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1884:  
A  
History  
of  
Wilsey, Kansas

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Compiled by  
Marc Evans

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to two individuals who have had a great influence on this compiler. The first is my grandmother, Ruth McIntosh Evans. Through her many narratives of family and community, she provided this compiler much of his heritage. The second is my mother, Phyllis Richardson Evans, who assisted with the typing and assembling of the original compilation.

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## **A Note on Documentation**

To reduce the number of footnotes, I have enclosed frequently cited sources within parentheses and have inserted them into the text. Some of these sources, such as the Standard Atlas of Morris County Kansas, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts, and Morris County Numerical Index: Range & Townships 16-17, appear in the abbreviated forms of SAMCK, MCNI: 4T, and MCNI: RT to save space. In addition, if information from one source appears in two or more consecutive sentences, the source will generally be cited after the last sentence. As a result, to determine the source used in a sentence with no citation, look for the next citation within that same paragraph. If that next reference is a number, then look up that number in the note section at the back of this compilation, and the source will follow that number.

## Contents

Dedication & Acknowledgments.....	2
A Note on Documentation.....	4
I. The Time Before.....	7
II. The Founding.....	11
III. Early Businesses and Homes.....	13
IV. Expansion and Incorporation.....	17
V. Businesses after 1900.....	19
VI. Public Services and Utilities.....	42
VII. Schools.....	49
VIII. Churches.....	56
IX. Recreational Activities.....	61
X. Special Celebrations.....	71
Echoes of Yesterday.....	74
Recollections of Early Days.....	75
Recollections in 1934.....	76
Cross Section of 1890.....	77
Recollections of Mrs. Ruth McIntosh Evans.....	79
A Friend of the Pioneer: The Cottonwood Tree Speaks.....	80
Maps.....	85
Population.....	87
Ministers of the Christian Church.....	88
Ministers of the United Methodist Church.....	89
Mayors since 1947.....	90
Number of Graduates and the Principals of Wilsey Rural High School.....	91
A Partial List of Fires.....	92

Postmasters and Postmistresses.....	97
John D. Wilsey Genealogy.....	98
Early Residents of Wilsey Compiled in 1932.....	99
Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Businesses.....	101
Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes.....	106
Notes.....	127
Bibliography.....	139

## I. THE TIME BEFORE

### Coming of the Railroad

The birth of many Kansas towns was associated with one significant event: the coming of the railroad. On July 26, 1866, President Andrew Johnson approved a land grant for a rail line that was to become the first in Morris County.<sup>1</sup> This grant gave the new railroad company the odd-numbered sections for ten miles on either side of the proposed route that was to begin near Fort Riley and to run in a southeasterly direction to Council Grove and then on to Parsons. This railroad was formally organized on April 7, 1870, as the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas, but it was best known as the “Katy.”<sup>2</sup> The promise of a railroad always encouraged a flurry of speculation and settlement, and one such speculator was John D. Wilsey, who acquired the northeast quarter of section twenty-nine of township sixteen range seven on August 25, 1873.<sup>3</sup>

In the early 1880s, the Topeka, Salina, and Western Railroad announced plans to construct a second line through the county.<sup>4</sup> The residents of Elm Creek Township (now Township Nine) then approved bonds totaling \$18,000 to help finance the construction.<sup>5</sup> When the condemnation of the right of way occurred on August 27, 1883, the proposed line followed Elm Creek, bisected Mr. Wilsey’s land, and continued west (MCNI: RT). Construction began in 1884, but by the time the crews had completed track four miles west of Mr. Wilsey’s property, the T. S. & W. had run out of funds.<sup>6</sup> Impatient settlers then nicknamed the line the “Tired, Slow, and Weak.”<sup>7</sup> Eventually, the Missouri Pacific purchased the line on December 23, 1886.<sup>8</sup>

Since the trains needed frequent stopping to obtain water, the companies supported the establishment of towns every few miles. In accordance with this policy, John Wilsey founded a town on his land. The promotion of a new community was not an easy task, but Mr. Wilsey met the challenge.<sup>9</sup>

## Homesteaders Prior to the Founding

Why had John Wilsey, a man who resided in Ohio in 1873, bought this 160-acre plot?<sup>10</sup> The answer becomes apparent upon the identification of two families whose settlement predated the founding of the town. In the summer of

1871, one year after departing from Iowa, Mr. and Mrs. Matson B. Otis left Strawn, Kansas, and homesteaded twelve miles west of Council Grove on 80 acres that in time would directly adjoin the north boundary of the future town site.<sup>11</sup> There, Mr. Otis dug a well, constructed a sixteen-foot square house on the site of the present Velma Crowley home, and built a sod stable directly to the west (Otis, "Echoes," p. 1). Mr. Otis and Mrs. Wilsey were siblings, so letters between the two were Mr. Wilsey's first source of information about the area.<sup>12</sup>

One mile to the west of the Otis home was the Brown farm. In 1873, John M. Brown had left Bloomville, Ohio, where he had worked in a sawmill owned by his cousin, John Wilsey. Besides purchasing his own property, he had also bought the site of the future town for Mr. Wilsey. He had then returned to Ohio, but in 1877, he had brought his wife Rose and infant son Frank to Kansas.<sup>13</sup>

Many other families, besides the Otis's, lived in the area before the town's founding. The following names comprise but a partial list.

Among the residents to the north were the Berry and Kinkel families. In 1870, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Berry, settled 3/4 of a mile north of the future town on the east side of what is now 1800 Road. Shortly after 1900, they moved their home into the new community onto the lot now occupied by the Ray Roether home.<sup>14</sup> Charles R. Kinkel (the grandfather of Charles Illk and Illa Carl) left Illinois in 1881 and acquired property three miles north of the town site. He then built his home on the property now owned by Wilmer Tischhauser.<sup>15</sup> The James S. Watkins family homesteaded 80 acres directly to the east of the Otis's along the west side of what is now 1800 Road (MCNI: RT). Mr. Watkins built his home one-fourth mile to the north of the town site on a spot where an earlier structure had served both as shelter for the first government surveyors in the area and as a post office originally known as Outpost. Mr. Watkins served as



postmaster until the office was moved into the new town and given the name of Mildred, by which it was best remembered (Lew Berry).

In 1882, William H. Pirtle acquired title to the quarter section directly north of the one owned by Mr. Watkins (MCNI: RT). Mr. Pirtle apparently had resided in the area as early as 1873 since he was a charter member of the Wilsey Christian Church.<sup>16</sup> On the east edge of his property was a stand of trees known as Pirtle's Grove; many townspeople later held picnics there.<sup>17</sup>

At least five families settled east and southeast of the town prior to the founding. In 1877, W.C. Gardner recorded a warranty deed for 160 acres adjoining the eastern edge of Mr. Wilsey's land (MCNI: RT). Mr. Gardner built his home diagonally across from the corner once occupied by the grade school and surrounded his home with so many trees that it was completely hidden from the road.<sup>18</sup> To the east of the Gardner's, Dr. Walker operated his practice at the present Larry Richardson farm before relocating in the new community 3/4 of a mile to the west (Ruth Evans). In 1883, Henry W. Riegel recorded a deed for a quarter section to the north of the Gardner's (MCNI: RT). Mr. Riegel located his home almost directly north of the Gardner residence. It is the present Jason Kovac home (Ruth Evans). During that same year, Andrew Yakle acquired property one mile south and one mile east of the Gardner farm (MCNI: RT). Two miles to the south of the Gardner property, George W. Coffin\* secured title to land in the middle of the section in 1882 (Leland Garner; MCNI: RT). Mr. Coffin was later to move into the new town and to play a leading role in its early years.

A number of families lived west and northwest of the town site in 1884. A short distance west of the Otis's, W. N. Hawley lived in a small house also adjoining the north edge of the town site.<sup>19</sup> One fourth of a mile west, Frank M. Wierman resided on the south side of the county road (Ruth Evans). Mr. Wierman taught school as early as 1873 in a small frame structure on the northwest corner of 1800 Road and V Avenue.<sup>20</sup>

In 1883, Henry H. Vorse, Sr., secured title to 160 acres directly west of the John Milton Brown farm (MCNI: RT). Mrs. Vorse was also a sister of Mr. Otis and Mrs. Wilsey.<sup>21</sup> That same year, Jacob H. Meyers obtained the southeast quarter of section 30 (MCNI: RT). Another early homesteader was Samuel Ferris, who built a large stone house along the Santa Fe Trail one mile west of Mr. Meyer's land.<sup>22</sup>

An additional settler was John W. Evans, the great-great grandfather of this compiler. Mr. Evans had left Illinois in 1875 and purchased a quarter section one mile south and three miles west of the future town (MCNI: RT).

\* George Weeks Coffin had a nephew with the same name. To distinguish between the two, this compiler will refer to the nephew as the younger George Coffin. The younger Mr. Coffin was the father of the late J. Donald Coffin of Council Grove (Leland Garner).

His oldest son, James, operated a blacksmith shop on the farm for several years. Later, James, and John W.'s half-brother Henry would become residents of the new town (Ruth Evans).

About 1880, Samuel Illk (the grandfather of Charles Illk and Illa Carl) got off the Katy in Council Grove and began walking west. When he reached the Evans farm, he stopped. He remained there until he secured lumber to build a house on 160 acres three miles to the northeast of the Evans homestead.<sup>23</sup> Six years later, Samuel's younger sister, Sarah Elizabeth, would marry B. F. Evans, John W.'s second son.

These families generally welcomed Mr. Wilsey's plan to found a community since a town nearby would eliminate most of those long trips to Council Grove.

### **Ohio Promoter**

John Derrick Wilsey was born in 1828 near Binghamton, New York to Tunis and Nancy Lukins Wilsey.<sup>24</sup> For a number of years, he resided in Wayne County, Pennsylvania, before moving to Ohio.<sup>25</sup>

Mr. Wilsey worked hard to promote the new community that was to bear his name, but such an undertaking was quite indicative of his character. As a young man, he inherited an old, unused sawmill and turned it into a profitable operation. Mr. Wilsey used as much of the lumber as possible. After he had fashioned a product, such a pair of oars, which was his specialty, he would utilize the scrap materials to make handles for rakes, forks, axes, and hammers. He even used the smallest pieces to manufacture match sticks and toothpicks. Then, he sold the saw dust as fertilizer. His success led the people of Bloomville, a small community 50 miles southeast of Toledo, to regard him as

one of their leading citizens. His determination eventually enabled him to engage in his small speculative venture and to journey to Kansas to bring about the birth of a town. Following his trip to the Midwest, he returned to Bloomville, where he died on February 17, 1920. Shortly before his death, he fell and fractured his shoulder, but even at age 92, he appeared to be recovering until he developed pneumonia.<sup>26</sup> Mr. Wilsey's life suggests that he was indeed a man with determination.

