

NORTHWEST QUADRANT DRIVING TOUR

Welcome to the Dickinson County Historical Society's northwest quadrant driving tour. This drive will take you to the towns of Buckeye, Industry, and Manchester. The route is approximately 55 miles in length and can take 2 ½ to 3 hours to drive.

From Abilene, drive east on old Highway 40 for two miles. On the southwest corner of Highway 40 and Jeep Road, you will see the former Pyke Schoolhouse, now a private residence. Turn left (north) onto Jeep Road and travel north for eight miles to the Buckeye intersection, which is 3100 Avenue.

Buckeye Township was first settled by the Buckeye Colony, led by V.P. Wilson. He first visited the county in October of 1869, looking for a suitable site for settlement. He selected this area and returned to Ohio to organize the colony in east-central Ohio and western Pennsylvania. On December 7, 1869, the first party of land seekers, led by Wilson, started out for Buckeye Township. The main body of this colony started from Ulrichville, Ohio, on Tuesday, April 5, 1870. They left on the evening trail, rested one day in St. Louis, and arrived in Abilene on Friday evening, April 8.

The village of Buckeye got its start with a cheese factory built in 1899. Soon a few houses were built or moved into the area. In the front room of one of these houses, Jesse Perry, who had been driving a grocery wagon through the country, opened a general merchandise store. In 1901, through the efforts of John Christner, a post office was opened in the Perry Store and a rural mail route was started. That same year, Perry started erecting a large store building to handle his increasing trade. This building still stands today, though the store was closed in March 1959. Today, the Mutual Aid Association facility is located at 3094 Jeep Road.

The Buckeye colony met in the surrounding schoolhouses for worship in the early years. Later, in 1885, the Church of the Brethren erected a church building on four acres in the NW corner of the Buckeye intersection. In early years, it was known as Chapman Creek Church, although the creek was several miles away. In 1923, the name changed to the Buckeye Church of the Brethren to reflect the location more accurately. It is still an active church and has an adjoining cemetery.

The Farmers Mutual Telephone Company was organized in 1904, with the switchboard and offices in the Perry store. A separate office building was moved into the community at a later date, and the Buckeye Telephone Exchange served the community until late 1973, when it became part of the Tri-County Telephone Association, Inc. A dial service was introduced at that time.

The village of Buckeye was the heart of the community, and reached its heyday around the turn of the century when it had a cheese factory, general store, blacksmith shop, post office, telephone exchange, and a cluster of homes around the church. The population was 15 to 20 persons. It was never platted or incorporated. An early colonist of the community said the area

was “nothing but heaven, earth, and prairie grass”. The residents of the Buckeye community today still say its heaven, earthy, and prairie grass, and much, much more.

From Jeep Road/3100 Avenue intersection, continue north for three miles to the stop sign at 3400 Avenue. Turn left and drive two miles west to Hawk Road. At this intersection, in the SE corner, is the location of the Cheever post office, which was established in 1873 in the home of Dr. Thomas G. Ayers.

Turn right on Hawk Road and drive three miles to the north. Curving to the right, continue following the blacktop road (1st Road, Clay County) for about 1 ¼ miles to the town of Industry. The main street of Industry is on the Dickinson/Clay County line and led to considerable confusion at various times in history. You will find the Industry United Methodist Church at the east end of 1st Road and still an active church. Chapman Creek traverses Industry and the water was an attraction to the Indians, who called the creek “Nishcoba” which means “crooked water”.

The first settlers around Industry came in about 1860. The first town site was platted under the name of Berlin. A post office was established in 1873 with Robert Hamilton as postmaster. In 1877, the post office was moved to the present site, and the name changed to Industry. The industrious miller, Christopher Kassebaum, was responsible for the name change. Among the early businesses in Industry were the Leo Gottreau general store, Latimer general store, Kickel general store, McAfee Bros. wagon and blacksmith shop, Jake Gibbs’ butcher shop, Doc Jones’ icehouse and Albert Munro’s general store. At the west edge of Industry, south of the road (in Dickinson County) on Chapman Creek, a water powered flour mill was first operated by Chris Kassebaum, later by John Kassebaum, and then by Theo Nuss. Industry was never incorporated as a city. At one time, it had a population of 100 to 150 persons. Today, Main Street is almost deserted.

Turn around in Industry and drive back west the 1 ¼ miles to the curve in the blacktop (1st Road) road. Here at this curve, on the north side of the road, was the location of Station #8 of the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express Company. This line was organized in April of 1859 and operated two stagecoaches daily, one starting from Leavenworth and the other from Denver. These Concord coaches had cost \$800 each and were the most modern, comfortable mode of overland transportation of the day. There were 27 stations between Leavenworth and Denver. The stages ran for about 18 months before the line was discontinued.

