

Lane

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The Pottawatomie Indians were moved to the Lane area in 1837 and established their settlement about a mile north of the Pottawatomie Creek bridge on the east side of the road. That year, Mr. Simerwell arrived to teach the Indian children. A mission was erected in 1840 to provide teaching for both the Indian children and adults. Reverend Jotham Meeker preached there in Indian languages in 1840. His sermon is listed as the first religious meeting held in the Mission.

In the 1846 Treaty, the Pottawatomie were granted new lands in the present counties of Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Jackson and Pottawatomie. Among the first settlers in the Lane area were the Sherman brothers, Henry, William and Peter. A post office was established March 21, 1855 and named Shermanville after the Shermans who had established a store and home at a crossing on the Pottawatomie. This crossing was within the limits of the original town of Emerson and at the northeast edge of the present town of Lane. The Dutch Henry cabin was known as a meeting place for pro-slavery men and border ruffians, and it was the focal point of the "Pottawatomie Massacre" that occurred May 24-5, 1856.

A small band of abolitionists led by John Brown murdered five pro-slavery men: James P. Doyle and his sons William and Drury, Allen Wilkinson and William Sherman, the only Sherman at home at the crossing, who was taken down the creek bank and killed. Henry Sherman, the desired victim of the Massacre, was shot and killed the next year while riding on the prairie.

About this time, a townsite company was being organized and entered in land office tract books May 16, 1857 under the name of Sewanoe. This name honored a Pottawatomie chief buried on the brow of a hill southeast of (present) Lane.

Legislative action after 1858—the first legislature controlled by free-state men—chartered the Lane City Association. However, the association failed to complete titles of its site. In the meantime, the post office of Shermanville was closed but was re-established in March, 1857. On January 28, 1863, the name Shermanville was changed to Lane, at the suggestion of Mrs. John Hanway, in honor of General James H. Lane.

The city of Lane began with the building of the railroad from Paola to Leroy (1879-80). The railroad changed hands and a new town named Emerson was laid out and platted adjoining Lane on the north. Emerson included all the railroad right of way and the depot. Avondale was

the name selected by the railroad for the depot which was given and retained until 1881. A petition was circulated to have the post office renamed Avondale, but was strongly opposed by some of the old settlers. Both Emerson and Lane town companies drafted articles of incorporation and filed them in early 1879. For eighteen months the two rival towns tried to build themselves up at the expense of the other. During the latter part of 1881, the strife ceased and Lane began to prosper.

The Lane mills were built in 1881, along with a new two-story rough "coralline marble" school house and about thirty dwellings. In early 1882, another twenty dwellings were built along with a hotel, three general stores, a drug store, a boot and shoe store, two millinery stores, two blacksmith shops, a wagon shop, an agricultural implement depot and a marble shop. A number of church organizations developed and the town grew to about 300 inhabitants.

Lincoln Park was developed just across Pottawatomie Creek north of the village. A 40x80 foot tabernacle was erected in 1882 and was used for religious services of all denominations. Lane's first newspaper was the *Lane Advance*, established July 1, 1881.

Judge John S. Hanway received a patent on land southwest of Lane and opened a quarry where a type of granular limestone or statuary marble was found. It was called "coralline marble" as it resembled the coralline marble found in Derbyshire quarries in England. The limestone was used in many buildings and houses in the Lane vicinity including two of Hanway's homes that are still serving as homes today.

A bank opened in 1892 and operated until it failed in 1923. The District Fair Association including Franklin, Miami, Linn and Anderson counties, was organized in 1892 and the first fair was held that September in Lincoln Park. A racetrack, noted as one of the finest in the state, was one of the attractions. The second annual fair followed in 1893.

In 1892, some thirty farmers from Kentucky settled in the area and engaged in tobacco farming. Seven large tobacco barns were built and a cigar factory was placed in operation. All the barns are now gone. The Lane Cemetery Association was formed in 1901. Finley Brownlee is reported as the first burial. The period of prosperity came to an end when in 1907, a fire destroyed fourteen businesses on the east side of the street.

The Farmers Elevator was built in 1918-19 on ground leased from the railroad. Later it failed, then operated privately for several years and was razed in 1980. A prosperous hatchery business was opened in 1930 by Loy Gerth and continued to grow through the 1940s.

Lane Stories Told by My Dad About the Hearse and His Horses

My Dad told a story about delivering a body to a cemetery maybe twenty miles away. It would be below zero and sitting up on top of this horse-drawn hearse, no matter how many clothes he had on, he would freeze. So after the funeral, Dad and the undertaker would climb inside the glass hearse to get out of the wind. Dad would turn the horses loose to make their way home while he and the undertaker stayed in the back of the hearse. For this, you had to have well-trained horses, because if they decided to run, there was no way to get out of the back of the hearse to stop them.

The roads then were not like today. You would drive one mile, turn a corner and drive another mile and then turn again. On a very cold day, my dad would jump off the hearse before the corner, cut across the field to warm himself and meet the horses around the curve. These horses thought this was a game and as soon as Dad jumped off, they knew it and they would pick up the pace and try to beat my dad to the point where he would get back on the hearse. He had smart horses.

My father had a fine team of black horses and pulled the hearse for the Lane undertaker. One day, he was told by the undertaker that they were to meet the local train at 7:30 p.m. for a body and they were to transport it to the local cemetery. When they arrived at the depot, they found a number of hooded Ku Klux Klansmen. They were informed that the body of a very important Klansman was coming in. The Klansmen unloaded the casket and placed it in the hearse; Dad was told to wait one-half hour before starting to the cemetery. After the one-half hour, he started to the cemetery with six hooded men walking beside the hearse. Every fifty feet, there was another hooded man with a torch in his hand. Dad said he was very lucky he had a well-trained team. Even then it was hard to hold them at this unusual affair. Dad estimated there must have been some three hundred Klansmen there. This was quite a show for a little sleepy Kansas town.

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