## II. THE FOUNDING

Soon after John Wilsey's arrival in Morris County, the town became a reality. On the night of May 14, 1884, Mr. Wilsey met with George W. Coffin, Matson Otis, and Henry Vorse, Sr., at the Vorse home to draw a plat and to name the streets. The following day, May 15, 1884, the town of Wilsey was born as the four men and a surveyor named Tyler began laying out the lots. For three days, Ora Vorse, Ora Otis carried the surveying chains while their fathers followed in a wagon and drove the stakes.<sup>27</sup> When the work was completed, the original town included twenty blocks -- five from east to west and four from north to south -- with block eight serving as a park around which the business section was to be built.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Wilsey became the fifth town in Morris County following Council Grove, Parkerville, White City, and Dunlap.<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Wilsey wanted the town to progress rapidly, and he characteristically took action to see that it did. First, he visited the businessmen throughout the county and offered to give lots if they would relocate or begin a new enterprise in his town. He then gave sites to several individuals. Amos W. Hampton received the northwest corner of Main and Fifth Streets (now owned by the Cavalry Chapel) and had already dug half of his basement before the surveying was even completed. Henry Vorse, Sr., received the southwest corner of Fifth and Lyndon (now site of the City Hall) while Dr. Walker was given the lot to the north across the street. C. R. Francis received a location a block to the east of Mr. Vorse's, directly across the street from the northwest corner of the park. George W. Coffin was given the corner lot a block south of Mr. Vorse's; it would later be the site of the Wilsey Oil Company. Since John B. Doner wanted a sport near the proposed railroad for a lumberyard, he chose the corner one block west of the Coffin lot. Mr. Wilsey then gave the northeast corner of block one, a location directly south of the little school (now the site of the Sharon Bufford home), to the congregation of the Christian Church. He also promised the Methodists and Presbyterians free lots when

they organized congregations.<sup>30</sup> As a result, of his efforts, the town did progress, even though a shortage of funds briefly halted construction of the T. S. & W. Railroad a short distance east of town (Coffin, p. 1).

### **Early Growth and Several Firsts**

The community attracted residents from the northern states, but in all probability, its growth was slow in the late 1880s. The first recorded county figures in 1891 listed only 181 inhabitants.<sup>31</sup> Most of these early settlers migrated from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.<sup>32</sup> Among these early citizens were the Berry, Bullock, Brown, Brundage, Francis, Kinkel, Melvin, Otis, and Sisson families -- most of whom still have relatives in Wilsey today.<sup>33</sup>

Soon after the founding, the townspeople noted several "firsts." Delta Doner, the daughter of John B. Doner, was the first child born in the new community. The initial fire occurred a few years afterward when the meat market and residence of Riley Rush, located on the site of the present Dennis Buchman home, burned to the foundation despite the efforts of many citizens. The funeral of Mrs. Daniel Young in 1887 was the first to be held in the new Christian Church house. Her grave was also the first one in the new cemetery (Coffin, p. 2).

John B. Doner had purchased 5 1/4 acres one fourth mile west of the town from Frank Wierman in August 1887, and then had platted it as a cemetery eight days afterward on August 28 (MCNI: RT). Before he established the cemetery, the deceased had been buried in the Highland Cemetery tow miles to the north.<sup>34</sup> In 1903, Mr. Doner sold the cemetery to Matson and Martha Otis.<sup>35</sup>

Another significant event was the establishment of a community well to provide the town with water. The community's first pump, windmill, and tank were located in the center of Fifth and Lyndon Streets (just northwest of the current City Hall). Milt J. Kimmel installed the pump, which furnished water for the residents from 1893 until 1903.<sup>36</sup>

One additional event was the planting of several trees along Fifth Street about 1890. A cottonwood tree moved from the Andrew Yackle farm to the walkway in front of the Kimmel Hardware Store (located across the street and slightly south of the current City

Hall) thrived. Many would sit on a bench beneath its branches and converse.<sup>37</sup> Eventually, lightning struck it several times. The tree finally died and had to be cut down about 1950.<sup>38</sup>

In 1886, the railroad finally reached Wilsey, but the T. S. & W.'s woes continued.<sup>39</sup> Just west of town, J. M. Brown and Henry H. Vorse, Sr. forced the construction crew to bypass the mile stretch that crossed their farms. The \$225 the railroad people had offered for the right of way satisfied neither man. Instead, the two chose to hold out for \$1,000 each. Mr. Vorse then gave his neighbor a gun, and Mr. Brown used it to keep the crew off his property. Their determination to take their case to court, if necessary, finally prompted the railroad men to negotiate. Mr. Vorse eventually accepted \$500. However, Mr. Brown refused to bargain and obtained the \$1,000.<sup>40</sup>

### **III. EARLY BUSINESSES AND HOMES**

#### **Businesses**

By the end of 1884, there were at least seven businesses in operation in Wilsey. In the spring of 1884, John B. Doner established the first business when he opened his lumberyard. The first general store was built that spring by C. R. Francis on the site northwest of the park.<sup>41</sup> The second general store was opened on the site of the current Cavalry Chapel brick building on Fifth Street by a Quaker, Amos W. Hampton (Coffin, p. 1). Mr. Hampton had temporarily begun his operation on the Kinkel property (now owned by Tony Carl) on the north edge of town. The next general store was built in the fall. It was owned by George W. Coffin and was located one block west of the park's southwest corner, or just across the street to the east of Mr. Hampton's store. In November, Harvey Meyers and his brother-in-law, O. C. Sheldon, opened still another general store.<sup>42</sup> This two-story structure was built on the corner across the street to the west of the current City Hall, and the rooms upstairs were rented to boarders.<sup>43</sup> Also that fall, Dr. A. Walker opened a drug store on the corner across the street to the north of the current City Hall.<sup>44</sup> In addition, Matson Otis provided the town with its first livery stable, an enterprise which he operated until the automobile business made it unprofitable (Coffin, p. 1). Thus, by the end of that first year, the business section had been firmly established along Fifth Street rather than around the park as had been planned.<sup>45</sup>

The Wilsey Hotel soon followed. J. W. Seguire built it and may possibly have begun operations as early as late 1884. Mr. Seguire had selected the lot eventually acquired by Mr. Hampton, so Mr. Seguire had to settle for the lot directly to the west between Mr. Hampton's store and the Doner lumberyard.<sup>46</sup>

Following the formation of the town, two real estate offices opened to take advantage of the speculation, which continued on a significant scale until about 1910 (MCNI: 4T). William H. Pirtle and his son Omer organized Pirtle and Son Real Estate. Both men served as Mr. Wilsey's representatives. Omer conducted business in his home, the present Dennis Buchman residence, by writing abstracts and selling property (Ruth Evans). Jacob H. Meyers, his son Harvey, and his daughter-in-law Hattie also ran a real estate business as early as 1884. Harvey and Hattie eventually operated it from their house, which stood on the site of the current Cory Albin home (Ruth Evans; Doyle Mowrey).

Four other stores were soon established. By 1887, and perhaps even earlier, Milt Kimmel opened a hardware store to the south of the Meyers-Sheldon Building (Ruth Evans).

After C. R. Francis relocated his enterprise on Fifth Street, a Jewish man named Moser began a grocery business on the Francis site (Lew Berry). Alex Monroe started an additional dry goods, or general, store prior to February 1887, in an undetermined location.<sup>47</sup> John B. Champion owned still another general store. He purchased the lot to the north of Mr. Coffin's business in the late 1880s, erected a two-story structure, and lived above his store until the early 1900s (Ruth Evans). However, of these four, only the hardware business survived beyond the early 1900s (MCNI: 4T).

There were probably many other short-lived businesses in the 1880s and 1890s. One of these was a broom factory owned by John Riley in 1891 and 1892. Its location has not been determined.<sup>48</sup> A second such venture, nicknamed "The Joint," was operated in 1890 by James "Dad" Hill in a two-story structure building west of the park and south of Mr. Moser's store.<sup>49</sup> Mr. Hill's structure may have been the building in which C. R. Francis had his first store (Leland Garner). Two additional businesses in 1890 included a shoe shop run by Sam Sisson, Sr., on the east side of Fifth Street and a butcher shop managed by Frank Meyers.<sup>50</sup>

Besides the Meyers shop and the Riley Rush market, which had burned in the 1880s, there was also a meat market in a frame structure just south of the bank (the current City Hall) building. In 1895, William McIntosh (the great-grandfather of this compiler) left Kelso and purchased this business from J. G. E. Mack (Ruth Evans).

Besides meat, Mr. McIntosh, or "Mac" as he was known by many, kept canned goods stacked on shelves along one wall. On the counter, he had a showcase of candy next to the scales, paper, and twine. Suspended from a hook in the ceiling was a large bunch of bananas. In the ice box the heavy meat block that dominated the center of the store, he kept a pitcher of cold tea. Ice was never added to the tea since it was cut from the pond one fourth mile east of town and then placed either in the large metal ice house to the south of the market or in the stone building to the north of the lumberyard. In addition, he kept three freezers of ice cream in the big ice box. One contained vanilla; the second, lemon; and the third, strawberry. He never made one of chocolate because it was not commonly used as a flavoring then. Surprisingly, the meat market was the only place in town where one could buy ice cream in 1900 (Ruth Evans).

Mr. McIntosh sold meat primarily in cuts such as roasts and steaks. He delivered part of his meat by team and wagon to Delavan one day and Diamond Springs on another day. Mrs. McIntosh boiled the smaller pieces in an iron kettle in the back room to sell as meat and broth for ten cents a half gallon. Also, Mac often sent his son Buell around town to sell heart, liver, and tongue, and anyone could buy all he wanted for a dime. Mr. McIntosh sold his shop to Jack DeLong and entered custom butchering a few years after 1900 (Ruth Evans).

Within a few years after the founding, Wilsey soon had its own newspaper. The first one was owned by Banny Cress and managed by a Mr. Hornbeck. It was set up in the same frame building later occupied by the meat market. This unidentified paper was soon moved to Parkerville and then to Council Grove. A Mr. Padget then established the Wilsey Bulletin in 1889. He then sold it a year later to the younger George W. Coffin (the nephew of the store owner with the same name). Mr. Coffin operated this paper a year and moved it to Council Grove, where it was later merged with Milt Amrine's Guard. Then, in 1905, William Charles Hopper began the Wilsey Warbler, the weekly publication which served the community for many years.<sup>51</sup> The Warbler occupied the two-story structure on the site of the present Community Building. This structure had

been constructed by Nathan Peddycord as a furniture store and also possibly for the Peddycord Photography Studio (Lew Berry).

