

Location of railroad prompted new location of town

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Train tracks and mail order catalogs prompted Kenneth city fathers to pick up their buildings and move them to what is now the town of Hoxie.

From 1878 to 1885, residents of Kenneth, originally located three miles northeast of the current town of Hoxie, bustled in and out of homes and businesses, arriving by stage coach or wagon, but when the railroad was built, the closest station was three miles to the southwest.

"Kenneth was the first county seat in Sheridan County," said historian and life-long county resident Don Rowilson. "Kenneth was moved because of the railroad."

Rowilson said the logistics of the Union Pacific line to the south caused Kenneth's leaders to move the town.

The rail line was built in 1888 on ground which was more flat compared to Kenneth's location in rolling hills.

"Some of the Kenneth business men formed a town company," he said. "They purchased lots, and people that were willing to move to Hoxie got a free city lot."

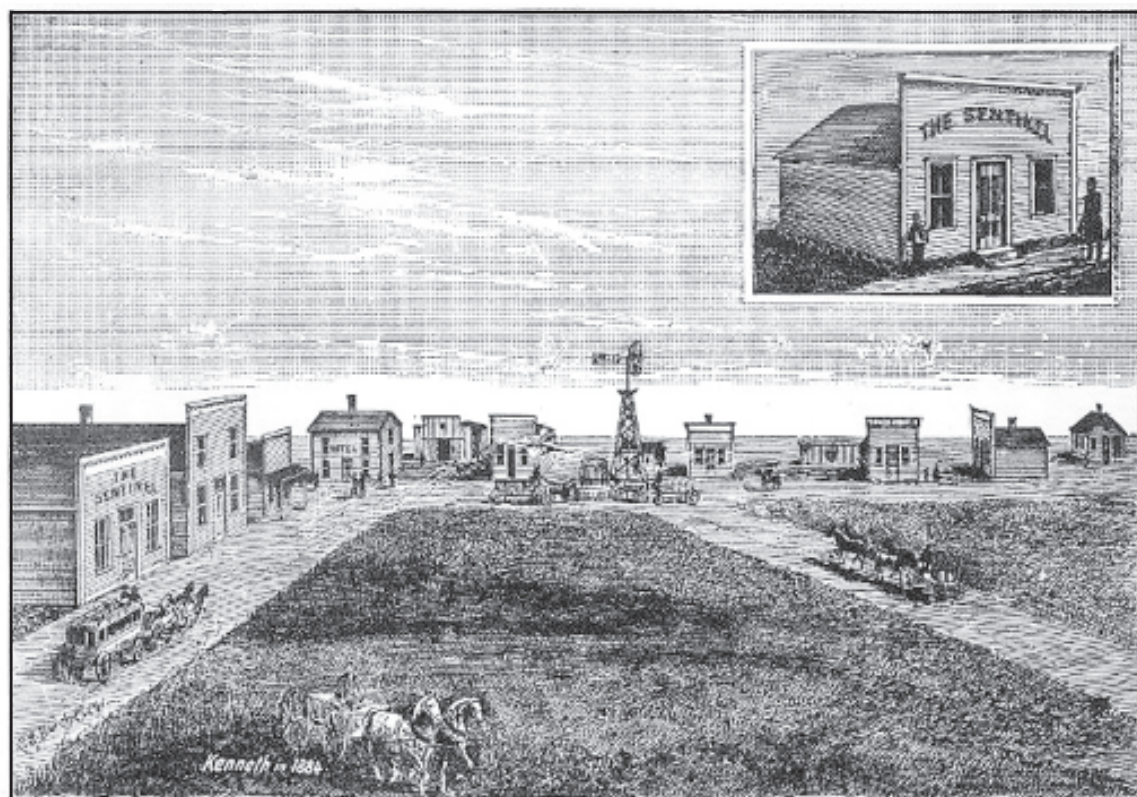
According to an article published in July 1976 as part of a bi-centennial insert to the Hoxie Sentinel, owners of the Hoxie Town Company contracted with George H. Dimond to move Kenneth's buildings to Hoxie.

Hoxie itself has a significant connection to the railroad, having been named after Herbert Mallory Hoxie, general manager for the Union Pacific at the time the railroad was laid through Sheridan County. Hoxie the man, died on Nov. 23, 1886, just four months after Kenneth was moved to the town of Hoxie, which had become county seat on July 29, 1886.

Rowilson said teams of horses and oxen were used to move the town's 12 buildings, which stood in Kenneth around a rectangular city square.

