

THE HISTORY OF WAKEFIELD, KANSAS
1900-1969

by

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"The History of Wakefield, Kansas 1900-1969"

D. Cheryl Collins

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Abstract

Acknowledgments

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D.C.C.

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The English Colony

A group of English colonists settled the town of Wakefield, Kansas in 1869.¹ The colonization effort was part of an immigration drive encouraged by Reverend Richard Wake, R.H. Drew, and John Wormald.² Rev. Wake, on orders from his partners in England, traveled from Illinois to inspect an area northwest of Junction City, Kansas. After looking at the land, Wake had it taken off the market and he sent for Wormald and Alexander Maitland.³ The two men arrived from England in August, 1869, and bought 32,000 acres from the Kansas Pacific Railroad and its subsidiary the National Land Company.⁴ The land lay between the Republican River and Chapman's creek in Clay, Dickinson, and Geary Counties. The prospective town of Wakefield was located in Clay county on the west bank of the Republican River, fifteen miles south of Clay Center, the Clay county seat. The area was already sparsely populated, the earliest settlers having arrived in the neighborhood in 1856 and 1857.⁵ By 1860 eleven families, some hailing from the eastern United States, some from Germany, lived in the area. Dr. Asahel Burt, an early settler, recalled his thoughts on hearing that the English were moving in:

One day A.C. Pierce [a Junction City land agent] told me that a colony of English were coming. My thoughts flew back to the first Englishman I had ever seen and that was when I was but 8 or 9 years old. He was talking with my father at our front gate and I went out to see them. I could not understand a word he said neither could I

understand what father said to him....I also thought how many pleasant acquaintances and valued friends we had among the English people, and we were glad they were coming, and we always have been glad.⁶

The first party of English settlers arrived with Maitland and Wormald on August 21, 1869.⁷ Four days later the Kansas Land and Emigration Company was incorporated.⁸ A company prospectus printed in the Junction City Weekly Union asserted:

The objects of this Company are, the encouragement and direction of emigration from Great Britain to the western States and Territories, of capitalists, agriculturalists and the industrial classes generally, for the twofold purpose of providing an outlet for the surplus population of England, and of securing the development of the vast resources of the newer portions of our country.⁹

Through the Kansas Land and Emigration Company the founders sought to "...both promote the interests of the settlers and secure the financial prosperity of this company."¹⁰ Toward this end, Richard Wake, John Wormald, J.D. Bennett, Alexander Maitland, Colonel Loomis, Charles Wake, and R.H. Drew planned the town of Wakefield August 26, 1869.¹¹ They then intensified efforts to recruit settlers from England. Seventy-seven colonists arrived in October of the year of the town's founding. By late October the Junction City Weekly Union noted: "Many new settlers are already on their places and there can be seen little houses dotting the prairie."¹² Others came from

England during the following winter, including a group of orphan boys from London who arrived in December 1869.¹³ Two parties arrived in April 1870¹⁴ and the last organized group landed in the spring of 1871.¹⁵ American and other English families and individuals continued to join the colony.

The Wakefield settlers were mostly "...English trade peoples from the cities."¹⁶ Originally, immigration organizers visualized a co-operative farming venture, but Rev. Wake favored an associative plan and this system was followed.¹⁷ That the English were serious about permanent relocation is indicated by the number of families which immediately moved to the new town. Most settlers were also serious about farming. A monthly livestock market was quickly established, as was an Agricultural and Literary Society, which sponsored discussion of farm topics.¹⁸ Although most of the Wakefield English colonists seem to have been of the middle class, some were wealthy.¹⁹ There were even a few "remittance men," younger sons of rich families sent to the United States to spend their allowance and time.²⁰

The tide of immigration ebbed after 1870, in part due to the hard times Wakefield people faced in the first few years. Kansas was in the midst of a wet, prosperous year when Rev. Wake chose the area for a townsite. Grass which stood as tall as a horse's back in 1869 looked less impressive after the drouth of 1870. The English were acquainted with the much milder climate of England, not the changeable, often severe climate of Kansas. Finally, the United States only slowly recovered from the Civil War; transportation and communication developments were hampered and prices were high. John Spooner reflected this as he reminisced:

We thought Junction City a dear, dear town, not only because of its "beautiful situation," or the beautiful people, but we found everything we wanted to be very dear, no matter what you wanted, from a sack of flour to a pound of nails, it would cost about three times as much as the present time [1894].²¹

Because of the hardships a few families returned to England or moved to other parts of the United States. John Chapman expressed the dissatisfaction many Wakefield people felt:

Five years is certainly long enough to give a thing a trial...When I tell you that scores of persons who went out west with capital and every advantage would be glad enough to occupy a laborer's cottage and eat a laborer's food in England, you will know that they have been grievously disappointed. It is quite true that land is very cheap and that meat can be had at almost a nominal price...When lecturers talk about the cheapness of things it would be well if they would also tell the cost of raising the crop mentioned and the average price paid to the producer. I see by one of the letters, copies of which were circulated by the lecturers, that beef can be bought at $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. Where, then, can be the farmer's profit for raising cattle, and feeding them through the fearful winters, if they are afterwards disposed of at such prices? A good bullock should weigh 100 lbs. per quarter, or a total of 400 lbs., which, at the price named, would amount to 2£ 10s. for the whole animal. If these things were considered over, it would be seen just where the shoe pinches; and that many years of toil, hardship and disappointment must be endured before the

prospects presented can be realized. No one looking on can tell half of the real facts, and those who have gone through it all find words fail to express their full meaning.²²

Some of the colonists blamed Rev. Wake and the Kansas Land and Emigration Company for encouraging false expectations.²³ Drouth, grasshoppers, and low prices for agricultural products certainly combined to make life a struggle for the first few years. The livestock market was discontinued and the Kansas Land and Emigration Company passed out of existence within a few years of the colony's founding. However, in 1873, the Junction City and Fort Kearny Line of the Kansas Pacific Railroad was finished to Clay Center via Wakefield. The railroad brought a fresh promise of prosperity to the town.

End Notes

¹Much of my information on the settlement of Wakefield comes from William J. Chapman, The Wakefield Colony (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1908), hereafter cited as Chapman, Wakefield.

²All three partners had prior experience or interest in colonization. R.H. Drew was a London land agent who had directed emigration to Australia. John Wormald had considered promoting emigration to northern Missouri and Reverend Richard Wake, a Methodist minister, had moved to the United States before the Civil War. He wrote pamphlets and articles advocating English removal to the United States and organized a colony of English settlers at Palmyra, Otoe County, Nebraska in 1866.

³Alexander Maitland, a Scottish businessman, more recently from London, was treasurer of the Kansas Land and Emigration Company while John Wormald served as secretary.

⁴The exact date the land was purchased is questioned by Percy Stone in "Kansas Land and Emigration Company," Junction City Weekly Union, March 12, 1870. He also states that the land was bought for \$2.50 an acre.

⁵Some of the earliest settlers in the vicinity were Moses, William, and Jeremiah Younkin and John P. King. J.B. Quimby, W.E. Payne, Lorenzo Gates, John Gill, William Mall, and Reverend William Todd also arrived in the area before 1860.

⁶Wakefield Advertiser, October 25, 1894.

⁷This first party was very small, around 10 people.

⁸The Kansas Land and Emigration Company had offices in Junction City, Charles Wake agent, and two offices in London, Robert H. Drew and John C. Miller agents. Evidently A.C. Pierce, the agent who showed Reverend Wake the land eventually purchased for the colony, handled the Company's business through his Junction City office for a time. Samples of soil, sand, clay, building stone, grain and grasses were collected at Pierce's office in 1869 to be sent for display in the Company's London offices according to the Junction City Weekly Union, October 16, 1869. The directors of the Kansas Land and Emigration Company were: John Wormald, Alexander Maitland, Richard Wake, J.W. Bennett, John Brown, Harry D'Oyle, and R.H. Drew. J.W. Bennett

and John Brown were from Illinois and may have been connected with the National Land Company. R.H. Drew and Harry D'Oyle lived in England. The Company officers were: R. Wake, President; A. Maitland, secretary; J. Wormald, treasurer.

⁹Junction City Weekly Union, December 4, 1869.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Named Wakefield by Colonel Loomis in honor of Reverend Wake and because John Wormald's hometown was Wakefield, England.

¹²Junction City Weekly Union, October 23, 1869.

¹³The boys ranged in age from sixteen to twenty-one. It is probable they were brought in to furnish farm labor. Junction City Weekly Union, December 11, 1869.

¹⁴The account in Chapman, Wakefield, p.13-14, lists about seven families and thirteen individuals in this group. However, the Junction City Weekly Union, April 30, 1870, notes the arrival of ninety farmers, mechanics, and laborers.

¹⁵The account of Chapman, Wakefield, p.20, lists nine individuals and six families. The Junction City Weekly Union, April 22, 1871, notes the arrival of forty Wakefield settlers and says that twenty-five more were expected the next day.

¹⁶J.B. Quimby, Wakefield Advertiser, October 25, 1894. The Junction City Weekly Union, April 22-30, 1871 consistently described the colonists as farmers. This may be a reflection of the colonists' ambition to become farmers in the new country. Mechanics and laborers were also mentioned by the Junction City Weekly Union, October 16, 1869. Those following the aforementioned professions, or that of maid, were said to have no trouble finding employment.

¹⁷Evidently the co-operative plan was not dropped until Wormald and Maitland arrived in Junction City in August of 1869. The Agricultural Director of the proposed co-operative colony, Mr. Spence, also arrived in Junction City in August. Further, Percy Stone complained in a letter to the Junction City Weekly Union, March 12, 1870, that when he left England he understood "...that in addition to land to be purchased for speculation, an improved farm would be taken and carried on upon joint shares by the

Agricultural Directors and Treasurer," and that he, Stone, would be "...housed, boarded and remunerated for my services until such time as I could obtain suitable land for myself."

¹⁸The 1871 officers of the Wakefield General Market Company were: William Alsop, President; R. Wake, Secretary; and J.B. Quimby, Treasurer. The 1871 officers of the Agricultural and Literary Society were: J.E. Burton, President; R. Wake, Vice President; T.P. Petigrew, Secretary; and J. Eustace, Treasurer.

¹⁹William Alsop was described by the Junction City Weekly Union, April 30, 1870 as "...a wealthy and enterprising English farmer"; colonists had some capital since land cost four to eight dollars an acre with one fifth paid in cash before emigration and the balance paid in two, three, four, or five years at an interest of six per cent annually according to a Kansas Land and Emigration Company prospectus published in the Junction City Weekly Union, December 4, 1869.

²⁰Some remittance men were remembered by Gov. William Avery during an interview held at his Wakefield home, March 23, 1980.

²¹J. Spooner, Wakefield Advertiser, October 25, 1894.

²²J. Chapman, quoted in Chapman, Wakefield, p. 38.

²³Hard feelings were intensified by the failure of the Kansas Land and Emigration Company to secure title from the railroad for some of the land they sold to the settlers. Reverend Wake said: "When by reason of the drought of 1870 and the short-crop years following, we were unable to carry the enterprise through--it was currently reported that the company had made deeds to various parties and failed to make their title secure. This was in no case true where purchaser took quarter-sections, as in every such instance the railroad company was paid in full and the title made good. But there were a few cases--three or four--in which we had deeded eighty-acre lots informing the parties that we had not perfected title, and could not immediately do so, because the railroad company refused to make deeds for less than the number of acres described in the original contract. And as we could not pay for and hold the additional eighty acres, we offered to pay back the money, which, after some delay, we did...I may say also that not all our shareholders lost all their investments. Messrs. Brown and Rose, of

Illinois, surrendered shares for land, and Mr. Wormald did likewise. Some of us who held on to the end did not have as good opportunity to make ourselves whole." Chapman, Wakefield, pp. 23-24. Evidently Reverend Wake held some land in the Wakefield area because the Wakefield Advertiser, August 12, 1887 noted he sold his farm to J.K. Hudson for \$9,000.

Wakefield City, 1900-1918

The promise of prosperity was partly fulfilled. Although Wakefield did not surpass Clay Center or Junction City in size, the period 1900-1918 is characterized by the town's growth, both in area and population, and the town's gradual emergence from the surrounding countryside.¹ Physically, the annexation of the Batchelor addition in 1902 increased town size by about eight residential blocks. Population grew from 322 in 1900 to 531 in 1920. This expansion of population was not the boom hoped for by townsite speculators but represents a substantial, steady growth.

The State of Kansas incorporated Wakefield as a third class city in 1887. This in itself symbolically separated town from country. After the incorporation the new city government passed many ordinances.² By 1907, herding stock through town was disallowed and by 1918 chickens were prohibited from running loose during the garden season. These laws gradually changed the character of life and emphasized the differences between town and rural living.

New services and conveniences became available to townspeople during this period, further separating city and country. The new inventions and services also found their way to the countryside, but at a much slower pace than they came to town. As an example of the new services available, Wakefield's electric lights and waterworks originated during this period. In 1905 the city granted W.H. Hewitt a gas franchise and in 1908 Tommy Waller

wired the town for lights. Hewitt's acetylene gas plant operated until 1910 when an accident destroyed it. On a March evening, H.W.C. Budden went into the basement gas works with a lantern to see about a possible leak. The resulting explosion killed Budden and injured two bystanders, the elder Mr. Harrison and Pete Manuel. Area windows shattered, houses shook, and the blast was said heard in Clay Center, fifteen miles away. A fire broke out in the gas works in 1906 but it had not resulted in an explosion or in damage of the 1910 magnitude. Although the Clay Center Times reported that the plant would not be replaced or repaired, some type of power plant evidently operated until replaced in 1916 by a new facility.³ One hundred people attended a mass meeting in February 1916 to discuss the building of new light plant. A representative of the Fairbanks Morse company estimated the cost of the double engine, twenty-five horse power system at \$8,000. Projected rates for electricity users were set at a minimum of \$1.00 a month. Citizens decided to check with other towns using this system and in April another mass meeting authorized the city council to move on the enterprise. By July an ordinance concerning the new lighting system appeared in the News. The second major service the town added between 1900 and 1918 was the Wakefield waterworks, which operated with fewer complications. The public service began during 1910, although at least a few houses had indoor plumbing as early as 1906.⁴

Wakefield also started providing other services to its citizens during this period. Fire posed a particular threat because the town's frame buildings were quite flammable and the town lacked adequate fire protection. In 1904 the businessmen of Wakefield, with the help of the city government,

purchased fifteen chemical fire extinguishers and placed them along Main Street. In April 1907 a blaze caused \$400 worth of damage at Fentem's slaughter house and the Wakefield News cautioned that the city still suffered from inadequate fire protection.⁵ No further improvements were made to the fire fighting system in the 1900-1918 period other than a new fire bell hung at the telephone operator's station in 1911.

Sidewalks were another welcomed addition to town life. From 1901 through 1915, sidewalk construction boomed. By 1915 there were enough sidewalks to inspire a city ordinance prohibiting bikes and coasters on them. The building of sidewalks meant townspeople no longer had to "paddle through the mud" on rainy days.⁶

Communication and transportation innovations changed life in Wakefield during this period even more radically than did new town services. The telephone long distance exchange reached Wakefield in 1901 and was located in Streeter's restaurant. By 1902 the town was wired for telephones. George Insley manned the phones during the day and Fred Gardiner served as night operator.⁷ Telephones became very popular with Wakefield people and in 1905 the Union Telephone Line was organized to include eight miles of rural service. By 1907 Wakefield central had two hundred and fifty telephones on the line.

