

# STOCKTON

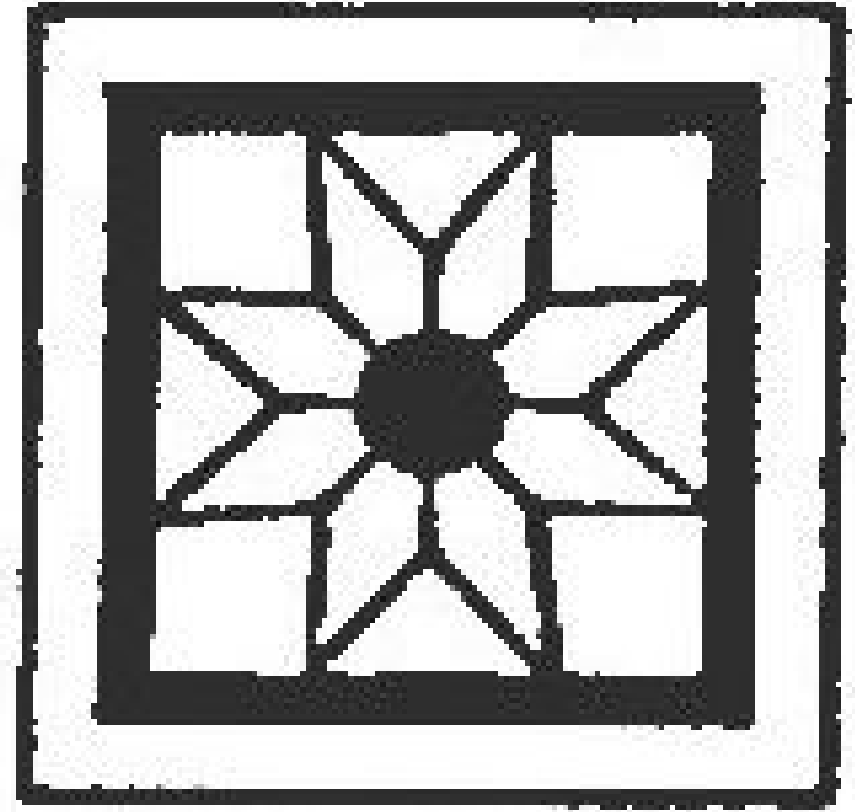
*Established 1872*

## GEOGRAPHY

*Welcome to the High Plains!*

West of Stockton begins a geological area known as the 'High Plains.' Hardly the flat area that many people associate with Kansas, this area of rolling hills and vast grasslands is interrupted by lakes, chalkbeds, sunflowers and fields of green. Webster Lake lies eight miles west of Stockton. Originally built for flood control, Webster Lake has become a recreational attraction for western Kansas.

*Kansas Sampler*



*Eight Rural Elements*

The High Plains begin the gradual ascent to the Rocky Mountains as visitors travel west. If you are headed east, you will notice the valleys are a little deeper and the Solomon River begins to flow more heavily.

## PEOPLE

*There's (Black) Gold in Them  
There Hills*

When Stockton became the county seat in 1872, its commercial future was cemented in agriculture and government. The south end of Rooks County had been known as a large oil producing area for many years, but the north end of the county was mostly left out of that industry. However, in the 1980s and 1990s oil was discovered right in the middle of Stockton. The resulting boom made several people wealthier than they were before. One such person included Frank Walker, who donated money to build the Rooks County Museum and the Senior Citizens Center.

If you travel around the north part of Stockton you will see oil pumping units right in the middle of residential areas. A number of zoning issues had to be dealt with, but no one wanted to turn down the money that the "black gold" meant for individuals or the community.

At the entrance to town you will notice a small sign recognizing Stockton as the home to Lorenzo Fuller. Fuller, a musician, made it big in New York City, performing in many plays and on the 1950 television show, *Van and the Genie*.



*The Rooks County Museum in southern Stockton was named for benefactor Frank Walker.*



*The Midway at the Rooks County Free Fair*

## HISTORY

*A Cow Town that Became the  
County Seat*

The City of Stockton, incorporated in 1880, originally developed into a market center for farmers and ranchers. Some people wanted to name the town McNultyville, after Joseph McNulty, who homesteaded 160 acres of the land. As stock raising was the only industry at first, the names Stockville and Stocktown were urged, but Stockton was finally settled upon.

A replica of McNulty's log home stands at the corner of Highway 24 and Cypress Street. (Note the lean-to, which was later added onto the cabin to become the town's first hotel.) The land was on the military trail that led south to Fort Hays, and north to Fort Kearney.

## ART

*Felton's Horse Graces  
Museum Entrance*

Located at 921 S. Cedar, the Frank Walker Museum has an outstanding display of items from Rooks County's history. A limestone workhorse sculpture, created by famed Hays artist Pete Felton, accents the entrance to the museum. Felton's sculptures are treasured throughout Kansas.

Stockton offers other works of art around town such as a multitude of barn quilts, murals at the intersection of Main and Walnut, a painted county history in the courthouse, or the unique steps and other works inside the City Library.

## CUISINE

*Bakery tradition, and Fair food*

Rural areas are often known for their good food. In order to find these hidden treasures, however, visitors sometimes have to ask the locals.

Stockton has a tradition of bakeries offering homemade delights. Names and locations have changed, but the tradition hasn't. Just ask the locals!

Other favorites at our restaurants include chicken-fried steak, chicken and noodles, or just a good, thick prime rib. Other more international cuisine can also be found around town. Whether at a local restaurant, a church supper, community barbecue, or good ole fair food, Stockton knows food!

## ARCHITECTURE

*Take a Walking Tour of Buildings*

The architecture of the buildings and houses in Stockton represents a time when 'building big' reflected citizens' aspirations for a growing town. The magnificent two-story buildings on Main Street, and large Victorian houses scattered throughout town, provide a glimpse of their vision. Pick up a brochure at the historic Rooks County Courthouse on Walnut Street or at the WPA era City Office building (also on Walnut) and take a walking tour of many of Stockton's historic buildings.

## CUSTOMS

*The "Fair of Champions"*

The Rooks County Free Fair has been a trademark of Stockton since 1879. The "Fair of Champions" is one of the largest and oldest county fairs in Kansas. Held during the second week of August, the fair is one of many customs that have endured for more than a century in Stockton. Travel to south Stockton and view the fair's original limestone grandstand, which was built as a WPA project.

Other customs and events include craft and garage sales, and the annual Swing Into Summer Festival, and the newly-created Peony Festival.

## COMMERCE

*It may not be Cabela's, but...*

Searching for truly unique gifts? Or would you rather view the barbed wire deer head? Stockton has several shops that are curious enough to warrant a special trip inside. Baxter Bait and Tackle may not be Cabela's, but it offers a tremendous variety of products that will delight anyone who loves a wilderness adventure. What a great place to stop on the way to Webster Lake!

Stockton's Main Street offers a real variety of shopping, whether you have a yearning for antique or restored furniture, hand crafted stone products, or quilting material.

The city has worked hard to maintain the downtown brick street that makes up Main Street. A person can sit on any of the park benches lining the street and listen to the rumble of cars and trucks as they travel through on Highway 24.



*Stockton's historic brick Main Street gives the downtown a unique character.*