Just as there were three newspapers, there were also three banks. C. M. Beachy opened the first in 1890 in the residence east of the present City Hall Building before moving to the City Hall site later in the year.<sup>52</sup> A few years afterward, he disposed of his interests and moved to Wichita (Coffin, p. 1). The second bank was started with Thomas C. Snodgrass as cashier, but he eventually requested his depositors to withdraw their money. Then, the Wilsey State Bank was established with Wilbur Henderson as cashier.<sup>53</sup> About 1905 or 1906, the wooden building was moved to the east, and the brick structure, now serving as City Hall, was completed. Lew Berry was one of the builders of the new bank (Lew Berry).

In 1895, James Coffin, the father of the younger George Coffin, established the Coffin Insurance Agency in his home on the northeast corner of Lyndon and Gilmore Streets.<sup>54</sup> Later, the company was moved to Council Grove. Today, it is Morris County's oldest insurance firm.<sup>55</sup>

## Homes

In addition to the first businesses, several homes deserve mention. One is the Matson B. Otis house. It was constructed in 1874, three years after the Otis's homesteaded along the north edge of the town site (Otis, "Echoes," p. 1). However, Henry Otis tore down this structure in 1930 and replaced it with the present home owned by Velma Crowley (Ruth Evans).

Across the street from the gymnasium stands one of the oldest residences. This house was first known as the Wilsey house. It was pre-cut, probably in Mr. Wilsey's sawmill, and shipped west as a home for him (Lew Berry). Even though he did not remain here, he did retain ownership of the house until 1904 when J. L. Taylor purchased it (MCNI: 4T). It is presently owned by Kirk Gentry.

At least four homes were constructed for other purposes. Several businesses have utilized the residence east of the current City Hall building. Three other homes were school buildings originally. They include the large house (now owned by Joseph



Orebaugh) south of the old grade school site, the home west of the Christian Church, and the second residence to the south of the Christian Church and east of the park (Ruth Evans).

Although there are no records that indicate the date of construction, many homes existed prior to 1900. Before John B. Doner moved to California, he built the Brown, Garretson, and Kinkel homes along North Street (Lew Berry). About 1970, Monte Carl tore down the clapboard, two-story Kinkel house and constructed the current Tony Carl home just to the east, and about 1982, the Higginbotham's remodeled the Garretson home. The third house remains standing at 510 North Street; for many years the C. H. Brown family resided there.

In 1900, Mr. and Mrs. William McIntosh moved from a small frame house that once sat between the current Vice and Dryer homes on the 500 block of North Street to the present Betty Burnett home. At that time, the only other dwelling south of the railroad was the Frank Melvin home across the street to the west (Ruth Evans). In the early 1970s, Monte Carl razed the Melvin home and built his present home.

One other home that definitely existed before the turn of the century is the only structure that is both north of the former railroad and east of 1800 Road, or First Street (Ruth Evans). That home, which was demolished and replaced by Dennis Filkin about 1990 was known by many as the Hinshaw house. Other residences include the Jason Kovac home just east of the city limits on V Avenue, and the Dennis Buchman home, southwest of the park. In addition to these, probably over twenty and possibly thirty others existed in 1900. (A combination of the dates of deeds and an interview with Mr. Lew Berry form the basis of this estimate.)

#### **IV. EXPANSION AND INCORPORATION**

Wilsey was to increase significantly in area during its early years. Its initial expansion occurred on February 10, 1887, when Conrad Seim platted five blocks of his property to add to the town (MCNI: 4T). These blocks were sandwiched between the railroad on the south and the section road on the north. They did not adjoin the original town but were two blocks beyond its western boundary (SAMCK, p. 12). Nevertheless, most of

the 43 lots sold quickly and several homes were soon constructed, even though one block west of Lincoln Street was never opened (MCNI: 4T).

After Seim's Addition, there was no further expansion until December 15, 1906. On that date, James S. Watkins platted four blocks from that portion of his land adjacent to the town's northern boundary. He also designated four lots of block one, next to 1800 Road and V Avenue, for the school since it had already occupied that site for over 30 years (MCNI: 4T). However, only one of the streets was ever opened, and all but one of the six homes built in this addition were built along North Street.

Since the years of 1905 to 1910 were a time of much growth, John D. Wilsey sought to stimulate this expansion. On October 22, 1907, he platted most of the remaining portion of his quarter section to the south of the railroad. All eighteen blocks of the Wilsey Addition adjoined the original town with two rows of seven blocks to the south and two rows of two blocks to the west (MCNI: 4T). Mr. Wilsey also gave the town the baseball diamond, which comprised block twelve of this addition, though the city did not record the deed until 1922, two years after his death. His addition did not prosper. Only eight houses were ever built there, and only Fourth and South Streets were completely opened. (SAMCK, p. 12).

Wilbur M. Henderson platted a fourth addition on August 29, 1910. He named it the Church Addition since it contained the Methodist Episcopal Church. This area lay entirely to the north of the railroad between the original town to the east and Seim's Addition to the west. Mr. Henderson had purchased it from Mr. Wilsey in 1902 (MCNI: 4T). Though actually four blocks in size, Henderson divided it into only three blocks, one of which consisted of 27 lots. In contrast to the Wilsey Addition, this area prospered. All the streets were opened, and fourteen homes were either built or moved there (SAMCK, p. 12).

Later that same year, Wilsey became an incorporated town. A group of citizens held a special meeting in the hall above the Francis-Riegel Store on October 11, 1910, for this purpose. Then on October 24, the townspeople conducted their first municipal election and chose I. L. Croner, mayor; Omer G. Pirtle, Frank S. Riegel, Clayton B. Otis, John C. Morgan, and A. W. Cushman, councilmen; J. M. Fitch, police judge; J. W. Peddycord, city clerk; R. F. Lilley, treasurer; and R. E. Keene, marshal (Coffin, p. 2). As a result,

the fifth town to be platted in Morris County became the sixth town to be incorporated; Dwight had been founded and incorporated in the intervening years.<sup>56</sup>

At the time of the incorporation, the citizens approved another expansion. This addition encompassed an area a block in width and stretched westward from the Watkins Addition to a point even with the western boundary of the Seim's Addition, which adjoined it on the south along with the Church Addition and portions of the original town. Matson Otis first owned this area, but he never platted it or named it (SAMCK, p. 12). Besides the Matson Otis homestead, which is the current site of the Velma Crowley home, nine other homes were built in this part of the community, and seven still remain today.

## **V. BUSINESSES AFTER 1900**

### **General Stores**

Soon after it became apparent that the business section would be located along Fifth Street, C. R. Francis decided to move his general store. He first moved it to the east side of Fifth Street directly north of the site formerly owned by the Wilsey Oil Company. Around 1900, he chose to relocate again. This time, Mr. Francis bought the site where Amos Hampton had operated his store until he had sold it in 1894 (Lew Berry: MCNI: 4T). During these years, Mr. Francis took his son-in-law, Frank S. Riegel, into the business as a full partner. The two then expanded the store into a two-story, white frame structure. The store occupied only the lower floor and consisted of three sections: women's clothing in the southern portion, men's overalls and shoes in the center, and groceries in the northern part (Ruth Evans). By 1920, they had installed a pump to sell Standard gasoline in front of the building (Leland Garner).

During these years, the Francis-Riegel Store became the community's largest general store (Leland Garner). One reason for this development was Frank Riegel. At times, people could not pay their bills in cash, so Mr. Riegel agreed to take some of their corn at a price higher than the market rate. He kept the corn in an old crib on west Main Street and regained his losses when the market price increased (Ruth Evans). When men, such as Luther Campbell, made payments on their bills, Mr. Riegel gave them a

free sack of candy for their children.<sup>57</sup> A third instance of his kindness involved the James Richardson family. While Mr. Richardson and his son Lewis were working in Delavan, the family was short of money. Mr. Richardson sent his son to the store to buy a few groceries on credit and to borrow \$20 for horse feed. Mr. Riegel's response was to give Lewis the money and groceries without saying a word.<sup>58</sup> Not surprisingly then, Frank Riegel was highly respected, and the store was very successful.

Following completion of the fourth-grade school, Mr. Riegel decided to build a new store. He then moved the wooden structure across the street to the south and employed the same contractor that had built the school to construct his store (Leland Garner). The new brick structure was completed about 1929 and remained the site of the store until Mr. Riegel closed it in 1959, two years after he had moved to Herington.<sup>59</sup>

Many ladies worked for Mr. Riegel through the years. Lizzie Coffin, the wife of Allie Coffin; Edith Peterson, Mrs. Coffin's sister; Ruth Garner, Mrs. Coffin's daughter; Opal Richardson, Mrs. Coffin's sister-in-law; and Nettie Evans, the aunt of Wayne Evans, all worked in the store during the 1920s or 1930s (Doyle Mowrey).

