

ARMY CITY, KANSAS: THE HISTORY
OF A WORLD WAR I CAMPTOWN

by

GEORGE PAUL RION

B. S., Kansas State University, 1956

AN ABSTRACT OF
A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History, Political Science and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1960

LD
2666
T4
1960
R56
L3

ALL206 933121

From the year 1917 to 1922 a small, unique community named Army City existed in Riley County, Kansas. The town, located between Ogden and the Fort Riley Military Reservation, was built to provide entertainment and services for the thousands of soldiers who were to be trained for duty in World War I. Army City was so dependent upon Camp Funston that the history of the two was inseparable.

Following the United States' entry into World War I a huge military training and expansion program was undertaken by the Federal Government. Huge cantonments capable of housing and training approximately 40,000 men each were erected in various parts of the United States. One such cantonment was located on the Fort Riley Reservation and was known as Camp Funston.

Camp Funston was constructed during the summer of 1917 and the first troops arrived in September of that year. The Camp was a huge, sprawling collection of unpainted, two-story, frame barracks which served as home for over 40,000 young trainees. Under the command of General Leonard Wood the 89th Division was trained and shipped overseas and the 10th Division had been trained and was preparing for overseas shipment when the Armistice was declared.

After the war Camp Funston served as a mustering-out center. By 1921 it was deserted and by 1924 it had been dismantled and the land was returned to its original state.

Mr. Arthur D. Jellison, of Junction City, conceived the idea of constructing a totally new town, Army City, immediately adjacent to Camp Funston to provide services and entertainment for the many thousands of men stationed there. Because of its geographical proximity such a town would be able to compete on favorable terms with the other nearby communities.

An ambitious development project was initiated. Land was purchased, a Townsite Company organized, and lots were platted and sold. Water lines, sewer lines, and electric power were all arranged for, and the Army City Service Company was chartered to handle the utilities. Construction of the town began in July, 1917, and within a few weeks Army City was open for business.

Two theaters dominated the main business district in Army City. One and two-story buildings, all in the Spanish Mission style of architecture, housed the various establishments. A bank was established and the town had its own post office. Restaurants, pool halls, drug stores, grocery stores, photo studios, tailor shops, military stores, dry-goods stores, a lumber yard, a hotel, and two wholesale houses were established in Army City.

The Townsite Company donated land to several churches. The Salvation Army erected a citadel, the Lutheran Church built a religious and social center, and the YWCA erected a large and popular Hostess House.

In May, 1918, Army City was incorporated as a third class city by the Riley County Commissioners. A mayor-council form of government was established and an election was held in June to choose the town's first officers.

The period from late July, 1918, to the Armistice was a time of "Bright Lights" for Army City. During that time business was at its peak and a gay social atmosphere prevailed in the evenings when the soldiers flocked across the reservation boundary to visit, shop, eat, and utilize the other services Army City afforded. But the "Bright Lights" were only temporary.

The fortunes of Army City declined rapidly as Funston was disbanded. No permanent industries could be induced to establish themselves in Army City and a rapidly disappearing Funston remained the only source of revenue for the community.

Several businesses were still operating in Army City and many soldier families were living there when, in August of 1920, an uncontrolled fire destroyed two full blocks of the business area. Losses were estimated to amount to \$200,000, none of which was covered by insurance.

The town could not recover from this final disaster. Businesses closed their doors and owners moved away. Eventually, only the Watson Cleaning Plant remained. Mr. Jellison re-acquired title to the original tract of land and traded it to Fred Yenni, a Geary County farmer, for a tract of land in Ottawa County, Kansas.

In 1960, where once was Army City, there was only a large, level meadow which had been made a part of the Fort Riley Military Reservation. Army City remained only as a memory.

ARMY CITY, KANSAS: THE HISTORY
OF A WORLD WAR I CAMPTOWN

by

GEORGE PAUL RION

B. S., Kansas State University, 1956

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History, Political Science and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1960

2668

TH

1960

R 56

Spec. Collections

PREFACE

During and following World War I a unique community named Army City existed in Riley County, Kansas. The community adjoined the Military Reservation boundary and was located just west of Ogden, Kansas. The entire life cycle of the community took place within a brief period of only five years, 1917 to 1922. In that span of time the small town took on a physical reality, established a government, experienced a boom, and, like a flower, wilted and died.

No history of Army City has previously been attempted. This paper was written to provide such a history. If, to some small degree, the paper succeeds in preserving a minutia of local history it will have fulfilled its basic purpose. If the writer proves to have benefited all bounds of reasonable expectation will have been exceeded.

The history of Army City was divided into three general phases: the conception and early development; the economic and social life; and the town's gradual demise. Each of the general phases was treated in one or more chapters. Where possible, outside factors affecting Army City were illuminated.

The account of Army City was meant to be an objective recreation of a portion of history which was rapidly becoming lost. The subject was chosen because of its interest, uniqueness, and the research challenge it presented. Army City was

studied as an isolated phenomenon and no generalizations were attempted regarding the affects of a large army post on the typical military camp town.

At the beginning of the study Army City was only a vague name. Early queries indicated it to be the scene of a "bank robbery where four men were butchered." The butchering did occur, but not in Army City. When asked what Army City had been like, one person answered, "It was just a few shacks housing prostitutes over by Funston." Few people were specific in their knowledge of Army City and the question was raised, "What was Army City?" This paper is an attempt to tell "what Army City was."

Information for this paper was gathered from three basic sources: newspapers, interviews, and the Jellison Papers. Mr. A. D. Jellison of Junction City was one of Army City's founding fathers and he has saved, among his personal records, many of the original Army City documents. Mr. Jellison was kind enough to lend his papers to the writer and without them the picture of Army City would have been much less complete. In addition to the basic sources mentioned, many widely scattered and diverse sources yielded bits of information which helped recreate the picture of Army City.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	ii
CHAPTER	
I. CAMP FUNSTON IN BRIEF	1
II. A TOWN IS BORN	14
III. GOVERNMENT IN ARMY CITY	39
IV. "BRIGHT LIGHTS"	44
V. THE MORAL CLIMATE OF ARMY CITY	61
VI. THE "ZONE"	68
VII. DECLINE AND DEMISE	76
VIII. CONCLUSION	91
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY	95

CHAPTER I

CAMP FUNSTON IN BRIEF

When examining history one often searches for a cause and effect relationship. This relationship is somewhat easier to find when dealing with the growth of a community, for towns and cities frequently give clear evidence for their existence and the factors determining their growth at a chosen location. Such was the case with Army City. That community's sole reason for existence was centered around the services and benefits which could be exchanged between the burgeoning city and the adjoining World War I military camp. Chronologically, geographically, and historically the two were almost one. Therefore, when considering the history of Army City one must give some attention to a discussion of Camp Funston.

The Camp Funston discussed in this paper must not be confused with the Camp Funston located on the Fort Riley Reservation in 1960. The latter was a product of World War II while the former was a World War I training camp which passed completely out of existence a few months after the Armistice was declared. For almost twenty years between the two great global conflicts the site of Camp Funston was unused land overgrown with prairie vegetation. The only thing common to the two camps was their name and their mutual location on Ogden Flats.

Following President Woodrow Wilson's war message and the subsequent declaration of war against Germany in April, 1917, steps were taken by the War Department, under Secretary Newton D. Baker, to create an effective military machine capable of representing the United States in Europe. Over considerable opposition the Selective Service Bill was passed on May 18, 1917 and the selection and planning of suitable training sites was initiated.

Sixteen National Army Cantonments together with many lesser camps were established throughout the United States. The cantonments were huge camps capable of housing and training 40,000 to 60,000 men each. A regular race ensued between the builders of the various camps to see which camp would be completed first. The national newspaper wire services gave considerable attention to this race and figures were regularly dispensed to the public giving the statistics to indicate the stage of construction at the cantonment sites. The articles were complete with figures for the percentage of completion, number of buildings completed, number of workers on the job, and an explanation for any delays. In August, 1917 the papers were able to announce that "Fort Sam Houston would be ready by September 1 and currently had 8,726 construction workers on the job." And, "Yaphank, Long Island would be completed by

October 1. Work was being delayed by strikes and swarms of mosquitoes."¹

In June, 1917 the War Department announced that a cantonment would be established on the Fort Riley Military Reservation in Kansas. A site selection and camp planning committee was appointed by Secretary Baker. Professor James S. Pray of Harvard was appointed as an engineer and an expert in town planning. Mr. Wynkoop Kiersted of Liberty, Missouri, was appointed as an engineer and an expert on waterworks and sewerage. These two men were joined on the committee by Herbert Hare, a landscape architect from Kansas City, Missouri, and Captain Fred J. Herman of the Quartermaster Corps, United States Army. The committee met at Fort Riley and, after much deliberation, selected Ogden Flats as the cantonment site.² Ogden Flats was a large, level tract of uncultivated ground adjoining the Kansas River at the south-east corner of the reservation and bounded on the north by high bluffs. This meadow, although presenting a drainage problem, was chosen because it provided ready access to the Golden Belt Highway and was bisected by the Union Pacific Railroad. Also, it was of sufficient area that all the buildings of the cantonment could be laid out uniformly and on a near level plain.

¹"Fort Riley and Camp Funston Clippings," Kansas State Historical Library, 1:16.

²Cantonment Life at Camp Funston, Pamphlet, 1918.

The cantonment was named Camp Funston in honor of Major General Frederick Funston. Born in Ohio, Funston was raised and educated in Kansas and during the Spanish-American War served as a colonel in the Twentieth Kansas Volunteers. Funston had a distinguished military life, highlighted by his capture of Aguinaldo, leader of the Philippine insurgents, in March, 1901.³ Funston's brilliant career was ended with his death on February 19, 1917, while he was commanding American forces on the Mexican border. As she would later do with another famous military leader, Kansas adopted Funston as a "native" and as such is he remembered. The Kansas cantonment was fittingly named.

The mammoth construction job which resulted in Camp Funston was a study in superlatives. By August, 15,000 workers from all over the Midwest had converged upon the area and Funston was providing work for all.⁴ Approximately 4,800 men were housed and fed at Camp Funston proper but the remainder lived in the nearby communities thereby giving the inhabitants a taste of the "boom" which was to follow. The men worked ten hours every day, seven days a week, with the exception of Saturday afternoons which was a brief period of rest and relaxation

³William F. Zornow, "Funston Captures Aguinaldo," American Heritage, February, 1958, 9(2):24-29.

⁴Army City Bulletin, August 31, 1917, p. 1. Only one issue of the Bulletin was located. It is in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Stevens, Ogden, Kansas.

enjoyed by almost all of the workers. The builders ate two carloads of beef per week and other food in similar proportions. Meals were served on the job for an average cost of thirty cents.⁵

The number of buildings in the camp was variously estimated at from 2,800 to 4,000.⁶ An examination of a detailed map of Camp Funston dated November, 1917 indicated 1,608 completed buildings and as this was within one month of the date of completion the figure should be reasonably close to the final total. The barracks were two-story, unpainted, frame affairs erected upon cement foundations. Each barracks could house 200 to 250 men without crowding.

Camp Funston was the largest of the permanently built cantonments in the country and had accommodations for more than 50,000 men. The cost of the camp was estimated at \$10,000,000, although by the time all utilities were in it was closer to \$15,000,000.⁷ A complete system of water works and sewers was provided and the camp was lighted by electricity and heated by steam. The radiators in Camp Funston, if lined up end to end, would have extended four miles.⁸ Sixty-eight central boiler

⁵W. J. Showalter, "America's New Soldier Cities," National Geographic Magazine, November, 1917, 32:439-476.

⁶W. E. Connelley, Kansas and Kansans, pp. 903-904.

⁷"Fort Riley and Camp Funston Clippings," op. cit., 1:10.

⁸Trench and Camp, October 13, 1917, p. 1.

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE I

Figure 1. This is the right half of a panoramic view of Camp Funston as it appeared in 1918. The view was towards the south. Note the numerous tall smoke stacks.

Figure 2. The left half of the same panorama. The original picture was bisected to facilitate its arrangement on the page.

PLATE I



Figure 1

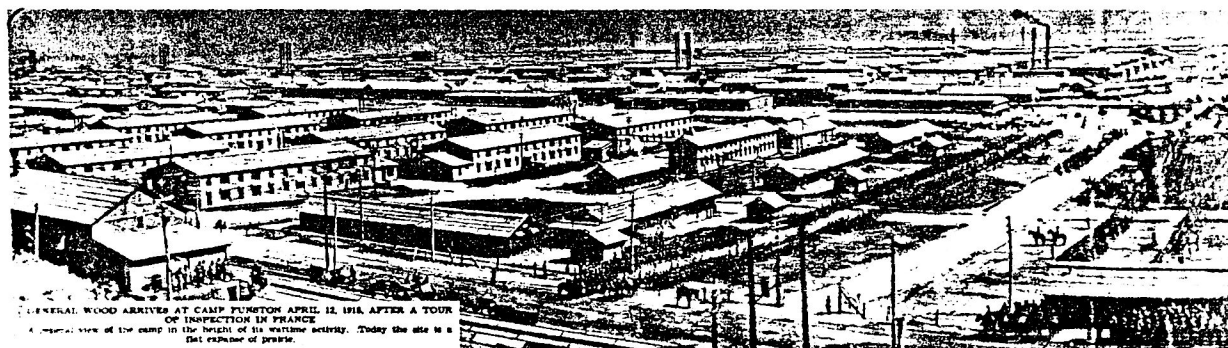


Figure 2

houses were erected to furnish steam heat for the barracks. Each central steam plant contained four boilers. For reasons of economy and speed of construction the steam was conducted to the barracks through overhead, insulated, steam conducting pipes. Above each of the boilerhouses towered a smokestack nine feet in circumference and eighty feet in height.⁹ The sixty-eight smokestacks dominated the Funston skyline.

A visitor to Camp Funston at its peak described the camp as follows:

The first impression I received was of the vastness of our Government's enterprise at this place. We climbed the steep hills that extend along the northern border of the camp on Saturday morning, and saw the mushroom soldiers' city that has sprung up overnight on the Kansas prairie spread out before us in a striking panorama, eight miles long and four miles wide. Beyond the camp to the south were many square miles of open country, which are used as drill grounds, rifle ranges, and for practice in trench warfare. This open country is walled in toward the south by another range of hills running parallel to the ridge on which we were standing. It was a remarkable view: 2,800 buildings had been arranged in squares like our city blocks, with main streets and side streets running through them at rectangles [sic] Some were paved, but most of them were dirt roads. Sidewalks, too, had been constructed in places, and the entire camp has been sewered. A keen March wind was blowing across the prairie, raising a lot of dust, which to a mere civilian was somewhat annoying. But the sun was shining brightly all the time, and already after the first day's tramp the exposure to wind and sun had put a perceptible tan on my face and hands. I have ceased wondering at the ruddy color and the sandpapered appearance of our soldier boys

The average civilian . . . will be amazed to see so much accomplished in such a marvelously short time by a Government that was not prepared for war. There may have

⁹Loc. cit.

been deficiencies in the beginning, and there has been suffering in the early weeks at Camp Funston, but it is not easy to see how all suffering could have been avoided. It is my conviction that the Government has spared neither expense nor labor to make the living conditions at the camp as good as they can be made for a soldier. The camp is kept scrupulously clean. Order pervades it. The barracks, though they look like huge barns, all built of frame and unpainted, afford sufficient shelter in bad weather, and are thoroughly ventilated The soldiers' food is good, substantial food, well prepared, and served in abundant quantity

When the folks back home talk about their boy being at Camp Funston and they hear of another boy, who is a friend of their son, also going to Camp Funston, they imagine that the two will meet every day. They imagine that the soldiers at the camp are one family, only somewhat larger than ordinarily. This is an incorrect view . . . a soldier living in the southeast corner of the camp may not meet his friend living in the northwest corner for weeks. . . .¹⁰

On July 18, 1917 the War Department published orders announcing the first major combat units to be organized and trained at each cantonment. Camp Funston was named as the training site for the 89th Division with Major General Leonard Wood assigned as commander.¹¹ General Wood retained this command, although he requested overseas duty, until the end of the war. The first quota of the more than 46,000 men assigned to Funston arrived on September 5, 1917 and the massive training program was underway.¹²

¹⁰W. H. T. Dau, "My Impressions," Lutheran Soldiers' and Sailors' Bulletin, May, 1918, pp. 3-7.