"After several abortive attempts to move the Central Hotel building from Kenneth to Hoxie, the old hostelry came sailing into town, drawn

CONTRIBUTED GRAPHIC
An artist's drawing of the late 1800s town of Kenneth shows businesses erected around a town square. Sheridan County's first county seat, Kenneth was moved in 1886 three miles to the south to be located closer to the railroad system. Kenneth is now known as Hoxie



by 23 teams and one yoke of oxen," the article said. Spring storms didn't dampen the endeavors of the town moving enthusiasts, but according to the article the schoolhouse sustained considerable damage during one storm as it rested on blocks waiting to be moved. Following the move of the building to Hoxie, it was converted into a bakery and restaurant.

Also during a storm, a new building which housed Crum and George Hardware was blown about five feet from its foundation, and an older building behind it was blown two feet from its original location.

The rear of Harris and O'Dell's livery barn was damaged. It was saved by "strenuous efforts of parties inside the building," the article said.

Rowilson said as the railroad became more active in 1893, so did Hoxie.

Ongoing work of the rail system took place at the same time Hoxie grew.

"There were a lot of bugs in the railroad," Rowilson said. "The river and creeks would come up and wash away the grade and they were always working on it, repairing bridges and building up the grade."

Rowilson said it was difficult for Hoxie's new city officials to keep track of who owned which businesses.

"Records weren't distinct enough to know who was selling to whom and what businesses were coming into town," Rowilson said. "But I've got microfilms of the early-day newspapers dating back to July 17, 1884."

Fred C. Conard, 94, said he remembers the impact the railroad had on Sheridan County and Hoxie until the railroad's end in 1998.

"I was born three miles east of Tasco but my grandparents homesteaded here in 1880," Conard said. "When the railroad came through, Kenneth was clear off the railroad and that's why they moved Kenneth to Hoxie." *Tasco is located seven miles east of Hoxie.*

Conard said he remembers his grandparents and parents relying on the railroad as a way of receiving supplies and mail.

"All the mail was carried on the trains," he said. "My folks would order things from a catalog, and the order would come on the train and be shipped to us by horse and buggy."

Conard said a mail carrier named

Frank English would deliver mail-ordered items to his house on a route which originated out of Hoxie.

"After a while, they established a mail route out of Studley, which was closer to us," he said. Studley is located 14 miles east of current day Hoxie.

Conard said the rail line also played a significant role in people traveling to Hoxie.

He said he remembers people arriving on the train, then using local livery stables to rent a horse or rig.

"People would come in on the train and rent a horse and buggy, and now they come in on a plane and rent a car," he said with a laugh. Conard said as an adult he, too, relied on the railroad system to conduct business.

He said he remembers ordering supplies which allowed him to teach school for seven years, and serve as county clerk from 1938 to 1943.

"Then I was a cashier at the State Bank for one year," he said, "and then I volunteered to serve in World War II as a Navy radar operator."

After his stint in the war, Conard returned to Hoxie and owned a Ford dealership. He said he relied on trains to deliver shipments of goods and supplies, including cars.

Conard said, while located in different buildings, two of Hoxie's current businesses stand where two former Kenneth businesses took root: Michelle Patmon's clothing and dry goods store, called Plum Creek Ltd, and Darel Gilliland's hardware and auto supply store, Great Plains Automotive Supply.

Rowilson, 56, agreed with Conard about businesses using trains to deliver goods and supplies to Hoxie. And he said people relied heavily on mail order catalogs.

Rowilson said he remembers as a child seeing advertisements in Sears, Roebuck catalogs for monkeys and burros.

"If you had the money, you could get anything in the world through a mail order catalog," he said. "Anything from needles to houses."

"The houses were neat," Rowilson said. "They came in crates and all you had to do was put them up. You could even get them turn key, with the plumbing and furniture."

Don James remembers one of the mail-order houses.

His father and mother, Jacob James and Melvina (Goff) James, ordered one from Sears and had it erected by James Weeks sometime between 1910 and 1915.

"It was shipped in by box car and brought out here in a wagon," James said, meaning the family farm three miles west of Hoxie on U.S. Highway 24.

James remembers playing in the house as a child and later owning it. He said and his wife Bette bought the farm in 1973, and while they no longer have, at one time had the original plans to the house.

The couple moved out of the house in 1976 after building a brick home just to the south of it.

They rented the mail order house out for several years, then stood until 1998, when stained glass doors which arrived by rail was salvaged and incorporated into the couple's current home.

The home when uninhabitable, was taken down.

"There was a china cabinet between the kitchen and the dining room and it had eight leaded glass doors on it," Bette said. "We had the glass put in these doors and still use them."

It took less than two months to move the town of Kenneth closer to the railroad.

Kenneth is long gone, and the railroad no longer going through Hoxie, but stories about both continue to be told even today.

Not only have stories made their way into the lives of people living in and near Hoxie, items like leaded glass from a Sears and Roebuck catalog have kept the spirit of Kenneth alive.