One of Mr. Riegel's most faithful employees was Celestie Nelson, who worked for him for over 24 years.<sup>60</sup> In 1939 and 1940, Mrs. Bertha Campbell, the sister of Wayne Evans, worked there from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. for a dollar a day. During that time, a salesman tried to sell Mr. Riegel some frozen foods, but he was afraid to buy them for fear that they might spoil and poison people.<sup>61</sup>

As late as 1940, the customer gave a list to one of these clerks, who then went through the store, collected the items, and placed them in an egg case for the patron.<sup>62</sup> In fact, one could leave a list with a clerk, conduct his other business, return, and pick up his groceries.<sup>63</sup>

Wilsey had its share of robberies, but the most notorious one involved Frank Riegel and his store. About 9:30 p.m., Saturday, February 24, 1951, Frank Riegel arrived home (at the house on the southwest corner of First and North Streets), picked up the black bag with the store receipts, climbed out of his truck, and walked towards the house. Just then an assailant stepped out of the shadows, struck him twice on the forehead with the

barrel of a pistol, and grabbed the bag of receipts totaling \$700. However, Frank recognized the assailant and shouted, "Hey, Deacon!" as the robber fled.<sup>64</sup>

Five days later, Clinton Anderson and Robert Loss were arrested and held in the Morris County Jail. Mr. Anderson was charged with first-degree robbery while Mr. Loss was detained for investigation.<sup>65</sup> Anderson, the son of the local hotel owners, Mr. and Mrs. Jess Anderson, had worked in a number of businesses in Wilsey and other towns. He was nicknamed "Deacon," by townspeople, who, in light of his later actions, were skeptical of his claim to have found the Lord.<sup>66</sup>

On March 5, Mr. Loss, who resided in Limon, Colorado, pleaded guilty to armed robbery, admitted helping Clinton Anderson, and was bound over for trial. Mr. Loss was soon sentenced and sent to prison.<sup>67</sup>

At Clinton Anderson's trial in December, Mr. Loss testified that he had met Mr. Anderson in Council Grove at Helen's Steak House, which the defendant was then managing. On the night of the robbery, he stated had met Mr. Anderson after the movie, had ridden with him to Wilsey, had parked where they could watch the Riegel Store, and had heard the defendant remark that Mr. Riegel always carried a lot of money. Mr. Loss admitted that the two of them had watched Frank Riegel leave the store and that then the defendant had driven to the Riegel home and had parked a short distance away. Mr. Loss next stated that Mr. Anderson had left the vehicle and had walked towards the house. Mr. Loss then testified that he had followed but had fallen down into the ditch when he saw the headlights of Mr. Riegel's truck approach. Mr. Loss then stated that he had seen Frank Riegel leave the truck, had glimpsed a shadow approach Mr. Riegel, and had heard a struggle and a shout before Mr. Anderson had returned to the vehicle and they had driven away.<sup>68</sup>

The trial at the Morris County Courthouse ended on December 14 when the jury found Clinton Anderson guilty of first-degree robbery following seven hours of deliberation.<sup>69</sup> Two days later, he was sentenced to 10 to 21 years to be served at the state penitentiary at Lansing.<sup>70</sup>

However, the trial would not mark the end of Clinton Anderson's association with the town. On July 18, 1960, several guns and other items were taken from the Dale Cook

Hardware Store. On August 10, Mr. Anderson was again arrested following a chase for a break-in at a hardware store in Cassoday, Kansas. He was soon connected with the heist of Mr. Cook's store, and on August 31, he was again sentenced to 5 to 10 years in the state penitentiary.<sup>71</sup>

Across the street from the Riegel Store, the George W. Coffin General Store sat on the northeast corner of Fifth and Main. It was operated by Mr. Coffin until his death in 1900 (Coffin, p. 1). His son Allie then ran the business until he sold it to E. M. Davis in 1908 (MCNI: 4T). About this time, Harry Farrar ran a hardware store here. Soon afterward, Clayton Otis and Henry Vorse, Jr., also operated a store in this building.<sup>72</sup> However, by 1920, the two-story structure had so decayed that it was torn down and replaced by the Wilsey Oil Company service station (Leland Garner).

The Meyers-Sheldon General Store, which sat across Fifth Street to the west of the current City Hall building, was managed by Harvey and Bob Meyers in the 1890s.<sup>73</sup> About 1908, Carl and Jessie M. Brown briefly operated Brown Brothers Clothiers in this structure (Lambert Buckner). Around 1915, Arthur Black, a former school teacher, also ran a grocery store here (Lewis Richardson). By the 1920s, the building served a variety of recreational purposes. Eventually, it was torn down and replaced by the Sinclair service station (Leland Garner).

Wilsey's other long-lived grocery store was built around 1906 one half block to the north of the Riegel Store with Mr. Lew Berry helping in the construction (Lew Berry). W. D. "Dan" Southern owned and operated it as a general store for a number of years. In the 1920s, when Oler and Stimel ran it, they simply brought in wares from other stores (Ruth Evans). By 1926, Bob Otis and John Mowrey operated the business.<sup>74</sup> However, Bob Otis soon acquired sole ownership in the early 1930s (MCNI: 4T)

On March 27, 1933, fire seriously damaged the Otis Store, weakened the W. T. Campbell Building to the south, and totally destroyed the John Mowrey Meat Market and R. W. Powers Drug Store housed in the Wigle Building to the north. The fire was discovered by Mrs. E. G. Davison of the hotel and Arthur Baum, who was awakened by the barking of his dog Andy. Mr. and Mrs. George Zink ran the telephone office and called out volunteer firemen. Despite the fact that the townsmen kept the fire engine

running at full pressure for 3 1/2 hours, the blaze resulted in an estimated \$20,000 in damage to the business section.<sup>75</sup>

As with any fire, this one prompted some unusual reactions. For instance, the first article Earl Ray carried from his cream station to the north of the Wigle Building was a new can of powder. Similarly, Bill Davidson took Bob Otis's store records and later searched all about before he found that he had set them on the edge of his lily pool. He then said, "I must have been thinking of water" (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p. 3).

Although the structure housing the meat market and drug store was not rebuilt, Mr. Otis hired George Fisher and Lew Berry to reconstruct his store (Lew Berry). In 1938, he sold the business to his brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Mac Otis (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p. 3). They operated it as the Mac Otis I.G.A. Store for the next 37 years; one of their employees was Florence Garretson Tischhauser, who served as their clerk for over 25 years.<sup>76</sup> The Otis's sold the store in February 1975, to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Illk, who ran it as the C and J Market.<sup>77</sup> At the beginning of April 1977, Mr. Robert Miller of Council Grove purchased the business and operated it, along with his Council Grove store, under the name of Miller's Market. In February 1978, Mr. George Belt bought Mr. Miller's two stores and renamed them the Handi-Mart, but unfortunately Mr. Belt mismanaged his businesses and lost them.<sup>78</sup> Mr. George Harder acquired both stores in August 1979, and closed his Wilsey business in November, 1980.<sup>79</sup>

After two town meetings in November and December, a group of citizens decided to form a corporation and reopen the store. The group sold stock for \$100 per share but limited the shares to ten per buyer.<sup>80</sup> Seventy-nine people in the area invested \$23,300 with most of the funds used to stock the shelves.<sup>81</sup> Herington grocer, Glenn Catlin, agreed to provide merchandise at wholesale prices for a small handling fee.<sup>82</sup> As a result, on March 20, 1981, the Wilsey Market, Inc. opened for business with Glenda Tompkins serving as manager and JaNell Gillaspie as assistant.<sup>83</sup>

In 1986, the board switched from Caitlin's I.G.A. of Herington to the Thriftway in Council Grove as supplier. Two years later, following some fund-raising events and the receipt of two anonymous donations, the board of directors purchased the building, painted the sides, and shingled the roof. Also, the market printed a weekly newsletter of community events and store specials and delivered it to 125 homes.<sup>84</sup>

Still, business declined over the years, so to keep the store going, so the directors held a benefit auction in 1993.<sup>85</sup> The directors also turned to Abernathy's Market in White City as a supplier, but financial concerns forced the board to close the market in August, 1994.<sup>86</sup> Additional managers had included Judy Scott, Becky Glessner, Wilma Whittemore, Cindy Post, and Gayle Young.<sup>87</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Lee then acquired the building and operated the Little Clothes Line craft shop there, as well as the postal station, from 1996 to 2003.

### **Meat Markets**

Throughout the years, meat markets have served Wilsey in at least four locations. As noted earlier, J. G. E. Mack, William McIntosh, and Jack DeLong operated meat markets in the first building south of the present City Hall Building from the 1890s to the early 1900s (Ruth Evans). In the late 1920s and the 1930s, Clinton A. Bocook had a grocery store and a butcher shop here. In 1937, Raymond Stander purchased this business and maintained it at this site until 1943 (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). The building then remained vacant until it was torn down about 1960.<sup>88</sup>

About 1906 or 1907, Mr. Lew Berry helped construct the two-story brick structure on the east side of the middle of the 100 block of Fifth Street. This building was erected for W. T. "Billy" Brown (Lew Berry). Mr. Brown ran a butcher shop in the north half of the structure, his sister Minnie operated a cafe in the other half with no partition separating the two businesses, and their mother lived upstairs. A few years later, Arthur Black briefly had a store here (Ruth Evans). Mr. Black put up a sign reading "Try a taste of our tasty cheese." Mr. Allie Coffin, who was noted for his pranks, then changed "tasty" to "nasty." About 1915, Robert A. Baum purchased the building, ran a hardware store on the first floor, and lived on the second story (Leland Garner). In the early 1920s, part of the brick front of the upper story had to be rebuilt after the top two to three feet suddenly collapsed onto the street. Fortunately, no one was injured (Leland Garner; Doyle Mowrey). In January 1938, Milford Campbell purchased the store from Art Baum, but went out business in February 1940 when Mr. Baum filed a foreclosure suit.<sup>89</sup> & <sup>90</sup> Then in 1946, Raymond Stander bought the structure and operated it as a locker plant (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). He continued in business at this location until a new state regulation forced him to close in December 1969.<sup>91</sup> Soon afterward, the building



was converted into a second fire station, and in October 1978, the second story was removed. Since the construction of the new fire station about 2002, the United Methodist Men have rented the building from the township as a storage shed for their rummage sales. The building was torn down in the summer of 2012.

One other butcher shop operated in the Kinkel Building, just north of the old Wilsey Oil Company. Clarence Poff ran one here around 1920 (Leland Garner). Later, John Mowrey had a meat market in this structure (Lambert Buckner). Taylor Allen also operated a shop here at one time.<sup>92</sup>

About 1925, William Wigle constructed a building in the middle of the west side of the 100 block of Fifth Street, just north of the Otis store. This structure housed still another meat market (Leland Garner). Clinton A. Bocook kept such a store here until 1930 when John Mowrey purchased the business (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). As previously noted, Mr. Mowrey occupied only the south half of the building, and Mr. Powers ran a combination drug and jewelry store in the north portion when the structure burned in 1933 (Leland Garner). No building has been erected here since, and the concrete floor still remains.

### **Drug Stores**

In addition to Dr. Walker and Mr. Powers' businesses, which were discontinued about 1900 and 1933 respectively, there were several other drug stores. All occupied the brick structure that was constructed by Mr. Lew Berry about 1906. This building occupied the lot between the former Riegel Store, now the Cavalry Chapel, and the former Wilsey Market (Lew Berry). This structure was built for A. W. Cushman and financed by his mother-in-law, Mrs. Painter. Next to the south window along the east wall was the soda fountain while along south wall were drugs and patent medicines. In the back was a beauty parlor, and along the north wall, school books were kept. By the north window, a man named Hobbs ran a jewelry shop that was not partitioned off from the remainder of the store (Ruth Evans). In 1917, Mr. Cushman sold the structure to Dr. Albert Beam. The doctor owned it until 1921 when Elmer Alexander purchased it (MCNI: 4T). During the early 1920s, "Doc" Jones ran the store and let the kids pump water into his tank for free sodas. Then briefly, Guy Allen moved his drug store here from the Meyers-Sheldon Building (Leland Garner). In 1924, W. T. Campbell bought the property, and Doyle Mowrey, assisted by his father, John Mowrey, operated a

theater here for several years (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 1). In the 1930s, E. C. Christensen and then Charles Sheldon operated the town's last drug stores (Wayne Evans). Later, the building became an ice cream parlor, cafe, and a garage before it was torn down in 1978.