¹¹A. G. Lott, "Camp Funston - Then and Now," The Kansas Legionnaire, September, 1933, p. 3.

¹²Junction City Daily Union, September 5, 1917, p. 1.

Leonard Wood was a stern taskmaster devoted to doing the best job possible regardless of the undesirability of the assignment. Under his guidance the troops were conditioned and trained with great thoroughness and efficiency. Considering the shortage of time, supplies, and equipment the result was outstanding.

The attitude and comments of the men in the camp were typical of soldiers at all times and places. The early arrivals complained about having to drill with wooden guns and were chagrined to have to wear blue overalls and blouses until more proper uniforms arrived. It seemed to the men that the training consisted almost entirely of running up the steep hills bordering the northern side of the camp, marching and drilling on the plateau, then marching back "up" the hills to camp. Running up hills seemed to predominate the training program and some men swore that Camp Funston had the only hills with sides that ran "up" whether one was coming or going.¹³

A frequent complaint was that the amount of free time the young troopers had was both inadequate and irregular. Not only the soldiers but the nearby businessmen were discouraged as well by this state of affairs. Although unpopular in some quarters, General Wood was not a tyrant. An Army City businessman defended the General in this manner: "Training many men

¹³Manhattan Tribune, October 18, 1917, p.1.

in a short time meant they had to be worked long and hard. Under these conditions the men needed their rest and sleep and little free time was made available for passes off the camp."¹⁴

Popular or not, General Wood prepared the men of the 89th for their duty overseas and in April, 1918 the division departed for the East Coast. The General accompanied the 89th as far as the port of embarkation where he was relieved of command and ordered back to Funston to prepare another division for combat. His disappointment did not lessen Wood's devotion to duty and he threw his whole energy into the training of the 10th Division. The 10th had completed its training and was preparing for shipment when the Armistice was signed in November, 1918.

Following the Armistice, Camp Funston was an active mustering out center. Thousands of men had as last memories of their service in the National Army the recollection of a few short and hurried days at Camp Funston as they awaited the completion of the process by which they were once again transformed into civilians.

From the beginning the optimistic had voiced expressions of faith in the permanence of Camp Funston. The huge, unglamorous, unpainted, barn-like barracks could be used for many

¹⁴Interview with W. F. Ziegler, October, 1959.

years if conditions warranted. All of the other cantonments had been constructed on leased private lands. Only Camp Funston had been erected on government owned land. This was an important reason for considering Funston to be more than temporary.¹⁵ Army men voiced the opinion that thirty to forty thousand men would be kept at Funston for several years after the war as they awaited demobilization. After demobilization at least ten thousand men would always be stationed at the camp for training purposes.¹⁶ The optimism would not be justified. The 10th Division was demobilized early in 1919. Its replacement, the 7th Division, remained at Funston for only a short time and departed during June of the same year. From that time until its final abandonment the camp remained deserted except for small guard units.

In early 1919 merchants on Camp Funston were notified that after February 1 less than ten thousand men would be stationed at the camp and the businessmen should govern themselves accordingly. Many made plans to conclude their businesses immediately.¹⁷ By December, 1919 all remaining merchants had vacated their premises. Funston was rapidly closing down.

¹⁵"Fort Riley and Camp Funston Clippings," loc. cit.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 185.

¹⁷The Manhattan Nationalist, January 20, 1919, p. 4.

In August, 1921 the first sale to dispose of the physical assets at Camp Funston was held. This was followed by subsequent sales until the final auction which was held on April 10, 1923. At the last auction one thousand bidders were on hand and they purchased over two hundred buildings and vast quantities of materials and fittings in a sale lasting five hours.¹⁸ Only two warehouses and three barracks remained of the once proud cantonment and these would be razed in the near future. In his report for 1924 the Fort Riley Quartermaster stated:

Camp Funston has been vacated by the dismantling contractor. During the past fiscal year cement piers, foundations and floors have been removed from approximately 100 acres. It is planned to clean 50 acres yearly until all cement piers, foundations and floors have been removed from the site.¹⁹

The prairie meadow was restored to its original state and so it would remain for almost twenty years. Army City's "raison d'etre" had ceased to be.

¹⁸"Geary County Clippings," Kansas State Historical Library, 3:124.

¹⁹W. F. Pride, The History of Fort Riley, p. 285.

CHAPTER II

A TOWN IS BORN

With the June announcement of plans for a cantonment at Fort Riley fevered activity and speculation commenced in the nearby communities. This activity was spurred by various combinations of patriotism, philanthropy, and avariciousness. Although the latter was quite evident the cantonment was thought to be more than just a "gold mine." The young men, "America's Best", were preparing to defend their country and those who remained behind felt there was nothing too good for those who would soon be in the trenches of Europe. There was a patriotic desire to "help out" in any way possible. Any service provided for the soldier was of benefit to national defense. Older heads tended to give consideration to the social, moral and spiritual needs of the young men and plans were made to establish the proper means for meeting such needs.

Although Manhattan and Junction City were to profit immensely from their proximity to the reservation, it was obvious that the existing transportation facilities could not begin to handle the expected demand. Estimates were made that the combined services of the Interurban Railway, which ran between Junction City and Manhattan, and Union Pacific shuttle cars could handle no more than ten thousand men per day.¹

¹Manhattan Mercury, August 1, 1917, p.1.

This left thirty thousand men on foot who would have to settle for the offerings available in communities within walking distance. As Manhattan and Junction City were too distant for easy walking the geographical advantage of the small Riley County town of Ogden came into sharp focus.

All eyes were cast in the direction of Ogden. It was not known whether Ogden could rise to the challenge. The town lacked acceptable sewer and water systems and would have to expend considerable money and effort before it could hope for approval from the military authorities responsible for the off-duty welfare of the young men training at Camp Funston.

Arthur D. Jellison, a Junction City banker, purchased several lots in Ogden as business sites for future expansion. Other lots were purchased for Jellison by Hale P. Powers, a Geary County farmer and entrepreneur. This bid to get in on the ground floor came to an abrupt end when alert Ogden citizens caught on and a mild real estate boom ensued making it impractical for Jellison to invest further in Ogden property.² The boom continued until many of the desirable lots on Riley Street in Ogden had multiplied several times their original value.

Not to be so easily stymied, Jellison conceived a bold venture. If Ogden was not available for his investments then

²Interview with A. D. Jellison, August, 1959.

the next best thing, and perhaps a better thing, was to build an entirely new town from the ground up. And thus began the story of Kellyville, soon to be named Army City.³

In the middle of June, 1917 Powers, acting for A. D. Jellison, completed the purchase of a large tract of land adjoining the eastern boundary of the Fort Riley Reservation and located just west of Ogden. The tract had been known as the Dyche Farm or Kelly Farm after previous owners. It consisted of approximately 216 acres of land on both sides of the Golden Belt Highway (U. S. 40 S).⁴ The land was purchased from James E. Kelly for \$37,500 and with the conclusion of the sale the path was open for the creation of a new Kansas town.⁵

While much of the early publicity for Army City was circulated in the name of Hale Powers, to Arthur Jellison must go the major credit for the skillful and systematic development of Army City. Not only did he conceive the town but he financed and planned much of it. Jellison was an established banker with a state wide reputation and a sound business philosophy. Jellison was active not only in business but in service and charitable organizations throughout the state.

³Loc. cit.

⁴"Army City, Dead Town File," Kansas State Historical Library.

⁵"Army City Abstract." This is an abstract in the papers of A. D. Jellison which traces the title of the land upon which Army City was constructed.

He was an outstanding leader for the Red Cross and during World War I served on the committees for the Liberty Bond drives. He became one of the state's strongest supporters of the 4-H Program and continued a high degree of interest in the field of education.⁶ Jellison, in 1960, was still living in Junction City and remained active in the Jellison Investment Company.

The first step taken by Jellison and Powers was the formation of a private corporation as the vehicle by which the town would be developed. The initial request for a charter was denied by the State Charter Board as it included too many corporate purposes. It was necessary to form a separate company to provide the utilities (water, electricity, sewers, telephones) and the initial corporation limited itself to "the purchase, location, and laying out of townsites together with the improvements thereon; and the purchase and sale of such real estate as is necessary and incidental to the business of the corporation."⁷

Two corporations were then formed in place of the one originally planned. The first was known as the Army City Townsite Improvement Company and the second, responsible for utilities, was the Army City Service Company. The major

⁶World Biography, p 589. Mr. Jellison deserves further mention as a most beneficent philanthropist and inspiring personality.

⁷Letter to the Army City Townsite Company from J. T. Botkin, Secretary of State, Topeka, July 19, 1917. This letter is in the Jellison Papers.

stockholders in both companies were the same and included A. D. Jellison, Hale Powers, Samuel Weichselbaum, Walter Ziegler, Roy Dalton, Herbert W. Jacobs, and Edward W. Rolfs.⁸

A surveying firm prepared a plat of the townsite which outlined a site consisting of thirty blocks, five east-west streets, and five north-south streets. Most blocks contained twenty-four lots, each lot being twenty-five feet by one hundred and twenty feet in size. The streets were sixty feet in width and the alleys were sixteen feet wide.⁹

Late in June, 1917 newspapers in Kansas began carrying headlines announcing the new town. The earliest publicity referred to the town as Kellyville, this being the name first announced by Hale Powers in honor of the family which had previously owned the land.¹⁰ Within a few days the name was changed to the more "appropriate" Army City.¹¹

From the beginning a high degree of city planning was in evidence. Streets were laid out neatly and formed rectangular blocks in the most approved manner. All utility lines were in the ground before building construction was undertaken on lots

⁸Corporate papers of the Army City Townsite Development Company. From the Jellison Papers.

⁹Topeka Daily Capital, June 27, 1917. In "Geary County Clippings, Kansas State Historical Library, Volume Two.

¹⁰Loc. cit.

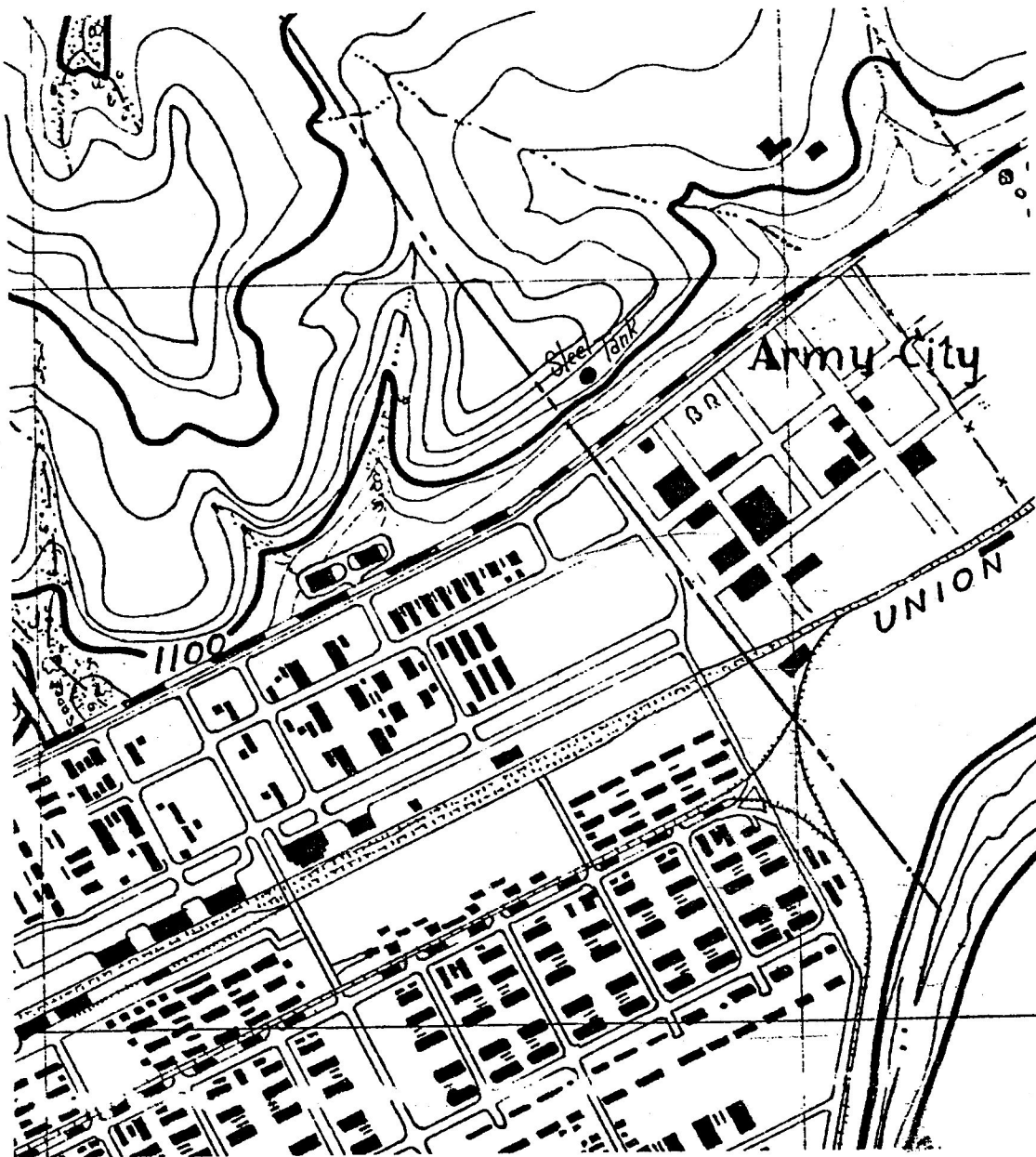
¹¹Ibid., A clipping from the July 2, 1917, Topeka Daily Capital.

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE II

Portion of a map showing location of Army City in relation to Camp Funston. The Northeast part of Funston was composed of the numerous buildings at the left and below center of that part of the map pictured. Army City is clearly marked. Ogden was located just to the right of Army City and off the map.

The original map was made available by the Office of the Post Engineer, Fort Riley, Kansas.