The increased use of the telephone made possible better weather forecasting. In 1915 Wakefield began to receive weather reports directly from the U.S. Weather Bureau at Chicago by phone. Accurate and timely weather reports were important to the area, which relied on a farm economy, since the weather tends to change quickly in Kansas. During the period 1900-1918 a

number of catastrophic storms hit the area. High water always presented problems for the town since it was built on a river bank. Republican River water was high in 1902 and 1905. It rose to major flooding levels in 1908 and 1915, but the worst flood of the period occurred in 1903.⁸ During the times of high water, train service was cut off and roads washed out. Farmers joked about catching fish feeding on their wheat. The Spring of 1903 also brought a tornado which swept through Athelstane, Gill, and Grant townships of Clay County. Although the tornado hit the Wakefield area the town emerged unscathed. Another bad storm, in 1910, caused a number of area residents, including Fred Towle, Pete Myers, and Curtis McCardle, to lose buildings and the railroad traffic between Clay Center and Wakefield was suspended for a few days. Not only did the town contend with high water and severe storms, drouth also occasionally plagued the area as it did in 1913. Extreme weather, such as flood, drouth, and severe storm, is not uncommon to Wakefield.

The automobile revolutionized both communication and transportation in the Wakefield area, but the conversion to automobiles was slow. In 1905 vehicles from Junction City cruised through town and W.H. Myers became the first Wakefield citizen to buy an auto in 1906.⁹ Not many other townsmen immediately followed his lead. There were only ten automobiles in town in 1911. But by 1913 the contraption began to catch on and twenty-eight Wakefield area folks owned cars. Makes included Reo, Ford, Buick, Marion, Lambert, Flanders, J.I. Case, Studebaker, Oakland, Regal, E.M.F., and Maxwell. Wakefield area residents owned fifty-six automobiles by the next year.

Even before automobiles became prevalent in Wakefield the town supported the National Good Roads Association. In 1905 George Pocock served as Wakefield's delegate to the association's convention in Junction City and agreed to support the proposed Clay Center convention. The town continued to participate in this organization through the years in an effort to lure roads through town. Location on important highways became as critical to town growth as having a stop on the railroad earlier.

As roads improved, communication improved. Rural mail routes were authorized as soon as roads could consistently support the traffic. Wakefield area residents petitioned for three rural mail routes in 1901.¹⁰ By 1906 mail route number five was started but was discontinued in 1915, at least temporarily, due to bad roads.¹¹

The gasoline engine not only made possible the automobile and helped encourage better roads. The invention also allowed the production and use of other forms of machinery. In 1910 motorboat rides were a novelty and in 1911 flying exhibitions amused the county.¹² The tractor and other motorized farm machinery served a more important function in the Wakefield area but the new equipment was expensive and sometimes difficult to get used to. The 1915 News reported:

A good one is told on Mr. Grattan. In learning to use the engine [tractor], he found it hard to forget he was [not] handling a team, and on coming to the end of the field, he just shouted "whoa" to the thing and it plowed three furrows across a road before he could remember to throw off the clutch.¹³

Other forms of new technology trickled into Wakefield during the 1900-1918 period. The phonograph and personal camera seemed to most interest Wakefield residents. The phonograph appeared as a novel attraction at special shows in 1901 but fast became a household form of entertainment. The ownership of a "Kodak" was unusual enough in 1915 to attract the notice of the paper, which observed that three "Kodaks" were owned by townspeople.¹⁴

Small towns have the reputation for isolation and lack of participation in the events of the larger nation and world as well as isolation from new inventions. Although it is true that Wakefield did not participate in every major event from 1900-1918, the town was hardly isolated from events or inventions. There are many examples of Wakefield citizens' participation in national or international events. The Oklahoma land opening of 1901 caused quite a stir. Those from town making the run were Reaves Hewitt, Dr. Everett Hewitt, William Marshall, Charles Fairman, and Andy Gates.¹⁵ The 1901 death of President McKinley saddened the community. Memorial services were held September 19, 1901 and in 1902 the school children of Wakefield participated in "McKinley Day" to raise money for a national memorial. When Queen Victoria died in 1901 the former English subjects living in Wakefield also felt the loss deeply. St. George's church held a memorial service and St. John's church hung a portrait of the Queen, draped in black, above the altar.¹⁶ St. John's church members observed mourning as prescribed within the British Empire. The reaction of some Wakefield residents to the death of Queen Victoria suggests that many still felt strong ties with the past and with England. However, the town's reaction to World War I, especially the lack of a strong sentiment toward joining England in the early days of the

war, suggests that by 1914 the townspeople felt very American.

In fact, the war in Europe seemed to very slowly materialize in the consciousness of the community. Most early war news concerned anti-war efforts, such as the January 1915 request by T.C. Coffman, Clay County Superintendent of Schools, that teachers get the children's signatures on a petition to stop the war in Europe. Other early war activity concerned relief efforts, such as the Belgian Relief Fund. The war came closer to home during 1916 when military preparedness articles began appearing in the News.¹⁷ Fort Riley held displays of military might attended by Wakefield people and Dr. J.E. Hewitt was ordered to active duty at the Fort.

When war was declared on April 7, 1917, four Wakefield boys enlisted: three joined the cavalry and one the Navy. By April 19th, a recruiting officer had moved into town. In May the Clay County Sheriff served notice that all men aged 21-30 were required to register as prescribed by the conscription law. Wakefield men registered at the Republic township poll. A few area residents refused to register and the News noted:

Lee Sheppard picked up a slacker without a registration card Saturday evening and took him to Clay Center for safe keeping. He had two more in sight last week, but they gave him the slip.¹⁸

The News also lambasted the Clay Center lawyers who charged boys for affidavits of exemption which the county clerk gave away free. By November 1917, some Wakefield boys were already in France.

Wakefield residents also supported the war effort on the home front.

The Red Cross garnered over fifty members by the end of May 1917 and bandage production began. The Wakefield banks pushed Liberty Loans and later the Thrift Stamp drives. The town saved every commodity imaginable. The Wakefield Bank collected scrap silver and gold jewelry or utensils on "Treasure and Trinket Day" to be sent to Washington to finance the Aviation Corps. H.H. Myers and J.B. McIntire led the food drive asking citizens to sign pledges to conserve food. Those who failed to sign were classed as "indifferent" or "opposed." Wakefield people also collected old shoes for Belgian or French needy, and tagged their shovels as a reminder to save coal. To further conserve fuel, businesses, except banks, closed early. The News cautioned against using too much sugar. Eventually only ten pounds per family was allowed for canning, and other forms of rationing were imposed. The Red Cross called for fruit pits, seeds, and nut shells. Seven pounds of shells and pits would produce enough carbon for one gas mask.

Wakefield people showed their patriotism in various ways. They supported the conservation and relief drives, the armed services, and the Liberty Loan campaign. The Farmers and Merchants Bank enrolled workers for the factories and fields. War films played at the theater and letters from the front appeared in the newspaper. A few citizens expressed their patriotism in a more aggressive form. Fist fights involving German sympathizers were noted in the News during the early part of the war. In 1918 all citizens of the German Empire aged 14 and up were required to register with the Postmaster.

During the last two months of the war and a month after, an influenza epidemic brought much sickness and sorrow to the community. In October 1918,

the Board of Health cancelled all public gatherings, including the Farmers Institute. Schools were closed and church meetings postponed. Thirty-five cases of influenza were reported that month. There were a number of influenza-related deaths.¹⁹ The funerals were held at the cemetery due to the contagiousness of the illness. The epidemic reached its peak in December 1918 with eighty people reported stricken. The Red Cross recruited help for the sick and their families and slowly the town recovered.

On November 11, 1918, the war ended. The News described Wakefield's reaction:

Pandemonium reigned supreme in Wakefield Monday night when every man and boy who was the possessor of a shotgun or anything else that would make a big noise, was out in force and the din was terrific until a very late hour.

The [cannon] was brought into use and kept booming at intervals during the whole proceedings.

A large bonfire was laid in front of the postoffice composed of old boxes and crates and crude oil was poured on profusely and the whole thing lighted, making a display that lit up the whole town.

Kaiser Bill was hung in effigy and served as a target for the boys with shotguns until it was shot down and then thrown into the fire.

The celebration was one long to be remembered and was in keeping with the enthusiasm and patriotism of the people of Wakefield.

On Monday noon when school was dismissed after occupying most of the forenoon with songs and a general patriotic celebration, they marched the children down the street with flags and singing and it was truly a

creditable showing of patriotism. The little ones enjoyed as well as those whose privilege it was to see them.²⁰

After some months, the surviving servicemen came home.²¹

End Notes

¹Much of the information for Chapter 2 was taken from the following newspapers: Wakefield Searchlight, 1900-1901; Wakefield Wideawake, March through September 1902; Clay Center Dispatch, 1902 through 1903 and 1909; Clay Center Times, 1903 and 1910 through 1914; Wakefield News, 1904 through 1905, 1908, and 1914 through 1918; Wakefield Pointer, 1910 and 1912.

²Wakefield was incorporated in April 1887; by July numerous ordinances were being printed in the Wakefield Advertiser, the town's official newspaper.

³Clay Center Times, March 3, 1910.

⁴That H.H. Myers was building an indoor bathroom was noted in the Wakefield News, October 25, 1906.

⁵Wakefield News, April 4, 1907.

⁶Wakefield News, November 10, 1904. Especially treacherous was the trail between the railroad station and the hotel.

⁷These men manned the telephones in 1903 according to the Clay Center Times, November 5, 1903. The telephone was originally in the Carpenter Hotel. When the Hotel closed in 1903, the switchboard moved to Streeter's Resturant.

⁸Interview with Mrs. Myers at her Wakefield home, September 1978.

⁹Wakefield News, May 17, 1906.

¹⁰The Wakefield Searchlight, April 4, 1901, notes that men posing as postal inspectors were touring the county gathering fees to set up rural routes.

¹¹Wakefield News, November 25, 1915. Route number 4 was also threatened due to bad roads.

¹²Motorboat rides were mentioned in the Clay Center Times, October 6, 1910.

¹³Wakefield News, August 19, 1915.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Wakefield Searchlight, July 11, 1901. Dr. Pearson also went to see the fun according to the Searchlight, July 18, 1901.

¹⁶Wakefield Searchlight, February 14, 1901.

¹⁷Wakefield News, February 24, 1916.

¹⁸Wakefield News, July 12, 1917.

¹⁹Among the fatalities was Lola Babst Beal, age 24, who died in December 1918. Often the paper would attribute influenza leading to pneumonia as the cause of death. About five deaths could conceivably be due to this combination of illnesses.

²⁰Wakefield News, November 14, 1918.

²¹World War I veterans buried in area cemeteries according to the Wakefield News, May 29, 1940, were: Highland--Herman O. Rau, Oscar Moreland, Carl Shandy; Milford--Samuel Fasse; Mizpah--John F. Siemers, Harold Buchanan.

Society in Wakefield

The types of social activity found in Wakefield changed relatively little between 1900 and 1969. Various clubs promoted most of the town's social events. Some of the same holidays and special events, such as the fair, were still being held in 1969. People continued to get to know each other at the schools and churches. Perhaps more people spent a greater amount of time at church in 1900; more time was spent at school functions in 1969 since Wakefield had established its own high school.

Entertainments changed much more completely between 1900 and 1969. Baseball games and plays, featuring home grown talent, and the many traveling shows which came through town were the main leisure time treats in 1900. By 1969 the townspeople drove to nearby Clay Center, Junction City, or Manhattan for the type of professional entertainment once provided by traveling shows. Radio, television, and the movies also helped displace local entertainment. Although the small town is often described in fiction as dull and life there is said to be boring and uneventful, the social life of Wakefield throughout the period 1900 to 1969 was as active, if not as varied, as that found in a city or larger town. In fact, a highly organized social life was characteristic of the town from the beginning.

Since Wakefield started as a colony, the settlers belonged to a loosely structured association. The churches, schools and clubs were quickly arranged and gave direction to the activities of the town. With a Methodist

minister as one of the founding fathers, it is not surprising that the Methodist church was one of the first organizations begun.¹ Methodist Church members met in the public hall in the northwest corner of the old market square from the church's founding in May 1870 until a site for the church building was chosen in 1903 and a church building was built. A second church was erected on the site in 1913. The mortgage for this building and a parsonage was paid off and burned in 1927. The congregation built an addition in 1930 and the church celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1945.

Although the Methodists were first to actually locate in the new town, a Congregational Church had been in the area for years. Reverend William Todd and Reverend Edward Moore established a Union Church during 1868 at schoolhouse number eight, which stood close to the future location of Wakefield. The school was called Madura in honor of the Reverend Todd's missionary work in Madura, India.² The church eventually affiliated with the Congregationalists and became the Madura Congregational Church. After Wakefield was established the congregation moved its services to town. By 1906 the Wakefield Congregational membership was 124 strong, and an addition to the original town building was constructed in 1922. The fiftieth anniversary of this building was held in 1931.

A third Wakefield church, the Episcopal, was founded in 1871. At that time funds were collected in Wakefield, England, and Baltimore to erect a stone church.³ Charles Ingram donated five acres for a church, rectory, graveyard, and glebe.⁴ The building was nearly complete when a tornado blew it down in 1872. St. John's Episcopal Church was built on the same site and

dedicated in the Spring of 1876. St. George's Episcopal Church was built in Wakefield and a new rectory was finished in 1900. By that time the Episcopal Church had a membership of 225. In 1929 the membership of St. John's and St. George's united since automobile transportation made a joint congregation feasible. St. John's building was physically moved into town to serve as a guild hall. However, the membership of the Episcopal church steadily declined even with the addition of the St. John's parrish.⁵

Wakefield people of other denominations traveled to area churches. Catholics organized a parish south of town. When this church closed, Wakefield Catholics were forced to travel to Junction City or Clay Center. Area Baptists went to church at Uniondale, northwest of town after 1877.

Churches provided both entertainment and instruction for Wakefield residents. Sunday School and auxilary groups meant social contacts as well as religious training. Revivals enlivened the summers from the 1900's through the 1930's. Often these revivals were non-denominational with several area churches cooperating.⁶

The local churches often worked together. An inter-church council pursued the possibility of community Sunday School contests or a religious education school in 1927, and in 1928 the Methodists and the Congregationalists considered federation to eliminate unnecessary competition. The churches decided to work together but to remain independent. The 1930 Easter sunrise service, held on the Wakefield bluff, is an example of the continued cooperation between the area churches.

During Wakefield's colonization, a school system was established soon after the first church was organized. The Wakefield primary school began in

March of 1871. It is interesting that the Kansas Land and Emigration company store and the Wakefield Ferry and Bridge Company were both organized and opened before a local school system was in operation. Most probably Wakefield colony children were taught at the Madura school or at home before the local school opened. That the Agricultural and Literary Society, an organization formed to promote agricultural knowledge and local projects, first met in the winter of 1871 suggests a strong, early interest in adult education. Wakefield's primary school system changes to a graded system in 1902. Although education was important to the residents it was estimated in 1905 that 80 to 85% of the children dropped out before high school.⁷ Many children quit school because until 1912 the nearest high school was in Clay Center. The Wakefield community wanted a secondary school and one of the first acts of the Community Club formed in 1900 was a petition to the county for a high school.

In 1904 the lack of a high school was to some extent adjusted for by the founding of the Wesleyen Bible School. The News reported: "The institution presents the following courses of Instruction: Grammar Grades, Academic Course, Normal Department, Theological Department and Musical Department."⁸ A.P. Lienard directed the short lived Christian school founded on an "industrial basis."⁹ Fire damaged the building the school occupied in 1905 and references to the school became more and more infrequent after that point.

The town continued to lobby for a high school and even harbored a hope to be a college town in 1905.¹⁰ The high school actually materialized and the first Wakefield High School senior class graduated in 1912. Wakefield

students no longer had to move from town to get a diploma.

