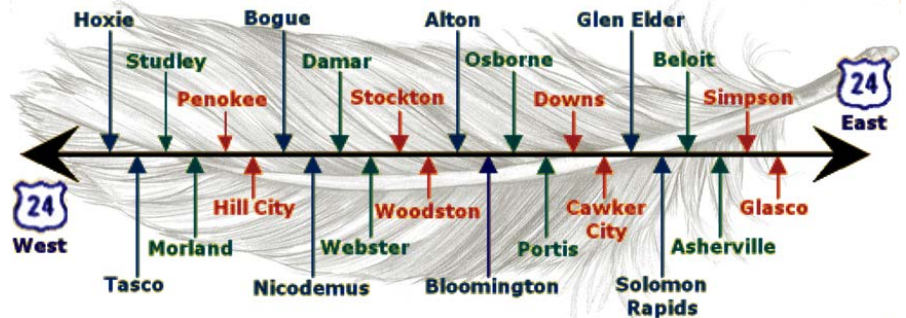
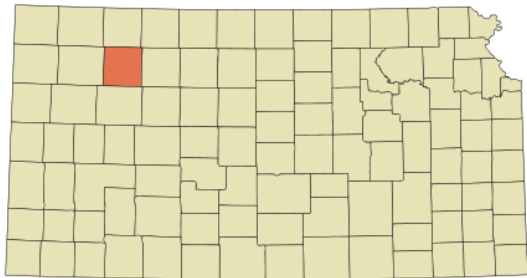




Tasco, Kansas

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History of Tasco

by Jennifer Spresser

[This is twenty-second in a series featuring the 24 communities in the Alliance. Jennifer Spresser is director of Mickey's Museum in Hoxie and vice-president of the SV24 board. The valley communities will be presented in alphabetical order, so long as the community provides the material by deadline (June 1). Next issue will be Webster.]

When describing the area along Highway 24 that is now Tasco, one must start with the earliest settlers of the land. In an area southeast of Tasco, known as "Museum," is a spring that is thought to have been a gathering place for Indians moving through the plains. Indian artifacts have been readily found.

It is also believed that near the present site of Tasco, a fight between a large number of Cheyenne Indians and U. S. Cavalry took place. Records indicate that, in the summer of 1857, Colonel. E. V. Sumner, who was commander at Fort Leavenworth, was engaged in a campaign against these Indians in both Kansas and Nebraska. In July of that year, he engaged a large number of these Cheyennes in the area of the Solomon River valley. The Indians were chased from the field, but Sumner's forces suffered two casualties and nine others were wounded in the battle. One of the wounded was Lt. J. E. B. Stuart, who later became famous as a Confederate general during the Civil War. After the battle, a small sod fort was erected to provide protection for them while the wounded were allowed to heal. This is considered to be probably the first sod building in Sheridan County ever erected, but no remains of it have been found to indicate the exact site. [Editor's note: an ongoing project of the SV24 Alliance is seeking the site of that 1857 battle and the location of the Cheyenne village at the time.]

Indians & Name Change

Thirty years later, in 1887, the railroad made its way into the county and, in a valley at the junction of the South Solomon River and Sand Creek, Mr. Perkins and Mr. Hopkins built a general store. This store was the beginning of a community named Guy, in honor of Mr. Perkins's son.

In its early years, Guy served as a livestock shipping center for the ranches in the area. A stockyard was built to hold 400 head of cattle. Another source of the town's revenue was

to come from a project damming the South Solomon River to create water power to operate a flour mill. Unfortunately the mill was abandoned after one winter's work had been done.

Guy has boasted a general store, blacksmith, cream station, lumber yard, garage, and implement dealer, though never a hotel, bank, or saloon. The town was never incorporated and never had a water system. The people who made up the population of Guy were either businessmen or railroad workers. On June 15, 1923, the name of the post office was changed from Guy to Tasco.

The Tasco Runt

Frank Brandram, an Englishman from the neighboring community of Studley, started a newspaper called the Tasco Runt. It was short lived due to the fact that the editor printed it only when he was in the mood. It was a scandal sheet; provoking fights, breaking up homes, and almost getting him shot.

Pleasure Resorts

Part of Tasco's claim to fame during the 1920s were two large pleasure resorts developed for recreation purposes near the town. One was known as "Houseworth's." The other was called "Ewers Place." At both places lakes were dammed and bath houses, diving boards, diving ladders, and slides into the water were built. Both resorts sported fine baseball fields, tennis courts, horseshoe grounds, and other recreation areas.

The two owners of these recreational areas had a rivalry with each other as to who could promote the greatest crowds and have the most going on. At the "Houseworth Place" there was a very large spring. A water wheel was constructed, which turned continuously by cascading water leading from the lake. "Ewers Place" boasted the "Death Dive," a dive performed at night by a daredevil diver who would mount a platform with a diving ladder, ignite himself and remain on the board for an instant before diving into the water to extinguish the flames. Both resorts died out in the Depression.

As written by Ed Conard: "The 1920's were good years for the small town, but like so many communities throughout the Midwest, the 1930's brought times too difficult for a small town to survive through. Tasco's dying out was not uncommon for many communities suffered similar fates in the wake of the Depression and war years. For all practicality, the town is dead now. Tumble weeds blow freely down its once busy dirt streets, catch here and there against a tree or fence. Life, though, exists in a small way with a few families having houses along the dusty road that once served the tiny community."

Stories Of Land Of Man Of Nature