PLATE II



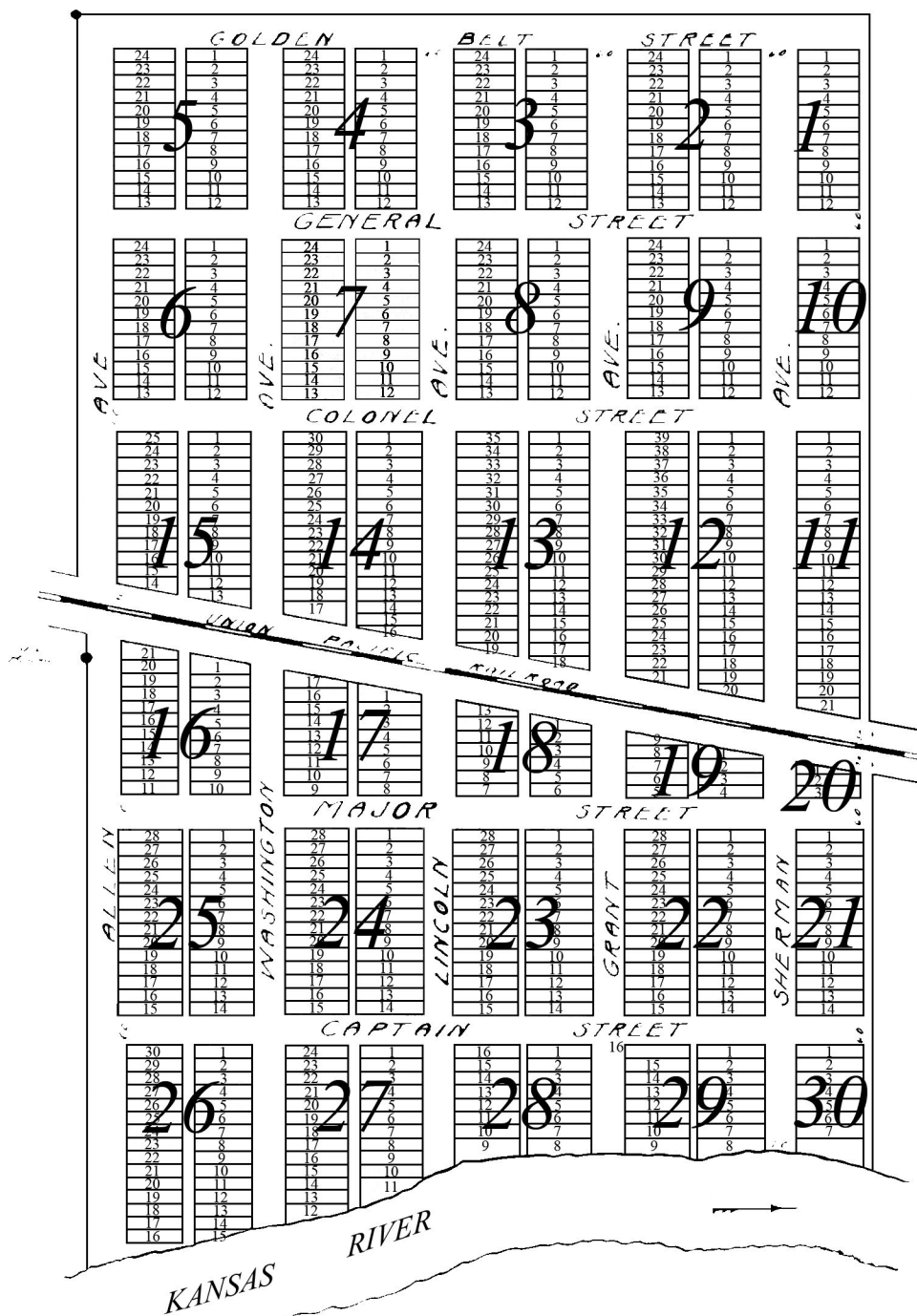
EXPLANATION FOR PLATE III

Plat of Army City, Kansas. From the Register of Deeds'
Office, Manhattan, Kansas.

PLATE III

ARMY CITY

RILEY CO. KANSAS.



to be served. The war effort resulted in labor and lumber shortages which curtailed construction at varying stages but the Townsite Company, ever alert, used these delays to cut wheat, mow alfalfa, and care for the corn crop, all of which were growing within the town limits.¹²

By the time the hot Kansas July was half over construction at Army City was at a fevered pitch. One visitor reported the scene as follows:

Where grew wheat, alfalfa, and corn, there is now a frenzied storm of construction activity. The fresh earth marking four principal Army City streets has appeared. The ditches for sewer and water pipes can be seen in the alleys between the streets. Foundations of stone and cement for the huge buildings to come are being laid. Carpentry activity is high as floors are laid and timbers raised.¹³

The Townsite Company decided that a uniform architectural style should be used by all business establishments and settled upon the Spanish Mission Style. All lot purchasers signed a contract containing the following clause:

It is further covenanted and agreed . . . that all buildings shall be erected upon the Mission Style and of Stucco and that the said party of the second part will use the electric lighting system to be installed by the Army City Service Company . . . and also connect with the water system . . . that said rates for use of the above systems will be uniform and not excessive¹⁴

¹²Manhattan Tribune, July 12, 1917, p. 5.

¹³Ibid., July 19, 1917, p. 3.

¹⁴Contract between the Army City Townsite Company and J. C. Stevens, July 21, 1917. Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Stevens, Ogden, Kansas.

It was believed that the method of construction would result in a permanent and fireproof city. Later events would prove the town to be neither permanent nor fireproof.

By the end of July the town of Army City had become a physical reality. Several large business buildings had been completed, the water and sewer lines were in the ground, the Rocky Ford Dam Company had completed stringing the majority of the electric lines, and water wells were being put down on the valley floor.¹⁵ The community's state approved water supply would come from wells fifty to sixty feet deep in the same manner as the Camp Funston water supply.¹⁶ A large electric pump forced the water to two large redwood storage tanks located on the high bluff just north of the town.¹⁷ Although the thousands of construction workers at Funston provided an initial business impetus for the merchants at Army City, that community was restricted to the soldiers until a satisfactory supply of water was made available. The quarantine was finally lifted when the water was declared satisfactory early in November, 1917.¹⁸

¹⁵Manhattan Mercury, July 30, 1917, p. 4.

¹⁶Loc. cit.

¹⁷Letter from George Taylor to J. E. Walker, Engineer, State Board of Health, August 20, 1917. From the Jellison Papers.

¹⁸Manhattan Tribune, November 15, 1917, p. 5.

Army City now had an important edge over Ogden for that community had neither a city water supply nor a sewerage system. It was touch and go as to whether the Ogden voters would pass the bonds to provide the needed utilities and although they were finally passed the utilities came too late to help Ogden reap her expected share of the soldiers' dollars from Camp Funston.

Ogden supporters had hinted as early as July that aid from Army City would be welcome. "The big problems for Ogden are water and sewerage. It is hoped Army City, which has both, will help solve these problems for Ogden."¹⁹ That a problem existed, and to what extent, was evidenced by this statement: "This little village . . . has suddenly jumped from a community of 250 persons to a town of 4,000. Of course there is no sewerage and probably not more than forty outhouses in the place."²⁰

Later statements indicated that Ogden was notably unsympathetic when nearby towns were quarantined for various reasons. An area wide quarantine due to a meningitis scare elicited this comment: "Ogden, which can't be hurt anymore, looks on with indifference at the anguish now being occasioned

¹⁹Ibid., July 5, 1917, p. 2.

²⁰Topeka Daily Capital, August 18, 1917. In "Geary County Clippings," Kansas State Historical Library, Volume Two.

in Army City, Manhattan, and Junction City. Odgen is extending the same kind of sympathy and help she received."²¹

Construction continued to boom at Army City through the fall of 1917. Hale Powers, indicating "the way things move in Army City," told of making a contract to build a cottage, the contract being agreed to on a Saturday; on Monday he started the carpenters and on Tuesday evening the painters finished the house in time for the lady to get supper.²²

By Christmas the major construction works at Army City had been completed. The year 1918 would see only the addition of some private homes, a few business buildings, and the construction of buildings to house several religious and charitable organizations.

One of the highlights of Army City's growing days was the promotional lot auction held to give increased momentum to the town's development. The Townsite Company felt an organized advertising and selling campaign would be the most efficient method of attracting investors and businessmen to Army City. On July 10, 1917 an agreement was signed between the Army City Townsite Company and the Carolina Land Development Company of Salina, Kansas, which called for the land company "to advertise

²¹Manhattan Tribune, November 29, 1917, p. 6.

²²Ibid., November 22, 1917, p. 6.

and sell at auction, the new townsite of Army City"23

The contract provided that the Townsite Company would develop and prepare the townsite for the sale and would expect the land company to:

. . . advertise the sale of said townsite by advertising through newspapers, cloth signs, picture show slides, personal letters, hand bills, and etc., so as to attract the attention of prospective buyers to the sale. . . to furnish on days of sale, a band of music, arrange for lunch, furnish ground men to mingle with the crowd, showing the strong points of the property being sold to cause the prospective buyers to bid on same, to furnish auctioneer to cry sale, and clerk to keep an accurate account of the sale and all other help necessary to conduct the sale in a rapid business like manner. All advertising and expenses to be approved by a member of the board of directors of Townsite Company.

We agree to pay all expenses in connection with the advertising and selling said townsite, said expenses not to exceed the sum of \$5,000.00, an itemized statement to be furnished after the sale of all moneys expended on same.²⁴

H. H. Halliday, President of the Carolina Land Company, visited Jellison in Junction City and plans were formulated for the sale. Four automobiles, carrying advertising literature and speakers prepared to extol the virtues of Army City, were embarked upon a tour of much of Kansas and into the neighboring states proclaiming the merits of business locations in Army City.²⁵ Advertisements appeared in major newspapers in

²³Contract between Army City Townsite Company and the Carolina Land Development Company dated July 10, 1917. From the Jellison Papers.

²⁴Loc. cit.

²⁵Junction City Daily Union, July 18, 1917, p. 1.

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE IV

Typical advertisement announcing the lot sale to be held at Army City. This particular ad appeared in the Topeka Daily Capital, July 26, 1917.

PLATE IV

Auction Sale

250 BUSINESS AND RESIDENCE LOTS

Adjoining
Ft. Riley
Reservation

ARMY CITY

Commencing
at 10 o'clock
each day

WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY, AUGUST 1 and 2

SALE TO BE HELD ON THE GROUND. Kansas' Greatest, Biggest, Busiest New Town. Located less than 100 feet from America's largest Cantonment. 60,000 population in 60 days, within a radius of two miles. Great opportunity for all business lines. Pay Roll will be over \$2,000,000 a month. The U. S. Government is spending sixteen million dollars in improvements. Army City will have sewer, water, electric lights, telephone, great white whys. 40 miles of new paving leading to Army City. Theaters, Banks, Hotels, Restaurants, Business Houses, now under construction.

The Greatest Sale of High Class Business and Residence Lots Ever Held in the West. EXCURSIONS ON ALL RAILROADS. Buy tickets to Junction City, Ft. Riley or Ogdensburg. Your chance to mop up big profits. Something doing in Army City every minute. Get in the prosperity procession Wednesday, August 1. A very convenient place for friends or relatives to stay while visiting soldiers. 10 miles from Manhattan, 10 miles from Junction City, on the Manhattan and Junction City Interurban, the Golden Belt Road, the U. P. Railroad.

TERMS: One-Half Cash, Balance March 1, 1918

Train Leaves at 8:48 A.M. Fare Is \$1.44

Army City Townsite Improvement Co., Owners
Office, Central National Bank Building, Junction City, Kansas

Carolina Land Development Co.
Sales Managers and Auctioneers. Western Office, Salina, Kan.

the Midwest as far away as Denver, Chicago, and St. Louis.²⁶ The ads were most laudatory and designed to catch the eye of any investor interested in locating near a large army cantonment.

August 1 and 2 were set as the dates for the sale. Arrangements were made for special trains to bring prospective buyers and sightseers to the sale site. The first day of the sale witnessed approximately three hundred people on the townsite, a small crowd but not too small a turnout considering the rainy weather. The crowd was further reduced because the Interurban was not running due to the relocation of some of its tracks on the reservation.²⁷

The highest price paid for a single lot during the sale was \$1,650 which purchased lot one in block five for Ziegler and Dalton.²⁸ They had previously purchased lots two and three in the same block for \$3,050 and thus possessed what was considered to be the best corner in the town.²⁹ They erected a huge garage and a filling station on this corner and conducted

²⁶Jellison Interview.

²⁷Manhattan Tribune, August 2, 1917, p. 1.

²⁸Loc. cit.

²⁹"Statement of Assets and Liabilities," taken from the records of the Army City Townsite Company and dated November 30, 1917. From the Jellison Papers.

a thriving business which was made more profitable by the rental properties which the two partners built on a portion of their lots.

The prices of the lots in Army City were regulated by their proximity to (a) the Golden Belt Highway, (b) the reservation boundary, and (c) location within a block. The established prices ranged from \$1,100 for lots in block five on Washington Street to \$550 for lots in the south-east corner of the town with \$200 being added to the price for corner lots.³⁰ Following the land auction it became possible to purchase lots for much less than their original price. However, the choice lots were sold during the auction at prices averaging \$800 or better. People waiting until after the sale paid less but were forced to settle for less desirable locations.

During the two days of the sale a holiday atmosphere prevailed at Army City. A ten piece brass band played throughout each day and a lively if somewhat small crowd listened to the auctioneer's spiel as new lots were placed up for sale. At intervals the sale was halted while drawings were held for prizes consisting of pieces of quality silverware. The Manhattan Mercury editor was chosen to draw the first number and

³⁰"Tentative Lot Prices," a list giving the suggested prices for the various Army City lots. Included in the Town-site Company records from the Jellison Papers.

the lucky winner was - the editor of the Tribune. "Thus do Manhattan newspaper men stand together."³¹

Records do not indicate the total amount of money taken in by the auction. One report estimated that \$75,000 worth of lots had been sold.³² Incomplete Townsite Company records indicated land sales totaling \$62,840 by November 30, 1917.³³ From incomplete records it was possible to assume that the auction resulted in the sale of more than \$50,000 worth of Army City lots. The remainder of the income from lot sales resulted from transactions completed before and after the auction.

As Army City approached its peak growth late in 1918 it presented an impressive picture to the casual visitor. The Mission Style of architecture, flowing from one building to the next, contributed to an air of solidarity and permanence. A business center had developed along Washington Street and spread east and west on General and Colonel Streets. Farther east, near Ogden, were clustered several private homes. South of the Union Pacific Railroad Line a colored district known as South Army City was developing. South Army City provided a pool hall, barber shop, restaurant, YWCA Hostess House, and

³¹Manhattan Tribune, August 2, 1917, p. 1.

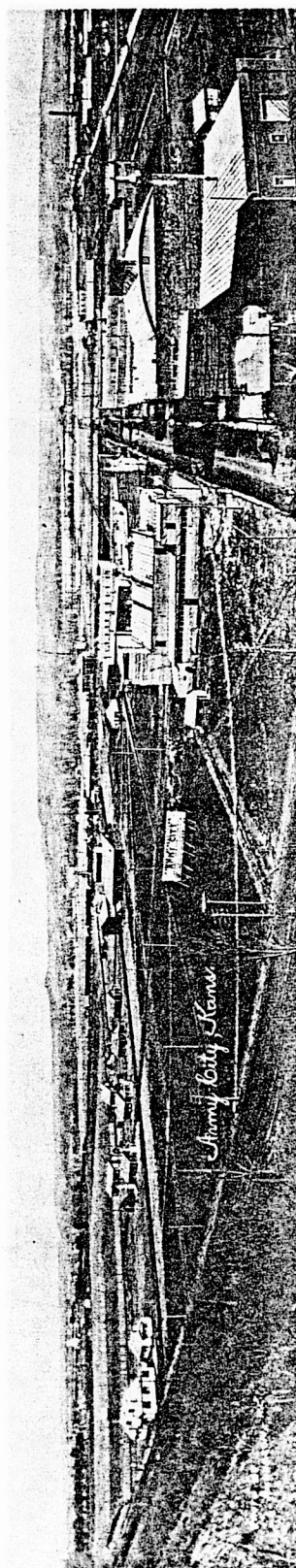
³²Jellison Interview.

³³"Statement of Assets and Liabilities," op. cit.

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE V

View of Army City from the approximate location of the town's water supply tank. The view was towards the south, Camp Funston may be seen at the far right, and Ogden is visible in the distant left background. The camera was aimed down the principal Army City street, Washington Avenue.