### **Cafes and Bakeries**

In 1945, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Figley opened an ice cream parlor and recreation center in the old drug store building. The center was later moved to the bank building, the Warbler building, and back to the former drug store. During this period, the business evolved into a cafe (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p.3). In August of 1948, Cal Marlin sold his confectionary business here to Beulah Wigle Scholes.<sup>93</sup> Polly Spiker owned the cafe during the early 1950s.<sup>94</sup> Other owners included Mrs. Iva Person, Donna Coover, Mr. and Mrs. Ryle Carl, Maude Roether, and Mr. and Mrs. Pete Smith. On June 1, 1954, Troy and Luella Parks and Luella's sister, Iva Parsons, purchased the business from the Smiths. After Mrs. Parsons sold her share of the cafe to her sister and brother-in-law in September 1957, Mr. and Mrs. Parks bought the former barber shop building on the east side of the street, added a kitchen onto the back, and opened for business in October under the name of the Wilsey Cafe (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p.3). Mrs. Parks continued to run the cafe after her husband's death four years later, but in 1970, she sold the restaurant to Dorothy Davis (MCNI: 4T). Following Dorothy's death in late 1983, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Cheek leased the cafe. The business was then closed for a while before Joe and Dorothy Williams reopened it briefly the final time. Then, the building remained vacant until Steve Hanson purchased it, added onto the east end, remodeled it into a home, and resided there a year before moving away in 2005.

A number of other cafes were also in business on the east of Fifth Street in earlier years. About 1910, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Atkinson ran a cafe that may have been in the former Champion Store, which sat in the location just north of the Wilsey Oil Company. C. E. Collins was the proprietor of the Wilsey Restaurant in 1917, but the location is unknown.<sup>95</sup> In 1918, Mr. and Mrs. Bradley operated a restaurant in the same location. Later, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Anderson ran one there as well (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p. 3). This structure was later torn down and rebuilt; the Wilsey Oil Company then used it as a storage shed from the early 1950s until 1981.

In the mid-1920s, Mr. and Mrs. C. W. "Bill" Davidson established their cafe in this same locale.<sup>96</sup> In 1929, they bought a small building, moved it onto the lot between the site of the Champion Store to the south and the old barber shop that later became the Wilsey Cafe on the north, ran their cafe in the front, and lived in the back (Leland Garner). During the 1930s, Inez Melvin worked there for \$2.50 a week, but half of the time, the Davidsons were unable to pay her.<sup>97</sup> They remained in business perhaps as late as 1937 before selling the restaurant to Mr. and Mrs. Dave Person (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p. 3). Clinton "Deacon" Anderson was this cafe's final owner. In 1945, he bought it from the Persons and ran it for several years before ceasing business (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p. 3). This structure later became a combined beauty and barber shop.

There were at least two other cafes in town. W. T. Campbell ran one in the Meyers-Sheldon Building in the 1920s. About 1930, Edgar Zink also a cafe in the north room of the rebuilt structure that the Wilsey Oil Company later used as a storage building (Doyle Mowrey).

Wilsey apparently had one bakery, and possibly another. Mr. and Mrs. Bud Zink operated one in the center and south rooms of the rebuilt structure, later used by the Wilsey Oil Company, before the Zinks left the community in 1935 (Doyle Mowrey). There may also have been another because a 1934 letter written by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Adams and published in the Warbler mentions the bakery building, which was then owned by the sister of either Mr. or Mrs. Adams.<sup>98</sup>

### **Hardware Stores**

Although Robert Baum ran a hardware business in the two-story brick building on the east side of Fifth Street as early as 1915, Milt J. Kimmel had started the first hardware establishment about 1887 on the west side of the street next to the Meyers-Sheldon Building (Ruth Evans). About 1904, the Kimmel store became the property of I. L. Croner (MCNI: 4T). Mr. Croner had worked for Mr. Kimmel and later married his widow (Lambert Buckner). In 1925, he sold the store to Bert Fay (MCNI: 4T). Mr. Fay ran the business for many years, even though he lost the property to the Farmers and Drovers Bank in 1934 because he had agreed to act as surety for a county official who had later

disappeared with some funds (Leland Garner). Following the death of Mr. Fay in the spring of 1951, Clinton A. Bocook purchased the store in September.<sup>99</sup> The store's final owner, Dale Cook, bought the business in 1953 (Wayne Evans). In 1966, Mr. Cook moved his hardware business to the former Riegel Store, and the old building became a storage facility for the Tri-County Telephone Company, before it was demolished about 1970. On September 29, 1978, Mr. Cook celebrated his twenty-fifth anniversary in business. Failing health eventually forced him to close his business in the early 1990s. The brick structure then sat vacant until it was acquired by Marcy Gieswein, remodeled, and opened as a telemarketing center known as Dreams Come True. The center employed about five people for a few months before closing in August, 1996. In 2003, it was then acquired by Merle and Joan Rothwell to be used as a classroom for the Wilsey Bible Training Center.

### **Barber and Beauty Shops**

About 1904 or 1905, Mr. Lew Berry helped construct the Allie Coffin Barber Shop (Lew Berry). The shop's concrete blocks were made in a cement plant owned by the lumberyard and located south of the cemetery (Ruth Evans). Mr. Coffin and his brothers, Bert and Frank, first ran the shop (Leland Garner). Around 1910, a shave and a hair cut together cost a quarter (Lewis Richardson). By the 1920s, Mr. Coffin, Nels Nelson, and Tommy Glasscock, each operated a chair in the shop. At this time, a shave cost only 15 cents and a haircut, 25 cents. About 1935, Mr. Coffin sold the business to Nels Nelson (Leland Garner). In February 1938, Mr. Nelson hired Miss Bertha Edwards of Strong City to operate a beauty parlor in a portion of his barber shop.<sup>100</sup>

In 1948, two years after Mr. Nelson retired, Maxine Bruckner Parker and Dick Hensley opened a beauty and barber shop there (Otis, "Riegel Building," pp. 1, 3). The barber shop occupied the front of the building while the beauty shop used the back (Ruth Evans). When Mr. and Mrs. Troy Parks bought the building for their cafe in 1957, the barber and beauty shops were moved into the next building to the south. In 1961, shortly after Mr. Hensley had left Wilsey, Mrs. Parker moved her shop to the former Nels Eland home, which sat just to the south of what was then the Cook Hardware Store (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). Then, in 1974, Mrs. Parker brought her daughter,

Reba Sumner, into her business. After Maxine retired, Reba continued the business for closing it around 2000.

Teresa Smirl opened a beauty shop in what would later become the library, a small structure between the post office and the Warbler building in 1927. Later, she married Walter Wild, who ran a barber shop in the second building south of the present City Hall. She then moved her business there, and they operated the Wild Beauty and Barber Shop until they moved away in 1943 (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3).

The first beauty shop in Wilsey was not located in the business district. During the early 1920s, Mrs. Francis Hardman, the daughter of Magnus Nelson, ran it in eastern portion of her parents' home at 509 Coffin Street. However, after only a few years, she moved away (Ruth Evans).

### **Wilsey State Bank**

The Wilsey State Bank was chartered May 2, 1902. Fifty shares of stock were issued for \$100 each. Its first directors included J. M. Brown, Dr. J. H. Garey, William Atkinson of Diamond Springs, William Hutchinson of Delavan, P. W. Goebel of Louisburg, F.L. Williams of Clay Center, and W. O. Sturgeon of Riley.<sup>101</sup> As was noted earlier, it began operations in the wooden building that was moved a half block to the east so that the brick structure, now serving as City Hall, could be erected for the bank about 1905 or 1906 (Lew Berry).

Throughout most of the 1920s, the Wilsey State Bank thrived. Its net worth increased to \$275,000, of which \$100,000 or more was in certificates of deposit. Alex Randle, Harvey L. Meyers, John B. Doner, Dr. Jacob H. Garey, Frank Riegel, Scott Wilson, and Lee Reeves were the bank's stockholders. George B. Sandford had succeeded Scott Wilson as president about 1921 or 1922. Cashiers included Fred Walker, George B. Sandford, and Jess Lentell (Leland Garner).

After Jess Lentell resigned, Leland Garner became assistant cashier during the final week of 1927 and remained in this position until the bank closed. During that four-year span, his salary increased from \$50 to \$90 a month. As assistant cashier, he ran the typewriter and the posting machine, posted all checks, kept the ledgers, and wrote

letters of transmittals (out-of-town checks to other banks). In addition, he served on the vigilante committee (Leland Garner).

The bank officials chose the vigilantes from those men in the neighborhood who would probably be available in case of an emergency. The county sheriffs and the Kansas Bankers Association had an agreement that permitted the vigilantes to serve as deputy sheriffs if needed. As a result, the vigilantes traveled to Fort Riley each year for rifle instruction. They also trained locally one mile north and one mile east by shooting to the south across the pasture from Wilbert Greer's loading pens. The vigilante members from 1927 to 1932 included Arthur Baum, Leland Garner, John Mowrey, and Frank Phillips, Sr. (Leland Garner).

After the stock market crash of 1929, the bank declined. People began to grow apprehensive and to withdraw their money faster than they deposited it. Their fear stemmed from a number of causes: 1) Their funds were unprotected since there was no Federal Depositors' Insurance Corporation; 2) Anthony Amend kept predicting the bank's closing; 3) Five Morris County banks closed within a short time in late 1931; and 4) a Council Grove bank sent out letters to local depositors suggesting that they transfer their funds there. Consequently, the directors voted to close the bank in early January of 1932, and the bank eventually paid out over 60% of its deposits (Leland Garner).