Although Wakefield managed to secure a high school, Clay Center continued to agitate for the removal of the school. Both Wakefield and Clay Center used their schools as evidence of their importance as they jockeyed for ascension. Clay Center wished to be the only place in Clay County to offer a high school diploma and thus to attract students from all over the county. Wakefield aggressively fought for independence from, and if possible domination over, Clay Center and so wanted to keep local students at home and to build the town's strength as a center for trade and entertainment. In 1921, school district reorganization caused a special election to decide if a rural high school would remain in Wakefield. The Wakefield school board assured voters that the current building could be used for at least the following fifteen years and that the tax levy would not be increased. The vote was held twice because of a dispute over procedure but Wakefield High School supporters won by a large margin both times. During this period a Business course and Domestic Science course were also added to the curriculum.

Throughout the 1930's the school system struggled to stay solvent. In 1930 the faculty were offered their jobs at 25% of their 1929 salaries. And the Wakefield schools had other worries. Clay Center attempted to gain more ground at the expense of the town by busing students but the state would not allow it. The Wakefield school board also found itself in a legal dispute with a female teacher who had been fired for marrying, an act against school board policy. The court upheld the firing in late 1932.¹¹ During this time, the operations of the school changed a bit. Graduating classes no longer

chose a slogan or class flower and the studies of geography, history, health, and civics were combined to form "social studies."

On November 14, 1945 the Wakefield High School burned down. The fire, of unknown causes, destroyed the main structure but the vocational building was spared. Students attended class in this building, the Congregational Church, the Hawes building, the library, and at the Mercer Chapel until a new school was built. Students escaped unharmed from a second fire at the Hawes building and classes were relocated in the Rankin building. During February of 1946 citizens voted seven to one support for a new high school. Classes continued in the less than satisfactory temporary locations until the new building was completed and dedicated by Kansas State University President Milton Eisenhower in 1948. The new school so depleted local tax funds that landscaping the grounds was paid for by subscriptions from townspeople. This high school still stands in Wakefield in 1982.

The Wakefield schools bear a reputation for high educational standards. Local children scored well in state wide scholarship contests and in the eighth grade diploma tests. In 1931, 1932, and 1936 the grade school was the only one in the county ranked superior by the State Board of Education. Many good teachers taught in the school system over the years, including Marjorie French who, after moving to Topeka, was named National Master Teacher in 1962.¹²

Clubs, like the churches and the schools, played an important part in the town's social life. The Agricultural and Literary Society, organized by 1871, held Wednesday night meetings, normally to discuss agricultural topics, but also to provide social contacts. The number of organizations and

clubs in the town quickly multiplied. By 1900, several fraternal organizations could boast membership in the town. Wakefield fraternal organizations included Royal Neighbors, Modern Woodmen, Ancient Order of United Workmen, Knights and Ladies of Security, Masons, Eastern Star, International Order of Odd Fellows, Rebekah, and National Aid association.¹³ The organizations furnished social entertainment and some of them also provided burial insurance benefits and burial rituals. These groups enjoyed large memberships in the early part of the century. The Modern Woodmen of America of Wakefield, organized in 1874, had the largest membership in central Kansas in 1900. The group met often in Thomas Hall and participated in the state-wide log rolling competitions.

Many of these groups faced declining membership after World War I. The Secruity Benefit Association had but few members in the Wakefield area by 1927 and had abandoned the lodge a few years before that date. The United Workmen and National Aid Society faded after 1915, and the Woodmen met only occasionally during the 1930's.

Contrary to this trend, a few of the fraternal organizations gained in strength. The Masons, founded in 1912, had a strong following in 1938 as did Rebekah and Eastern Star. Royal Neighbors also held meetings through the thirties. The Odd Fellows boomed during the 1920's and could boast the largest enrollment in Clay County with 193 members in 1925. The group dropped to 10 members in 1934 but reorganized and regained some of its former strength by 1938. Perhaps some of the fraternal orders failed because they simply no longer filled the social expectations of the people. Insurance companies took over certain fiscal functions of these orders and,

with the automobile, fraternity members could drive to entertainments not close enough to get to earlier. The time-consuming fraternal meetings were no longer needed.

A number of other clubs thrived in Wakefield between 1900 and 1969. The Wakefield women especially relied on club activities as important parts of their social lives. The Library Club, founded in 1914, was very prominent in town. The club promoted a town rental library. In 1924 membership was \$1.00 a year or 5¢ per book per week. In the early days of the Library Club the books were kept in a member's home. Later the Commercial Club allowed book storage in their rented rooms. Membership originally was by invitation only, and it was a mark of status to belong. Eventually membership was opened to anyone who wished to join. The Library Club continues to operate. Young ladies of town also formed their exclusive clubs. For example, the N.N. Club formed in 1919 to provide a good time every two weeks.

Although the men of the community rarely formed "official" clubs for purely social contact, the unofficial "Spit and Whittle Club" provided recreation for a number of retired men. The "club" held meetings on the east side of the post office, during nice weather, in 1928. The "Spit and Whittle Club" found the depression a boost to its membership. By 1934 the News suggested: "The local Spit and Argue Club now boasts of the largest and most active membership in its history. This is attributed to the New Deal, the drouth, the proposed lake site, etc."¹⁴ The Mule Mitten Tossers was another unofficial organization. The city allowed horseshoes to be played on Sunday afternoons.

Through the years special interest groups developed. Athletic interests

were served in a number of ways. The Wakefield Athletic Club originally sponsored local baseball games but in 1921 the club was disbanded in favor of the Wakefield Baseball Association. This Association organized a town baseball team. Riverview Golf Course was laid out in the early 1900's and it became the center for local golf enthusiasts. Dues for the club were \$15.00 a year in 1930 but it was speculated that golf would have to be given up for the duration of the Depression because of lack of funds. The course was moved in 1939. K.S.U. Athletic Director, Mike Ahearn, played on the 1939 course and pronounced it "excellent."¹⁵ The town also supported a Bowlers Club in 1939.

Cultural interest clubs were also popular. A Musical Club formed in 1915 and a Dramatic Club in 1921. On a number of separate occasions during the early part of the 1900's a town band was formed but the band never lasted long.¹⁶ Other clubs like the Coursing Club (1915), Bridge Club (1916), Dancing Club (1910), Embroidery Club (1917), Gun Club (1910), and the Wakefield Community Game and Fish Protective Society (1923) all served specific purposes.

Political organizations founded in Wakefield include the Young Republicans and Young Democrats. The Ku Klux Klan, a semi-political organization, recruited in the Wakefield area in 1924. One Klan lecture drew a large crowd. The News reported: "The lecture was good in spots, but tie [sic] 'high lights' were few, and however beneficial the organization may be, the general opinion of those present was that the lecturer had failed to help the cause here much."¹⁷ Another Klan talk was given at Dodson's Hall and a cross was burned on the bluff north of town. One black family lived in

the Wakefield area until the 1930's and relations between the races seemed to be generally harmonious throughout the years. The only incident, other than the cross burning, which suggests poor race relations occurred in 1916.

The News reported:

Excitement being at a low ebb the other night, someone suggested that they get a rope and hang a 'nigger' and 'Casey' being the only available timber, he thought he was in for it. He didn't stand on ceremony but streaked across the south part of town at a lively rate. A good sized crowd gathered and Casey was still running at last reports.¹⁸

A number of lynching stories from across the country appeared in the News during this time. The racial tensions felt in the United States after World War I were felt in Wakefield but were not powerful in the homogenous community.

The veterans were represented by the Grand Army of the Republic organization and, after World War I, by the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary.¹⁹ All of the wars between 1900 and 1969 encouraged the growth of the town Red Cross, but there were also other service groups. The Lions Club, founded in 1946, sponsored a number of community projects. The Lions Club basically helped replace the commercial clubs which had come and gone through the years. Many of the club's members were businessmen and the club helped organize and carry out community projects.

The large number of clubs, with their range of interests, were an important part of Wakefield social life from the beginning of the town's

existence. Clubs which existed before World War I tended to meet more often and helped give the townspeople something to do. After the War the automobile made it possible for people to go other places for activity. The clubs also reflected the social order of the town. The Library Club, for instance, gave its members a mark of status. Other clubs served the same purpose. The type of club that the people joined depended on the interests of and, in some cases, the business of the town. Before construction of Milford Reservoir, farm organizations were very important. The Grange, 4-H, Farmer's Union, Farm Bureau, and a number of farm women's clubs such as You and I, held many meetings. Some of these clubs held meetings after land was acquired for the reservoir but many of them folded or had few members. After the lake went in, camping and water sport clubs became important. The Gnat Batters, a campers' association, formed in 1968 and the Milford Water Sports Club was organized in 1969. The Junior Rifle Club also formed in 1969. These clubs show the new interest in the recreation opportunities brought by the reservoir.²⁰

Holidays, celebrations, and special events also served to add diversity to the town's social life each year. All of the major holidays were recognized and celebrated but some holidays were especially important. Memorial Day was observed by the members of the G.A.R. with graveside services for veterans. After World War I, the veterans of that war took over the Memorial Day services from the few remaining Civil War Veterans but interest in the holiday waned.²¹ By the 1930's there was only family observance of Memorial Day. The Fourth of July celebrations, which were very extravagant in the early part of the century, faded too during the 1920's. A

slight interest in a town Independence Day celebration returned during the 1930's but town wide festivities were only organized for a few years. Labor Day was celebrated with various outdoor activities including ball games, horse races and, in 1932, airplane rides. Halloween, too, was a time for fun. As a particularly outrageous prank, a goat was left in R.M. Lockridge's office on one Halloween night.²² Tricks like this often were played on October 31. November 11, Armistice Day, became a legal holiday after World War I and banks as well as some businesses closed on that day through the 1920's and 1930's. Other holidays, Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter, were celebrated by families, and by school or church festivities.

Special events also helped entertain and educate the community. Educational programs long commanded a prominent position in the entertainment of Wakefield people. The "Wakefield Lecture Course" of 1904 brought in speakers, and the Clay Center Chautauqua attracted a number of townspeople in the early 1900's. By 1909 a lecture circuit was routed through Wakefield. This lecture series ran for a number of years. The July 1915 Chautauqua in Wakefield advertised Dr. H.W. (Taffy) Sears, a humorous lecturer, the Chautauqua Singers, two other singing groups, and four other lecturers, including a Methodist missionary and a Southern orator. The summer event continued in 1916 but was discontinued in 1917-1919, due to the war. The Chautauqua developed financial difficulties in 1927 and seventy-five residents pledged financial backing for the 1928 season. With the support of the community the annual, week-long, summer lectures continued for a few more years only to again suffer losses in 1930. The News speculated that the community lacked interest in this type of entertainment and the annual

Chautauqua was not continued.

A special event held in the fall from almost the beginning of the town's existence is the Wakefield Free Fair. The Farmers Institute, a farm organization, sponsored the fair and the lectures which were held at the same time. Wakefield felt proud their fair attracted local people and that the prize money stayed in the county. In contrast, the News asserted that most of the prize money from the Clay County Fair held in Clay Center in 1931 went to people who lived outside the county.²³ Outside difficulties sometimes affected the free fair. In 1932 economic conditions caused the fair to cut expenses and in 1942 frost and the war injured participation. The fiftieth anniversary of the Wakefield Free Fair was celebrated in 1939.

Wakefield residents have participated from the beginning in the town's active, if not wildly various, social life. The associative nature of the colonization helped townspeople to form social ties, while churches, schools, clubs, and holidays and special events have all had their parts in keeping things lively.

End Notes

¹It is interesting that the Kansas Land and Emigration Company was established in August of 1869, almost a year before the local Methodist Church got its start. The first large party of settlers had arrived in Sept. of 1864. The colonization obviously was not inspired by religious conviction.

²Rev. William Todd served in India as a missionary under the American Board from 1833 to 1839. In 1858 he followed his adopted sons, J.B. Quimby and W.E. Payne, to the future Wakefield area.

³The services of the Episcopal Church were first held in the Spring of 1871 at the home of Mrs. Pearson, who had moved to the Wakefield area from Baltimore in 1870. The solicitation of funds in Mrs. Pearson's former hometown were probably made in hopes of success due to her influence.

⁴The glebe, a parish-owned farmland around the church, is the only one in Kansas according to Goodrich Robert Fenner and Edward Clark Turner The First 100 Years (Lawrence, Kansas: The Allen Press, 1959), p.83.

⁵Due to declining membership, the rectory was sold in 1935. The congregation dwindled to 42 by 1959 and the Rector of St. Paul's, Clay Center served the membership.

⁶Ted Avery's grove was a popular location for tent meetings, such as the one held July 20 through 31, 1905. The revivals must have been exciting. Reverend C.B. Young, of Wakefield, stated in the Wakefield News, October 19, 1915, that he disagreed with the writer of a Clay Center Times story attacking revivals as "morbid" and "hysterical." Young recalled biblical accounts of shouting.

⁷Wakefield News, September 23, 1905.

⁸Wakefield News, October 6, 1904.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Evidently a short lived hope.

¹¹The State Supreme Court eventually upheld Wakefield's school board in the suit brought by Mrs. Betty Chaffin Grimison.

¹²Marjorie French taught at the high school in 1942 and 1943. In 1944 she served as principal.

¹³The Knights and Ladies of Security later changed it's name to Security Benefit Association.

¹⁴Wakefield News, July 11, 1934.

¹⁵Wakefield News, April 19, 1939.

¹⁶It is difficult to understand why the band was so hard to sustain. A music teacher, Miss Randall, managed to maintain a music class from 1900 until at least 1916.

¹⁷Wakefield News, July 23, 1924.

¹⁸Wakefield News, June 8, 1916.

¹⁹The G.J. Stannard G.A.R. post in Wakefield was named for General G.J. Stannard. Dr. Asahel Burt was at the battle of Fort Harrison during the Civil War and assisted in amputating the arm of General Stannard during that battle. It is likely Dr. Burt suggested the G.A.R. post be named after the General.

²⁰For a list of some of the clubs in Wakefield from 1900 through 1969 see the Appendix 1.

²¹Memorial Day was an important Holiday until after World War I.

²²Wakefield News, November 8, 1933.

²³Wakefield News, October 14, 1931.

Wakefield 1919-1941

World War I officially ended November 11, 1918, but Wakefield people continued to be reminded of war days.¹ Liberty Loan drives went on, the fifth loan starting during "Loyalty Week" of April 1919. In another effort to raise money to pay for the war, the Bank of Wakefield offered a savings bank made out of a grenade as an inducement to buy war stamps. The government cut this offer short, refusing to release the grenades. Another war reminder came in the form of shortages of housing and commodities. Coal shortages were especially critical during 1919. Late in that year, the Mayor of Wakefield received communication from the Railroad Administration stating that the town might be cut off from all coal. To help with conservation efforts the town sponsored a wood chopping day in December and wealthier citizens donated wood for the needy. Necessary businesses opened only from nine to five and all places of amusement were closed for a short time. By early 1920 the coal shortage abated but housing remained scarce. The Wakefield News suggested the motto for the town in 1919 was "Buy a Home."² Returning servicemen married and families wanted a quick return to a peacetime way of living. Supplies, however, were not immediately available for construction. Building accelerated during the 1920's and this eased the housing problem.

With the war over Wakefield people wanted, as did the rest of the nation, to return to "normalcy." And again the town tried to strengthen its

position as an area trade center. Town amenities such as paved streets, parks, and sewers became more important. Town services were expanded. Improvement in the city's fire protection system came after a potentially devastating fire when in 1922 the Farmer's and Merchant's Bank was almost destroyed. This spurred the City Council to organize a paid fire Department within one month of the damage. The chief received \$2.00 a drill or fire, the assistant chief received \$1.50 for each effort, and firemen got \$1.00. As well as upgrading the personnel, the town attempted to upgrade the equipment. An electric fire siren improved communication after 1928 and in 1930 the town purchased a chemical fire truck with hook and ladder. The truck cost \$2,766.00 with the trade-in of the old truck. The News reported: "We understand the Councilmen and Mayor can't agree however on which will have the honor of driving it to the first fire."³ The truck greatly improved the town's ability to fight a blaze and lowered business insurance by 5% on buildings and 2% on contents. Homeowners did not benefit from lower rates.