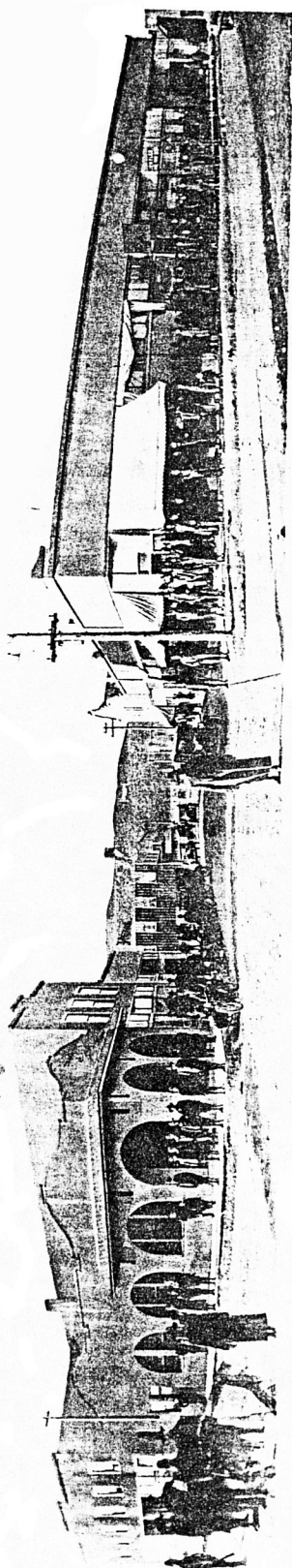
PLATE V



EXPLANATION FOR PLATE VI

A view of Army City looking north on Washington Avenue from the intersection with Colonel Street. The picture was taken on December 16, 1917. Many of the store windows contained Christmas displays and advertisements.

PLATE VI



a theater for the use of the colored troops who were barred from similar activities on the north side of the railroad tracks.

Army City boasted electric street lights, modern public utilities, and cement sidewalks. Many buildings had installed telephones; over one hundred electrical meters were in use; approximately one hundred water users were listed; over forty sewer connections had been made.³⁴ Fifteen dollars was the charge for tapping water mains, ten dollars for connecting to a sewer line, and five dollars was the charge for installing an electric meter.³⁵

By April, 1918 Army City's official population was 304.³⁶ The population was so fluid and there were so many semi-permanent residences that some visitors estimated the population at 1,500 or even greater.³⁷ The total assessed valuation of the community, according to 1918 figures, was \$367,880, which was greater than that reported for Randolph and slightly less than the figures for Ogden and Leonardville.³⁸

³⁴Ibid., November 1, 1918.

³⁵Loc. cit.

³⁶"Incorporation of Army City," Riley County Commissioners' Journal, Number Five, p. 49.

³⁷"Geary County Clippings," Kansas State Historical Library, 3:227-228. The "Dead Town File," KSHL, credits Army City with a population of 3,000 at its peak but this is an extreme estimate and seems too high.

³⁸Manhattan Tribune, July 4, 1918, p. 1.

A wide variety of businesses and service organizations located in Army City. Several churches, the YWCA Hostess House, and a Salvation Army Hut were erected. The business area boasted two huge theaters, several pool halls, and numerous restaurants. Barber shops, drug stores, jewelry stores, tailor shops, and photo studios were making fine profits for their owners. Several dry goods stores specializing in military clothing and supplies did a land-office business. A hotel, garage, filling station, lumber company, bank, and two wholesale houses completed the business picture. The future of Army City looked bright indeed to the men who had labored so diligently for its creation.

CHAPTER III

GOVERNMENT IN ARMY CITY

The necessity of incorporation for Army City was first evidenced in a report to the directors of the Army City Townsite Company in December of 1917. In that report Jellison mentioned two problems which could be properly handled only by making Army City an incorporated city. One of the problems was that of collecting money from the property owners to pay for the modern street lights and the other was that of restaurant sanitation.¹ Public health and welfare are two important concerns of government which are not generally left to the discretion of private individuals or groups. Ordinances must be made and enforced and taxes must be levied, collected, and utilized to the best interests of all concerned. Army City had grown to the point that incorporation was a necessity in order that the powers of government could be exercised to provide for the welfare and protection of the community.

For a Kansas village or town to be incorporated certain requirements and procedures must be followed. In the past a third class city has been incorporated by the County Commissioners when the city has a population of more than 100 and less than 2,000, and when a majority of the electors sign a

¹"Report to Townsite Company," December 13, 1917. From the Jellison Papers.

petition requesting such incorporation.² Incorporation laws have shown few changes through the years. The only notable difference was the 1918 requirement that a city had to have a population of at least 200.³ A petition requesting the incorporation of Army City with a mayor-council form of government, was presented to the Riley County Commissioners at their regular meeting in April, 1918. After ascertaining that the proper legal notice had been given and all requirements had been met the commissioners, "Ordered and declared that the said Army City, Kansas, be and the same is hereby incorporated as a city of the third class by the name and style of 'The City of Army City, Kansas.'"⁴ The metes and bounds of Army City were described as follows:

Beginning at a point on the East line of the Fort Riley Military Reservation where the North line of The Manhattan City and Interurban Railway right-of-way intersects the East line of said Military Reservation; thence in an Easterly direction and along the North line of the Manhattan City and Interurban Railway right-of-way 1460 feet, more or less, thence in a Southerly direction and parallel with the East line of said Military Reservation 2246 feet, more or less, to the North Bank of the Kansas River; thence in a Westerly direction along the said North Bank of the Kansas River to a point where said Kansas River bank intersects the East line of the said Fort Riley Military Reservation; thence in a Northerly direction along the said East line of said Military Reservation to the point of beginning, all of said land

²General Statutes of Kansas, Revised, 1949, 15-102
(Hereinafter cited as Kansas G.S.)

³Riley County Commissioners' Journal, Number Fi
pp. 49-51.

⁴Loc. cit.

being located in section twelve (12), township eleven (11), South of range six (6), East of the sixth principal meridian in Riley County, Kansas.⁵

The incorporating act by the County Commissioners also ordered the first election for Army City which was held on June 4, 1918. The results of that election were included with the incorporating minutes and showed the following as being elected to office: Mayor - Roy Dalton; Police Judge - Rob Kanard; Councilmen - J. C. Stephens, Charles Phillips, Harry Jordan, Charles Shirley, and Maurice Jencks.⁶

A gap must remain in the history of Army City's government. The government was established, ordinances were passed and enforced, taxes were levied and collected, and the duties of government were generally fulfilled. However, all city records (council minutes, ordinances, expenditures, etc.) were apparently lost. Following the disastrous fire in 1920, the City Clerk reported that all of the city's documents and records had been destroyed.⁷ Any later records were apparently lost during a severe flood in 1935. When a city unincorporates its records are turned over to the township clerk.⁸ The present Ogden Township Clerk, Julius A. Erichsen, could locate no

⁵Loc. cit.

⁶Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁷Junction City Daily Union, August 6, 1920, p. 2.

⁸Kansas G. S., 15-111.

records of Army City. He recalled that during 1935 a flood of major proportions destroyed many of the township records including, he thought, those of Army City.⁹ Mrs. Violet Hubert, whose father was township clerk at the time of Army City's unincorporation, similarly recalled that the Army City records, along with part of Ogden's records, were lost during the 1935 flood.¹⁰

Only scattered receipt books, personal property assessment rolls, and Army City tax records, excluding the real estate assessment rolls, were available in the Riley County Courthouse records. Mill levies were established for four funds; general, street, lighting, and fire protection. These levies totaled 5.50 mills in 1918, 9.00 mills in 1919 and 1920, and 4.50 mills in 1920.¹¹ The amount of revenue resulting from these levies appeared to have fluctuated between approximately \$2,000 and \$4,000.

Roy Dalton, Army City's first mayor, was succeeded by Charles H. Watson. Watson continued as mayor until the city's unincorporation in 1922. The city council appointed mustachioed

⁹Interview with Mr. Julius A. Erichsen, December, 1959.

¹⁰Interview with Mrs. W. F. Hubert, December, 1959.

¹¹Tax Receipt Books for 1918-21, Treasurer's Records, Riley County Courthouse, Manhattan, Kansas.

Nick Veite as the first fire chief and Frank Schemerhorn, of Ogden, was the first city marshal.¹²

¹²Jellison Interview, August, 1959.

CHAPTER IV
"BRIGHT LIGHTS"

Although Army City was built for the soldier it owed its initial prosperity to the thousands of laborers who came from far and near to participate in the construction of Camp Funston. These men, as would the soldiers later on, worked long and hard by day; after supper they were ready to make their presence known to the businessmen of Army City and Ogden. "It is at night, when the Funston laborers are free, that a strange, new metropolitan atmosphere exists. The streets are lined and every little stand is surrounded by patrons."¹ Contrasting the new activity to the earlier, lonely meadow scene, one editor remarked, "Bright lights are showing forth where never bright lights shone before."²

On July 5, 1917, the first edition of the "Ogden and Army City News" appeared as a special section of the Manhattan Tribune and was devoted to news and views pertaining to the two communities.³ While outlining plans to establish a printing plant in Army City the editor discussed the future prospects for that newest of Kansas cities:

¹Manhattan Tribune, July 19, 1917, p.6.

²Loc. cit.

³Ibid., July 5, 1917, p. 6.

The editors theorize that Manhattan has an influx of \$300,000 per month, from all sources, the year around. This \$300,000 supports a town of 7,000 covering more than one and one-half square miles of territory. Ogden and Army City will have \$1.5 million at their doorstep. Can they fail to prosper?

It is that million and a half dollars a month on which we base our faith in the immediate future of this community if it rises to the situation and does its part.⁴

The editor of the Tribune never made it clear which of the two towns he favored. Perhaps he favored both equally for a few months later he was commenting with favor upon the idea of Ogden and Army City "amalgamating" and forming one community.⁵ And then again this may have been his solution to the problem of securing water and sewers for Ogden which was still quarantined due to its lack of proper and healthful facilities.

The Tribune's early enthusiasm soon dwindled. No separate paper was established and the "Ogden and Army City News" continued only as a section of the Tribune, becoming more obscure as time passed.

More concrete were the efforts of the Hammond Publishing Company of Manhattan. That company built a two room office in Army City to serve as a news gathering house and eventually as a printing plant. Although they never established a separate printing office in Army City the Hammond Company published the

⁴Loc. cit.

⁵Ibid., December 27, 1917, p. 7.

Army City Bulletin for several months in their Manhattan office. The paper was a small ten to twelve page affair and emphasized Army City news and advertisements as well as news about Camp Funston and Ogden.⁶

The following description of Army City during its "heyday" recreated the "bright lights" atmosphere.

Army City, at Camp Funston, is the only place of its kind now in existence. It has been compared to an old-fashioned frontier town, which it does in some ways resemble, but it has important differences; for instance, it does not have a single saloon (tho' it does have several thirst parlors where men from St. Louis and Chicago imbibe bevo and profanely compare it with the genuine article of their hometowns), and nearly all the buildings are stuccoed. There are patches of sidewalk in Army City and patches of ice and patches of mud, and the dust blows madly up and down the street. On Saturday nights the town is a sea of soldiers. "Anywhere out of camp" seems to be their motto, and as Army City is just barely outside the government reservation on which Camp Funston is situated, and as the men can do anything in Army City that they would do in Junction City or Manhattan, it is as full of soldiers as "somewhere in France." Army City was built for the soldiers and lives by the soldiers and at present it is living high. One man who went into business there when it was opened about four months ago says that during the first month he did \$18,000 worth of business. Between 8 o'clock in the morning and 4 o'clock in the afternoon the population is estimated at a scant 200. By 7:30 in the evening it is between 10,000 and 20,000. Every restaurant and candy store is full of soldiers, the photograph galleries are full. The movies are full and there is a double line three or four blocks along waiting outside the Orpheum. What sidewalk there is, is taken over by the soldiers, and the streets themselves are jammed, and between the crowds of jitneys and soldiers it is as difficult and as risky to walk down the middle of the street as it would be in Denver. It is an interesting and for the most part good natured crowd that assembles in

⁶Army City Bulletin, August 31, 1917, p. 1.

Army City. There are men from all over the middle west. Almost every college and university, almost every town, little or big, in Kansas, Nebraska, or Colorado, is represented, and the men are all young and brimming over with high spirits. It is no wonder that Army City resembles a small college town on the night of a football victory - but on the whole the boys are orderly, remarkably so.⁷

One problem the Army City businessmen faced was that of anticipating the soldiers' visits. During the winters of 1917-18 and 1918-19 various typhoid, influenza, and meningitis epidemics forced the Army to restrict the troops to the camp confines. During such quarantines Army City lost the majority of its trade. Relatives and friends waiting to visit boys at the camp provided some business but only a small percentage of what the storekeepers were used to. During such lulls the Army City men would gather at John Sechler's Pool Hall for a few games of billiards and lengthy discussions on the subject of the day, "When will the troops be back?"⁸

Even more serious were the unexpected absences of the soldiers when no quarantine was in effect. Such absences were the result of General Wood's demanding training schedule and, although they were in the best interest of national defense, they often wreaked havoc with the Army City merchants. Restaurants would frequently sell out of all their perishables such as steaks and ice cream during one of the fantastic rush

⁷"Geary County Clipping Files," KSHL, 3:227.

⁸Ziegler Interview.

periods for which Army City became famous. The merchants would immediately restock their larders in preparation for the next evening's rush only to wait in vain as the mass exodus from the camp failed to materialize. The new stock might rot or spoil before the soldiers were allowed to take a break in training and leave the reservation.⁹ Walt Ziegler, who had many business interests in Army City, recalled that, "A carload of the best melons I have ever seen arrived during a rush period and about half were sold almost at once, and the rest spoiled before the soldiers were allowed to again leave the reservation."¹⁰

In spite of irregularities, business boomed at Army City during late 1917 and throughout 1918. The barber shops were exemplary of the many businesses which existed as virtual if temporary gold mines. One headline read, "Barbers Make Big Money," and the article continued, "The men at Shirley's Barber Shop will be plutocrats if the war lasts a year. Last week one man took in \$126. His net amounted to \$82. Not bad."¹¹

The Orpheum and Hippodrome Theaters, with a combined capacity of more than 3,500, played to standing room only crowds. Vaudeville, "reels of pics," and bands and chorus

⁹Loc. cit.

¹⁰Loc. cit.

¹¹Junction City Daily Union, January 5, 1918, p. 1.

lines made up the typical bill.¹² The theaters' advertisements carried the flavor of vaudeville to the reader with such announcements as, "The U.S.A. Girls, with Jimmy Allard and Vic Gilbert - 16 People - Some Show."¹³ Or one might choose to see, "Frank King and 8 Pretty, Dainty Girls - Snappy, Clever Burlesque."¹⁴ And if this was not enough variety one could wait and see, "Dan Russels' Matinee Girls - 16 People - Nearly All Girls."¹⁵ Dancers, singers, comedians, and novelty acts were interspersed with occasional reels of the latest movies but the emphasis was on "girls." The opening night of the Hippodrome was described as follows:

The Hippodrome was opened Monday night to a \$400 house and a company of girls who looked pretty and made a great hit with their singing and dancing. Of course there were some men in the company, good actors, dancers, and songsters, but men are common at Funston, it is the girls that count.¹⁶

The colored soldier was not forgotten. In South Army City the Prince George Restaurant, "Eats and Drinks for Colored Soldiers," was opened; a twelve table pool hall was built for the colored troopers; and a theater, showing exclusively

¹²Manhattan Nationalist, November 29, 1917.

¹³Camp Funston Trench and Camp, March 2, 1918, p. 2.

¹⁴Ibid., February 23, 1918, p. 2.

¹⁵Ibid., March 23, 1918, p. 1.

¹⁶Manhattan Tribune, November 22, 1917, p. 1.

colored talent was opened in May, 1918 with the production, "The Georgia Coontown Kids."¹⁷

Restaurants, offering both food and entertainment, flourished in Army City. At least six restaurants were in existence with three, The Palm Garden, The Log Cabin, and Schler's, being the most prominent. The Palm Garden was the largest and was often packed to overflowing. During one of the typical evening rushes everybody was pressed into service as waiters or cooks and there was neither the help nor the time to handle the money properly. As the paper money was taken in it was hurriedly thrown into the safe. The safe was soon filled and before the evening was over the money had formed a large pile upon the floor.¹⁸

Reports indicated that no intoxicating beverages were served and the popular substitute was "near-beer" or "bevo." The more popular brands went by such trade names as Notox, Excelso, and Bevo. The "near-beers" were the butt of many disparaging remarks by men familiar with the "real thing."