### **Wilsey Hotel**

The first floor of the two-story structure contained an office, living room, dining room, kitchen, pantry, and small bedroom off the kitchen. The stairwell stood midway along the north wall. Upstairs, there were three small bedrooms in the northwest portion of the structure, three larger bedrooms in the other corners, one large storage room with no window along the west wall, and two additional small bedrooms sandwiched between the larger corner rooms.<sup>102</sup>

The hotel had several owners and even more managers. In 1892, J. W. Seguire, the original owner, sold it to Thomas C. Snodgrass. Four years later, W. D. Southern purchased it and managed it until 1901. Then, over the next twenty years, ownership changed hands ten times (MCNI: 4I). One of the managers during this time was Owen Moss Taylor, the father of Thelma Parks.<sup>103</sup>

About 1906 or 1907, Mrs. David Hinton attempted to earn a living for her eleven children by running the hotel. During her short stay, her son Harry was stricken with appendicitis. The doctor operated on the boy on the dining room table, and after a long, slow recovery, young Hinton became one of the first around to survive an appendicitis attack (Ruth Evans).

In later years, the hotel rarely changed hands. From 1921 until the end of 1947, when Mr. Davison died, Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Davison owned and operated the business.<sup>104</sup> Then in January of 1948, Mrs. Jess Anderson bought the hotel and reopened it about a month later.<sup>105</sup> In 1959, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Douglas purchased the building (MCNI: 4T). Finally, about 1970, the Douglas's tore down the hotel and moved a mobile home onto the site.

### **Lumberyard**

Besides the hotel, the lumberyard was the only other business that began in 1884 and remained in its original location. John B. Doner sold it in 1886 to John Muehleison. Then in 1892, Robert F. Lilley acquired it (MCNI: 4T). Mr. Lilley operated the yard until his wife's asthma forced him to leave the community and to sell the business to A. L. Scott (Ruth Evans). Mr. Scott owned the yard from 1913 to 1952 (MCNI: 4T). Since Mr. Scott did not live in Wilsey, he hired several men to run his business. One of his earliest managers was Charles Arend (Leland Garner). Other managers included Kirk Hart from 1922 to 1935, Glen Thompson, Mr. McNary, and Lew Bullock (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). Harold Bobst worked for the Scott Lumber Company for many years, and he served as manager in Wilsey until September 25, 1948.<sup>106</sup> The yard was then closed for a few years before Jim Albin purchased from the Hussey Brothers of Topeka and reopened in January, 1952.<sup>107</sup> Mr. Albin operated it until 1973, when he sold it to Dennis Filkin, who built homes across the street to the south, sold them, and moved them to sites chosen by the buyers.<sup>108</sup>

Tragedy struck on March 10, 1977, when a fast-spreading fire destroyed the office, storage buildings, three trucks, and an inventory valued between \$60,000 and \$100,000. Mrs. Clyde Douglas discovered the blaze at 1:20 a.m. when she awoke to an orange glow lighting the interior of her mobile home east of the yard.<sup>109</sup> Within two hours, the fire had completely burned the structure. Because of a southeast breeze,

local fire fighters and crews from Burdick, Council Grove, Herington, and White City saved the Douglas home and garage to the east and the old Phillips Garage building, then known as the “bus barn,” to the north. Afterward, fire chief Gary Dalquest said that the fire had been too intense to enter the office or the yard. A deputy fire marshal was unable to determine the cause of the blaze.<sup>110</sup>

Mr. Filkin then operated out of one remaining building across the street to the south. In October 1978, he terminated Wilsey’s oldest business and has since devoted his time to building homes.<sup>111</sup>

### **Carpentry Shop, Undertaking Parlor, and the Warbler**

On the west side of Fifth Street across the alley to the north of the current Community Building once stood a carpentry shop (Lew Berry). Andrew Allen and Lew Berry operated this business together in 1906 and 1907, with Mr. Allen continuing to run it until 1923 (Otis, “Riegel Building,” p. 3). Later, George Fisher had the shop, and Henry Vorse, Jr., worked there. It was eventually torn down sometime after 1932 (Leland Garner).

In 1946, Victor Peck moved to Wilsey and opened a cabinet shop in an undetermined location. He operated this business and served as mayor after 1947 until his death in November 1948.<sup>112</sup>

Until the end of 1948, the Warbler Building occupied the lot directly to the south of the old carpentry shop. In the southern half of the building was the undertaking parlor (Leland Garner). The proprietors stored the caskets on the second floor (Ruth Evans). Early managers of the Wilsey Undertaking Company were a Mr. Fitch and I. L. Croner (Otis, “Riegel Building,” p. 3). In the 1920s, Bob Durland and Bob Block ran the parlor with Bert Fay acting as assistant (Leland Garner). In 1941, Bert Fay and R. W. Block were the proprietors.<sup>113</sup>

In the northern portion of the building was the printing office where William Charles Hopper began the Wilsey Warbler in 1905 (Otis, “Riegel Building,” p. 3). Arley R. Pirtle next purchased the weekly paper and later sold it to Tom McGill. After an unidentified White City youth ran the paper for two weeks, Floyd Burres bought the business and perhaps became the Warbler’s most successful editor.<sup>114</sup> Ray Logston also ran the paper



for a short time (Lewis Richardson). In 1926 Richard Downey acquired the weekly and later sold it to George Edgerton.<sup>115</sup> Mr. Edgerton acquired the paper on September 1, 1928, then served as editor with his wife Ethel until the Warbler was discontinued in 1941, at which time they moved to Eskridge to run its newspaper.<sup>116</sup> The paper was published every Thursday, and a subscription for the paper cost \$1.25 for the year, if paid in advance, from as early as 1917 when Arley Pirtle was the editor until it ceased publication.<sup>117</sup>

Mrs. Arthur Parks (Thelma Taylor) began her nearly 50 years of service as a newspaper reporter for the community with the Warbler. She started while still in high school and used her earnings for writing articles on locals, club meetings, weddings, and obituaries to pay for her graduation expenses. In 1943, she became the Wilsey correspondent for the Council Grove Republican, succeeding Allie Coffin (Otis, "Riegel Building," p, 3. For the next thirty years, Mrs. Parks wrote the Wilsey news until her death in 1973.

After the Warbler ceased publication, the building was used primarily as a recreation center for the young people as dances and parties were held there (Ruth Evans). After Mr. Figley briefly ran his recreation center there, the Wilsey Home Demonstration Unit purchased the structure for \$650 in May 1947. The local residents also contributed \$400 to renovate the building into a community center, and a committee composed of Mrs. Richard Gant, Mrs. Harold Bobst, and Mrs. Dick Hensley supervised the redecoration. The building was then opened every Wednesday evening for young people's recreational activities under the sponsorship of the churches and various clubs. In addition, the 4-H Club and the Extension Home Unit met there, and the junior-senior high school banquets were held there.<sup>118</sup>

About 1 a.m., shortly after a New Year's Eve dance, the structure was destroyed by a fire discovered by Mart Richardson and Jean Bross. The fire began in the northwest corner of the building near a flue. Mart Richardson first detected the blaze.<sup>119</sup> During the efforts to contain the fire, the townspeople helped Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Sprecker temporarily evacuate the Walker Building (site of the current telephone building), where they were living at the time (Wayne Evans). The loss of the building was estimated to \$3,000; it had been covered by only \$1,300 insurance.<sup>120</sup>

Shortly after the fire, Mrs. Rosa Irwin heard some of the young people lamenting the loss of the center and remarked, "We'll just build you a new one" (Ruth Evans). At a meeting on January 10, the community voted to erect a new structure to be built by volunteer labor and then selected a building committee consisting of Jim Rader, Ralph Bross, Lester Evans, and Frank Phillips, Sr. to draft the plans. A committee of sixteen members of the Home Demonstration Unit was also organized to canvass the town and surrounding area to raise the funds needed.<sup>121</sup>

On June 17, 1949, the community officially dedicated the present 40-foot by 60-foot concrete block structure, costing \$7,000, with an open house in the afternoon and evening and with a program of vocal and instrumental numbers.<sup>122</sup> Some pessimists feared the debt of the new center would never be retired, but the \$3,500 mortgage, financed by a local retired farmer, was paid in 1955, following a series of fund-raising events.<sup>123</sup> The building is currently used for meetings, parties, receptions, reunions, elections, and bloodmobile visits.<sup>124</sup>

### **Blacksmith, Harness, and Shoe Shops**

One of the earliest blacksmith sites in Wilsey was on the north side of Lyndon Street, just south of where the water tower now stands. In 1886, James M. Evans bought lot five from Mr. Wilsey and operated a shop there for several years (MCNI: 4T). In the 1930s, Lew Chapman, Everett Chapman, and John Roy ran a shop there, also.<sup>125</sup> Later, Ben Hudson had a shop in the same location (Leland Garner). John Adams and R. Everett Keene also operated a business at this site (Lew Berry). Finally, this old wood structure was demolished (Ruth Evans).

A second blacksmith shop stood in the open space north of the Baum Hardware Building along the east side of Fifth Street (Leland Garner). Otie Pirtle ran one on this site, probably during the first decade of the century (Lewis Richardson). Perhaps as early as 1908, Munson Peddycord opened a shop here (Leland Garner). Later, J. W. Cox and then Mike Keene operated it. One day in 1916, while Mr. Keene was shoeing Ora Otis's horses, Doyle Mowrey and Russell Black pushed metal hoops in front of the shop. The noise spooked one of the horses, and the frightened animal kicked Mr. Otis so hard that it broke his leg (Doyle Mowrey). Sometime after, this open-air, wood structure was torn down (Leland Garner).

Across the alley to the east of the Peddycord site was a third shop. J. W. "Piebiter" Cox ran this shop about 1910 and lived in the old two-story structure along Fourth Street formerly owned by James Hill (Lewis Richardson). Both the shop and the old building were torn down by the mid-1920s (Leland Garner).

In addition to the blacksmith businesses, there were three harness and shoe shops (Ruth Evans). In 1890, Sam Sisson, Sr., had a shoe shop, which may have been in the building north of the store of George W. Coffin (the site of the storage building of the Wilsey Oil Company).<sup>126</sup> About 1906, John Knauber made harnesses, saddles, and boots in the first wood structure south of the current City Hall Building (Ruth Evans). Later, in the 1920s, Lew Sisson also operated a shoe and harness shop in the same location when he was not busy pouring several of the town's sidewalks or doing stone work (Leland Garner). Prior to this time, however, his shop was in the building next to the Coffin General Store (Ruth Evans).

After Mrs. Arthur Parks closed her novelty shop in the storage building north of the Wilsey Oil Company in the 1930s, two shoe shops were briefly in business here. A Mr. Love from Herington opened the first. Later, an unidentified Herington man operated a shop here as well.<sup>127</sup>

### **Garages and the Chevrolet Agency**

Shortly after 1900, Art Sisson constructed a livery stable and a barn for his horses to the west of the lumberyard on the northwest corner of Sixth and Main (Leland Garner). With the coming of the automobile, he converted his business into a garage. In 1917, the Trail Garage served the community in an undetermined location; this may have been Mr. Sisson's garage.<sup>128</sup> Around 1952, he removed the peaked roof from his garage and replaced it with a rounded one. He also added a pump, on the east side of the building and sold Standard gasoline. One of his mechanics over the years was Lloyd Garner, who worked there in the early Twenties and again in the mid-Thirties (Leland Garner). Mr. Sisson continued in business until at least the late 1930s and perhaps into the early 1940s (MCNI: 4T).