In another effort to improve the quality and safety of the business district and the town the city government and businessmen jointly hired a night marshall to patrol Main Street. The city council promised one-third of the watchman's salary; the businessmen agreed to pay two-thirds. A vigilante organization was formed in 1930 to assist the night marshall if he needed help. By 1936 Wakefield also hired a day marshall who usually took care of traffic matters. The job of marshall evidently required some special political skills and a number of marshalls quit after becoming entagled in differences with Councilmen or citizens.

Town improvements of this period included a community hall. The idea of

a central meeting place was long advocated in town. High school students called for a Community Hall in 1920 and were supported by the Library Club and the Commercial Club. Two mass meetings were held in 1921 but although sixteen people agreed to give \$100.00 each, and the city approved placing a building in the city park, no Hall was built. In 1922 there was again talk of putting a gymnasium in City Park and the Library Club pledged \$300.00 in support of a gymnasium/Community Hall combination. The Commercial Club worked with the City Council and by May \$5,000 worth of pledges had been received. It was assured that dancing would not be allowed in the new building. In early August bids were rejected as too high and in late August the plans for the Hall were changed to include a kitchen and a future livestock pavilion. However, some townspeople began to question who would control the Hall and the building movement dissipated. The old Alliance building was purchased in 1927 to serve as a township hall, but again in 1930 the Community Club called for a Community House. The long desired building was put up in 1930 at a cost of \$20,000. Popular subscription raised \$18,000 and the sale of the Alliance building brought \$2,000. The new Hall had a 1,200 person capacity and a library room. Workmen rushed to complete the structure in time for the fair.

Of the additional town amenities added between 1919 and 1941, sewer improvements were the most controversial. The city discussed, in early 1924, installing a partial sewer system at a cost of \$8,500 to \$9,000. A number of citizens circulated a petition asking for a complete sewer system. The city rejected the petition and arranged for a Clay Center firm to do the sewer work providing they used some Wakefield labor. A group of townsmen protested

the city's sewer plans and asked for a temporary injunction against the project.⁴ The injunction was set aside and the work carried on. The state accepted the Wakefield sewer job in August 1924, although a few citizens continued to voice complaints about the project. The city also improved the water system the year after completing the sewer, but this job was much less controversial. The city well was originally dug in 1910. In 1925 it was re-drilled at the cost of \$4,978.00. The well continued to operate satisfactorily until the late 1930's when it began to run slow and murky. The city discussed replacing the well but became concerned with other matters, primarily war matters, and the project was dropped.

Town life also changed in other ways between 1919 and 1941. Electricity usage increased markedly. Many new inventions boosted electricity consumption. Electric clothes washers were advertised in the News in 1920. L.J. Coffman gave a radio demonstration in his home in 1922 and in 1923 a few Wakefield folks bought radios in order to hear Doc Brinkley's broadcasts from Milford. One enterprising youth, Bobby White, arranged to hear the Brinkley show by making his own radio with a coil wrapped around a cane hooked up to a head set. The first electric cooler in town was owned by Percy Batchelor in 1925. By 1929 there were twenty-two refrigerators in town, including one in the Buche Hotel. Electric ranges also became popular by 1931 and Kansas Power and Light sponsored cooking demonstrations with the new appliance. The city owned and operated the electric light franchise until United Power and Light took over February 13, 1924. In 1928 the company cut rates but increased the minimum, which suggests a substantial increase in use. The News complained of poor service at the time of the rate changes and

it was not unknown for the lights to be out for hours or even for days. The town petitioned for lower rates in 1933, during the lean years of the Depression, and considered changing back to municipal light operation in 1935. The Depression discouraged this endeavor. The town was still sufficiently dissatisfied with United Power and Light of Kansas to award the electric franchise to the Kansas Power Company of Abilene in 1936. By the next year area farmers began to get electricity. The Rural Electrification Administration (REA) continued to bring power to rural homes through the 1940's.

Wakefield also sought to strengthen its position as a trade center by making sure a major highway ran through town. The Midland Trail, later renamed the Midland-Roosevelt Highway, was almost moved in 1924 from an itinerary which ran from Manhattan to Clay Center via Riley to a route which would take traffic from Manhattan to Junction City to Clay Center via Wakefield. This proposed route was longer but would benefit Fort Riley. Wakefield courted the possibility of becoming a stop on a major state highway many times from 1919 through the 1940's and sent representatives to many road meetings but was unable to win any real support. The town simply was not large enough to draw a highway on its own and was not geographically placed so that a major road had to pass through.

Access to a major road system became more important after the 1930's when the railroad cut back service to the town. The economic depression and increased competition from trucking firms put a strain on train operations. Early in 1931, the Wakefield merchants went on record opposing freight shipment by truck since this type of transfer did not serve to support

Wakefield people. The railroad stopped one passenger train that had served Wakefield in 1931 and cut down to two freight trains a day and one on Sunday. The Commercial Club of Wakefield protested this move and Wakefield citizens attended a meeting in Clay Center about the matter, but nothing changed. The railroad attempted to encourage trade by offering free delivery and pick up of shipments and sent a representative to talk with area shippers but the move to generate business was coupled with a fifteen percent rate increase request. Late in 1931 the railroad cut back on the number of Wakefield employees and began to close the depot in early afternoon.

Some of the passenger trade lost to the railroad was picked up by the Cardinal Stage Lines bus service from Salina which began a route through town in 1934. The bus ran between Junction City and Clay Center twice a day. This helped solve some of the transportation problems caused by the withdrawal of the passenger train.

The loss of railroad passenger service was largely due to the worsening depression. By 1930 this depression was evident in Wakefield. January 1, 1930, the Wakefield News had proclaimed: "Farmers and town folk alike had much to be thankful for during 1929 and dawn of 1930 is rosy hued indeed."⁵ The blush faded from the picture during the subsequent years. During 1930, disruptions caused by the Depression were mentioned more and more frequently. By April 1930 the News was noting that at tax time: "Dogs are very scarce, most of them hanging around the sausage shop. Radios, pianos and automobiles are in very poor condition. Household furniture is also getting very worn, watches have lost their shine, diamonds dim and everybody

seems happy and ready for a prosperous year."⁶ As the Depression wore on Wakefield area people made adjustments. "Roomers Wanted" advertisements appeared in the News. Horse drawn buggies appeared on Main Street and people began to do more home butchering and canning. Newspaper advertisements suggested tires as the perfect and practical 1930 Christmas gift. Albert Berlin, editor of the News announced in January 1932: "Berlin Unable to Pay Debts"; "Anyway we've got lots of company now."⁷ The economy continued to slump.

All levels of government and private agencies offered aid. The Wakefield Red Cross organized assistance and in December 1931 a town Relief Board formed to distribute food and clothing to the needy. Clay County also attempted to aid those in need but this help, coming out of Clay Center, received much criticism in Wakefield. In 1930 the county refused assistance to anyone with a car, a dog, a radio, or anyone who attended the picture show or allowed their children to do so. The News suggested that this was going too far. Throughout the 1930's the News resented the monopoly that Clay Center had over the poor fund and suggested an independent agency take care of relief operations. Federal funds also provided assistance including a number of local work projects. Local Civil Works Administration (CWA) workers built a retaining wall and storm sewers for the town with one hundred percent federal money in 1934. A number of other possible projects were discussed including a swimming pool, street improvements, a library, city building improvements, a gymnasium, and replacement of the bridge washed out in the 1935 flood. In 1935 the town organized a planning board to consider proposed town improvements and to help direct efforts to take

advantage of county, state, and federal assistance.⁸ A new library was chosen as an appropriate project and federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers began construction on the library in 1936. At one point it looked as if the project would be dropped because the blueprints of the building were lost at one of the area offices. Fortunately, the plans were found. The stone for the building was blasted from the northeast part of the bluff near town.⁹ When completed, the library cost \$12,000 and stood 24 feet by 40 feet, holding 1,700 books. The Library Club boasted a membership of almost 80 and the February, 1938 dedication of the new building attracted about 500 people.

Besides the library construction project, Wakefield people participated in other area federal work programs and also worked at distant Civilian Conservation Camps (CCC). The National Recovery Act (NRA) Blue Eagle emblem appeared in the News office window as well as other places in town, indicating support for federal programs.

The News suggested that Wakefield, with its agriculturally based economy, was hurt more by the 25 to 30 percent drop in wheat prices than by anything else in the Depression. Some in the community attempted to make use of the surplus by eating it for breakfast. The federal wheat allotment plan was approved by farmer participants in the area and the first checks arrived early in 1934. Corn and hog reduction contracts also received attention. By 1934 the News reported that all but four area farmers were on contract. The contract farmers cut wheat acreage by five percent in 1935.

The tax burden was also minimized during this period. County assessments were reduced in 1931 and the county reduced tax levies in both

1931 and 1933. Local banks were allowed to collect taxes to save citizens the trip to Clay Center. Realty values declined twenty percent in 1932. City water rates fell in 1931. Few citizens bought car tags in early 1933, preferring to wait until fifty percent reductions were announced. But as taxes were reduced, so were city, county, and township wages. The city cut wages ten percent in 1931 and again cut wages in 1933. The county and township cut wages in 1932. As wages and taxes were lowered so were expenditures. Wakefield made few purchases or city paid improvements during the depression years.

Weather conditions, as much as the economic turmoil, caused problems for Wakefield area farmers and residents through the 1930's. A tornado ushered in the devastating decade. May 5, 1930, the storm ripped through the areas southwest, south, and east of Wakefield. Cattle were killed, buildings torn down, and individuals hurt, but the storm missed the town proper. More quietly disruptive were the drouth years of 1930, 1931, and 1934. The semi-dry year of 1933 prompted the News to suggest that it was "...not now necessary to go to Arizona to see Grand Canyons."¹⁰ In 1934, Wakefield was placed on the Secondary Federal Drouth List. Dust storms made things unpleasant and caused a Wakefield dry cleaner to advertise: "After the DUST STORM let us restore the natural freshness to your clothing," and a grasshopper plague that year destroyed crops hardy enough to withstand the drouth.¹¹ The dry years left the ground unable to absorb a downpour and contributed to the occurrence of the worst flood in the area's history in 1935. The flood washed out the Wakefield Republican River bridge on June 3. When the bridge, built in 1885, went out it left R.A. Moreland, Fred

Stadler, and DeForest Heath stranded for over two hours. There was much dead livestock and property damage in the area. Tracks were damaged so the railroad could not run for two weeks. Flooding occurred in the area again in 1941 but was much less severe than that of 1935. Drought, flood, grasshoppers, and low prices combined to plague Wakefield area farmers throughout the 1930's.

Wakefield changed in physical appearance between the turn of the century and the town's seventieth anniversary in 1939. After World War I, automobiles lined the better kept, curbed streets. Many of the old buildings were torn down. "Rotten Row," a group of old business buildings, gave way in 1928, for the Brougher Automobile building. Telephone and electrical wiring threaded its way through the streets. These new inventions and improvements as well as a myriad of others which appeared since the early 1900's changed the face of the town. The depression of the 1930's also left a visible mark. The economic strain forced some businesses to fail. The Bank of Wakefield, long a landmark, was one of these businesses. Private building and city improvement projects slowed during the depression but government projects, such as the library and storm sewer construction, were accelerated.

The appearance of the town changed yet the town still remained tied to its past. A number of townspeople corresponded and visited with relatives in England. Occasionally the News would print an excerpt from an English letter. One story stated that the Hammond family found they might well be heir to a large English estate.¹² Still, interest in English affairs seemed to have fallen off considerably from the early 1900's. The coronation of Edward VIII received very little attention compared with that given the

death of Queen Victoria in 1901. Wakefield people still had ties with their English past but their interest in events in Britain was the interest of Americans, not of Englishmen.

As in the past, the town jealously guarded its economic position. Wakefield fought to stay on a major transportation route, be it train or automobile. The town's appearance and public services were upgraded to attract new businesses and residents. Wakefield remained suspicious of Clay Center as evidenced by the dissatisfaction with welfare operations during the Depression and by Wakefield's vocal refusal to support the building of a county hospital at Clay Center in 1922.¹³ The town also guarded against encroachment by other area small towns. The Post Office Department tried to move seventy families which received their mail in Wakefield to the Milford office's jurisdiction in 1927 but was forced to cancel the change. As from the beginning, Wakefield continued to fight for position and economic viability throughout the period between the World Wars.

End Notes

- ¹Much of the information for this chapter was taken from the Wakefield News 1919-1941.
- ²Wakefield News, October 2, 1919.
- ³Wakefield News, September 17, 1930.
- ⁴R.M. Lockridge, W.H. Dibben, John Exley, and Pret Gates led the protest.
- ⁵Wakefield News, January 1, 1930.
- ⁶Wakefield News, April 9, 1930.
- ⁷Wakefield News, January 13, 1932.
- ⁸A.L. Guy, Everett Kerby, and Walter Herman served on this board.
- ⁹The blasting kept residents awake occasionally during November 1936.
- ¹⁰Wakefield News, August 2, 1933.
- ¹¹Wakefield News, March 27, 1935.
- ¹²Wakefield News, January 26, 1938.
- ¹³The hospital was soundly defeated at this time. Wakefield residents often went to Junction City for medical treatment. One of the first local experiences with X-rays came when a Wakefield child had a broken arm X-rayed in Junction City. Wakefield News, June 5, 1919.

The Wakefield Economy

Great expectations of financial prosperity accompanied the founding of Wakefield. The founding fathers hoped to realize a profit from their investments and the settlers hoped to become wealthy in farming or business. Because the local economy was built around farming, the railroad became very important to the fulfillment of these dreams. By 1873 a branch of the Kansas Pacific railroad reached Wakefield. This helped make the town a shipping and trading center. Freight "received" and "forwarded" at Wakefield was regularly reported in the newspaper during the early 1900's. Agricultural materials such as corn, cattle, and hogs were most often forwarded while items like lumber, coal, and agricultural implements were most often received.

By 1900 the growth and prosperity the settlers and founders had envisioned had not developed but the town was established as a local trade center and shipping point. Three general stores, a WFC (Wakefield Farmers Cooperative Association) store, and two meat markets helped make the town a market town. There were also two restaurants, three barbershops (or "tonsorial parlors"), and six businesses relating to horse drawn transportation, such as livery stables, blacksmith shops, and wagon shops. The town also had a drug store, bank, lumber yard, and jewelry store as well as a hotel and photography studio.¹

Most businesses conducted trade in more than one type of goods. For

instance, S.R. Randall sold coal as well as caskets in his undertaking firm and the drug store owner, I.W. Thomas, also sold insurance. Local stores accepted produce in lieu of cash as a business incentive. Miss Addie Yeo's Millinery shop advertised this sort of trading in 1904.

The importance of agriculture to the local economy was reinforced during the period from 1900 to 1920. Two elevators and a flour mill were built and two creamery stations were opened to collect from area farmers. In addition, there were three chicken hatcheries and a greenhouse. The opening of the Farmers and Merchants Bank in 1908 gave the town added strength as a banking center and farm loans constituted a significant part of the town's banking business. Livestock production was also important for a time. Local farmers advertised mule and stallion service. Avery and Son Percherons won high honors at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and consistently won top prizes at the State Fair. The Averys sold their stock in 1906. The other local breeders also gradually went out of business as demand for work animals declined. There was also some farm-related light industry. H.E. Walter and Fred Dodson both manufactured and sold storage tanks and H.W.C. Budden sold windmills. Generally, however, there was little industry or factory work in town.