Rivalling the Palm Garden in popularity was the Log Cabin. The building was made of pine logs and on the inside was a large, open fireplace which always provided a cheery warmth during the cold weather. On the door of the Log Cabin was a

¹⁷Camp Funston Trench and Camp, May 18, 1918, p. 2.

¹⁸Ziegler Interview.

locally famous picture of a German helmet and written under it was, "Our Sentiments - To Hel-met the Kaiser."¹⁹

Sechler's Lunch Room, which adjoined his pool hall, featured a large, circular lunch counter eighty-four feet in circumference.²⁰ His combined profits from the lunch room, pool hall, and a souvenir stand were sufficient to permit Mr. Sechler to retire. He invested heavily in real estate in Junction City and lost most of his wealth when the community began to feel the effects of the reduction in strength at Fort Riley following the war.²¹

Although there were restaurants and shops in Camp Funston, they lacked one attraction which was offered by Army City. Women were employed in the stores and restaurants of Army City while they were barred from Camp Funston. As one soldier said, "There's sort of comfort in having a woman around even if she is homely, and unattractive, and doesn't put out a smile while she's serving you pie."²²

New Year's Eve, December 31, 1917, was like any other busy evening at Army City. To the soldiers the most notable thing about New Year's Eve was that it lasted longer.

¹⁹Manhattan Tribune, November 22, 1917, p. 2.

²⁰Manhattan Mercury, July 30, 1917, p. 4.

²¹Ziegler Interview.

²²"Geary County Clipping Files," KSHL, 3:106.

It might have been a "Headacheless New Year's" but a wild time was had in Army City regardless. Hot dogs and bevo were the chief refreshments and Army City's streets were packed. There was a sharp contrast between Funston, where "taps" were blown at the regular time, and Army City, where the bright lights, cheering, drinking, eating, and singing continued far past midnight. Everybody stayed open and it was a thrill to be able to buy a malted milk or a hot dog even if it was past midnight.

Army City, being closest to Camp, had the biggest orgy of all. The six "cabaret" cafes ran out of ice cream by 11:00. After that the typical order was "whatever you have got."

Popular New Year's Eve topics of conversation were trench digging, rifle practice, etc.

Some attended the moving picture shows. One of these depicted how a child saved her father from drunkenness. Another showed Charlie Chaplin brutally kicking a policeman every few moments. A third showed "the intricacies of the manufacture of woolen clothing from the cotton field [sic] to the soldier's back."

One dark spot marred the evening's pleasure. At the Log Cabin Inn (Hot dog sandwiches - 10¢, a pretty, fat cigar girl who talks you into buying two when you really didn't want any) the hot dogs ran out at 10:30! But on New Year's Eve such big disappointments don't last long.

At the "Paris Arbor" there was much singing, drinking of grape juice, and eating of fried oysters. This continued as the oysters got smaller and smaller, and the crowd, thinner and thinner. "It was, in fact, a wild, wild night."²³

The lights of Army City were indeed shining brightly and the future looked promising for the small town. All of the activity was not confined to the evening hours and 1918 saw some of the most exciting events in Kansas occurring at Army City.

²³Camp Funston Trench and Camp, January 5, 1918, p. 1.

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE VII

Figure 1. Interior of Shirley's Barber Shop. Mr. Shirley was the gentleman in the dark vest at the rear of the shop.

Figure 2. Exterior of the Log Cabin Restaurant. The Kaiser's "Hel-met" may be observed on the left door.

PLATE VII

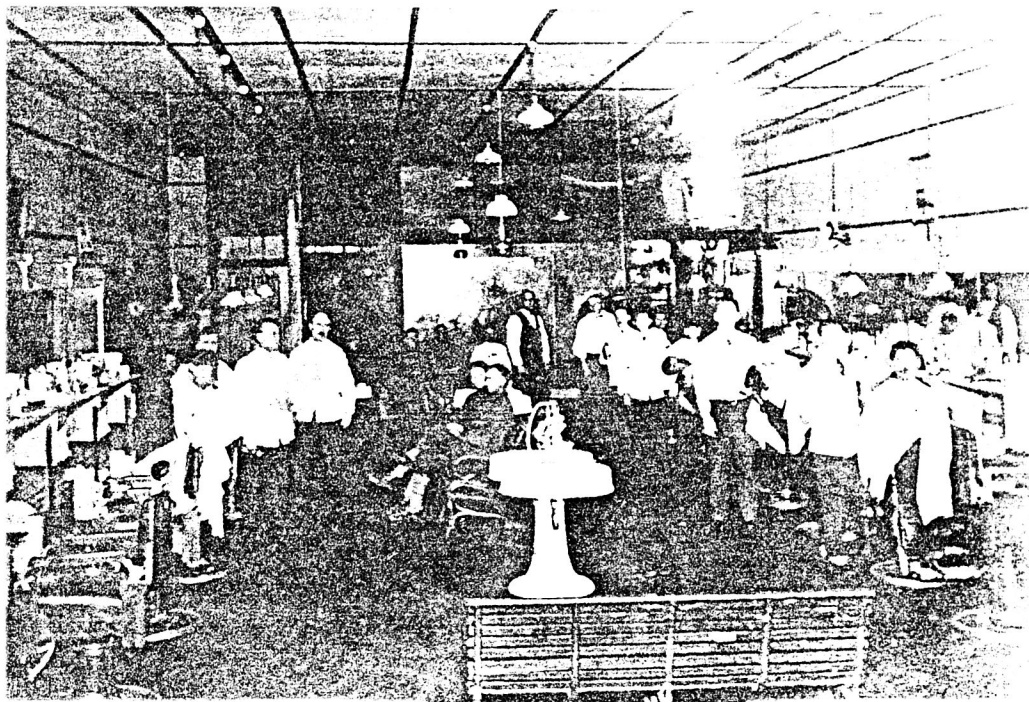


Figure 1

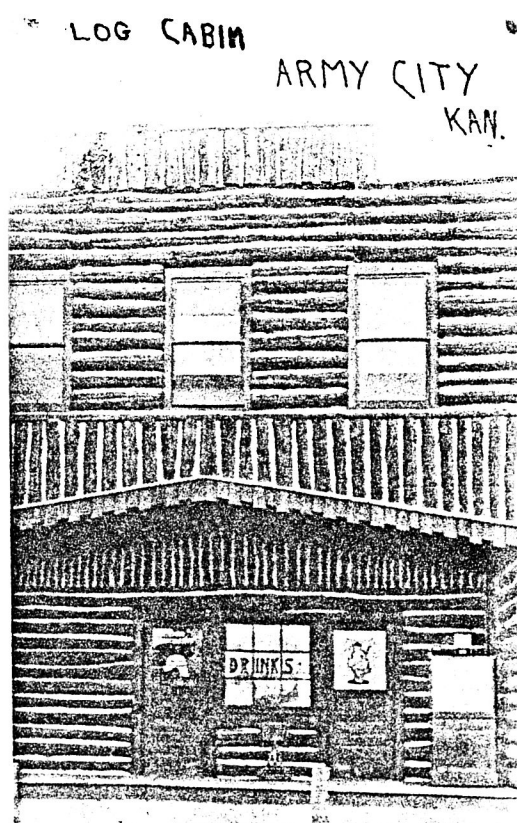


Figure 2

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE VIII

Figure 1. Stevens Drug Store in Army City.

Figure 2. Mr. Stevens at his well-stocked cigar and tobacco department.

Figure 3. The Stevens Drug Store as it appeared immediately after it was moved to Riley Street in Ogden, Kansas.

PLATE VIII

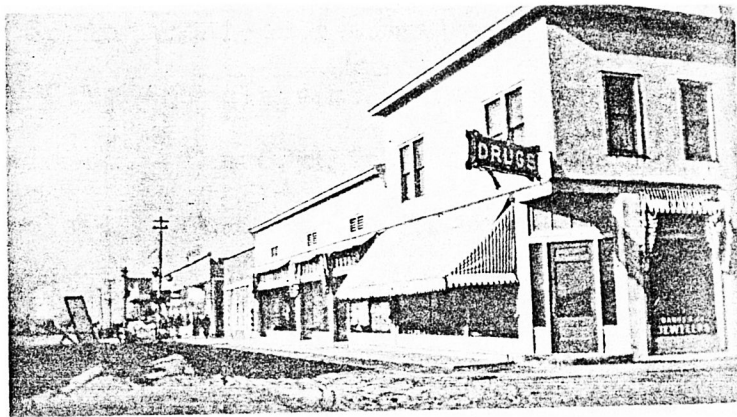


Figure 1

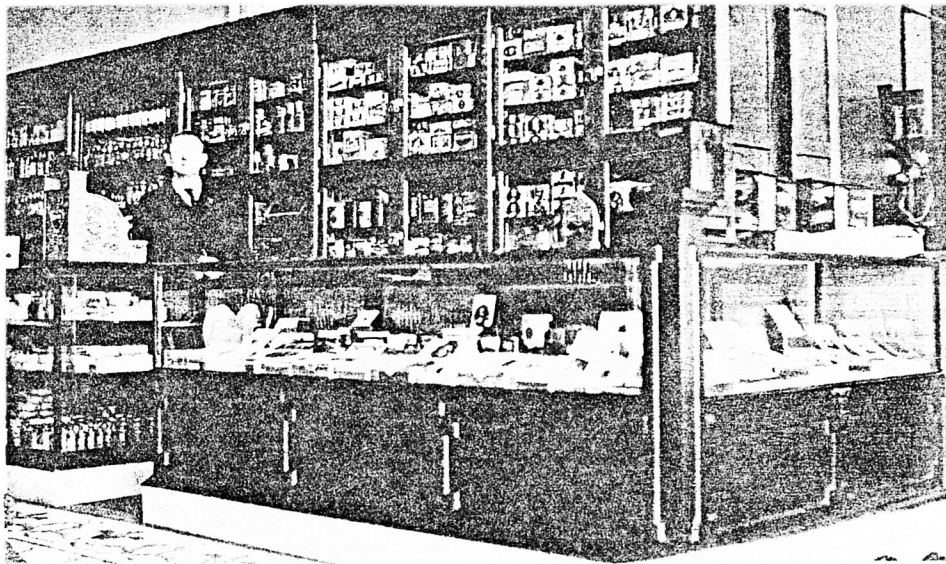


Figure 2

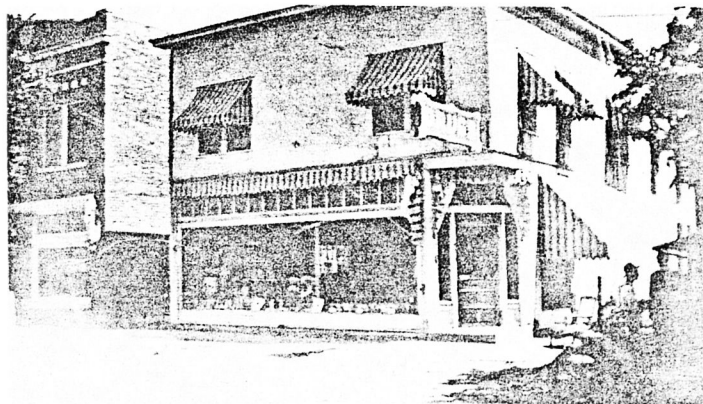


Figure 3

In the Spring of 1918 two major league baseball teams visited Army City and played exhibition games with a team from the 89th Division. The 89th Division Team defeated the St. Louis Cardinals in ten innings in the first game of the year by a score of 8 to 9.²⁴ The Cardinals set the Division players down by a score of 10 to 13 in the second game. Eight thousand spectators witnessed the two games and were thrilled to see the soldiers hold their own against such formidable competition.²⁵

The baseball thrill of the year came on April 12 when the World Champion White Sox came to town to demonstrate their prowess against the 89th Division Team. The stands at the Army City ball field were packed with 7,000 spectators. A holiday had been declared in honor of General Wood's return from Europe and both the General and Mrs. Wood were in attendance. The day was a big success although the White Sox were never threatened as they soundly defeated the soldiers by a score of 12 to 1.²⁶

Other attractions vied with baseball for the soldiers' interest throughout the spring, summer, and fall months of 1918. In a camp as large as Funston a wealth of talent was sure to be available to assist in almost any enterprise.

²⁴Ibid., April 6, 1918, p. 1.

²⁵Loc. cit. Longtime Kansas sports fans would recall the name of one of the officials at the game, E. C. "Ernie" Quigley.

²⁶Ibid., April 20, 1918, p. 1.

Accordingly, a combination Wild West Show and Circus was organized. Famous stars were located in the ranks of the conscript army and were "drafted" as entertainers. Frank Burns, a Ringling Brothers Clown, Tom Eckart, World Champion Bulldogger, Red Garrett, famous broncho rider, and Zudona, another Ringling Brothers Star, were a few of the top attractions.²⁷ Zudona was famous for being able to hang by his toes from flying rings while supporting a two hundred pound anvil from his teeth and then permitting anybody in the audience to hit the anvil with a sledgehammer.²⁸ After several delays due to inclement weather the Wild West Show and Circus was staged at the Army City ball field and amused and thrilled thousands of soldiers and their visiting relatives and friends.

Auto Polo was introduced to Army City in early July. A large crowd was entertained as two teams, two autos per team, fought back and forth across the improvised polo field.²⁹

Late July saw the Kansas Trap Shoot Championship decided at the Army City ball park. Hotels were available but visitors were encouraged to bring cots and tents and camp out as the town was expected to be quite congested. Trap loads were made available at the field for \$1.15 per box so participants would

²⁷Loc. cit.

²⁸Loc. cit.

²⁹Ibid., July 6, 1913, p. 1.

not have to rely upon the crowded and uncertain express services.³⁰ The State Championship went to E. W. "Patty" Arnold of Larned, Kansas. It was Arnold's sixth championship and was earned by hitting 97 out of 100 shots at 16 yards.³¹

In August several Army City businessmen, confident of the town's future and wishing to encourage its growth, made plans to form Army City's first Commercial Club, the equivalent of the modern Chamber of Commerce. Sixty-eight members were secured and they chose as their first president, Mr. Maurice Jencks.³² The Commercial Club's first venture was to raise funds to provide for a community dance pavilion. Within ten minutes over \$1,000 was subscribed and two weeks later the first of many weekly and bi-weekly dances was held.³³

One of the last attractions to visit Army City was the Sells-Floto Circus. Billed as the nation's best and most famous, the circus played at the ball field on September 7, 1918.³⁴

The last major event held at Army City was the "Greatest Coursing Event in the History of Dogdom," a week long series of

³⁰Loc. cit.

³¹Ibid., August 3, 1918, p. 1.

³²Manhattan Nationalist, August 1, 1918, p. 1.

³³Camp Funston Trench and Camp, August 17, 1918, p. 1.

³⁴Ibid., August 31, 1918, p. 1.

dog races. Over 400 greyhounds from all parts of the nation were entered in this coursing event, competing for both publicity and \$6,000 in prizes.³⁵ The last race was held on October 20 and, although those present did not know it, that race marked the beginning of the end for Army City.

As winter weather set in, two serious influenza epidemics forced the Army to once again restrict the troops to the Camp. The first quarantine lasted for much of October and early November and the second lasted from December 10 to December 28.³⁶ The quarantine brought business in Army City to a virtual standstill. Following the Armistice and the epidemics only the most optimistic voiced faith in Army City's future. After a short but vigorous "heyday" the robust, romantic, and remunerative days of Army City were drawing to a close. The "bright lights" were growing noticeably dimmer.

