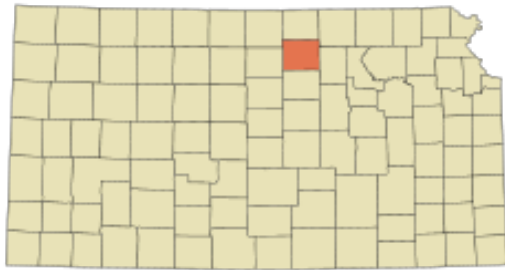




## Glasco, Kansas

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## History of Glasco

by Joan Nothern

Indians and buffalo frequented the Solomon Valley before Kansas was a state, before Glasco was a town. The first permanent settlers in the vicinity of the present Glasco arrived before the county was called "Cloud."

In May 1866, John and Jeanette Hillhouse, emigrants from Scotland, concluded a long and arduous journey in Shirley County, near the Solomon River. They left Scotland in 1856, traveled overland to Salt Lake City, arriving in October 1856. This young family was a victim of Brigham Young's tyranny, denied work and the freedom to leave. Their brave escape, separation from each other, and reunion 2 ½ years later are indicative of the courage of the area's first family. They settled in Platte County, Missouri, in 1859. During the Civil War, Mr. Hillhouse enlisted in Co. K, 18th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, on January 2, 1862. This resulted in attacks and persecution by bushwhackers.

After the Civil War, the Solomon Valley was opened to soldiers and widely advertised. The Hillhouses arrived in March 1866 and located a homestead on the Solomon River on April 1, 1866. In addition to the Hillhouses, the early permanent settlers were Robert Smith and John Henderson, 1865, and H. H. Spaulding and U. D. Teasley, spring of 1866.

In 1867 the state legislature acted to bestow a name of dignity on the county, for as the butt of a joke it had been (Jane) "Shirley County," named for a notorious Leavenworth prostitute. Instead it was given the name "Cloud," honoring Colonel William F. Cloud, of the 2nd and 15th Kansas Cavalry and the 10th Kansas Infantry, one of the state's bravest heroes.

Moving bands of Indians created alarm in the Solomon Valley and on August 11, 1868, there were raids in the locality, resulting in tragedy in the valley in Ottawa and Mitchell counties as well as in Glasco.

In the autumn of 1869 Senator Edmund Ross came to the Solomon Valley from Washington, D. C., and established a post office, with Captain H. C. Snyder, a Civil War veteran, as postmaster. The mail route extended as far as Beloit.

The town in the southwest corner of Cloud County was first known and platted as "Dell Ray" on land that was granted by the U.S. Government to one of the earliest pioneers, Isaac Biggs. The Dell Ray Town Co., formed by A. H. Spaulding, J. M. Copland, H. C. Snyder, J. A. Potts, and H. H. Spaulding, was incorporated July 18, 1871. The purpose of the company was to purchase, locate, and layout a town site, and the sale and conveyance of the same in lots, blocks, and subdivisions. The company issued 11 shares of stock at \$100.00 each.

Isaac Biggs succeeded Snyder as postmaster in 1871. It was he who submitted the name "Glasco" to the state legislature in 1878 as the official name. That was the name preferred by the Union Pacific Railroad, which reached Glasco in 1878. The name reflects respect for the Scotch settlers' Glasgow, but was misspelled when submitted by Mr. Biggs.

Glasco was incorporated as a city of the third class on April 14, 1886. W. R. West was elected the first mayor on May 4, 1886.

The arrival of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1878 stimulated substantial growth of the business facilities in Glasco. The first stone building was constructed on Main Street by Isaac Biggs in 1880. Direct communication east and west provided ready markets for produce. Bridges over the Solomon were also essential. Following propositions for Simpson and Glasco, and settlement in the court, a fine iron truss bridge was built at Pott's Ford, one mile south of Glasco, in 1884. This substantial structure is now on the National Historic Register and still used daily.

It is hard to determine if a history should be told in terms of people, significant events, its businesses, or outstanding accomplishments. A gesture toward each will be attempted in this brief summary. Ninety-eight veterans of the Civil War are buried in the Glasco cemetery, confirmation of the rugged first citizens who settled here. Owen Day, a Confederate veteran, served as the 6th postmaster. The high school athletic field was donated by Bert Nicol and dedicated "Day Field" in 1929 in honor of the Day family.

His son Tom Day and M. L. Noel organized the first Glasco football team in 1895. In the next 10 years they brought the best teams in Kansas to Glasco: Ottawa University, Washburn, Kansas Aggies of Manhattan, KU, the Swedes of Lindsborg, and Haskell Indians.