The conversion from horse drawn transportation to the gasoline powered automobile greatly changed the economy of Wakefield. By 1920 there were many automobile related businesses. Three companies, Wakefield Implement Company, W.E. Brougher, and Avery and Barnes, sold cars and trucks. There were three garages and two tire stores. While the automobile served to bring new types of businesses to town it also made other area towns possible supply points

and funneled some trade away from Wakefield.²

Along with changing trade patterns, the deepening depression also caused growing concern during the 1930's. The magnitude of the depression became apparent during the national bank holiday in March of 1933. At that time the Bank of Wakefield closed, never to re-open. The bank failure shocked the entire town. In 1929 the rumor had circulated that the Farmers and Merchants Bank and the Bank of Wakefield would merge, but no real foreshadowing of the Bank's collapse warned the townspeople.³ The closing put a new word in the vocabulary of Wakefield: conservator.⁴ The Farmers and Merchants Bank bought the empty bank building for \$9,000.⁵ Seventy-five percent of the Bank of Wakefield's deposits were put into a trust fund while the other twenty-five percent were allowed withdrawn within the next eighteen months. The process used to settle the accounts was criticized. Some of the depositors thought that the trustees were selected in a less than satisfactory manner.⁶ Controversy also arose when the News published a story which confirmed that the Bank of Wakefield's President had received a federal loan for his ranch. The News justified its printing the story saying that the public had an interest in the steps stockholders took to settle their liabilities.⁷ The bank released dividends yearly from 1933 until the final payment of 1937. Of the amount deposited, seventy percent by the state's count and seventy-eight percent by local counts was eventually returned.⁸ The bank closing limited the town's potential as a banking center and caused much hardship and distress to the townspeople. By 1939 there were four Clay County banks. The county had had seventeen banks in 1900; before the 1933 federal bank holiday there were twelve.⁹ In 1933 the Farmers and

Merchants Bank at Wakefield joined the Federal Reserve System.

Other business also failed or closed. The Jevons store, which carried hardware and appliances, folded soon after the Bank of Wakefield. The Jevons family had conducted business in Wakefield since the turn of the century. Will Jevons expanded his store during the 1920's and started a separate business manufacturing hog and chicken waterers.¹⁰ After the store failed, a trustee was appointed and the stock was sold. The DeYoung store also closed in 1935. This general merchandise store was founded in 1897. The decline in business due to the automobile, the poor condition of the farm economy in the 1920's, and the national depression all helped to make business in the small town difficult.

As with the rest of the nation, the economic picture began to brighten for Wakefield during the 1940's. Nearby Fort Riley became an influence on the town's economy. As transportation improved, Wakefield people found jobs at the Fort and Army personnel moved into town. The Fort had long been a source of entertainment, as when soldiers occasionally camped in and around town, townsfolk would go in groups to watch the military maneuvers; during the 1940's and 1950's the Fort became a financial support. The type of businesses in town changed rather quietly between 1940 and 1960.¹¹ In 1940 there were at least four stores selling food; by 1960 there were two. The drug store was replaced by a sundry store and the last general store, which sold clothing among other things, went out of business, as did the theater and bowling alley. Automobile related businesses were prevalent in both 1940 and 1960, with two automobile agencies and numerous gas stations and garages.

Milford Reservoir cast an ever more ominous shadow over the economy of Wakefield from the 1930's on. The uncertainty about the dam hampered business planning for years. By the middle 1960's much of the valuable farm land which had supported the town's economy was under water. Some people moved away while others rebuilt in the new Wakefield, hoping that Milford Lake would provide some economic advantages. Recreation oriented businesses, such as a marina and two bars, located in, or near, town, were founded. The town continued to serve as a local trading place for the surrounding area, although business tended to be more seasonal. The reservoir did not provide the boom predicted by some or the bust predicted by others.

Wakefield people long hoped the development of a local oil industry would bring them economic success. After World War I, the oil speculation began. In 1920 W.C. Ritchie, an independent oil speculator, struck oil north of town on the Yarrow farm. Although the well produced about ninety barrels a day, Ritchie's business failed and the rig was sold to satisfy a lien. The oil industry, during this period, was generally unstable and proved itself as so time and again in the Wakefield area. The Skow brothers brought in a thirty barrel-a-day well on the Younkin farm north of Wakefield in 1923. About 3,500 local people went to see the operation and "...many bottles of the greasy stuff were carried off as souvenirs."¹² This well failed too, and though no well had yet produced for any length of time, oil companies and individuals still continued to test and drill in the area. Each new oil boom brought workers and some of their families into town. Local workers seem to have been employed infrequently. Each boom also attracted a flurry of scouts for various oil companies and the News advertised that it printed oil lease

blanks and oil worker pay forms.¹³ Companies continued to sink wells in 1931, 1933, and 1934. A test was also made south of town, a new development for, until 1934, the oil speculation was mainly north and east of town. In 1937 a survey was made for all of Clay County. Oil rumors, drilling and tests continued through the 1940's but the activity moved to the area southwest of town. The News estimated that between 1920 and 1957 there was at least fifteen local oil tests, but by 1957 there were still no regularly producing wells. In 1926 the News observed: "A Community with a good, healthy, year in and year out farming country to support it, is far better than an oil boom that inflates prices and gets everyone wild for a few years, then drops into insignificance."¹⁴ The events of later years bear this observation out.

Wakefield newspapers served to focus attention on the economy of the town. For all but ten years between 1900 and 1969 Wakefield relied on and enjoyed the publication of a local newspaper.¹⁵ The town newspaper served to advertise and boost local business as well as focus attention on local problems and concerns.¹⁶ The first newspaper was the Herald, which was printed from 1871 to 1887. The Advertiser began in 1886 and ran until 1899 when it merged with the Searchlight, continuing under that name with W.E. Miller as editor/publisher and J.K. Miller as owner. Late in 1899 E.H. Miller became editor and served at that post until the demise of the concern in 1901. Wakefield suffered without a town paper until George C. Hall founded the Wideawake in 1902. In August of that year F.W. Boyd began editing for publisher Hall, a short lived arrangement as this weekly folded in September. The next journalistic effort lasted longer. The News began

printing in June of 1904 and continued without interruption through at least part of 1909, with the Rice brothers editing from 1904 until 1907 when Isabelle Fraser took over. It seems the News merged in 1909 with the Pointer.¹⁷ The Pointer, "A Little Newspaper Promoting the Interests of A Good Little Kansas Town," ran at least occasionally through 1912 with J.N. (Newell) Squires as editor. The News evidently resumed operation in 1913 under Robert G. Reed. Dave Pyle bought the paper in 1914 and worked as editor until Albert Berlin took over in 1920.¹⁸ Berlin, the longest serving editor in the town's history, ran the paper until it closed in 1957. The last newspaper printed in the 1900 to 1969 period, the Sun, began in 1966, with Kurt Kessinger, son of the paper's publisher Ed Kessinger, as the first editor. The Sun had six editors in its first three years.

Town newspapers provide a view of a town's economic life. Of the six papers published in Wakefield between 1900 and 1969, only one lasted more than five years. Of the many editors, only the two editors, both with the News, the longest running newspaper, lasted more than five years. The editors of the Wakefield papers frequently lamented the lack of sufficient advertising. Wakefield simply had a limited number of potential advertisers and a limited number of potential subscribers. There was competition for these readers and businesses from Clay Center papers, which also ran some Wakefield local news. Wakefield newspapers served to both advertise local business and to advertise the town with the hope of attracting new businesses. However, finding adequate support for the paper continued to be a struggle.

Wakefield commercial clubs also struggled to boost local businesses and

to attract new companies. Like Wakefield's newspapers, the history of the local commercial clubs provides information about the town's economy. The first Commercial Club, organized in 1900, lost a fight for a Wakefield High School. Evidently the club faded quickly because the town paper called for a commercial club in 1902 and again in 1904. Finally in 1915 a Wakefield Community Club began meeting. As their first project they placed Christmas trees on Main Street for the holidays. The next year they planned a Fourth of July celebration and discussed town improvements, but the club did not last. In 1919 the Commercial Club was revived and began to agitate for a new depot and to sponsor sales and picture shows. In 1920 the group advocated a community building, attempted to get a suitable grain market, organized a Community Day celebration for 1921, launched a Wakefield advertising program, and put up sign boards. The plans of the Commercial Club fell through and a City Club was formed in 1921 by thirty businessmen. This effort lasted four years, supporting the fair, arranging calf projects, sponsoring better roads and high school athletics oyster feeds. In 1922 the club even took action against boys chewing tobacco and smoking in public. After faltering in 1924, the organization disbanded late in 1925 and by 1928 the town was ready to try another Commerical Club. The 1928 version lasted, and had some success, for eleven years. The organization attempted to bring in new businesses and to support them. In 1929 the club members went to Linn, Kansas to see a creamery with the view of bringing a creamery to Wakefield. The Linn creamery was not as impressive as was hoped. The notion of starting a cheese factory was discussed a number of times but nothing concrete came of it. Road signs were placed to make the town easier to get

to and the new "talkie" theater was supported as the Commercial Club bought up tickets and offered them free in 1930. The interests of this group are reflected in the names of its committees for 1933: Finance, Entertainment, Membership, Civic, Streets/Roads/Highways, and Advertising. The 1933 members even sang special club songs.¹⁹ A real victory of this period was the renewal of the local International Harvester dealership. When the local dealer lost the franchise in 1935 the Commercial Club protested and the company returned the dealership. There were not many other victories as the nation-wide depression persisted. The Commercial Club reorganized in 1940 and became the Wakefield Chamber of Commerce, with a membership of seventy-nine. The Chamber installed a co-op meat storage center in the early 1940's and looked into discrimination against local WPA workers. The Chamber also tried to support the picture show. Shortly after 1940 the Chamber effort faded. The Lion's Club, formed in 1946, began to take over some of the commercial club community projects and no new city clubs appeared. Through the years, Wakefield businessmen were unable to sustain a Chamber of Commerce or Commercial Club, but they were always willing to try.

By and large, Wakefield's economy has been remarkably steady despite changes in technology and even changes in local geography. The town started as a small agriculturally based trading center and remained a small trading center,²⁰ although farm trade dwindled. The town's newspapers and commercial clubs tried to diversify the economy and their failures illustrate Wakefield's inability to grow into a larger, more commanding town. But consistency marks Wakefield's economy and although the town failed to grow substantially richer or larger it continued to support the local population.

End Notes

¹See Appendix 2 for some of the businesses in 1900.

²See Appendix 2 for some of the businesses in 1920.

³Wakefield News, July 31, 1929.

⁴Wakefield News, March 22, 1933.

⁵Wakefield News, June 28, 1933. The News estimated the worth of the bank building at \$40,000.

⁶Wakefield News, July 12, 1933. Over 100 depositors met to protest the way the trustees were selected.

⁷Wakefield News, July 4, 1934.

⁸Wakefield News, September 29, 1937. Not all the Bank's outstanding debts were collected either. Interview with Mrs. Dan Myers, III., Fall 1980.

⁹Wakefield News, May 3, 1939.

¹⁰The EZ Fountain Company bankruptcy was handled separately. Wakefield News, April 19, 1933.

¹¹See Appendix 2 for some of the businesses in 1940 and 1960.

¹²Wakefield News, August 22, 1923.

¹³Wakefield News, September 26, 1928.

¹⁴Wakefield News, March 3, 1926.

¹⁵There was no newspaper from December 1901 until March 1902, September 1902 until June 1904, intermittently from 1909 until 1913, and from 1957 until 1966.

¹⁶History of Kansas Newspapers, by William E. Connelley, Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1916, listed the following Wakefield Newspapers: Advertiser, March 29, 1886-1899; News (first), June 23, 1904-1909; Searchlight, August 28, 1899-1901; Wideawake, March 12--September 11, 1902; Pointer, ?--1909; News (second), July 2, 1914--?. The Wakefield News, April 29, 1931 lists: Searchlight, August 28, 1899--December 1901; Wideawake, March 12, 1902--September 11, 1902; Herald, December 30, 1886--August 4, 1887; Advertiser, March 29, 1886-1899 (with interruptions); News (first), June 16, 1904--December 28, 1909; News (second), July 2, 1914 and on.

¹⁷It is difficult to determine exact dates for this newspaper. The Clay Center Dispatch, April 29, 1909 mentions that Wakefield Pointer Editor

Newell Squires visited the city, so the paper was evidently in operation at this point. History of Kansas Newspapers by William E. Connelley, Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1916, p.161 states that the News merged with the Pointer in 1909.

¹⁸The Clay Center Times, March 26, 1914 states that Robert G. Reed; owner and editor of the News, sold the paper to Mr. Pyle. The Clay Center Times, April 6, 1914 says that Mr. Reed edited the paper for over a year.

¹⁹The Songs were written by Mr. E. Hawes. Wakefield News, January 11, 1933.

²⁰Population figures given by the newspapers: 1900--323, 1910--514, 1920--531, 1940--509, 1969--571.

Politics in Wakefield

Most often serene, Wakefield city elections usually featured an incumbent slate and no political opposition. Wakefield generally held city elections every year from 1900 to 1921 and every two years thereafter. These elections followed a specific schedule. The townspeople drew up the slate by holding a caucus or caucuses in March. Usually one group chose a slate but occasionally, as was the case in 1910, two tickets were chosen. On a few occasions the town forgot to have a caucus and the ballot was printed without any candidate names. Election day fell on the first Tuesday in April. On this day citizens voted for a Mayor, five Councilmen, a Street Commissioner and a Police Judge. Before 1916 City Clerk and Marshall were also listed on the ballot; after that date these office were appointed. The Street Commissioner's job also dropped from the ballot between 1913 and 1915.

Wakefield city officials generally remained in office for a number of years. Mayors especially tended to serve more than one term and a couple of Mayors were elected many times. W.H. Myers held the office of Wakefield Mayor more than fifteen years between 1901 and 1920. In more recent times, Bill Auld ran the city between 1955 and 1965. Councilmen also were often re-elected. Usually two or three of the five-person Council was retained in office. In this way, a core of citizens continued to influence the city government.¹

The number of people voting in city elections varied greatly between 1900 and 1969. The smallest participation probably came in 1903, with 24 votes cast, and the largest vote occurred in 1933 when 281 voted.² Large numbers cast ballots in all the elections during the middle 1930's, perhaps because of the unstable economic conditions. Just before the April 1933 election, the national bank holiday closed the two town banks and only one re-opened, so people were particularly uneasy in Wakefield.

Usually city elections were characterized as "quiet" by the newspaper. The 1923 vote did not follow the usual pattern. Most often a city caucus picked the ticket in March and that ticket was victorious in April. In March 1923, a small group of citizens nominated the slate. The News noted that there was not much interest in the race and added "The present council has been pretty conservative and watchful of the city treasury--in fact too much so in the matter of street lighting, we believe, yet they have probably done what the majority desired--for lights do cost money."³ Although only fifty-five people cast votes on election day, the results were surprising. The mayor, James McIntire, was re-elected but three of the five Councilmen were not. The News suggested that the upset was due to the council's failure to appoint a welfare board at the request of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the failure to find a suitable city hall, and the fact that several trees fell in the city in the last year. Evidently voter displeasure with the three defeated Councilmen abated by 1925; all three were elected at that time. Only rarely did any discussion or dialogue on town political questions or arguments come out in the Wakefield paper. It seems that there were few political differences and these few were settled

in private, not in the newspaper. In contrast with the various and many commercial clubs through the years, the political leadership remained steady and continuous. To maintain an incorporated city status for the town, officials had to be elected. Without much political turmoil or debate, or even many decisions to make, the job of Councilman was not overly demanding. Any projects that the City Council might wish to pursue were limited by the finances of the town. Most of the decisions the Council made were of a routine nature, generally ordinances backed by the consensus of the townsfolk. The Council could even get along without an ordinance book for long periods of time as was illustrated when the book was lost.⁴

Wakefield women began voting in city elections in 1901. In March of that year the women first met separately at Thomas Hall and then joined the men at Dodson's Hall to nominate a slate. The Searchlight reported: "The presence of a large number of ladies lent a pleasant feature to the meeting. They were there for business and did their share, proving that women can take advantage of the right to vote, and conduct their affairs in a business like way."⁵ In the election which followed, the most hotly contested thus far, Mrs. J.B. Pocock ran for City Clerk but was defeated. Through the years, townswomen generally cast half the votes in city elections, but women candidates were nonexistent. In 1941 there was talk of a "petticoat" ticket but none materialized.⁶ Women thus participated in the town government only indirectly.