³⁵Ibid., September 28, 1918, p. 1.

³⁶Ibid., January 4, 1918, p. 4.

CHAPTER V

THE MORAL CLIMATE OF ARMY CITY

Not all of the activities at Army City were of the light and frivolous type. Indeed, a concerted effort was made by the Townsite Company to encourage service and religious groups to establish centers in Army City. Many organizations received title to city lots as donations from the Townsite Company, such title being contingent upon the establishment of a church building or other structure for the purpose of serving the moral and spiritual needs of the young men assigned to Camp Funston.

One of the earliest and most popular service centers was the YWCA Hostess House. The Hostess House was a large, frame structure erected on land donated by the Townsite Company. It served as a place where soldiers could meet mothers and sweethearts in a warm, homey atmosphere. Two dormitories, an excellent cafeteria, and an entertainment and reception parlor were the principal rooms. Comfortable easy chairs centered around a large fireplace and formed one of the most pleasant places for a young soldier to relax, visit with relatives, read magazines, or just take things easy for a bit.¹

The hostesses are always ready with a kind word, a bit of advice, to ease the homesickness some of the boys encounter. Occasionally a fellow brings in a sweater to

¹Camp Funston Trench and Camp, December 29, 1917, p. 4.

be mended. Help with Bible references is a frequent request. The Army City Hostess House is doing a wonderful job of serving as a "Home away from Home."²

The Salvation Army Hut was dedicated in the late Spring of 1918. Officials from all over the United States were present for the ceremony.³ The two story building was of frame construction, sixty feet by two hundred feet. A large auditorium, reading, and recreational rooms were on the first floor. The second floor contained living quarters for the Salvation Army officers and limited guest facilities.⁴

The Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church financed the construction of a Lutheran Center at Army City for the use of the many Lutheran boys stationed at Funston. The building contained a social room, library, office, and a chapel seating five hundred.⁵ A dwelling was also erected for the use of the Lutheran pastor assigned to the Center. Pastors were enthusiastic about the work accomplished and felt the Center was an ideal solution to the problem of contacting the boys training on the Reservation. It was difficult to locate each of the boys at Funston yet it was very easy for them to locate the

²Loc. cit.

³"Fort Riley and Camp Funston Clippings," Kansas State Historical Library, 2:91.

⁴Camp Funston Trench and Camp, March 9, 1918, p. 4.

⁵Ibid., March 16, 1918, p. 1.

Center. Services were held frequently and the "church and a home" provided the boys with the one thing "needful."⁶

Not all people were aware of the serious side to life in Army City. The good work done by the several church and service organizations went unnoticed by many. The Military State Bank, the Lux Mercantile Company, the Hostess House, and the Lutheran Center were just a few of the many sincere, hard working, business and charitable organizations located at Army City. The leaders in the community were solid, respectable people who had made good names for themselves in nearby communities or were to do so in the future. But regardless of facts, many people could not envision an army town, any time, any place, that was not a pest hole filled with the dregs of humanity. Army City was not above such prejudice.

One of the most severe attacks upon Army City appeared in the memoirs of an intelligence officer stationed at Camp Funston. Assigned to help in the investigation of a bank robbery at Camp Funston in which four men were brutally beaten to death with an ax, the officer ordered a "mop-up raid on Army City, a parasitical settlement on the outskirts of Funston."⁷ The officer personally directed the raid as he

⁶Rev. H. Petrich, Lutheran Soldiers' and Sailors' Bulletin, August, 1918, p. 23.

⁷Thomas R. Gowenlock, Soldiers of Darkness, p. 52.

felt, "The criminal, or information leading to him, would most likely be found in that known hangout of unsavory characters."⁸

Army City was one of those freak, mushroom towns full of cheap pool halls, hamburger joints, and ice cream parlors that had sprung up beside Funston's regimented rows of barracks like a boil on a young man's neck. Its inhabitants preyed on the soldiers and were considered a menace by Army officials. Bootleggers, gamblers, dope peddlers, and prostitutes operated there with reasonable success. . . . Two hundred soldiers were used to encircle the city . . . Every suspicious person, of whom there were many, was brought in . . . After viewing dope peddlers, pickpockets, and drunken prostitutes all night, I realized, despite all the iniquity unearthed, not a single clue to the identity of the bank murderer had been found.⁹

Part of the officer's problem was in the fact that he was looking in the wrong direction. The murderer was a captain in the Army, living on the Camp, who had calmly returned to his quarters with the bank loot. The murder and robbery were solved but with little thanks due to the "social critic." Later investigation did not support the officer's description of Army City.¹⁰

A survey of newspapers published in Manhattan and Junction City revealed very little in the way of vice or crime at Army City. In March, 1918, Frank Schemerhorn escorted five ladies

⁸Ibid., p. 53.

⁹Loc. cit.

¹⁰Bascom Johnson, "Eliminating Vice from Camp Cities," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, July 1918, 78:60-64.

out of Army City, "proving that Army City is not a good place for women of the underworld."¹¹ In June two women, members of a vaudeville troupe, while walking and getting a breath of fresh air after the last show, were attacked by two colored soldiers who fled as the women's screams brought speedy rescue.¹² In another incident Schemerhorn confiscated forty-two cases of lemon extract from grocery stores in Army City. Three arrests were expected but never reported.¹³ Such was the general nature of the journalistic attention given to Army City's vice and crime. The incidents appeared to be few and far between and of a not too serious nature.

As a young girl, Mrs. Violet Hubert attended Army City movies frequently during the summer evenings of 1918. Although she lived in Ogden she walked to Army City, attended the theater, and walked home. She did not recall any feelings of trepidation nor did she remember her parents evidencing more than normal concern for her well-being.¹⁴

Mrs. Maurice Jencks was married to the manager of the Orpheum Theater. She spent most of her evenings at home with her daughter while her husband was at the theater. She felt

¹¹Manhattan Tribune, March 21, 1918, p. 7.

¹²Manhattan Nationalist, June 6, 1918, p. 1.

¹³Ibid., October 17, 1918, p. 5.

¹⁴Hubert Interview.

Army City was a safe town and she was not afraid to stay alone at home during the nights. As she remembered it, Army City was a clean town and remained clean as a matter of necessity; anything less would have resulted in its being placed off-limits immediately.¹⁵

Stray women were considered the only moral problem with which Army City had to contend. According to Walt Ziegler they might sneak in and rent a hotel room or an apartment but they would not last long. "It was not so much a question of morals as it was just plain good business to keep the town clean and keep the military authorities from having an excuse to interfere."¹⁶ Army City was a much cleaner town than many were willing to believe it to be.

While Army City's economy was obviously bound to that of Camp Funston, the attitude of the prominent Army City businessmen was far from that of the avaricious parasite. The following remarks were made by A. D. Jellison to the Board of Directors of the Army City Townsite Company:

An effort should be made to show that Army City is not altogether a money making scheme. It furnishes good, clean entertainment to the soldier and his friends at a convenient place, and without the Army restriction of the camp life. It is a taste of the life the soldier is used to and will be appreciated. Money invested in Army City will help win the war because it makes better soldiers, looking after interests that would otherwise be

¹⁵Interview with Mrs. Maurice Jencks.

¹⁶Ziegler Interview.

neglected. . . . There are many well disposed people who would be glad to contribute to things at Army City that will be a benefit to the soldiers.

I don't believe Army City should ever be put in the light of a money making scheme. It should be the best place in the world for the soldier. Just as soon as accommodations can be arranged conventions should be encouraged to come to Army City. Its big theaters are good places for the state to hold some of its farmer meetings. Prominent speakers could be invited to Army City, etc., etc. School debating societies would welcome a visit to Army City and a trip through the Camp. Folders should be sent to all County teachers. These should give full particulars about the Camp, and about Army City.

Army City should be advertised as the place where everybody has a good time.¹⁷

Army City, if not better, was no worse than many other Kansas and mid-western communities. As far as camp towns went, Army City was probably a notch or two above the average. People who visited Army City had a good time. And Army City, a unique, bustling, lively, "bright lights" town, was a good place in which to live and work.

¹⁷"Report to Townsite Company," December 13, 1917. From the Jellison Papers.

CHAPTER VI

THE "ZONE"

People who were casually acquainted with the Fort Riley area during World War I confuse the Zone of Camp Activities, and events which occurred there, with Army City. For purposes of clarification a brief discussion should be made of Camp Funston's Zone of Camp Activities.

The "Zone" was essentially a two-block long strip of buildings which were owned by the Government and leased to reputable businessmen who were to provide sundry services to meet the needs of the soldiers. The buildings were centrally located in Camp Funston and closely regulated.

The Zone of Camp Activities was unique in that it provided facilities for the soldiers at no expense to the government, yet the facilities were government owned, controlled, and located on government land. Persons interested in investing money in the "Zone" were invited to finance the construction of all of the buildings in the area set aside for Camp Activity purposes. Each concessionaire built and paid for his own building which, upon completion, immediately became government property. In return the concessionaire received a five year lease to the building and permission to operate an approved business in that location. The builder also paid approximately $13\frac{1}{2}\%$ of his gross earnings to the Camp Exchange Officer for

distribution to individual unit funds.¹ Even under such restrictions many men were eager to invest in the "Zone." As at Army City, the prevailing sentiment was that Funston would be "large enough for long enough" to enable everybody to reap their initial investment plus a handsome profit.

Under the direction of Capt. Dick Foster, over \$1,500,000 worth of private capital was poured into the erection of Camp Funston's "Zone."² Three large theaters were erected with each seating approximately 1,900 men; a pool room was built and was equipped with seventy pool tables; a barber shop was constructed which boasted forty chairs and claimed to be the world's largest.³ Two banks, one of which was the scene of the robbery and its resulting tragedy, drug stores, clothing stores, lunch rooms, bevo parlors, and other concessions were all crowded into the "Zone."

Camp Funston was the only World War I military camp to boast a Zone of Camp Activities. It was so successful that plans were made to duplicate the "Zone" at other cantonments but the Armistice was signed while such plans were in embryo and they were cancelled.⁴

¹"Fort Riley and Camp Funston Clippings," Kansas State Historical Library, 1:150.

²Cantonment Life at Camp Funston, op. cit.

³Loc. cit.

⁴"Fort Riley and Camp Funston Clippings," Kansas State Historical Library, 1:156.

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE IX

Figure 1. The left portion of a picture of the Zone of Camp Activities at Camp Funston. The inset is a picture of Capt. Dick Foster, Director of the Zone.

Figure 2. Continuation of the same picture.

PLATE IX

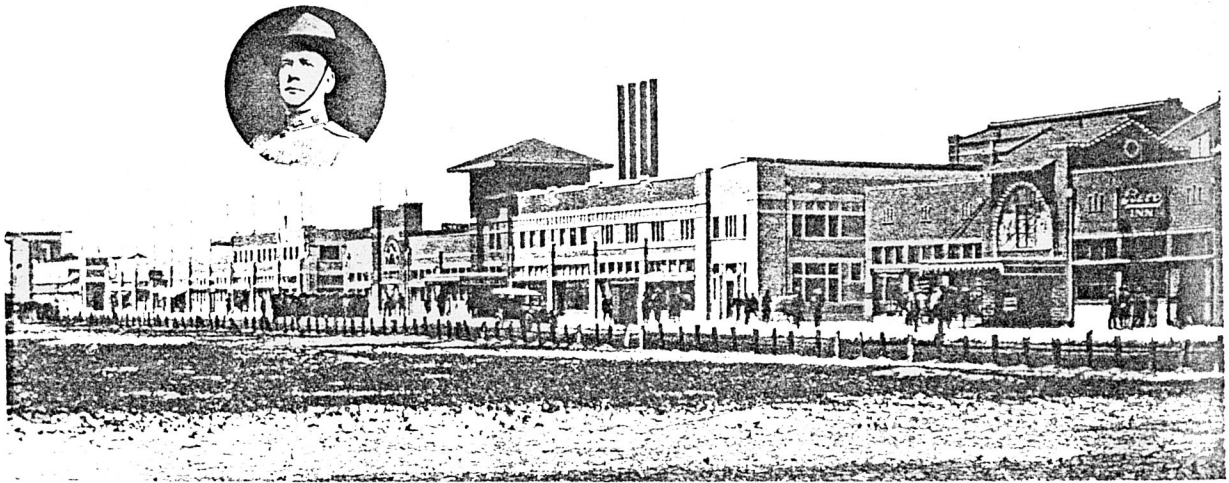


Figure 1

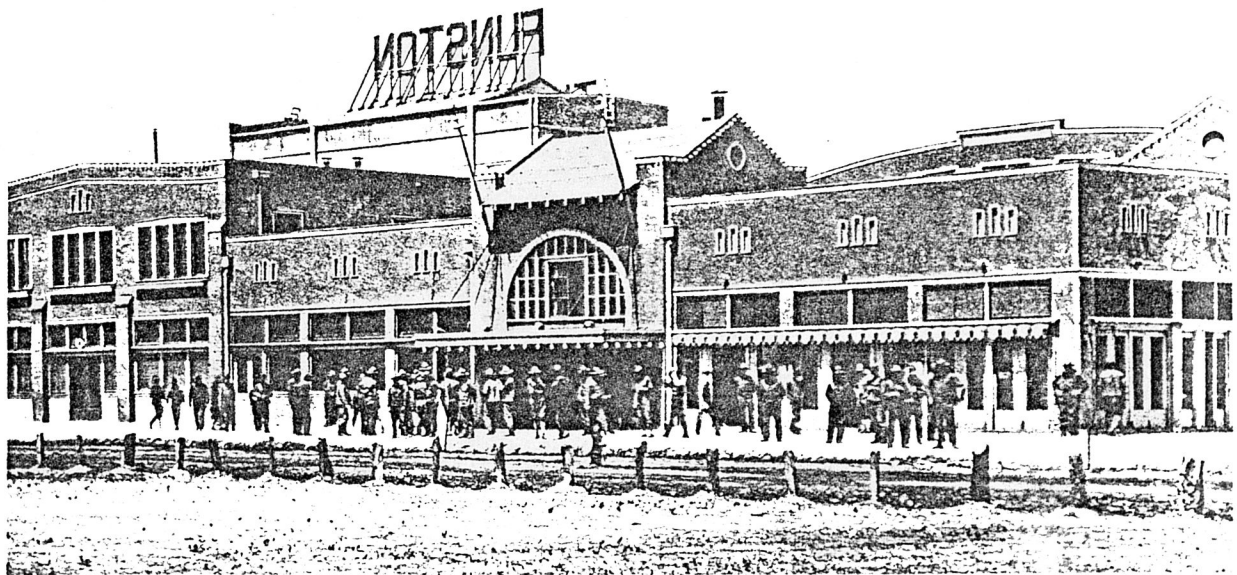
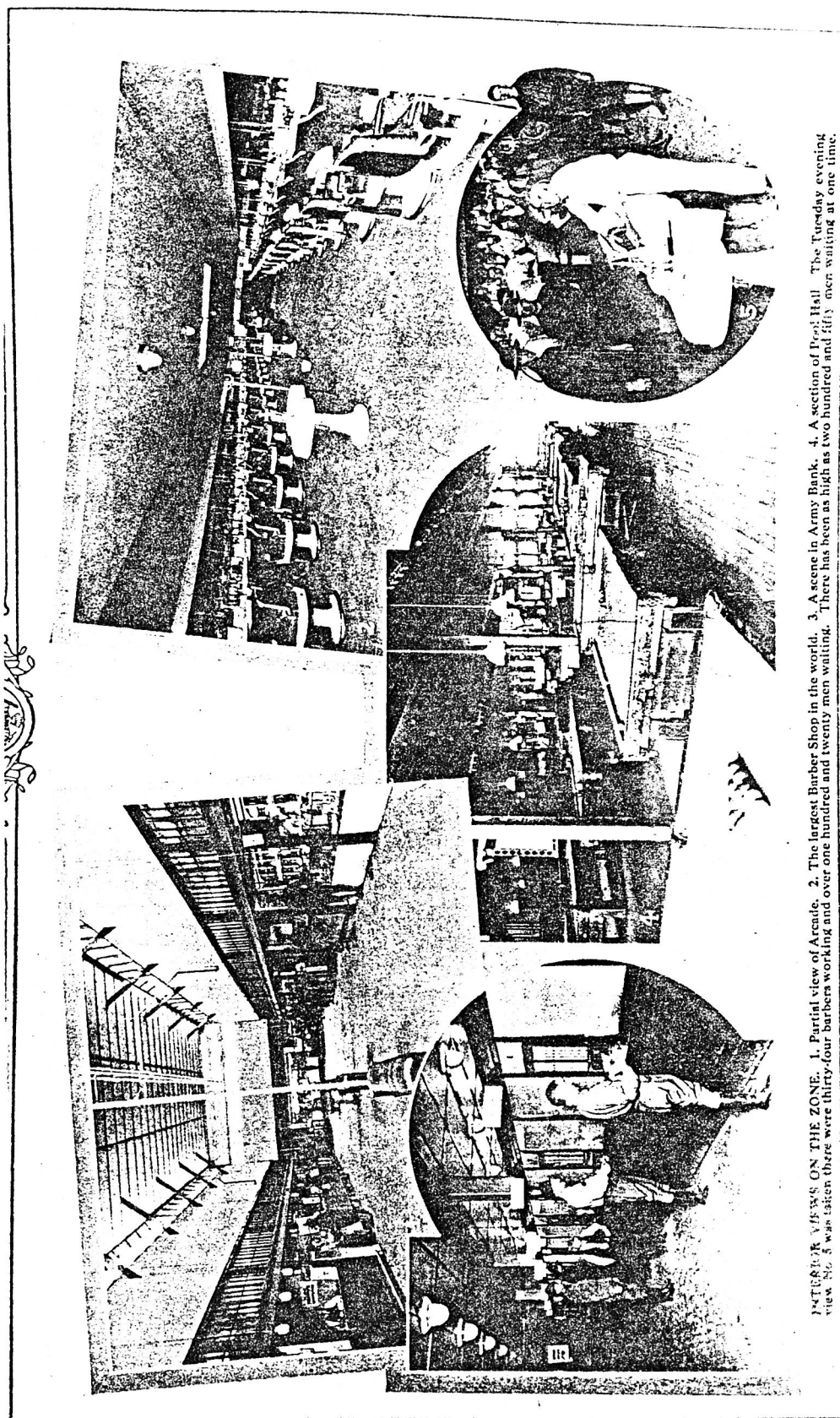


