

GLEN ELDER

Established 1869

Commerce

Area agriculture can be quite a viewing experience during both the Wheat Harvest in June-July and the Corn & Milo Harvests held in September-November.

Radio Station KDNS resides on the northwest edge of town. This small-town station is unusual if for no other reason than it is in a small town. KDNS is part of Sunflower State Radio which covers rural areas of Kansas including Glen Elder.

Customs

Glen Elder is considered “*The Gateway to Waconda Lake.*” Recreational activities abound on the lake, ranging from boating, water skiing, and camping to fishing, ice fishing and hunting. Fishing at the outlet on Glen Elder Dam is considered by many to be a must when in the area. Glen Elder Fun Day is held the second Saturday in August. People can view the parade and booths, play games, and eat barbecue and homemade ice cream.

Art

Located in the City Park in the town square is a bronze Statue of Liberty, resting on a marble base. At the north end of City Park is the Peace Pole. The Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance elected to place a Peace Pole in the valley to mark Kansas’ 150-year observance. Glen Elder accepted this honor, with the peace monument being placed in their Town Square there.

This process has renewed acquaintance with Clarence Pickett, whose family came to Glen Elder when he was a child. Pickett went on to a remarkable career of public service. He was the Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, providing leadership for 22 years. The 1947 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to AFSC.

The eight languages selected for the four-sided Peace Pole are Czech, English, French, German, Kaw, Norwegian, Pawnee, and Spanish. Each says “Let peace prevail on Earth.”

Architecture

Town Square is flanked by Mill, Main, Market, and Kansas Streets. Cities in the Solomon River valley were laid out based on three basic architectural plans: (a) the mill plan; (b) the 'T'-shaped or railroad plan; and (c) the town square plan, which is



Glen Elder’s Castle Filling Station is listed on the National Register of Historic Places

what Glen Elder is based on. The square is the heart of the town, with the business district surrounding it. In Glen Elder, the City Park occupies the town square.

The Lee-Thomasson Building, located on the northwest corner of Main and Mill Streets, was built in 1887 of native Post Rock Limestone by Mayo Rouse. It was home to Charles Lee



Looking west across the city of Glen Elder and Waconda Lake

Hardware & Furniture Store until 1903, when D.A. Thomasson bought the business and carried it on in his name.

The Castle Filling Station located at the corner of Main and Market Streets is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built of native Post Rock Limestone in 1926 by Ernest "Ernie" Norris, who based his design on castles he saw in Germany during World War I. The matching garage was built in 1929.

Geography

“*The Best Little Town By a Dam Site*” is what Glen Elder is also known as. Construction on Glen Elder Dam began in 1964 below the forks of the Solomon River and the dedication was held in 1968. With well over 100 miles of shoreline, Waconda Lake is the third largest body of water in Kansas, trailing only Milford and Tuttle Creek Reservoirs.

Glen Elder Bluff is located on the southwest corner of town overlooking the northern end of Glen Elder Dam. The bluff, and its ability to deflect the worst of a winter's weather away from the site where Limestone Creek emptied into the Solomon River, was one of the prime reasons for the location of the town of Glen Elder.

People

George Stinson, a Justice of the Peace, is credited with naming Glen Elder and opened the first two stores here, operated a land office, and was the first Glen Elder postmaster in 1870. In 1872 he sold his land and helped to settle the townsite of Phillipsburg, Kansas.

Arthur “Art” Beyers was born in Germany in 1883. He arrived in the United States in 1904 and moved to Glen Elder in 1914. Art was a longtime businessman and town mayor who operated a bakery and then Beyer’s Café. He died at the age of 103 in 1986.

Walter Keef was a local druggist who served as state senator for the surrounding district in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Clarence Rarick was born on a homestead just northwest of Glen Elder in 1879. He attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York in 1900 before resigning to become a teacher. Clarence taught in rural schools and then at Osborne and Plainville. In 1919 he began teaching at Fort Hays State College and was named college president in 1934. Clarence is credited with changing the college into a university, for leading it through the Great Depression, and also for securing world-renowned paleontologist George Sternberg as curator of museums, earning the university international recognition. Rarick Hall stands today on the Fort Hays State University campus as a permanent memorial to him.

Cuisine

Waconda Lake fresh fish—you catch ‘em, you cook ‘em!

History

The earliest settlers known to Glen Elder were the Truman Allen and David Anderson families, arriving in the spring and fall of 1869 on Limestone Creek on the north side of the present Glen Elder townsite. George Stinson soon started the first two stores, the “Tanzy Bitter Saloon,” which was surrounded with a stockade to provide protection from Indian attacks, and the “Log Cabin Home,” a log shanty used as a hotel. The only known artifact from the original Glen Elder townsite is a large rock sign, uncovered in two parts in later years, when Max & Phyllis Porter built a new home. The sign has crudely carved lettering “*Log Cabin Home Glen Elder 1870*” and now sits in their yard on the north side of U.S. Highway 24.