Women gained the right to vote in state elections in 1914 and then in national elections in 1920. Wakefield women supported the suffrage movement in a variety of ways, including organizing a 1910 "Suffragette Social," the

invitation to which read:

The Suffragettes have lofty minds,
And are smart as all creation:
They can give the men some pointers
On how to run this nation.
Don't miss their celebrated meeting
At DeYoung's Hall Friday night.
For they're a bunch of orators;
And a mighty handsome sight.
Given by the Royal Neighbors
At eight o'clock November fourth;
Admission twenty cents,
Refreshment served by the Suffragette husbands.⁷

Finally, in June 1919 State Senator W.H. Myers attended a special Sunday session of the Kansas legislature to ratify the national suffrage amendment so that women would have the vote in the fall.⁸

Wakefield politics, on the state and national level, were consistantly and strongly Republican. As an example of this Republican enthusiasm, 3,000 people gathered at Wakefield for a rally of the McKinley/Roosevelt Club in October 1900.⁹ County offices occasionally went to a Democrat but this seems to have been due to the personality of the candidate offsetting the party affiliation.¹⁰ Occasionally, though, interest was shown in town for a candidate not a Republican.¹¹ The 1930 gubanatorial campaign of J.R. Brinkley, from nearby Milford, drew some Wakefield supporters. The News noted:

Brinkley signs adorn many car windshields, (although we

notice very few except on Fords,) the radio station at Milford sizzles with campaign talk,...¹²

And in times of poor farm prices, farm organizations with political interests, like the National Producers Alliance and the Non-Partisan League, attracted small local followings.¹³

Like most of the townspeople, the two Kansas State Senators from Wakefield, H.W. Avery (1909, 1911) and W.H. Myers (1917, 1919), were both Republican, as was William "Bill" Avery, the only Wakefield citizen to hold a national elected political office. After years of activity in the Young Republicans organization, Avery was elected to the Kansas legislature, where he served from 1951 through 1955.¹⁴ In 1954 he became the Second District Kansas delegate to the 84th United States Congress, where he served until 1965. From 1965 through 1967, Avery was Governor of the State of Kansas. Though he was defeated in his 1968 bid to become the Republican Senatorial candidate, support for Avery remained strong in the Wakefield area throughout his political campaigns. Wakefield has always been proud of its most famous citizen.

Generally, in politics, Wakefield held true to the Republican Party, city elections were quiet, and the town was run smoothly by a small group of interested citizens.

End Notes

¹For a list of known Wakefield Mayors and Council members, see Appendix 3.

²Clay Center Dispatch, April 10, 1903; Wakefield News, April 5, 1933.

³Wakefield News, March 14, 1923.

⁴The Council relied on memory instead of an ordinance book for many years according to the News, April 23, 1930. The ordinance book was lost in 1936, News May 6, 1936.

⁵Wakefield Searchlight, March 14, 1901.

⁶Wakefield News, March 19, 1941.

⁷Clay Center Times, October 27, 1910.

⁸Wakefield News, June 19, 1919.

⁹Although in January 1900 the Searchlight announced itself the only independent paper in Clay County, Editor Miller formed a Rough Riders Club in September and printed a supplement to the paper for the October McKinnley/Roosevelt Rally.

¹⁰The Wakefield News, November 3, 1920, estimated the Wakefield vote to be 3 to 1 Republican except in the County Clerk and Probate Judge balloting, where it was 2 to 1 Republican. The county Democratic ticket was not even given in the paper during some years, though the Socialist, Prohibition, or People's Party tickets often were given. There may well have been no Democratic slate some years.

¹¹Some Wakefield residents sought office on other than Republican tickets, usually unsuccessfully. As an example, R.M. Lockridge ran as an independent in the 58th District Representative race in 1914, while W.D. Starling campaigned for Superintendent of Public Instruction as a Socialist.

¹²Wakefield News, October 15, 1930.

¹³The National Producers Alliance tried to organize in 1931 and the Non-Partisan League was active in 1922.

¹⁴Avery's exposure in various anti-dam organizations also gave him much publicity.

Wakefield 1942-1962

Although Wakefield was settled primarily by English colonists, there was no widespread public support for joining the British in the fight against Germany during the early days of World War II, just as there had been none early in World War I. War news did not dominate the newspaper in 1938 and 1939, and although the town supported both the Finnish and the Red Cross relief drives during 1939, there was no public call to arms. The national movement toward military preparedness changed things. Fort Riley activity increased during 1939. In 1940, all Wakefield men aged 21 to 35 were called on to register in the library basement and 80 to 100 men were expected to register. The response of employers to the draft registration prompted the News to condemn help wanted ads which said: "No men of draft age desired."¹ The war's influence on the paper can also be seen in headlines such as: "Weather does a Blitzkreig."² Wakefield participated in the preparedness program and followed the war in Europe but local citizens still did not advocate American involvement.

With the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Wakefield joined the rest of the nation in the war effort. A group of twenty business and professional men met in early December and elected a council from the town and adjoining townships to plan wartime action according to federal recommendations.³ The committee was elected to serve for the duration of the war. A separate Defense Savings Bond Committee met to direct collection of

local war funds.⁴ As the conflict continued other committees were formed. In 1942 the tire rationing board was established. Gas rationing went into effect in 1942. Harold Gingrich of the Home Oil station sold 4,000 gallons of gas and kerosene the day before rationing began. The next day he sold exactly four gallons of gas. Service stations were limited to seventy-two operating hours a week in 1943. Some townspeople thought tire and gas rationing would prove a boon to Wakefield businessmen as customers would prefer to shop at home.⁵ It is probable that more people traded closer to home, but fewer goods were available. In March, 1943, 1,156 people registered in Wakefield for the ration books which regulated meat, dairy products, sugar, coffee, and gas sales.

Other types of shortages were also felt. Teachers and farm hands were in short supply. The News had to limit local write-ups when the military drafted the Editor's assistant. The cafe and hotel closed for a time in 1943 due to lack of help and supplies. Marshall Hardware also closed in 1942 because of a lack of stock. As in World War I, townspeople were encouraged to save scarce items for military use. A Victory Book Drive encouraged giving books for use by servicemen. Victory gardens and home canning was encouraged to save food. The cafe cut portions to achieve the same end. "Make over, Make do, Use up" was the motto of the day.

Many Wakefield people, male and female, joined the military. In 1942 the draft was expanded to include men aged 20 to 41, and later in the year those aged 45 to 64 were asked to register. By 1943 men with children were being called up. The following Wakefield area residents lost their lives in World War II: William Alsop, Elvin Case, Jim Guy, Elmer Mickey, Herschel

Murray, Norman Shandy, Ellis Shivers, and Harold Wiese. Victory in Europe Day in 1945 was observed by only a few townspeople. The Japanese were still much feared, as is shown by the excitement generated in June 1945 when a ballon, speculatively attributed to the Japanese, passed over town. The balloon was later identified as a weather instrument. Victory in Japan Day, September 2, 1945, brought much relief but not much celebration, in contrast to Armistice Day of World War I. This war was too grim.

World War II slowed Wakefield's attempt to improve services and facilities. The town had decided to pave the main street, but the war held up shipment of necessary supplies. Main Street was paved in 1942 but there was some question whether the oil seal would be available to finish the job. Eventually it arrived. With the paving of Main Street, the now superfluous horse-drawn street maintainer was sold.⁶ In an attempt to improve sanitary conditions, the town insisted all cesspools and outdoor toilets be abandoned and all townspeople were required to be connected to the sewer in 1944. Train service, unfortunately, was not improved. In fact, passenger service was regularly cut back until, in 1949, passenger service from Wakefield was completely discontinued.

After World War II ended Wakefield began a private war against the United States government. Rumors that the government planned a dam on the Republican River circulated throughout the 1930's. In 1935 the rock strata was tested at Milford to determine its suitability as a setting for a dam. The War Department's Corps of Engineers remained interested in the Milford site throughout the thirties but other possible sites were also mentioned. Fifty people attended a meeting at the Wakefield Community Hall in 1937 to

discuss the situation. A committee was appointed to draw up a petition and work to further Scandia as the dam site.⁷ Scandia businessmen met and Junction City businessmen joined them to advocate the Milford site. The Corps of Engineers remained interested in the Milford location and surveyed the area again in 1938. The community felt it received a reprieve that year when the Congress did not approve money for the project. Still the News said that townspeople were neglecting to paint and make improvements because of fear of the dam.⁸

The Second World War diverted the government from the project. No mention of the dam was made in the News from 1942 until 1947. After the war was over the project was taken up by the government with enthusiasm. The Board of Engineers held a public hearing on the Republican River project at Gravelly Point, Virginia in 1948. The News suggested: "And of course those 'big wigs' couldn't spare the time nor cash to come to the mid-west to conduct a hearing. Instead they ask individuals and organizations to travel half way across the nation to meet with them. But that's the way the present bureaucratic government does things. Its do as they say, or else."⁹ The Wakefield Lions Club voted to raise money to help fight the government on the issue. A mass meeting was called to discuss the problem and the federal meeting to be held in Virginia. One hundred people attended the meeting. The resulting organization, which elected Bill Avery president and Dan Myers secretary/treasurer, was later named the Lower Republican Valley Development Association.¹⁰ Bill Avery and Dan Myers traveled to Virginia. A professor from Kansas University also went to: "do his bit towards dunking this area in the murky river water."¹¹ The News suggested that the Wakefield

representatives should have brought some Kansas State professors to the meeting. The townspeople felt heartened when the Milford and Tuttle Creek projects were not funded in 1948. Area residents continued to plan the fight against the dam and fifty area residents took their concerns to a hearing held in Topeka late in 1948.

In 1949 the Army engineers approved the Milford site. Bill Avery and Will Beall, of Clay Center, went to Washington to give testimony before the Congressional Public Works Committee. A state-wide anti-dam organization, the Kansas Soil Conservation and Flood Control Association, was founded in 1950. This organization vowed to fight all major dam construction in Kansas. Bill Avery of Wakefield served as treasurer, and anti-dam meetings were held across the state.

It was about thirty years from the start of the Milford reservoir rumors to its actual construction. Local people became very tired of the uncertainty and felt it hindered development and improvement of the area. Dam construction for purposes of flood control received much more wide-spread support after the extensive flooding in 1951; and Milford Dam became more certain in 1954 with the passage of House Document 642, which authorized construction. Townspeople protested the act with little success. The Army engineers sent a letter with a map illustrating the proposed lake to the Council in 1957. The prospective lake took all of Broughton, a neighboring town, and part of Wakefield. Still the lake was delayed. Wakefield Mayor Bill Auld traveled to Washington in 1958 to ask that the proposed reservoir be cancelled or, if that was impossible, built as soon as possible.

Bill Avery, who had long been active in the fight against Milford and other big dams, won election to Congress in 1954. The apparent end to the Milford dam fight came when the Wakefield area Representative Avery asked for money to construct Milford dam in 1958. Avery still opposed the dam but had reached the conclusion that it was inevitable and he wanted to get on with life and assure his constituents all possible government help with the move.¹²

The United States budget of 1960 included one million dollars to start Milford Reservoir. A slight change in the dam site, moving it closer to Alida, caused the water to cover less Clay County land but it did not help Wakefield much. Town residents held a meeting in December 1960 with Col. A.P. Rollins, Jr., Chief Engineer from the Kansas City headquarters of the U.S. Army Engineers. Two hundred people came to hear the Corps' proposal and to determine whether the town, which was just nine years short of a century old, would move and continue to function or whether the residents would go their separate ways. The Corps of Engineers offered twenty-five percent of the value of the property as moving expenses for those who had to be relocated. The residents asked if the whole town could be moved, not just the sections which would be under water, and questioned the status of the railroad. The Kansas Corporation Commission protested the Union Pacific plan to abandon the line and the railroad temporarily reconsidered. After a period of indecision, Wakefield decided to move the part of the town necessary because of the reservoir to higher ground along the lake while keeping the parts of town that did not need to be moved.¹³ Representative Avery announced Wakefield's intention to relocate along with the information

that the town had obtained a no interest Community Facilities Administration loan of \$4,575 to plan new sewage and water systems and new streets and sidewalks. Wakefield City Attorney, Dan Myers III, set up a non-profit corporation to sell lots at cost to those wishing to relocate. The corporation gave first priority to persons whose property would be inundated. The maps showing ownership of the lands needed for Milford Reservoir were made public in 1961. Appraisals began in the summer of 1962 and land purchases, originally scheduled for soon after, started in 1963. The fight was over.

The Clay County Commissioners requested that a bridge be placed over the lake at Wakefield and a County hired engineering firm supported the request. For some time it looked as if the crossing at Wakefield would not be built. There was speculation that a proposed expansion of Fort Riley would jeopardize the bridge, and the town would be isolated. Representative Avery successfully worked to fund the Wakefield crossing and Fort expansion did not affect the construction.

The Wakefield people who fought the dam fought to save their property and homes. They also saw the fight in other terms. In some respects it was People vs. Government and there was much complaint about government bureaucracy. It was also in part a City vs. Small Town and Farms fight. At one point the News complained: "Of course big city leaders desire large dams at any cost, and regardless of consequences, while farm owners, small towners, etc., generally want conservation, both of water and soil, near the source."¹⁴ Wakefield felt that it was being made to suffer the consequences of keeping Kansas City and Topeka safe from floods.

Little aroused Wakefield in the 1950's like the dam. However, the Korean War also left a mark, even though most Fort Riley soldiers brought to the area during the conflict were single and did not have families living in town. The hotel, which held five fort families before the war, was half empty by July 1950. The Korean conflict also caused some hoarding as people still vividly remembered World War II shortages. A few Wakefield people came out against U.S. involvement in Korea and anti-war letters appeared in the News. The death of a Fort Riley soldier who had lived in Wakefield brought the war very close to home in 1950.

In the time period spanning World War II and 1962, the most important event from Wakefield's standpoint was the battle against the dam. World War II caused the townspeople to work together on wartime projects and gave the community, as well as individual families, cause for grief. The Korean War produced some of the same activities and emotions but on a much less grand scale. Most importantly, though, the dam changed the pattern of life. The uncertainty, which went on for so many years, probably did hamper the economic growth and material improvement of the town.¹⁵ The business district, the heart of a town, was physically moved and altered. The changes shuffled neighborhoods. What was once a prestigious block no longer had the same location. Farm families were forced to move off their land, sometimes off land held in one name for generations. The battle was long and hard fought but the battle was lost. Some residents were bitter, others were philosophical, and the town decided to move together and make the most of the opportunities provided by the new lake. Wakefield again looked toward the future with new hopes for prosperity.

End Notes

¹Wakefield News, October 16, 1940.

²Wakefield News, November 13, 1940.

³The following were elected: Dr. A.W. Butcher, Chairman; R.M. Lockridge, Assistant Chairman; Albert Berlin, Secretary; Walter Herman, Otto Brueggeman, Bruce Brougher, Dan Myers, N.E. Price, Ben Fyfe, John Koerner, and H.B. Willis, Council Members from Wakefield. Township Members were: Henry Lumb, Bill Avery, Dub Elkins, Joe Mason, Jr., John Erickson, Horace Cowell.

⁴W.J. Herman was Chairman of this board.

⁵Wakefield News, December 31, 1941.

⁶Not all Wakefield residents favored street work. In 1947, 58 people signed a petition against street improvements. Wakefield News, August 27, 1947.

⁷Those serving were: Walter Herman, R.M. Lockridge, and John Dunham.

⁸Wakefield News, June 15, 1938.

⁹Wakefield News, February 11, 1948.