Sidewalk Sale

- Furniture
- Discounted Gift Items

Aug. 21-25

Open until 7 p.m. Thurs.; 9-4 on Sat.

OFFICE WORKS & Home Furnishings
960 South Range Colby, KS 67701
www.askofficeworks.com (785) 462-2222 FAX: (785) 462-2262

Farmers hope demands reflect cost

URBANA, Ill. (AP) — The principle of supply-and-demand has corn farmer David Kurtz bubbling with enthusiasm about the future of his business.

Dozens of ethanol plants under construction across the Midwest and Great Plains will mean more demand for corn, and that likely will lead to higher prices and bigger profits.

"I happen to be more encouraged by what I see going on in agriculture now than anytime from the time I got involved in it in 1977," said Kurtz, who farms about 800 acres southeast of Urbana. "More demand for corn, it's very simple, it leads to higher prices."

More than three dozen ethanol plants are under construction or expansion, according to the Renewable Fuels Association. Add those to nearly 100 that are already producing and it's easy to recognize the need for much more of the gasoline additive's major raw material, says Darel L. Good, a crop marketing specialist at the University of Illinois.

In fact, the portion of the U.S. corn crop consumed for ethanol production is projected to rise from

12 percent in 2004-05 to 23 percent in 2014-15, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report released earlier this year. American farmers grew about 11.1 billion bushels of corn last year.

"I think very quickly, maybe as soon as next year, we need another five million acres of corn, 5 to 6 percent more corn," Good says, assessing the nationwide need. "And maybe we need to add to that a little more in '08."

That means farmers, who already are beginning to think about next year's crops, need to decide now whether to plant more acres of corn, he said. Many of those extra acres could come from more farmers breaking traditional crop rotation patterns and planting corn on the same ground corn is growing on this year.

"If they're going to do corn-on-corn it implies maybe some more fall tillage, more fertilizer needs, more cash needs, difference in seed requirements," Good said. "You can't wait until the last minute to make all those decisions."

Good and colleague Gary Schmitkey developed a formula for farmers to determine whether

growing more corn might be more profitable than keeping a 50-50 corn-soybean rotation. They determine a break-even price for growing corn by considering the difference between the cost of growing corn and the cost of growing soybeans — which they set at about \$110 per acre — soybean price relative to soybean yield and corn price relative to corn yield.

Using a \$6 per bushel benchmark price for soybeans, Good and Schmitkey reason that the break-even price for corn would be about \$2.40 per bushel. Prices above that favor growing more corn while prices below favor soybeans.

"I think for a lot of producers, particularly in high-productive corn areas, you're going to find that break-even price is at a pretty reasonable level and probably at or below what the market is offering for the '07, '08 and '09 crop," Good told farmers attending the university's Agronomy Day last week.

"We believe that there is a lot of momentum here, a lot of attractiveness to growing more corn, but you've got to push the pencil on it here as you make the decision."

BOLD
transcends expectations

FUSION

	2006 Ford Fusion	2006 Honda Accord	2006 Toyota Camry	2006 Nissan Altima
	S 14 4-Door Sedan	4 CYL Manual 4-Door	4 CYL Manual 4-Door	4 CYL Manual 4-Door
Standard 16" Wheels	Yes	No	No	Not Available
Standard MP3-Capable Audio System	Yes	No	No	No
Available Six-Speed Automatic Transmission	Yes	No	No	No
Crash Sensor	Yes	Not Listed	Not Listed	Not Listed
Standard Electronic Message Center	Yes	No	No	No
Standard Six-Way Power Driver's Seat	Yes	No	No	No
Manual Tilt/Telescopic Steering Column	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Standard Power and Heated Exterior Mirrors	Yes	No	Yes	No
Available Steering Wheel-Mounted Speed, Audio and Climate Controls	Yes	No	No	No
Standard 4-Wheel Disc Brakes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Dash-Top Storage Bin	Yes	No	No	No
Trip Computer	Yes	No	No	No
Keyless Entry	Yes	Yes	No	No
Base Price MSRP	\$17,145	\$18,775	\$18,445	\$17,750

\$219
PER MONTH FOR 39 MONTHS*



BOLD MOVES

TUBBS & SONS FORD SALES
810 S. Range Ave. • Colby, KS
785-460-6746

Fusion SE model shown. *39-month/12,000-mile Red Carpet Lease with \$2,038 due at signing. Excludes taxes, title, license and registration fees. Not all buyers will qualify for Ford Credit Red Carpet Lease. Payments may vary; dealer determines prices. Residency restrictions apply. Take new retail delivery from dealer stock by 10/2/06. See dealer for qualifications and complete details.