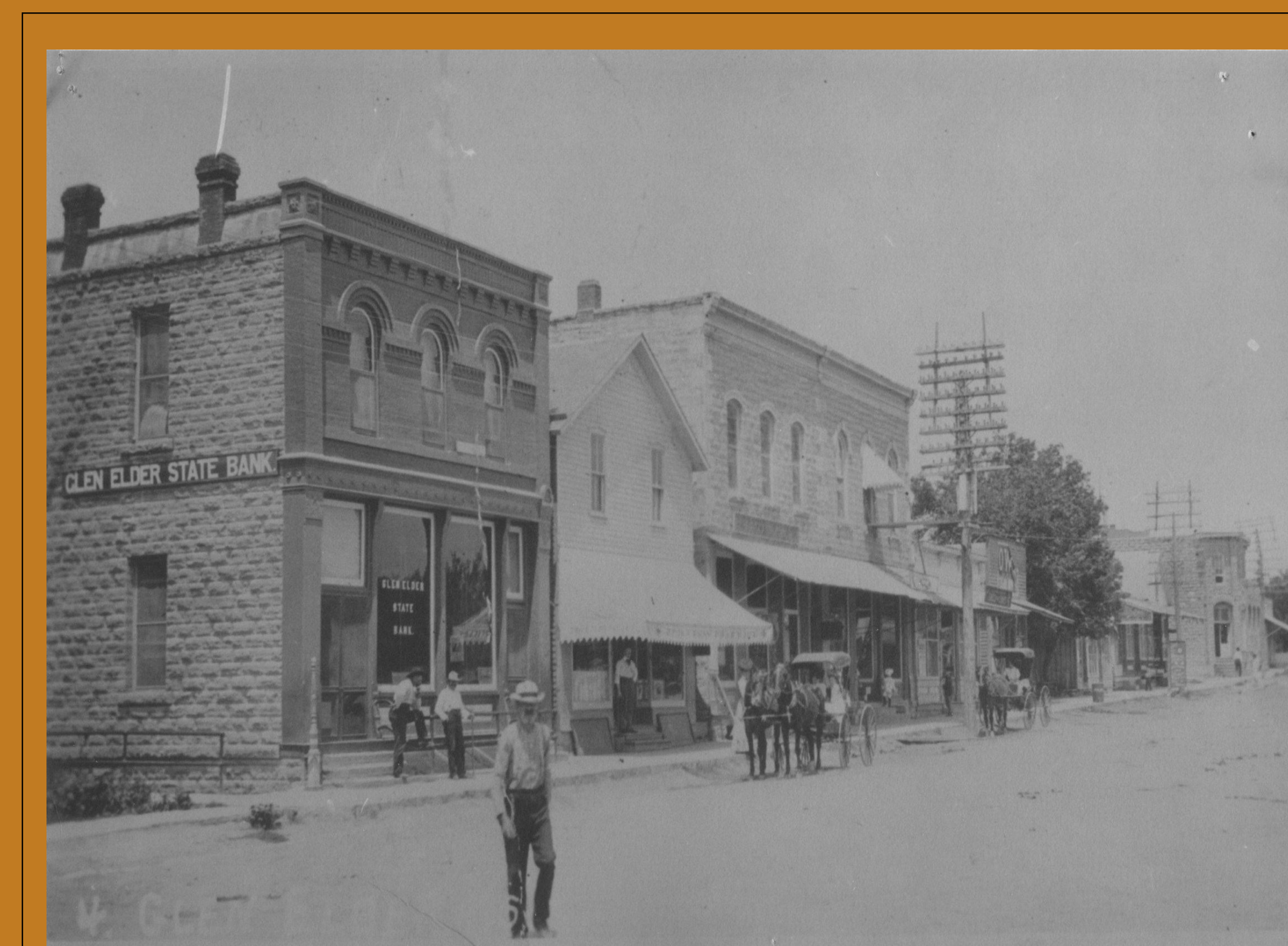
The village of West Hampton was platted in 1872 within the boundaries of the present Glen Elder business district. Charles Davis opened the first store, selling flour from the mill. When the railroad came through on the south edge of West Hampton, the postal department wanted the Glen Elder post office from out north of the present townsite to be nearer the new railway. Glen Elder Township took a vote and agreed to change the name of West Hampton to Glen Elder. This was done and Glen Elder was officially incorporated on November 28, 1879, as a city of the third class.

A dam was constructed in 1870 on the Solomon River at the south edge of town and provided power for a mill, which remained one of the principal businesses at Glen Elder for sixty years. A cement dam later replaced the original wooden one. A three-story flowing roller mill was built in 1886 and the business was known as one of the best in the area.

This dam provided a swimming hole for the youth of the community for many years. In February 1928, a break in the dam and the “Old Mill Pond” was a thing of the past. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1930 and was never rebuilt.

From 1918, when the Midland Trail brought tourists through town, until the population decline beginning after World War II, downtown Glen Elder was a popular and busy destination.

The modern school system began in 1887 when a new building was opened on the hill above Glen Elder. A new high school building was built in 1917 and was used until May 1971, when consolidation forced it’s closure. The Glen Elder “Bearcats” served their school and town well and were active in sports, speech, drama, music, woodworking and many other activities through the years.



The west side of Glen Elder’s Town Square in it’s heyday