¹⁰Others elected as officers: Roy Glace, Leo Chapman, and Joe Rudolph.

¹¹Wakefield News, March 3, 1948.

¹²The Avery farm was located under the proposed lake and Congressman Avery was forced to sell his family farm like many others. His property was taken by court action since he was a member of Congress.

¹³Randolph residents had bitterly fought the government about the Tuttle Creek Reservoir to no avail. Perhaps Wakefield residents wanted to avoid the extreme bitterness experienced by Randolph residents.

¹⁴Wakefield News, July 25, 1951.

¹⁵As an example of the lethargy of the business community, a large fire destroyed the Ford Store, Rankin Drug Store, Siemers Mercantile, and the Mason and Eastern Star Hall in December 1954. Some city records were lost in this fire. The News, December 30, 1954, estimated the damage at \$75,000 to \$100,000. But not all the losses had been covered by insurance and the rubble of the Rankin building remained in July of 1955.

Wakefield 1963-1969

Wakefield's relocation began July 8, 1963 and the "new" town accepted bids on water wells as its first official action. Two-thirds of the one hundred and thirty houses in town moved to the new lots and the non-profit land corporation continued to do steady business. Wakefield attempted to make the most of the new reservoir and the best of the forced move. Under the direction of the Lions Club, the town constructed a recreation area in the space left open by moved business and houses.¹ The Club built a boat ramp and eventually the area was designated a State Recreation Park.² Wakefield sent representatives to the Milford Lake Association when that organization held its first meeting in 1966, and participated in the Milford Lake dedication May 17-19, 1968.³

But Wakefield also held a special celebration in 1966, advertising the success of the move with a "Wonderful Weekend in Wakefield."⁴ Five thousand people attended the week long celebration. Governor Avery officially opened the Highway 82 bridge and the town dedicated the new Post Office. The "Wonderful Weekend" also kicked off a new effort to bring business to town. The Committee to Promote Wakefield grew out of economic development meetings held in 1966.⁵ This committee used the celebration to promote development interest. To further this effort, the Local Development Corporation was founded in 1969 specifically to encourage small business in town. One hundred and twenty subscribers pledged \$34,500 to the project. As another

inducement to business location in Wakefield, an airstrip was built in 1969. The National Guard at Clay Center constructed the strip as a training exercise and the Wakefield Lions Club paid for the fuel and landscaping.

Wakefield celebrated its one hundredth birthday in a town which physically only faintly resembled the town settlers laid out in 1869. A huge lake bordered the city instead of a river. The business district no longer filled both sides of a short Main Street, but was scattered along a curving throughfare. There was no park in the center of town but there was a state designated recreation area full of visitors beside the reservoir where the business district had stood for years before.⁶ The automobile and other modern inventions, conveniences, and amenities lined the streets, changing the town's appearance and life. As different as the new town looked, there were similarities between the 1869 and the 1969 Wakefields. Agriculture still supported the town, although the role of the farmer had diminished slightly by 1969. Many of the same families who came in the year of the town's founding still lived there in 1970.⁷ And most importantly, the hope for economic prosperity felt by the original settlers and founders continued to be felt by townspeople in 1969, and that is evidenced by the Wakefield economic development plans.

This hope for prosperity was very important to Wakefield colonists. The town was not founded as a "City Upon a Hill," as a monument to a collective ideology, although, if the cooperative farming plans would have been put into operation, it could have been.⁸ The Wakefield colony was a loose association and the homogenous population had great expectations about the future. These expectations continued through 1969, during the time when the

town became separated from the rural community by ordinances restricting rural types of activity and by the acceptance of new services and inventions which came into use in town more quickly than on the farm. Politically, a small group of men directed things, avoiding conflict or controversy. Town life also offered many and various social activities, primarily led by clubs and school and church groups. The automobile changed the nature of Wakefield's social activity as it allowed townspeople access to the leisure time opportunities of the surrounding areas. The automobile also changed Wakefield's economy as people shopped in other places. The national Depression of the 1930's further altered business, limiting the town's effectiveness as a banking and farm equipment center. But most visibly, Milford Dam changed Wakefield life. The many years of uncertainty about the reservoir hampered business and residential growth. The lake took many acres of farm land, diluting the agricultural economic base. The town changed in physical appearance. But the lake also presented Wakefield with opportunities as a recreation center.⁹

Wakefield's citizens' faith in the future remained constant through the years even if development plans were inconsistently or unsuccessfully carried out. Perhaps Wakefield has not fulfilled the founders or residents' economic or population growth expectations but it has continued to be a viable, steady small town while other small towns have disappeared. Wakefield's hope for and faith in the future have assured its present and promise to assure its future.

End Notes

¹It was frustrating that quite a bit of land not actually under water had to be cleared as a flood plain. The old Bank of Wakefield building occupied by the Farmers and Merchants Bank and much of the business district was cleared for this reason.

²The Clay County State Park at Wakefield was dedicated August 19, 1967.

³It took many years to actually complete the lake. Water did not reach Wakefield's new shoreline until 1967. Wakefield Sun, March 2, 1967.

⁴Earl Herman was chairman of the "Wonderful Weekend" committee and Ted Hayes was Master of Ceremonies.

⁵Ted Hayes, President; Rosemary Visser, Vice-President; Jay Mason, Secretary; and Ruby Kerby, Treasurer.

⁶It is symbolically fitting that the state park which Wakefield hopes will bring economic opportunities was built over the old Wakefield business district.

⁷The Wakefield Sun, September 17, 1970, lists a number of Wakefield families who had been in Wakefield for a century: Adams, Alsop, Avery, Billingham, Budden, Cowell, Elkins, Eustace, Faidely, Gaston, Guy, Hammond, Hawes, Jevons, Jones, Kerby, Lumb, Male, Marshall, Mason, Muston, Myers, Newell, Seal, Sparrowhawk, Swezey, Thurlow, and Yarrow.

⁸Page Smith discusses various types of American town settlement, with emphasis on the settlers' motivations, in his book As a City Upon a Hill, New York: Knopf, 1966.

⁹Wakefield has attempted to enhance the area's attractions to those looking for recreation opportunities. Mention of a possible Wakefield Arboretum appeared in the Wakefield Sun in October 1968. Today, in 1982, Wakefield has both an arboretum and a fine local History Museum.

Appendix 1

Wakefield Community Organizations

American Legion	1920)
Ancient Order of United Workmen	Gnat Batters (formed 1968)
B and E Club (Bacon and Egg Club)	Golf Club
Baby Beef Club (founded 1922)	Grand Army of the Republic
Bacon Club (formed 1933--for young girls)	Grange
Booster Club	Gun Club
Boy Scouts (founded 1922, first)	Hi 4 Club
Bridge Club	International Order of Odd Fellows
Campfire Girls	Jr. Rifle Club (founded 1969)
C.C.C. Club (formed 1923)	Ku Klux Klan
Commercial Club	Knights and Ladies of Security (Security Benefit Association)
Cooking Club	Library Club
Capper Pig Club	Lions (founded 1946)
Country Club	Modern Woodmen of America
Coursing Club (1915)	Masons
Dancing Club	Milcah Club
Dramatic Club	Milford Watersports Club (formed 1969)
Embroidery Club	Mule Mitten Tossers
F and N (founded 1942)	Musical Club (formed 1915)
Farm Bureau Club/Farm Bureau Women (formed 1928)	National Aid Association
Farmers Union	News Club
"500" Club	Night Club
4-H	N.N. Club (formed 1919--for young girls)
Friendly Neighbors	O.C. Jrs.
Girl Reserves	Old Timers Club
Girl Scouts (founded 1924)	Order of the Eastern Star
Girl Service League (founded 1942)	Outing Club (O.C.'s)
Girls Friendly Society (founded	

Parents and Teachers Association (formed 1917 and 1926)	Wakefield Agricultural Society
Patriotic Order of the Owl (Young Woodmen)	Wakefield Athletic Club
Pricilla Club	Wakefield Baseball Association
Royal Neighbors of America	Wakefield Bowlers Club
Rebekahs	Wakefield Community Game and Fish Protective Society
Red Cross	Wakefield High School Alumnae Asso- ciation (founded 1927)
S. D. of J.	Wakefield Livestock and Grain Or- ganization (founded 1922)
Social Club	Wakefield Social Club
Spit and Whittle Club	Willing Workers Sewing Club
Sunshine Club (founded 1918)	Women's Christian Temperance Union
Tennis Club	You and I Club (founded 1919)
Total Abstinence League	Young Democrats
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary (founded 1946)	Young Men's Christian Association
	Young Republicans

Appendix 2

Some Wakefield Businesses

1900

Auctioneer--L.C. Cookson
Bank of Wakefield--D.H. Myers,
President; S.E. Richards, Vice
President; W.H. Myers, Cashier.
Barbershop--William Steffin
Barbershop--Fred Towle
Barn--B.F. Jevons
Blacksmith and tank manufacturing--
H.E. Walter
C.F. Dodson Furniture--Sold lumber
interest to W.H. Fletcher.
Cash Store--S.F. Richards
City Meat Market--R. Alsop
City Restaurant--C.W. Crosby, sold
to A.W. Johnson, sold again to
F.H. Karnell.
Contractor--John Ives
DeYoung and Company
Dodson's Hall
Dressmaking--Louise Coatsworth
General Store--William Guy
Hardware--H.S. Walter
Harnessmaker--Williams
Dr. Everett Hewitt
Jewel Restaurant
Jewelry, Eyeglasses--George Insley
Mental Scientist and Magnetic Heal-
er--Anna Faidley
Millinery--the Pocock sisters

Music Class--Miss Randall
Photographer--Hall
Star Meat Market--A. Fenteem, pro-
prietor.
Star Steam Laundry of Clay Center--
Chas. Gates, agent
Streeter and Brothers Livery
Tank manufacturing--Fred Dodson
Undertaking--S.R. Randall
Union Pacific--R.T. Batchelor,
agent.
Wakefield Alliance Cooperative
Association (WACA)--J.P. Marshall,
manager.
Wakefield Drug Store--I.W. Thomas,
sold to C.W. Rankin.
Wakefield Hotel
Wakefield Insurance and Real Es-
tate--W.H. Myers
Wakefield Tonsorial Parlor--Lee
Sheppeard
Windmills--H.W.C. Budden

1920

Auctioneer--Ross B. Schaulis
Avery and Barnes--Oldsmobile,
trucks, etc.
Bank of Wakefield
Beal Brothers gasoline and Garage--
Sold to Joe Hueson.

Biggs Blacksmith Shop
 Blacksmith--John Sparrowhawk and
 Son
 W.E. Brougher Ford
 Buche's Boarding House
 City Bakery (opened in the spring
 every year)
 Commercial Hotel--E.T. Smiley
 Fred Dodson Plumbing and Heating
 Electric Theatre
 Farmers and Merchants Bank
 Farmers Produce Store--James Shandy,
 manager
 Dr. A.F. Flanagan, D.V.
 A.L. Guy Store
 Hawes Store
 Dr. Dana O. Jackson, M.D.
 Jevon's Hardware
 Dr. T.L. Jones
 Gerald L. Kerr Tire Store of Junc-
 tion City and Wakefield
 Model Furniture Store
 Moyers Vulcanizing Shop
 Myers and Heath, cement works
 Niemoller Flour Mill (sold to Otto
 Brueggeman and C.E. Tutwiler in
 1920.
 Piano tuning--Sam Haden
 Poultry, cream--Bob Davis
 Rankin Drug Company
 Roop Lumber Company
 Schiltz Meat Market
 Dr. C.M. Smith, D.V.
 Smokehouse

Undertaking--Mert Schwensen
 Wakefield Alliance Cooperative
 Association (WACA)
 Wakefield Cash Clothing Store--
 Bingham, manager
 Wakefield Garage--Billingham and
 Pocock
 Wakefield Implement Company--C.S.
 Williams
 Wakefield Motor Company, furnaces--
 Al Faivre
 Wakefield Opera House
 Percy Walter Florists
 Wapler's Store, jewelry

1940

Auld Chevrolet
 Barbershop and Suitatorium--E.J.
 Billingham
 W.E. Brougher Ford
 Dr. A.W. Butcher, M.D.
 Dr. J.L. Chestnut
 Dodson's Bowling Alley
 Duck Pin Bowling Alley--Walter Trow
 and Son (opened 1940)
 E.K. Eakins Insurance
 Farmers Elevator
 Farmers and Merchants State Bank
 Ford Produce
 Fyfe Garage
 A.L. Guy Store
 Hawes (High Grade Food or HGF)
 Grocery Store
 Home Oil Company (Conoco gasoline)

Hotel

Irwin Funeral Home and Ambulance
Service

Koerner's Service Station (Standard
gasoline)

Marshall Hardware

Mercer Furniture Store and Monuments
(opened 1940)

Modern Beauty Shop (opened 1936)---
Laville Saller, operator

News Shop, typewriters

N.M Price--pool hall

Rankin Drug Store

Restaurant--Al Younkin, sold to
Myrtle Kerby

A.M. Sandborn Lumber Company

Charles Seitz, produce

Tavern--Roy Budden

Theater

Elmer Tressin--buying furs, hides,
etc.

Wakefield Bakery (closed 1940)

Wakefield Cafe

Wakefield Meat Markets--Joe Mickey

Percy Walter Florists

Wapler Jewelry Store

1960

John H. Alsop Sand Company

Auld Chevrolet Company

Auld's Sundries

Brougher Motor Company

Carlson and Dons Truck Lines

City Cafe

E.R. Eakin Insurance

Farmers and Merchants State Bank

Arthur Fasse Truck Service

Freeman Oil Company

Hawes Store

Home Oil Company

Kerby Insurance

Mason Service

Mercer Funeral Home and Ambulance

N. Price Billards

Sandborn Lumber Company

Wakefield Barber Shop

Wakefield Farmers Cooperative

Wakefield I.G.A.

Wakefield Telephone Exchange

1969

Auld Chevrolet (Phillips 66 gaso-
line)

Auld's Sundries

James D. Braden Insurance

Cowell Auto Repair

Cut and Curl Beauty Shop

E.R. Eakins General Insurance

Eastside Laundry

Farmers and Merchants State Bank

Home Oil Company

Kerby Insurance

Lakeview Restaurant

Mason Service

Mercer Funeral Home

Mick's Sporting Goods

Newell Truckline

William T. Steffen Insurance

Suzy Q Lounge--Tommy and Dottie

Toulouse, proprietors

T. and J. Sheet Metal

Art Tannehill--excavating

Town and Country Beauty Salon

Wakefield Agency Insurance

Wakefield Barber Shop

Wakefield Farmers Co-op

Wakefield Grocery

Wakefield Marina

Appendix 3

Wakefield City Officials

1900

Mayor: David Frazer

Council: W.H. Myers, David Gaston, R.M. Irvin, S.E. Richards, J.P. Marshall

Police Judge: R. Alsop

Street Commissioner: Ed. W. Jones

Clerk: A. DeYoung

Marshall: Thos. Smith

1901

Mayor: J.P. Marshall

Council: W.H. Myers, S.E. Richards, S.M. Gaston,
Joseph Streeter, Arthur Guy.

Police Judge: R. Alsop

Street Commissioner: R.M. Irvin

Clerk: W.G. Billingham

Marshall: Alfred Alsop (resigned), Lee Sheppard

Voting: 148

1902

Mayor: W.H. Myers

Police Judge: C.W. Durant

Marshall: H.G. Lovett

(Other names unavailable)

1903

Mayor: W.H. Myers

(Other names unavailable)

Voting: 24

1904

(Results unavailable)

1905

Mayor: W.H. Myers

Council: J.P. Marshall, S.E. Richards, A. DeYoung, Sam Gaston, E. Harbes.