Roy Seaton was born in Glasco on April 17, 1884.. He went on to a distinguished career in Engineering Education at KSU, for the US Office of Education, and the US Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. At KSU he was known as "Mr. K-State Engineering." Seaton Hall on the KSU campus in Manhattan bears his name. He authored the textbook Concrete Construction For Rural Communities, copyright 1916, surely impacting the Solomon Valley indirectly.

Earl Calvin Padgett graduated from Glasco High School in 1912. He served in WWI and received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from Washington University in 1918. He was appointed Clinical Professor of Plastic Surgery at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in 1936. Dr. Padgett was an outstanding researcher in the field of Plastic Surgery. His greatest contribution to surgery was the Dermatome, a calibrated instrument for cutting skin grafts of uniform thickness. This brought him international recognition and was widely used during WWII. The American Legion presented him the Distinguished Citizenship award in 1940 for the invention.

Another Glasco doctor of note is Claude Harwood. He practiced in Glasco from 1956 until his retirement in 1990. He continues to live in Glasco and is a member of the SV24 Alliance. Dr. Harwood is well known for delivering 1,173 babies during his career.

Elmer Stricklett was born in Glasco August 29, 1876. At 28 years, he broke into big league baseball as a pitcher, starting April 22, 1904, with the Chicago White Sox. For the next three years he played for the Brooklyn Superbas. Stricklett's nickname was Spitball, and with good reason, for he is credited with perfecting the spitball. He was only 5' 6" tall and weighed 140 pounds. He participated in the team's longest string of losing seasons. The Superbas were later known as the Brooklyn Dodgers. The spitball was banned in the 1920s because no one could hit it.

Glasco's early prowess in sports was also demonstrated by the Red Line Basketball Team. This band of players had the idea to tour the Kansas division of the Midland Trail from Kansas City to Denver. Starting January 6, 1916, the team traveled in one of Davidson and Co. cars, pulling a trailer to carry tools and paint. The Red Line was painted on poles from Kansas City to Denver. The team played basketball each night, making enough money to pay their expenses and the cost of the paint. They completed 23 games by February 13, winning them all. The Red Liners were instrumental in boosting interest in this route across Kansas.

The Solomon Valley Wool Growing Association was established in 1875, the first in the state, and contributed to the prosperity of the county. Beginning in 1903, an annual livestock show was held in Glasco. Perhaps these were forerunners of the Cloud County Fair, held in Glasco 1933 through 1982. The community festival tradition is now maintained with the annual Fun Day, held the first Saturday in October. Larry and Madonna Sorell, Lazy S Farms, Glasco, are contemporary pioneers, raising heritage stock: Red Wattle pigs, Standard American Bronze turkeys, and Katahdin lamb, again furnishing eastern markets with quality meats.

Glasco lies on the eastern edge of Post Rock Country, with the escarpments along the Solomon providing stone used for building. Modern post rock homes were built in Glasco in the 1950s. A historically significant structure, the grocery store built in 1902 by J. W. and Adam Studt, was identified by Grace Muilenburg and Ada Swineford in their 1975 book, *Land of the Post Rock*, as being in particularly good repair. The Glasco Community Foundation is working to maintain this building, now used for many Main Street ventures.

In November 2002 Glasco's Downtown Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It includes both sides of Main Street between Fisher Street and Railroad Avenue. This district's period of significance, 1880-1948, is noted for its architecture and as a commercial retail and light industry district. There are 22 contributing buildings in the historic district. Included are the Studt Grocery Store and the Biggs Building. This 1880 building was placed on the Kansas Preservation Alliance "Most Endangered Buildings" list in 2005.

Glasco is proud of its role in Cloud County Stained Glass Capital of Kansas designation, with the churches offering tours of stained-glass windows. One hundred years of local history was celebrated at the millennium with drama, art, and dance by the Glasco students. The Glasco Community Historic Society maintains the Community Historic Museum on Main Street. The Glasco Sun, established in 1883, provides a continuous record of community history.

Finally, consider the role of education. The first school was established in 1868; the first high school graduation was in 1898, with four graduates. Glasco Rural High School was established in 1920, and the present high school was built at that time. Glasco maintains kindergarten through 12th grade schools, and is now in the Southern Cloud USD#334 district. The annual gathering of alumni over Memorial Weekend draws up to 400 people. Many are choosing to retire in Glasco, returning to the peaceful valley of their youth.

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