The building has since served a variety of uses. For a few years,

townspeople stored their cars there. In 1945, Frank Montgomery ran a second garage there for about a year. Then, Walter Hudson operated a blacksmith repair shop in it for about five years (Wayne Evans). Since that time, the structure has become known as the County Building because the Morris County Highway Department stores road graders and other equipment there.

Several years before 1920, Harvey L. Meyers travelled to Kansas City, purchased two Chevrolets, brought them to Wilsey, and sold both. That venture led him to establish a Chevrolet agency in the Meyers-Sheldon Building (Lambert Buckner). Although Mr. Meyer's son-in-law, Arthur Baum, may have sold the first Chevrolet from the new agency, Mr. Meyers had actually been the first to sell one in Morris County.<sup>129</sup> However, Mr. Baum did run the agency from 1920 until at least 1932 in the former structure to the west on the south side of Lyndon Street -- the building first known as the Baum Garage and later as the bus barn.

Lloyd Garner and Frank Phillips, Sr., became partners in the shop during the 1920s while Mr. Baum sold parts and gasoline (Leland Garner). Then in 1932, after working ten years for Mr. Baum, Mr. Phillips purchased the garage and operated it until 1954. At that time, he sold it to Lloyd Banks (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 1). Soon after 1959, Mr. Banks moved the garage into the old drug store building between the Otis and Riegel stores on the west side of Fifth Street, and the Baum structure became a garage for the school busses. In 1971, Mr. Banks sold the old drug store building to Maxine Grover, and the garage ceased business soon afterward (MCNI: 4T). A short time later, Joe Williams bought the old drug store structure and eventually tore it down during the summer of 1978. The old Baum structure had become unsafe by 1982 and was soon razed after that.

A third wooden building once stood directly south of the bank of Fifth Street prior to the 1930s. One old photograph identifies it as Carl's Garage.

### **Service Stations**

Charles H. Brown and his R. T. Brown established the Wilsey Oil Company in 1923 on the northeast corner of Fifth and Main, where the Coffin General Store had once stood (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). Across the street to the south, Lloyd Garner installed the

pumps, tanks, and pipes needed to store the oil and gas shipped in by the railroad. Since Mr. Brown owned several service stations, he soon hired Orville Bullock to help with his Wilsey business (Leland Garner). Then in 1937, he sold his share of the station to his son, who operated it four years before selling to the Farmers Union. In 1947, Ray Griffiths, Lafe Edwards, Lambert Buckner, and Orville Bullock purchased the station, but two years later, Mr. Buckner sold his interest to Dale Melvin. Orville Bullock and Dale Melvin then bought the remaining interests in 1957 (Otis, "Reigel Building," p. 3). Sixteen years later, Mr. Bullock retired and sold his share of the station to Wayne Evans. When Mr. Melvin retired in 1976, Mr. Evans purchased Mr. Melvin's half of the business as well. Later that same year, John McFadden, Jr., acquired a share in the station. In January 1979, Bill Cunningham purchased Mr. McFadden's share. Throughout its years of operation, the Wilsey Oil Company sold Derby, Enarco, Sovereign, and White Rose gasoline (Wayne Evans). After 1954, the station marketed Conoco products, until Mr. Evans and Mr. Cunningham closed it in June 1981 (Dale Melvin). Later, the Kovac family reopened it for a short time, calling it Kovac's Korner.

Wilsey's other service station was built after 1926.<sup>130</sup> It was erected on the southwest corner of Fifth and Lyndon, following the removal of the Meyers-Sheldon Building (Lew Berry). This business was known as the Sinclair station for twenty years.<sup>131</sup> Some of its managers in the 1920s and early 1930s included U. P. Edwards, Jesse Anderson, and Doyle Mowrey (Leland Garner). An additional operator of the station, probably before the mid-Thirties was David Clayton.<sup>132</sup> About 1935, John Abell began took over the station and ran it until his death In 1939.<sup>133</sup> Then, C. E. Nelson managed it for John's wife, Edna.<sup>134</sup> John's son, Charles, also ran the station, either with his father or for his mother before he moved to Topeka in 1941.<sup>135</sup> After Clinton "Deacon" Anderson ended his tenure as manager there and closed the station, Charles Vorse reopened it in January, 1946 and handled Phillips products.<sup>136</sup> Other operators were Hugh Harkness, Ralph Stover, Jr., and Glen Richardson (Wayne Evans). Dale Melvin was the station's final proprietor, just before he joined the Wilsey Oil Company (Dale Melvin). The station then served as the local domino parlor until Mr. Melvin purchased the lot and the razed the building in the early 1970s (Wayne Evans).

## **Elevators**

The Morgan family constructed the elevator at the south end of Third Street just north of the railroad, and Perry Morgan (the great uncle of Leland Garner) operated it, perhaps as early as 1906 (Leland Garner). Possibly, this business may have begun as a mill (Ruth Evans). In 1908, the Morgan's sold the property to C. H. and E. C. Dennis. Then in 1910, the Farmers Union acquired it (MCNI: 4T). During the nearly forty years of ownership by the Farmers Union, Charles Roy, Earl Ray, and Ray Griffiths worked there as managers. Mr. Griffiths served in that capacity for almost 29 years (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). Jay and Leroy Francis bought the elevator in 1949; four years later, Leroy became the sole owner. Then in February 1965, Charles and Gary Dalquest purchased the business and operated it as the Wilsey Feed and Grain.<sup>137</sup> In 1968, the Dalquest's leased the Burdick elevator and ran it as the Dalquest Feed and Grain; in time, both businesses were operated under the latter name.<sup>138</sup> After, the elevator ceased business in the summer of 1983, Monte Carl purchased the elevator and its storage buildings to use for his farming operations.

The community's first elevator was built about 1900. It occupied the railroad right of way to the north of the tracks and to the east of Gilmore Street in the western part of town (SAMCK, p. 12). Some of its managers included C. R. Kinkel, Bert Fay, and Richard Sunter (Lewis Richardson). Then, one evening in the late 1920s, it was destroyed by fire. There were rumors that the fire had resulted from a bomb. Richard Sunter searched the site afterward but found no trace of one (Dale Melvin).

### **Creameries and Cream Stations**

A large stone structure on the north side of Main Street to the east of the current Bill Blosser residence housed one of the two creameries (Ruth Evans). For a number of years, if not throughout its entire existence, Ralph Elder managed it (Lewis Richardson). The date when it ceased operations is unknown, although the time was probably before 1909, when the school used the building to relieve overcrowding (Ruth Evans).

The other creamery building stood west of Gilmore Street, not far from the present Larry Krause home (Ruth Evans). It was known as the Wilsey Creamery Company (MCNI: 4T). It began operations around 1896.<sup>139</sup> A Mr. Graham ran it for some years before it was torn down (Ruth Evans).

During the 1920s and 1930s, two cream stations were present in Wilsey. Originally, William and Carrie Ramsey ran one in the structure north of the Wigle Building on the west side of Fifth Street. Earl Ray then kept this station, later moving it to the Farmers Union Elevator after the 1933 fire (Leland Garner). In addition, Lew Bullock operated a second station on the east side of Fifth Street (Dale Melvin).

### **Hatchery**

Prior to 1930, Forest Root, a former school teacher, began the hatchery in the Walker Building on the northeast corner of Fifth and Lyndon and operated it there until about 1932 (Ruth Evans; Leland Garner). Frank Riegel next used a room in the back of his first store for a hatchery. After his old store was moved south across Main Street to the location of the present fire station, he continued to operate a hatchery in its back room but also kept an incubator in the old store's front portion. Later, he needed more space and began to keep the baby chicks west of the former store in a small frame building that he had moved from its original site on the east side of Fifth Street between the George W. Coffin General Store and the Kinkel Building -- the site later occupied by the Wilsey Oil Company. When still more space was needed for the chicks, Mr. Riegel used the Walker Building (Ruth Evans).

Even though Mr. Riegel operated the hatchery only three months of the year, it required more time than he could spare from his store, so he hired a manager and split the income. From 1942 to about 1945, Lester Evans and his daughter, Bertha Campbell, with the assistance of the rest of the family, spent many hours candling eggs, placing them in incubators, and staying overnight with the baby chicks. Altogether, the Evans's hatched over 60,000 chicks before the market deteriorated, and Mr. Riegel closed the hatchery (Ruth Evans).

### **Radio-TV Service**

When Frank Phillips, Sr., sold his garage business in 1954, he devoted all of his time to his radio and television service. He had begun this work as a hobby in 1922. In fact, he had made and sold the first radios in Wilsey for several years. In 1951, he had also sold the town's first television to Leroy Francis (Otis, "Riegel Building," pp. 1, 3). Mr.

Phillips sold Admiral television sets and maintained his repair service in his home until his death in 1970.<sup>140</sup>

Many years earlier, Richard Sunter's son had also operated a radio shop at an unknown location (Dale Melvin).