Figure 2

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE X

Interior views of several of the establishments on the Zone of Camp Activities. The pool hall pictured contained seventy tables and the barber shop boasted forty chairs.

PLATE X



Following the Armistice the businessmen gradually left the "Zone." Many building owners had sub-leased their business sites to people who, while lacking capital, were quite adept at "hawking their wares." The sub-lessees were the first to leave and the original investors were left to recover what they could. In December, 1919, the Federal Government ordered all businessmen out of the Zone of Camp Activities.⁵ As the "Zone" had operated for such a short time, many businessmen had not even recovered their initial investment. Because the original five year leases had not expired, property owners filed claims against the Government requesting damages to equal, but not exceed, their actual losses.⁶ The U. S. Government recognized the plight of the investors in the "Zone" and satisfied all claims in February of 1923.⁷

The "Zone" was built to serve the soldier and was not intended to drive out businesses in Army City. Indeed, some men invested in both places. And Army City had certain advantages which enabled it to compete on favorable terms. Girls were employed in the shops and restaurants of Army City, a feature the "Zone" could not duplicate. Also, a certain

⁵"The Army Bank of Camp Funston vs. the United States of America," a claim against the Federal Government from the Jellison Papers.

⁶Loc. cit.

⁷United States Statutes at Large, 67th Congress, Senate Bill 85, Private Bill 181, 42(2):1774.

psychological benefit seemed to be derived by the soldier when he could step off the Camp for even a few moments, and Army City was "off-camp" while the "Zone" was not. On the other hand, the businessmen on the "Zone" benefitted from a steadier flow of customers than did those at Army City. Although generally restricted during the epidemics, the "Zone" could be visited during the evening hours, after the training routine had ended, without the soldier needing to obtain permission to leave the camp confines.

After all was said and done there was more than enough business for both Army City and the "Zone." At times businessmen at both places were less worried about the money to be earned than they were about the minutes to be slept before the next mad rush would put them back to work.⁸

⁸"Geary County Clipping File," Kansas State Historical Library, 3:227-228.

CHAPTER VII

DECLINE AND DEMISE

During the exciting days of 1918 many businesses prospered at Army City and people were optimistic about the future. Should the war end immediately it was felt the town would continue to prosper, for Army men and congressmen had said that 25,000 to 30,000 men would be stationed at Funston for at least five years after the war.¹

But even before the Armistice, weaknesses were making themselves known in Army City. Building construction lagged and community expansion was at a standstill. Those businesses which needed the support of something more substantial than the seven to ten evening soldier trade were feeling the pinch worse of all. In a letter to the Townsite Company a furniture and carpet dealer announced:

(We) were in Army City last week, to convert our business into an amusement parlor, but found conditions so poor, also everybody so discouraged, that on our return decided to make no change.

We have in our room, fixtures to the amount of about \$600.00 and I am willing that you take over these for the balance of the rent. It will more than compensate you for our indebtedness and relieve us of a losing proposition, which it has been since last December. At the same time rent the room and lose nothing there.

I have lost everything I had in this venture, and can pay no more rent, and would like to have my name clear of any indebtedness.

¹Manhattan Mercury, August 1, 1917, p. 1.

Am enclosing the store key, and would appreciate an early reply.²

The Army City Service Company was, by August of 1918, barely making ends meet. The Kansas Audit and Promoting Company of Salina was called in to make a survey of the situation and formulate recommendations. The recommendations were quite voluminous but the entire problem was summed up thusly:

You are equipped for handling many times the amount of customers you have and your overhead expense would be but little more than it is now. Consequently, each additional consumer increases revenue of the Service Company very materially. The Townsite Company holding back and not getting in more people to patronize the Service Company when they have gone to the expense of equipping themselves for a larger volume of business works a hardship on them and accounts for a large part of their poor showing.

While there has been a loss that could probably have been avoided I am calling your attention to this particular problem so you will not overlook it when considering matters in general at Army City.³

The developers of Army City were not blind to their problems. They were aware that a healthy community needed to have an economic foundation based upon greater resources than just the ability to entertain and provide services for the soldier. As early as December, 1917, the Townsite Company discussed possible industries which could be attracted to Army City. Everything from laundries and cigar factories to the

²Letter from R. H. Goldberg to Powers and Jellison, August 28, 1918. From the Jellison Papers.

³Letter to A. D. Jellison from Wilson Auditing Company, Salina, Kansas, August 14, 1918. From the Jellison Papers.

manufacture of shoes was considered.⁴ Efforts to secure industries for Army City were of no avail.

Although new businesses and industries could not be persuaded to come to Army City, the community held its own throughout the first few months of 1919. Many troops were processed through Camp Funston for the transition to civilian life. It was a rapid mustering-out system, taking only a few days, and many men never left the Camp. But always a few did, and these few were the sustenance for the remaining Army City businesses. Army City store windows advertised closing out sales, the theaters and restaurants continued to operate, but the evening crowds became thinner and thinner. It was a time to dream and jokingly reminisce about the earlier evenings when the mad rush came boiling over the reservation boundary, and the cash register was not made that could ring up the sales fast enough.

By early 1920 Army City's population hovered around a much more stable 200 mark.⁵ These people were the last hardy businessmen and their families who refused to throw in the towel and several army families who lived in the uncrowded apartments which had once commanded such impressive rents. Casual visitors

⁴"Report to Townsite Company," December 13, 1917. From the Jellison Papers.

⁵Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1:218.

were becoming more and more a rarity, the town seemed to be going to sleep.

Fate had handled Army City rather roughly. Epidemics, quarantines, flash floods, unpredictable Army training schedules, and the complete abandonment by the Army of Camp Funston combined to serve as an oppressive weight bearing down with ever increasing force and crushing the hope in even the most optimistic. The town was like a tumbleweed in a dusty street, waiting for a breath of wind to tell it which way to go. And fate was ready to provide the last breath of wind which would settle forever the question of Army City's future.

Early publicity had proudly announced that Army City would be a model town containing only fireproof buildings. All buildings would be concrete, stucco, or brick and would meet all safety requirements.⁶ Most of the business buildings did have stucco exteriors. But under the thin layer of stucco was a layer of tarpaper, a wooden frame, wood floors, and the "frosting on the cake" was the tarpaper roof used on most of the buildings. While making an inspection of the buildings in December, 1917, Jellison commented:

A company should be organized among the people who stay at Army City overnight. Where fires are left to keep things from freezing a night watchman should have a key. In fact, it is poor policy to leave fires. The danger of fire is great. In many places stoves are too

⁶"Geary County Clippings," Kansas State Historical Library, 3:104.

close to walls and smoke stacks pass through walls when not necessary. Unless all work together to eliminate danger, there is certain to be fires.⁷

Army City had for fire fighting equipment a total of one hose cart, six hundred feet of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch hose, two fire nozzles, and four hose spanners.⁸ Insurance rates for Army City were quite high. "The rate sheet is just out . . . low rates are 6.41% for the bank and post office . . . up to 10% for restaurants. The insurance companies seem to be betting pretty strong that there will be a fire."⁹ The fire risk was so great, and the protection so inadequate, that all fire insurance in Army City was cancelled shortly after the end of the war.¹⁰

On a sleepy Wednesday afternoon in August, 1920, fate struck the final blow against Army City. About 2:00 p.m. a fire started from unknown causes in the apartment occupied by the Watson family in the upstairs of the Hippodrome building.¹¹ Within twenty minutes after its discovery the fire was raging throughout all of blocks four and five in the north-west

⁷From freehand "notes" made by A. D. Jellison while inspecting Army City buildings. From the Jellison Papers.

⁸Contract between Eureka Hose Company, Kansas City, and the Army City Townsite Company, September 6, 1917. From the Jellison Papers.

⁹Manhattan Tribune, October 25, 1917, p. 6.

¹⁰Manhattan Mercury, August 5, 1920, p. 1.

¹¹Manhattan Nationalist, August 12, 1920, p. 5.

corner of Army City.¹² Fire carts from Army City and Camp Funston fought valiantly but could not prevent the fire from consuming all the buildings in the two blocks. The fire fighters were fortunate to be able to contain the fire to just the two blocks and thereby save much of the town. The fire started in the south-west part of block five. The wind was from the south-west and fanned the flames through all of block five with such intensity that the flames leaped Washington Avenue and consumed block four. The wind direction was instrumental in saving the portion of the town south of General Street.

A vital portion of Army City's business district had been wiped out. Among the buildings burned were the Hippodrome Theater, the Orpheum Theater, Dillner Photo Shop, Haarmyer News and Tobacco Store, Davis Tailor Shop, Mason Cafe, O. B. Scott Variety Store, and the large Ziegler-Dalton Garage and Filling Station.¹³

There were no injuries except for some minor burns suffered by a few of the fire fighters. Fifteen or twenty families, mostly soldiers' families, were left temporarily homeless. Only a few small articles had been saved and the only item apparently insured was O. B. Scott's electric piano, valued at

¹²Loc. cit.

¹³Loc. cit.

\$500.¹⁴ The total loss in Army City was estimated at \$200,000.¹⁵

Unusual stories accompany every disaster. At Army City, just prior to the fire, a Sgt. Thornhill had withdrawn \$650 from the bank. The money was in his shirt pocket and the shirt was hanging on the back of a chair in his apartment when the fire began. During the excitement of the fire a rescue party dashed into the apartment and carried out Thornhill's wife's toiletry set, leaving the shirt and its contents to be destroyed by the fire.¹⁶

Army City could not recover from this final disaster. Many businessmen quietly closed their doors and moved away. Maurice Jencks opened a temporary theater but soon closed and went to Topeka where his abilities brought him greater fortune than Army City could have ever offered. A majority of the buildings in Army City were dismantled and sold for scrap and lumber. A few were moved over into Ogden. The Stevens Drug Store, built at a cost of \$25,000, was moved to a mainstreet location in Ogden without removing or disturbing any of its contents.¹⁷ Three Army City buildings were still in use in Ogden in 1960.

¹⁴Loc. cit.

¹⁵Loc. cit.

¹⁶Manhattan Mercury, August 5, 1920, p. 1.

¹⁷Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Bill Stevens.

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE XI

Figure 1. A view north on Washington Avenue at the height of the disastrous fire of August 4, 1920.

Figure 2. Remains of the Orpheum Theater and other buildings in block four following the fire.

Figure 3. View of Army City showing the total destruction of the properties in blocks four and five. This view may be compared to the picture on page 34 which was taken three years earlier.

PLATE XI



Figure 1

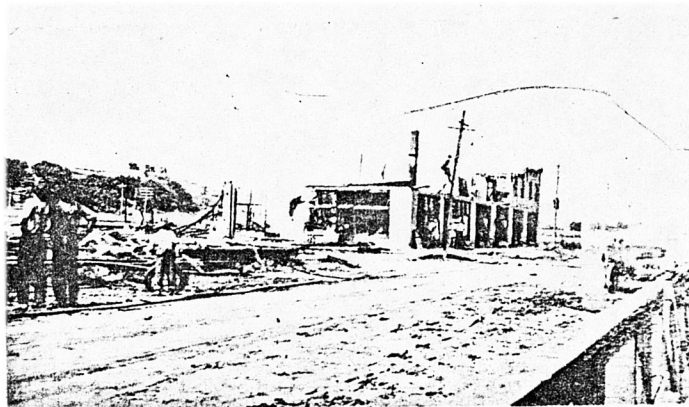


Figure 2



Figure 3

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE XII

Figure 1. The Hippodrome Theater as it appeared prior to August 4, 1920.

Figure 2. The same theater after the fire of August 4, 1920.

