

History - City of Solomon

Solomon lies among two rivers, one being the Solomon River and the other being the Smoky Hill River. It lies in the central part of Kansas between Salina and Abilene. Solomon has retained a population of around 1,000 residents for many years.

If the development of a town called "Buchanan", near the mouth of the Solomon River had been a success, no doubt Solomon City, as it was first named, would never have come into existence. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, Buchanan did not develop into a city.

The second session of the territorial legislature in 1856 chartered a company under the name of "Buchanan Town Company", taking the name from the newly elected President of the United States. This company was given thousands of acres of land to build cities, construct railways, etc. Richard Mobley, a pro-slavery man, was made president of this company.

In 1857, the first settlement in the area was made. The cabins in this area were destroyed. One account states the destruction was caused by a prairie fire; another they were destroyed by flood waters from the river. Either cause could have been possible; no trace is left of their existence, no landmarks whatever remain to prove the exact location of "Buchanan".

The French named several important rivers in Kansas. Among those named was the Solomon River. The word "Solomon" is believed to be a corruption of the word "salmon". Solomon was founded under the name of "Solomon City". Later the word, "City" was dropped.

In 1865 the idea of Solomon City laid out at the mouth of the Solomon River on land belonging to Henry Whitley was conceived. Within a few years, little land adjacent to Solomon was available either for entry or purchase at the attractive low prices offered in the past.

The people of Solomon were of modest means. Most of the family heads had come to the plains with little but industry and purpose to aid in building the community. Most of the settlers were Civil War Veterans who had filed on homesteads under the liberal opportunities of the Homestead Act, while others purchased railroad land. Railroads were active in promoting the sale of land, realizing they must rely on increasing production to sustain the railways.

The first car of wheat was shipped from Solomon in 1871. Wheat was the principal cash crop of the early day farmers. Solomon remained a trading point. The water power at Solomon was excellent and in 1872 a grist mill was built at the confluence of the two rivers.

In 1871, the town had grown sufficiently to enable it to be incorporated and during that year became a third class city.

Solomon never seemed destined to become a great industrial center but rather to be a civic center for the surrounding rural community. Settlers claimed the farmland around this newly organized town and it grew and developed largely because it was a trading center as well as a place for the social and religious activities of these rural people.

In 1894, the drought was so severe; the locals raised \$200 and hired a "rainmaking train" owned by the Rock Island Railroad to come to the City. Despite this, the weather remained hot, dry and windy.

Ironic as it may seem, the iron rails which brought trade and prosperity to Solomon were also a major cause for her decline. During the 1880's, Solomon had four railroads operating and all four were doing good business. However, in the late 1880's, the Missouri Pacific and Rock Island Railroads were completed through southwestern Dickinson County. With the building of these railroads, the trade which Solomon had enjoyed was lost when new towns were started to the south. The final reason for Solomon's early decline was due to the competition from Abilene and Salina. Abilene is located seven miles to the east and Salina is located thirteen miles due west. These towns drew trade away from Solomon and the local citizens did not bring in enough new industry or provide adequate services to keep pace with those two towns. As a result, Solomon was left behind in terms of growth and development after 1885.

Many travelers come to central Kansas during the summer vacation months. Many of these people travel on our interstate highways. Kansas is blessed with definite seasons. It is blessed with many major rivers and from those rivers most Kansas are provided many recreational activities. Large man-made reservoirs provide fishing, boating and skiing during the summer months, while others enjoyed just fishing the local rivers. Catfish is plentiful along the Solomon River. We enjoy hunting, both with bow and gun. Kansas is not people living in dug-outs, riding horses and fighting Indians. Nor is Kansas a tornado-ridden state. Kansas had no more tornadoes than many other states in the area. We do have many windy summer days. Guess God gave us those to get all our wheat dry and golden for harvesting. This isn't the "Wizard of Oz" land nor is it the land of cowboys and Indians as shown in the old movies. We are an agriculture orientated state with many other industries becoming major to our makeup. We in Solomon have many occupations: farming, cattle, racing Greyhound Dog breeding and care aside from all the normal employment that you readily know. Solomon itself is the Kansas home of "Sunbelt-Solomon", which refurbishes and rebuilds electrical transformers for people all over the world. While we have many things going for this community, the most is that it is a community with a low population with all the life necessities which looks good to those who must work in the larger populated cities but wish to have their families in a smaller more closely knit informal community. We in Solomon, although becoming more involved in the industrial larger picture, still have been able to retain the most important part of any lifestyle, "the family".

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