Horace Greely, editor of the New York Herald Tribune newspaper, made an overland journey from New York to San Francisco in the summer of 1859. He rode the Leavenworth Pike’s Peak Express stage from Leavenworth to Denver. He stayed overnight at Station #7 in Junction City on May 27, 1859. The next morning, he departed at 6:00, traveling north and west after crossing Chapman Station #8 to change mules and dine. Greely described the stop in his book *An Overland Journey*: “There is, of course, no house here, but two small tents and a brush arbor furnishing accommodations for six to fifteen persons, as the case may be. A score of mules are picketed about on the rich grass; there is a rail pen for the two cows. Our landlady gave us an

excellent dinner of bacon and greens, good bread, applesauce, and pie. She would have given us butter had we passed a few days later, but the cows, just arrived, have been over-driven, and need a few days rest and generous feeding. We were in the wagon again a few minutes before noon, for we had thirty-five miles yet to make today, which, with a mule team, requires a long afternoon.”

From the site of Station #8, drive three miles south on Hawk Road to 3400 Avenue, turn right on 3400 Avenue, and drive six miles west to the town of Manchester. Turn right on the second street past the bridge (Bonebrake) and drive north to the stop sign. Turning right, you are now on the Main Street of old Manchester. You are invited to drive around the town and use the park as a picnic spot. The park is located one block north of the post office.

Manchester, like most of the northwest part of the county, was slow in development in the early days because of the lack of a railroad. It wasn't until the Santa Fe Railroad built its branch line from Strong City to Abilene, and northwest through the county to Superior, Nebraska, in the fall of 1887, that the town was organized. J.E. Bonebrake of Abilene and a few other men organized the Manchester Town Company in 1887 and purchased G.H. Harvey's farm on Section 16 in Flora Township. In a short time, the town was platted and building commenced. John Trott, who had come to Kansas by way of Canada, from England, named it Manchester after Manchester, England. A large number of the early settlers of Flora Township came from England or Scotland, originally coming first to eastern U.S. and/or Canada. After the town was platted and buildings built, Jones Freet, who had a store at the Keystone Post Office, north and east of Manchester, move his store and post office into town. Bonebrake and Rice of Abilene built the first store and put in a stock of hardware. D.H. Huey of Abilene built a hotel. A lumberyard, operated by Boardman and Cross, was soon followed by one owned by H.H. Floyd of Abilene. Dr. Weatherly, Manchester's first physician, built the first dwelling. In 1907, Manchester was incorporated as a city of the third class. By 1909, the population had reached 269. During to next 10 to 15 years, in spite of many improvements being made, most of the businesses vanished. Today very little remains of the once busy little town.

When you are ready to leave Manchester, drive to the north-south road on the east edge of town (Daisy Road) and turn right. Drive south on Daisy Road to 3400 Avenue and continue on Daisy Road about 1.3 miles. Looking to the northwest, you should see two depressions in the prairie near the top of the hill. This is the location of two dugouts, one the original home of Robert Lyday, who came to Abilene in 1871 from the celebrated Genesee Valley of New York state. During the Civil War, Lyday was in a New York Cavalry regiment. In the fall of 1871, he homesteaded the northeast quarter of section 28, Flora Township. In the spring of 1872, he built a dugout at this location and moved onto his claim. While in Abilene, Lyday drove a freight wagon. In March of 1875, Lyday had a post office established at his home, with D.R. Emery as the first postmaster. It was the first postal station in Flora Township and was called Poplar Hill. The post office became migratory and was passed around the neighborhood until it was finally discontinued in 1889, and mail was received in Manchester.

From the Poplar Hill post office location, drive south on Daisy Road to 3100 Avenue. Looking to the west, up on the hill, was the Abilena Wells. The local people called the hill "Physic Hill".

Around the turn of the century, the Abilena Company bottled water from these wells, which were drilled into the only known deposit of true and pure sodium sulfate in the United States. It was a perfect cathartic agent and a diuretic. The water was pumped into cream cans and hauled by a team and wagon to the bottling plant in Abilene. At the plant, the water was poured into an overhead stock tank. Below the tank was a bench with a pipe along the back wall with several spigots about four feet apart. Each spigot had a short piece of rubber hose attached, which an operator had to insert in each bottle to be filled. The Abilena Company bottled and sold the water nationally for a number of years. The company first bottled the water in a store building between Spruce and Buckeye, which opened onto both Third and Second streets. Later, the company built a building for their bottling plant on Cottage Avenue, where the Duckwall/Alco offices were once located and what is now home to the Great Plains Theatre and Thunderstruck Bumpers.

From the Abilena Wells site, drive south to Highway K-18. Turn right on K-18 and drive west to Barn Road. In the northwest corner of this intersection was the location of the Haphazard Post Office.

The Patrick Dowling family settled on claims northwest of Abilene in the early 1870's. The older daughter, Matilda, homesteaded 80 acres in Willowdale Township. She built a small store and called it Haphazard. Mostly Texas cowboys patronized the store. Matilda "Tillie" was appointed postmistress of the postal station. The post office brought additional trade and income to her store. As far as is known, Tillie's store and post office was the only business in Haphazard. She was postmistress until her marriage to Mr. Goodell in January 1882. The post office was then discontinued.