PLATE XII

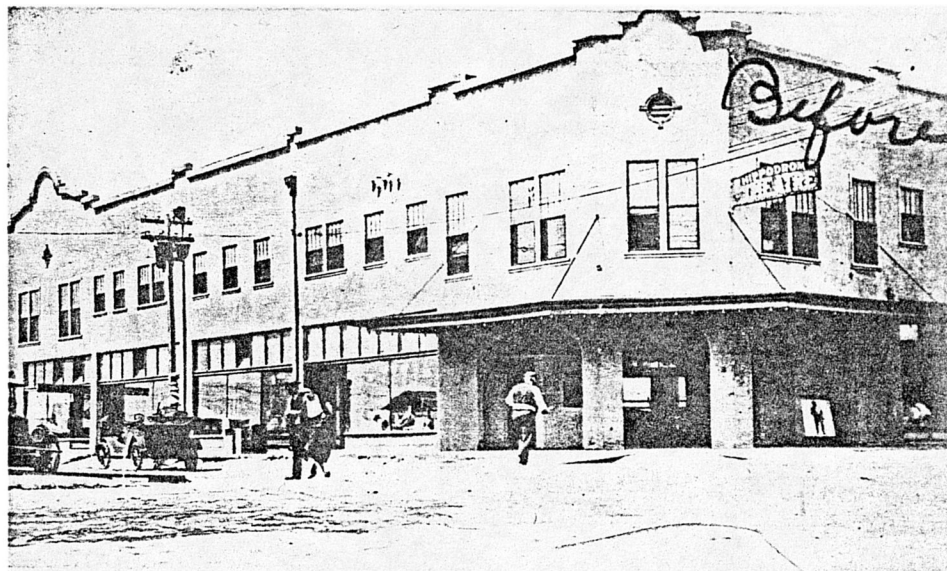


Figure 1

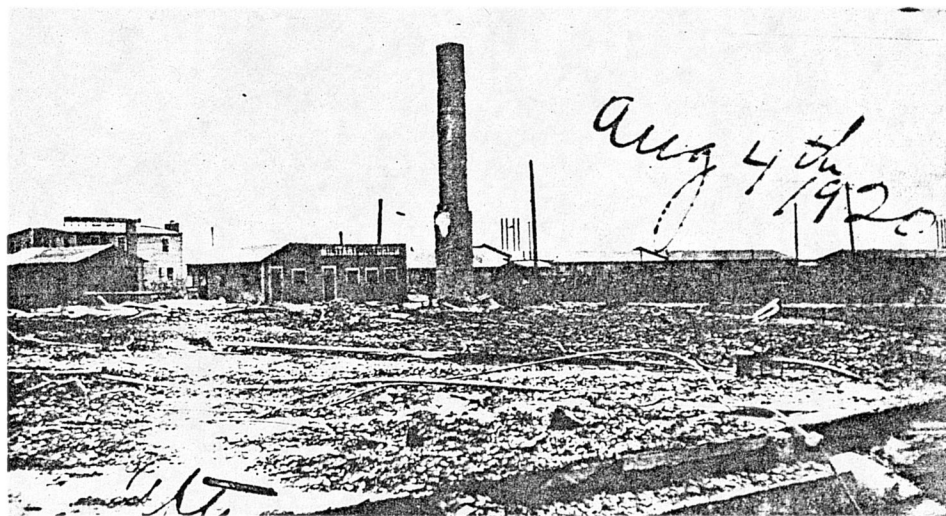


Figure 2

The last people to leave Army City were the members of the Watson family. Watson had been mayor of Army City for many years and had a cleaning plant which proved to be a steady, reliable business. The cleaning plant remained in block two of Army City until the land was made part of the Fort Riley Reservation, at which time the Watsons set up a new plant at the east edge of Ogden.¹⁸

Government in Army City ended in September of 1922. At that time six of the town's eight remaining citizens met at Watson's Cleaning Plant to vote on the future of the city. "All six voted to unincorporate and Army City was through."¹⁹ The land encompassed by Army City returned to the Township and the city records were turned over to the Township Clerk of Ogden Township. Army City was officially vacated by the Riley County Commissioners in 1926.²⁰

A. D. Jellison reacquired the title to all the land in Army City with the exception of lots 13 and 14 in block two which were retained by the Watson and Hussey families.²¹ In July, 1925, Jellison traded the original tract of land,

¹⁸Loc. cit.

¹⁹Kansas City Star, October 8, 1922. In "Geary County Clipping File," Kansas State Historical Library, Vol. 3.

²⁰Riley County Commissioners' Journal, Minutes of February 1, 1926, 5:225.

²¹"Army City Numerical Index, Block 2," Register of Deeds Office, Riley County Courthouse, Manhattan, Kansas.

purchased by Hale Powers for \$37,500, to Fred Yenni, a Geary County farmer. In return Jellison received from Yenni a 400 acre tract of land in Ottawa County, Kansas.²²

The alfalfa and corn fields had returned and the "bright lights" would shine no more. Army City had run its life cycle and returned to its original state. The tract of land upon which Army City had been built was used for farming purposes until 1941, at which time it was acquired by the government and made a part of the Fort Riley Military Reservation.²³

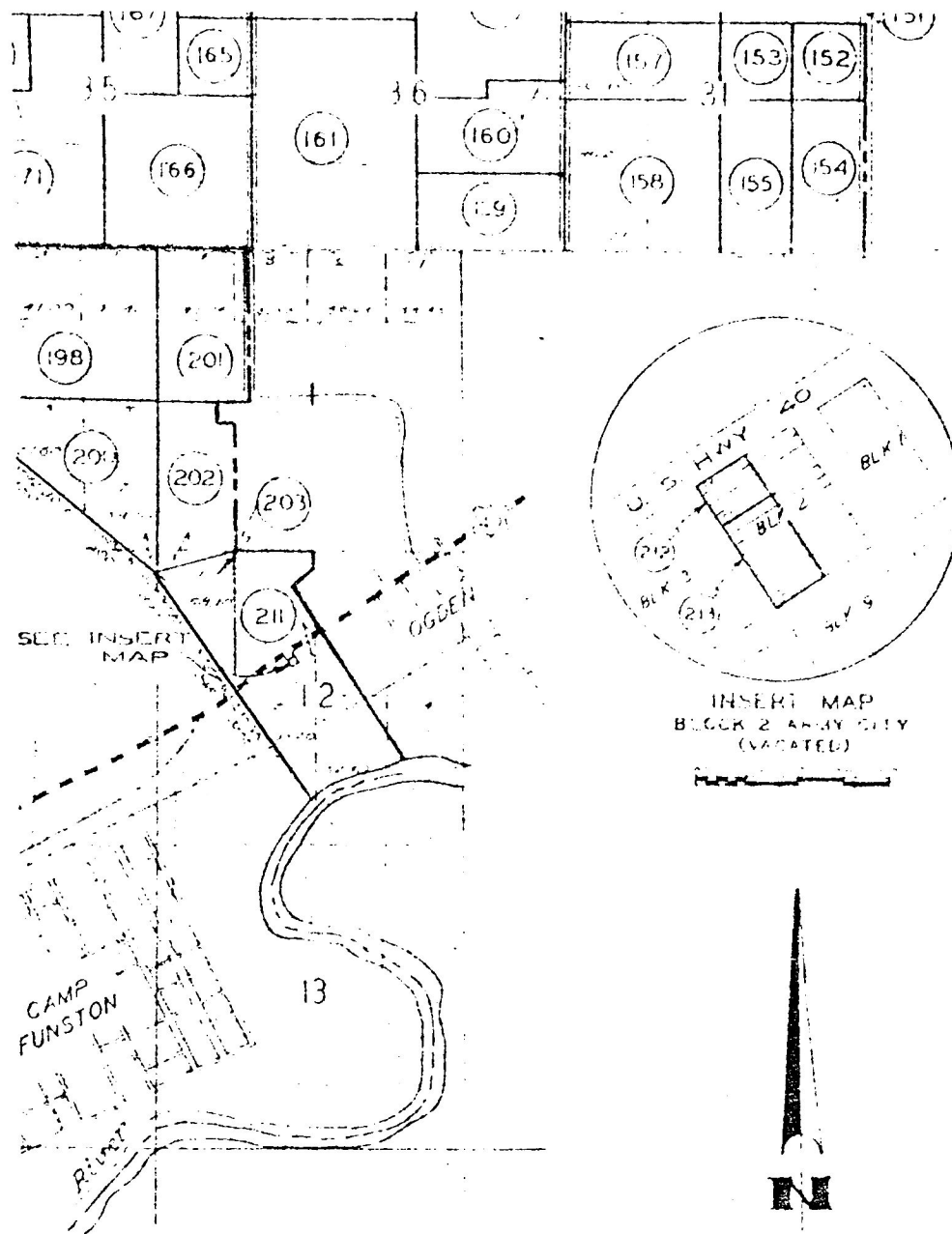
²²Contract between Mr. Fred Yenni and Mr. A. D. Jellison, 31 July, 1925. From the Jellison Papers.

²³"Army City Numerical Index," op. cit.

EXPLANATION FOR PLATE XIII

A portion of a map showing the parcels of land purchased by the U. S. Government to enlarge the Fort Riley Reservation. Parcel 211 was the original tract of land purchased by Mr. Jellison for Army City and which was later traded to Fred Yenni. The insert map shows parcels 212 and 213 which belonged to the Hussey and Watson families. The Watsons were the last family to leave Army City.

PLATE XIII



CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

A visitor to the site of Army City would find few traces of the once bustling community. The buildings were long since moved, dismantled, or destroyed. In 1960 the area was part of the Fort Riley Military Reservation and only a smooth, broad plain, dotted with a few trees, existed where once stood proud theaters and hotels. The casual observer could readily locate the vacated site of Army City for it was adjoining and just south of Highway 18 and immediately east of the flood control dike protecting the eastern side of Camp Funston. The only physical evidence remaining of Army City was found on the high bluff north of the original town site. There, chipped, weather worn, and partially hidden by grass and brush, remained several cement foundations upon which rested the two water tanks which provided storage for Army City's water supply. All other traces of Army City had disappeared.

In retrospect it is clear that Army City had very little chance for success. At the very best, with kinder treatment at the hands of Lady Fortune, it could have developed into no more than a small, permanent camp town, providing minor services, recreation, and housing for men stationed at Fort Riley. Had Army City survived until World War II it might have grown and perhaps it and Ogden would have joined together to form a substantial community. Even so, with the improvements in

transportation and the ease with which larger communities may be reached, it would appear doubtful that Army City, with or without Ogden, could ever have amounted to more than a small camp town.

Why did Army City fail while Ogden, in spite of her own troubles, remained secure and permanent? Ogden, if small, was an established community with many families having lived there for several generations. It was not dependent upon Fort Riley for its existence; it was originally a farm community and maintained its rural support after the war. People have a tendency to remain near the place they were raised and for many people Ogden was "home." The citizens of Army City were "foot-loose and fancy free." The oldest citizen in Army City lived there less than ten years. When Funston closed down there was very little to hold anyone in Army City.

Army City held no attraction for farmers, industrialists, investors, or retired folk seeking a quiet, neighborly retreat. The optimistic who voiced faith in Army City's future were basing their faith upon the assumption that Camp Funston would be a permanent camp with, if not forty thousand men, at least several thousand men stationed there at all times. The developers of Army City were not the only ones who believed in Camp Funston's permanence. Businessmen in Junction City and Manhattan, and high ranking military and government officials, all concurred with the belief that the investment at Camp Funston was not a short time arrangement. But as so often happens, the

nation was even more ready to return to peace time standards than it had been to go to war. The demobilization fever reduced the strength of the Army in an amazingly short time. And the fever did not stop with getting the men home but carried through to the early dismantling and abandonment of the training sites. The all-pervading element in Army City's history was its total dependence upon Camp Funston. When Camp Funston ceased to be, Army City was certain to follow.

People who had invested money in Army City generally realized their investment and nothing more. The initial boom had been rewarding enough that many property owners had paid for their buildings by the time of the Armistice. Some who left early took considerable money with them. Those who stayed were less fortunate. Most salvaged sufficient funds to re-establish themselves elsewhere but few really profited. Overall, Army City was a "break-even" business venture.

Army City lived too fast and died too soon to leave a lasting impression. But it was a unique town, like no other in Kansas and probably not in the United States. It was a colorful, strange and different little town which added something to the lives and memories of many people. It was possible to eliminate Army City's "bright lights" but it would never be possible to deprive Army City of its "uniqueness."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Humble and sincere appreciation is extended to Dr. Homer Socolofsky of the History Department, Kansas State University. Without his guidance and encouragement this paper would not have been possible. Thanks also are extended to the fine members of the staff at the Kansas Historical Library, to Mr. A. D. Jellison, and to the many others whose cooperation contributed so much to this paper. The writer would be amiss if he did not expressly thank his wife, Sue, whose patience and presence never faltered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Federal Documents

Fourteenth Census of the United States. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921, 1:218.

United States Statutes at Large. 67th Congress, 1921-1923, 42(2):1774.

State and Local Documents

Army City Tax Receipts, 1918-1921, Riley County Treasurer's Office, Manhattan, Kansas.

"Army City Numerical Index," Riley County Register of Deed's Office, Manhattan, Kansas.

General Statutes of Kansas, Revised. 1949.

Moore, R. C. Environment of Camp Funston. Kansas State Geological Survey Bulletin Number 4, n. d.

Riley County Commissioners' Journal, Volume 5, County Clerk's Office, Manhattan, Kansas.

Newspapers

Army City Bulletin, August 31, 1917.

Camp Funston Trench and Camp, October 1917 - January 1919.

Junction City Daily Union, June 1917 - December 1922.

Manhattan Mercury, June 1917 - December 1920.

Manhattan Nationalist, June 1917 - December 1922.

Manhattan Tribune, June 1917 - December 1922.

Topeka Daily Capital, June 1917 - December 1918.

Manuscripts

"Army City." Dead Town File, Kansas State Historical Library, Topeka.

Jellison, Arthur D. A collection of Mr. Jellison's private papers containing records, deeds, contracts, documents, letters, and miscellaneous notes pertaining to Army City.

Periodicals

Dau, W. H. T. "My Impressions." Lutheran Soldiers' and Sailors' Bulletin, May 1918, 3-7.

"Incorporation." Kansas Government Journal, April 1939, 25(4):7.

Johnson, Bascom. "Eliminating Vice From Camp Cities." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, July 1918, 78:60-64.

Lott, A. G. "Camp Funston - Then and Now." Kansas Legionnaire, September 1933, p. 33.

Petrich, H. "Camp Funston." Lutheran Soldiers' and Sailors' Bulletin, August 1918, p. 23.

Showalter, W. J. "America's New Soldier Cities." National Geographic Magazine, November 1917, 32:439-476.

Zornow, William F. "Funston Captures Aguinaldo." American Heritage, February 1958, 9(2):24-29.

Pamphlets and Scrapbooks

Cantonment Life. A publication for the Department of Camp Activities and Amusements. Kansas City: Baird Company Engravers, 1918.

"Fort Riley and Camp Funston Clippings." Volumes 1 and 2. Clipping File, Kansas State Historical Library, Topeka.

"Geary County Clippings." Volumes 2 and 3. Clipping File, Kansas State Historical Library, Topeka.

"European War Clippings." Volumes 1 and 3. Clipping File,
Kansas State Historical Library, Topeka.

Books

Connelley, W. E. Kansas and Kansans. Chicago, New York:
American Historical Society, 1928.

Gowenlock, T. R. Soldiers of Darkness. New York: Doubleday,
Doran, and Company, 1937.

Holme, John G. The Life of Leonard Wood. New York: Doubleday,
Page, and Company, 1920.

Pride, Woodbury F. The History of Fort Riley. Topeka:
Capper Publications, 1926.

General Reference Works

Annals of Kansas. Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka,
1956.

Ayer, N. W. and Sons. American Newspaper Annual and Directory.
Philadelphia, 1918.

World Biography, Fifth Edition. Bethpage: Institute for
Research in Biography, 1954.

Interviews

Interview with Mr. Julius A. Erichsen, Ogden, Kansas, December,
1959. Mr. Erichsen, at the time of the interview, was the
Clerk of Ogden Township.

Interview with Mrs. W. F. (Violet) Hubert, Ogden, Kansas,
December, 1959. Mrs. Hubert visited Army City many times
as a child. Her father was Ogden Township Clerk at the
time of Army City's unincorporation.

Interview with Mr. Arthur D. Jellison, Junction City, Kansas,
August, 1959. Mr. Jellison was the principal developer
and investor in Army City.

Interview with Mrs. Maurice Jencks, Topeka, Kansas, December, 1959. Mrs. Jencks lived in Army City while her husband was in business there.

Interview with Mr. Chris Montgomery, Junction City, Kansas, August, 1959. As a young man, Mr. Montgomery clerked in a candy store in Army City.

Interview with Mrs. Charles Shirley, Junction City, Kansas, December, 1959. Mrs. Shirley lived in Army City where her husband was a businessman and member of the City Council.

Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Bill Stevens, Ogden, Kansas, January, 1960. Both Mr. and Mrs. Stevens were familiar with Army City. Mr. Stevens father ran a drugstore in Army City.

Interview with Mr. Walter F. Ziegler, Junction City, Kansas, December, 1959. Mr. Ziegler invested in property at Army City and constructed many of the buildings.