Police Judge: W.E. Lumb

Street Commissioner: Wm. Streeter

Clerk: W.G. Billingham

Marshall: Wm. Starling

1906

Mayor: W.H. Myers

Council: J.P. Marshall, S.E. Richards, A. DeYoung, S.S. Gaston, E. Harbes

Police Judge: W.G. Billingham

Street Commissioner: W.E. Lumb

Marshall: Starling

(Clerk's name unavailable)

1907

Mayor: W.H. Myers

Council: J.P. Marshall, S.E. Richards, A. DeYoung, W. Gaston, C.W. Rankin

Police Judge: W.E. Lumb

Street Commissioner: H.H. Myers

Clerk: W.G. Billingham

Marshall: W.D. Starling

Voting: 80

1908

(Results unavailable)

1909

(Results unavailable)

1910

Mayor: W.H. Myers

Council: J.P. Marshall, Arthur DeYoung, H.S. Walter,
Fred Dodson, S.E. Richards.

Police Judge: R. Alsop

Street Commissioner: W.G. Billingham

Clerk: Henry Avery

Marshall: L.L. Sheppeard

1911

(Results unavailable)

1912

Mayor: W.H. Myers

Council: S.E. Richards, Art DeYoung, A.L. Guy,
L.P. Hardenbrook, J.P. Marshall.

Police Judge: R. Alsop

Street Commissioner: Wm. Calberson

Clerk: H.A. Avery

Water Commissioner: Fred Dodson

(Marshall's name unavailable)

1913

(Results Unavailable)

1914

(Results unavailable)

1915

Mayor: W.H. Myers

Council: J.P. Marshall, Art DeYoung, L.D. Hardenbrook,
S.E. Richards, W.C. Billingham

Police Judge: W.H. Dibben

Clerk: W.D. Starling

Marshall: L.L. Sheppeard

1916

(Results not available)

1917

Mayor: W.H. Myers

Council: S.E. Richards, J.P. Marshall, C.S. Williams,
L.D. Hardenbrook, A. DeYoung.

Police Judge: R.T. Batchelor

Appointed: Clerk: W.D. Starling and Marshall: Lee Sheppeard

1918

(Results not available)

1919

(Results not available)

1920

Mayor: McIntire

Council: Wm. Jevons, Art DeYoung, Lee Sheppeard, R.M. Lockridge, McIntire
Clerk: Wm. Rau

1921

Mayor: J.R. McIntire

Council: D.S. McIntire, Art DeYoung, Al Faivre, Eugene Price, S.E. Richards.
Clerk: Wm. Rau

1923

Mayor: James McIntire

Council: Al Faivre, Sam Richards, A.L. Guy, S.S. Gaston, Wm. Jevons.

Police Judge: R.T. Batchelor

Clerk: Wm. Rau

Voting: 55

- 88 -

1925

Mayor: Dan McIntire

Council: Eugene Price, Ted Eustace, Art DeYoung, W.C. Gaston.

Police Judge: August Niemoller

Clerk: Wm. Rau

Voting: 77

1927

Mayor: Dan McIntire

Council: S.E. Richards, A.L. Guy, Eugene A. Price, Art DeYoung, E.R. Eakins.

Police Judge: R.M. Lockridge

Clerk: Wm. Rau

Voting: 65

1929

Mayor: Dan McIntire

Council: S.E. Richards, Art DeYoung, A.L. Guy, Ernest Eakins, Eugene Price.

Police Judge: James Brannick

Clerk: Charles Cowell

1931

Mayor: Dan McIntire

Council: S.E. Richards, A.L. Guy, Elmer Hawes,
Eugene Price, Harold Gingrich.

Police Judge: R.M. Lockridge

Voting: 33

1933

Mayor: Lee S. Walters

Council: Harold Gingrich, A. DeYoung, A.L. Guy,
Charles Seitz, Walter Herman.

Police Judge: R.M. Lockridge

Voting: 231

1935

Mayor: Lee S. Walters (killed November 1935 in an accident.

Eugene Price became Mayor and Herman Avery was appointed to the Council)

Council: Harold Gingrich, Chas. Seitz, A.L. Guy,

Eugene Price, John H. Alsop.

Police Judge: A.F. Niemoller

Voting: 83

1937

Mayor: A.L. Guy

Council: Tom Mallett, L.P. Wapler, Joe Mickey, Del Laflin, Ben Fyfe.

Police Judge: R.M. Lockridge

Voting: 161

1939

Mayor: A.L. Guy

Council: Del Laflin, Otto Brueggeman, L.H. Wapler, John Koerner, Joe Mickey.

Police Judge: R.M. Lockridge

Voting: 93

1941

Mayor: A.L. Guy

Council: Otto Breggeman, L.H. Wapler, Willford Nelson,

Joe Mickey (resigned), Ramond Clark (resigned),

Bruce Brougher (appointed), A.J. Avery (appointed).

Voting: 80

1943

Mayor: Gene Price

Council: Otto Brueggeman, Bruce Brougher, Ben Fyfe,

Joe Mickey, Charles Seitz.

Police Judge: R.M. Lockridge

Voting: 62

(No names printed on ballot. City slate chosen too late.)

1945

Mayor: Eugene Price

Council: Chet Cool, Bruce Brougher, Charles Seitz, Joe Mickey, Ben Fyfe.

Police Judge: R.M. Lockridge

1947

Mayor: Eugene Price (resigned, 1948. Charles Seitz was appointed.)

Council: Bruce Brougher, Charles Seitz, Ben Fyfe, Chet Cool, Joe Mickey.

Police Judge: Will Yocum (Everett Kirby was Police Judge in 1948)

Marshall: Roy Budden (resigned, 1948)

Ray Myers, Wesley Stoddard, City Marshalls in 1948

City Attorney: Dan Myers

Health Officer: Dr. A.W. Butcher

Voting: 33

1949

Mayor: Charles Seitz (Resigned March 1951. Chet Cool was appointed.)

Council: Chet Cool, Bruce Brougher, Claude Rickley, Will Auld, Jack Alsop.

Police Judge: Everett Kerby

Voting: 98

1951

Mayor: Roy McCune

Council: Bruce Brougher, Gurner Jevons, Lowell Leatherman,

Bill Auld, Jack Alsop.

Police Judge: Martin Fasse (Resigned. Henry Carez was appointed.)

Voting: 61

1953

Mayor: Roy McCune

Council: Bruce Brougher, Bill Auld, Gurner Jevons,

L.T. Leatherman, Jack Alsop.

- 91 -

Police Judge: Henry Carez (Resigned)

Voting: 39

(D.H. Swezey, Fire Chief 1944-1954. Bruce Brougher, Fire Chief 1954)

1955

Mayor: Bill Auld

Council: Willis Weichel, Lowell Leatherman, Frank Auld,
Fred Oswald, Don Anderson.

Police Judge: Neither Henry Carez nor Dutch Fasse would accept the position.

Voting: 35

(The slate was chosen too late, so the ballot was blank.)

1957

Mayor: Bill Auld

Council: Don Anderson, Willis Weichel, Ben Fyfe,
Frank Auld, J.L. Leatherman.

Police Judge: Melvin Jones

Voting: 28

1959-1965

Mayor: Bill Auld (Resigned 1966)

(Other names unavailable)

1967

Mayor: Frank Auld

Council: Earl Herman, Jay Mason, Harry Marshall, Ray Myers, Robert Clark.

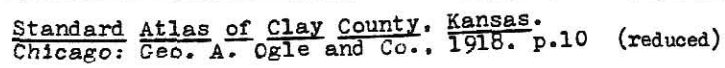
Police Judge: Elmer Debenham

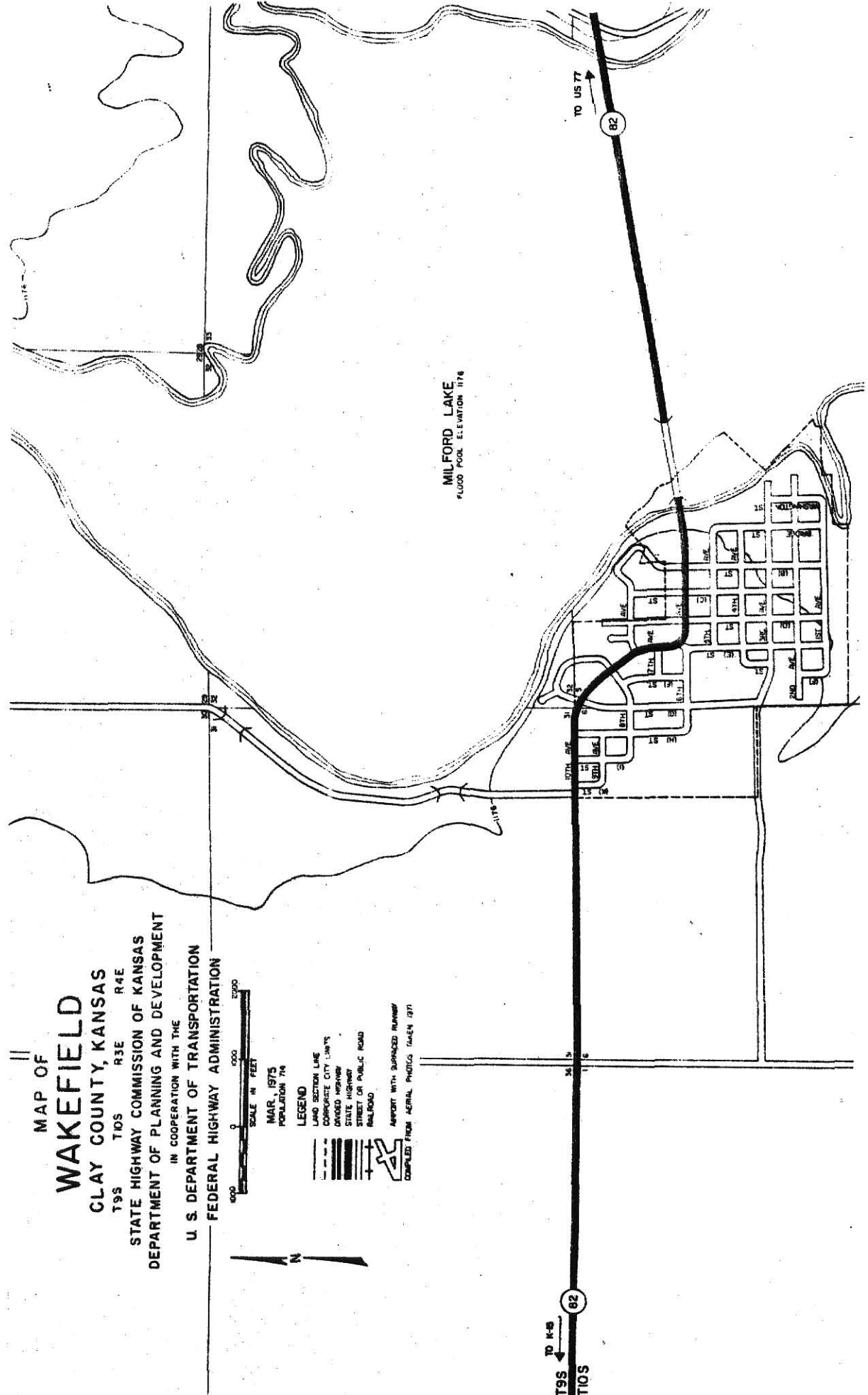
Voting: 217

1969

Mayor: Frank Auld

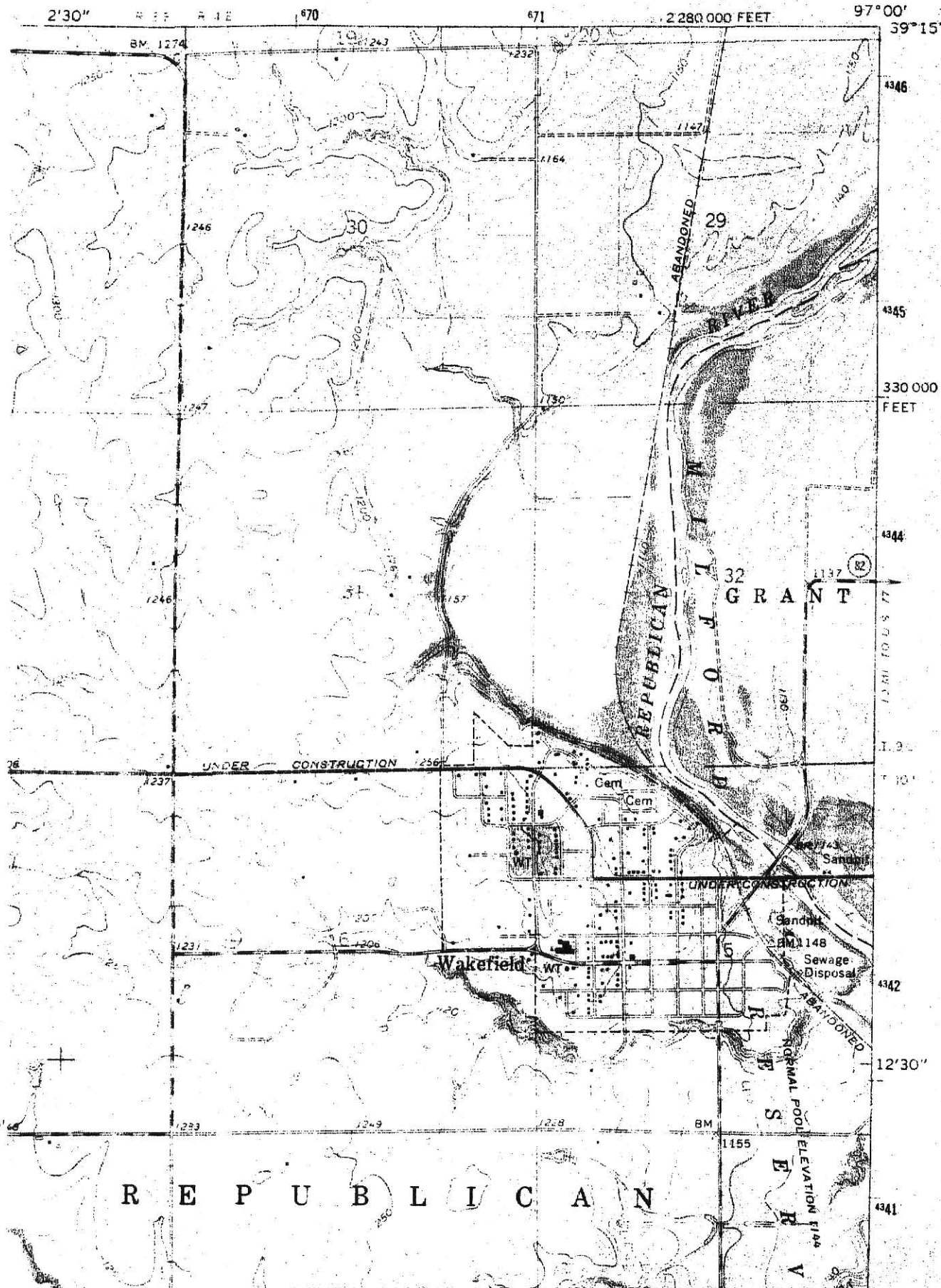
Council: Tom Abbot, Jay Mason, Earl Herman, Harry Marshall, Irvin Koerner.





WAKEFIELD QUADRANGLE
KANSAS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

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THE HISTORY OF WAKEFIELD, KANSAS
1900-1969

by

D. CHERYL COLLINS

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1982

Abstract

This paper reports the history of Wakefield, Kansas. After a short first chapter which summarizes the town's founding and existence until 1900, the paper concerns itself with the years 1900 until 1969, the town's centennial year. I have placed emphasis on the effects of the World Wars, the Depression of the 1930's, and on the building of the Milford Reservoir dam as those subjects have had great impact on the town and the lives of the townspeople. I have given over special chapters to discussions of the town's social, economic, and political events and organizations and I have appended lists of the names of town clubs, businesses, and office holders of the period.