Turn around here at Haphazard and drive back east on K-18 for five miles to Fair Road. Turn right on Fair Road and drive south into Talmage. Talmage, like Manchester, was slow in developing because of the lack of a railroad. In the fall of 1887, after the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad, Talmage was platted. The town plan was registered in January 1888 at the county courthouse. The town was named after a popular evangelist and minister, Thomas DeWitt Talmage. He was a Lyceum Lecturer, Editor of the Christian Herald Magazine, and wrote several books. He was a circuit rider and had held meetings in the Talmage area. Talmage, like a number of other small towns of Dickinson County, started to decline by the late 1950's. A number of stores closed, and several houses were moved out of town.

Continue your drive through Talmage and on south to 2600 Avenue. Turn right and drive west for a little more than a mile. Look to the right (north) for a heavily wooded area, the location of an Indian battle that took place in 1860. There were no trees there then, just wide-open prairie. A wagon train of about 40 wagons pulled by horses and oxen were on their way to the Colorado gold fields in the spring of 1860. They had crossed into Kansas at Leavenworth and had camped overnight at Fort Riley. The next morning, they started west and noticed some Indians following

them at a distance. Towards evening, the wagon train decided to camp for the night. They posted guards for the night and prepared for an attack at dawn. All of the men were up at dawn with guns ready, the stock inside the wagon circle, waiting for daylight. When it began to show light in the east, they could hear horses' hooves pounding fast and hard, coming at them from the northeast. The Indians attacked the wagon train and the battle lasted about one hour. Some Indians broke through the circle at the north side, and the gold-seekers shot, clubbed, and knifed about five Indians inside the circle. When it became light, the Indians broke off the attack and suddenly left, leaving five of their dead inside the wagon circle. The travelers dug a grave about 20 feet long, four feet deep, and two feet wide and buried the Indians. None of the white men were killed, although several were slightly wounded. It was a terrifying experience for the women and children. When the Indians left, they carried off all of the dead and wounded from outside the circle but left about a dozen dead or wounded ponies. One of the gold seekers who had been in the battle returned to the area in 1872 as a homesteader. He stated that on his return, he could still see the bones of the ponies on the prairie.

From the Indian battle site, drive on west to Daisy Road, turn left (south) on Daisy and continue south, about five miles, to old Highway 40. We will not tour Solomon, but the following is a short history of the area provided for you.

Henry Whitley was the first settler to locate in the Solomon area. He filed a claim at Ogden, Kansas in June of 1859. In July of that year, he built a cabin on his claim. His nearest neighbor was in Abilene on Mud Creek. In 1865, Henry Whitley, John Williamson, and Luther Hall organized a town company. In 1866, a town was surveyed and platted on the land owned by Whitley. The town was incorporated in 1871 as a town of the third class. The name given was Solomon City, the latter part of the name dropped as time went by. In 1866, G.B. Hall built a two-story frame hotel named the Hall House. Until the railroad reached Solomon in 1867, the Overland Stage Line stopped at the hotel.

To the west of Solomon, about ½ mile south and ½ mile west of the railroad bridge is the location of a settlement named Buchanan. The second session of the territorial legislature chartered a company under the name of Buchanan Town Company in 1856. The original act to organize the county was enacted by the Territorial Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Kansas. The act declared the county seat to be located in the town of Buchanan. The act was to take effect upon its passage in February of 1857. The only problem was that after the final organization of Dickinson County in 1858, Buchanan ended up in Saline County. Newport was then named the county seat.

Turn left on old Highway 40 and drive east for about two miles to Sand Springs. Sand Springs was never platted or incorporated as a town. It never had a post office but became a well-known community because of the spring that was located just east of the old Abilene water works pumping station. In the early days, the fresh water of the spring made it a popular camping site in the mid 1880's for early western travelers following the Smoky Hill Trail (also referred to as the Military Road), which went west to the Santa Fe Trail.

In 1860, William S. Moon bought land from a man who had homesteaded at Sand Springs and had built a log cabin just north across the road from the spring. Most of his homestead was on the south side of the river but did include about 20 acres on the north side, where the spring was. This land was later purchased by the City of Abilene.

In 1862, Moon discovered that the sand hills region was a good place to raise melons and sweet potatoes, which he traded to the Indians. In the early 1920's, melon festivals were held which helped to identify the Sand Springs area as one of the finest melon districts. Many carloads of watermelons, cantaloupe, and sweet potatoes were shipped to big city markets.

There is a pioneer burial place in the area near the springs. Three children of the family who owned the homestead before Moon are buried there. The first wife of J.W. Hoover, a small Indian boy, an Indian scout, and several Texas cowboys are also buried in the cemetery. The cemetery is on private property, so please do not attempt to drive to the see the graves.

The Sand Springs water became a source of water for the city of Abilene when the pumping station was erected in the early 1890's. This station was replaced in the 1920's by the brick buildings that is at the location today. The water was 99.98% pure. The pumping station was in use until the flood of 1951. Water was then pumped from three wells north of the old station and melons and vegetables are still grown in the sand hills area.

Return to Abilene by the way of old Highway 40 to the east. We hope that you have enjoyed the tour and have a new awareness of the diversity of our county's history.