### **Doctors, Dentists, and Veterinarians**

From 1884 until 1950, Wilsey was never without the services of a physician. Before 1930, there were always two and often three doctors in the community. Dr. Walker, who briefly ran a drug store in a building on the northeast corner of Fifth and Lyndon was the town's first physician. He had been living east of Wilsey when it was platted.<sup>141</sup> The second was Jacob H. Garey, who arrived in 1884 from Pennsylvania and practiced for thirty years before retiring to his farms (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p. 3). The third was A. T. Swann, who came in 1905, left the next year, returned in 1908, and then remained until his retirement in 1950.<sup>142</sup> Both Dr. Garey and Dr. Swann kept their office in a small frame building between the hotel and the lumberyard for many years (Leland Garner). In 1906, Drs. Hepler and Hepler moved to town and lived at 605 Lyndon; however, they soon moved on to Manhattan (Ruth Evans). Dr. Albert Beam arrived around 1910 and set up his office in the building that is now known as Maxine's Beauty Shoppe on west Fifth Street. About 1916, he purchased the Cushman Drug Store. Soon afterward, perhaps as early as 1918, he chose to relocate in Americus.<sup>143</sup> After Dr. Beam departed, a Dr. Hawthorn also had an office in the beauty shop building for a brief period (Lambert Buckner). A. W. Lovene moved to town at about the same time and lived in the home presently owned by Carol Dryer until about 1922, when he moved away (Ruth Evans; MCNI: 4T). The final doctor to come to Wilsey was James E. Bowers. He had an office in the beauty shop building from 1937 until he relocated his practice in Council Grove in the early 1950s.<sup>144</sup>

At least two dentists have served the community. The first was Elmer Hanna (the uncle of Lloyd Hanna). About 1905, he kept an office in the frame building east of the current City Hall. The other was R. F. Pierce (Ruth Evans). He located his office in the second frame structure to the south of the City Hall, where Alice Fenlorn and a Mrs. Finley had



once operated a millinery shop and where the Christian Church ladies had often served dinners (Lambert Buckner; Ruth Evans). In 1937, Dr. Pierce moved to Herington.<sup>145</sup>

In 1906, Anthony E. Amend began his veterinary practice in Wilsey from his residence at 408 Lyndon, and he continued to serve the community until his death in December of 1940.<sup>146</sup>

### **Other Businesses**

About 1980, Mrs. Peggy Douglas completed her training in reflexology, a practice of massaging the feet to relieve various discomforts. For a time, she operated her business in Council Grove, but in 1984, she relocated it in her home until illness forced her to retire.

From the 1960s through the 1980s, Inez Melvin created and sold ceramic ware in her home at 303 North Street. Her works included memorial plates of the high school, the first depot, and a view of the businesses along Fifth Street for the centennial. Years earlier, Inez had opened a gift and specialty shop in 1940 somewhere on Fifth Street.<sup>147</sup> Charles and Joan Illk also opened another business selling Fenton glassware from their mobile home on Gilmore Street during the 1970s.

### **Herington Air Base**

During World War II, the Herington Air Base boosted the local economy. Construction of the facility three miles north of Delavan, or twelve miles to the northwest of Wilsey, began in 1942, and by early 1943, it was in operation. Each day, two busses shuttled residents back and forth for the morning and evening shifts. A number of women worked as seamstresses to sew parachutes while men performed a variety of jobs. Unfortunately, the air base was closed soon after the war, and at this Wilsey's population began to decline (Ruth Evans).

### **Saturday Nights in the 1930s**

In the 1930s, Wilsey was a bustling community on Saturday nights. Townspeople and country folks parked their cars diagonally in the middle of Fifth Street, as well as long both the sides; nevertheless, some had difficulty finding a parking place for a block to

the east or west along Lyndon and Main Streets. Since businesses remained open until ten or eleven o'clock, the women often gathered at the Riegel Store to talk. The men usually remained outside and conversed in front of the stores while the young people walked around the streets and waited for the band concert and the movies to begin.<sup>148</sup> At this time, Wilsey had nearly twenty businesses.

## **VI. Public Services and Utilities**

### **Post Office**

The first post office was known as Outpost and later as Mildred. It was located at the James S. Watkins homestead site on the west side of 1800 Avenue about one-fourth mile north of town (Lew Berry). At that time, mail arrived only three times a week; Wilsey was the first stop; Diamond Springs, the second; the Elk community in Chase County, third; and Marion, last before the carrier returned to Council Grove. The name of the post office was changed to Wilsey when it was moved to the Meyers-Sheldon Building, where George W. Coffin served as the first postmaster and sold hardware supplies. C. R. Francis became the postmaster in 1887 and moved the office into his store, which was then on the east side of Fifth Street just south of the building that would become the Coffin Barber Shop and eventually the Wilsey Cafe. M. J. Kimmel served as the next postmaster and located the post office inside his hardware store that sat on the west side of Fifth Street just south of the Meyers-Sheldon Building. John B. Champion succeeded him as postmaster and kept the office inside his general store on the east side of Fifth Street in about the present location of the storage building used by the Wilsey Oil Company. Wilbur Henderson succeeded Mr. Champion and moved the post office to his store in the frame building that later became the local phone office but then sat on the southeast corner of Fifth and Lyndon until about 1905 before the current City Hall Building was constructed there. Mamie Vining became the first postmistress and gave out mail in her variety store, which occupied the northwest corner of Fifth and Lyndon, where the post office remained for most of its existence. Following Mamie Vining as postmaster was W. T. Brown and then his sister Minnie, who kept the office in the brick building Lew Berry had helped construct for them in the middle of the 100 block of the east side of Fifth Street. Charles J. Roy became the first postmaster not to have any other business than handling the mail; during his tenure, the post office was returned to its location at Fifth and Lyndon.<sup>149</sup> One other postmaster during this period

was W. Harley Wollard, who was the minister of the Christian Church.<sup>150</sup> A complete list of postmasters and postmistresses appears later in this work.

Dr. Jacob H. Garey commissioned the construction of the post office building about 1900. In 1940, Henry M. Otis, who had become postmaster in 1934, bought the structure as part of the Garey estate. In 1959, Mr. Otis's granddaughter, Velma Crowley, who had succeeded him as postmistress in 1949, added a large postal room on the north and rest room on the west. She also remodeled the remainder of the interior with new heating and lighting (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p. 3). Thus, the post office was always in a privately-owned structure rented by the government.

Following Velma Crowley's retirement in 1981, Diane Ecklund became the postmistress, but when she transferred to Lost Springs about 1990, the Wilsey Post Office was closed. Mail was then delivered by the rural carrier from the Council Grove office. A contract post office was reopened in February 8, 1996, in the former Wilsey Market Building with Evelyn Lee serving as postmistress. During this time, the rural carrier continued to deliver mail to individual homes; the post office only sold stamps. Mrs. Lee retired September 30, 2003, at which time, the post office was closed for the final time.<sup>151</sup>

The first rural mail carriers were Ora G. Otis and Lewis Adams. Rural route # 1, which lay to the south of Wilsey, was established on March 1, 1904 with Mr. Otis as carrier. Rural route #2 for the areas to the north of town was created on September 1, 1904 with Mr. Adams carrying the mail.<sup>152</sup> On January 2, 1920, LeRoy Hudson replaced Mr. Adams, and upon Mr. Otis's retirement on June 1, 1932, Mr. Hudson combined both routes.<sup>153</sup> He continued to serve as carrier until his retirement in August, 1962.<sup>154</sup> Walter Burns of Delavan then became the rural mail carrier. When Mr. Burns retired in 1981, Larry Richardson succeeded him. Since Mr. Richardson's retirement in April 2004, Phillip Peterson of Burdick has carried the mail.<sup>155</sup>

Several men have served as substitute carriers. One was Thomas Melvin. From 1951 to 1962, Wayne Evans served as another. Larry Richardson then followed (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p. 3). Later substitutes have included Dana Richardson, Ed Bachura, and Phillip Peterson.

## **Stockyards, Depot, and Section House**

When the railroad reached Wilsey, the stockyards were constructed north of the tracks west of Fourth Street. Around 1905, when Ruth Evans was a girl, cowboys still drove longhorns to the stockyards. At the sight of dust clouds indicating an approaching herd, everyone rushed indoors and stayed there (Ruth Evans).

Following the dismissal of school for the day, the kids would run from the school to the nearest home, where the lady of the house would be waiting at the door to admit them. She would then look for any sign of longhorns, and if none was in sight, the kids would run on to the next house. These “stopping points” were especially important since there were no houses between the school and the present Ray Jensen home, as well as between the business district and the former home of Rebecca Miller on the southwest corner of Lyndon and Gilmore (Ruth Evans).

During the early years of the town, citizens kept their milk cows together in a pasture just north and east of V Avenue and 1800 Road. The local boys took turns in bringing them to town for milking and then driving them back twice daily.<sup>156</sup>

In 1884, the depot was constructed west of the stockyards and south of the lumberyard, along the north side of the proposed railroad line (Lew Berry). Then about 1904, fire destroyed the original building.<sup>157</sup> At one time, there were three agents who kept the depot open 24 hours a day. Some of the many agents over the years were George B. Horton, and J. F. Aikens (Ruth Evans). Royce Duff served as agent for 22 years before he was transferred to Lindsborg in the early 1950s.<sup>158</sup> At night, William McIntosh would take the mail from the depot to the post office, unlock the door, and drop the mail sack inside (Ruth Evans). Later, Ed Anker also served as the night mail carrier (Lewis Richardson). The Missouri Pacific finally closed the depot in 1962.<sup>159</sup> LeRoy Hudson then moved it to the Council Grove City Lake and remodeled it into a cabin.

Soon after the railroad reached town, a section house was built north of the baseball diamond. Two crews used the building. One went east to Helmick, and the other went to Delavan. W. D. Southern was in charge of the section house before he opened his general store (Ruth Evans). This structure was razed in the 1940s (Phyllis Evans).

## **Fire Stations**

After Wilsey experienced a number of serious fires, the townsmen formed a volunteer fire department. In the 1920s, the men paid their poll tax by serving in the department. Two men at a time took turns on the handle of the portable pump, which drew water from cisterns since there was usually at least one in every block. Later, Lloyd Garner and Frank Phillips, Sr., built the community's first fire engine. This vehicle was kept in the small frame structure, which still stands just west of the post office building. This structure also served as the town jail with one, and possibly two, small steel cages in the back (Leland Garner). In 1965, the city council acquired the former bank building, now the City Hall, and converted it into a fire station. Then five years later, the trustees of Elm Creek Township, now known as Township Nine, bought the former Stander Locker Plant and remodeled it as a second fire station (MCNI: 4T). At that time, there were four fire trucks available for service for both the city and the township. In 2000, the metal building on the southwest corner of Fifth and Main was constructed to house the three trucks and tanker for Fire District No. 13, which includes both Wilsey and Township Nine.<sup>160</sup> Through a government fund, the city also acquired firefighting equipment for its volunteers. At that time, the city then converted the city's former fire station into the present City Hall with the current council meeting room, office, rest room, and storage room in the rear. The former township fire station is used as a storage site.

The first siren to warn citizens of fires and severe weather was installed on a utility pole next to the local telephone building. About 1968, the siren was placed under the southwest corner of the roof of the new Tri-County Telephone brick building. In the 1990s, a new, larger siren was mounted on a utility pole on the southeast corner of Fifth and Main. It continues to provide warnings to the community today.

## **Telephone Companies**

The Wilsey Mutual Telephone Company was established March 28, 1903 (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). The former library building, north of the post office, was the first office.

About 1926, the company moved into the structure on Lyndon Street to the east of the current City Hall Building. This structure served as the office until the company was sold (MCNI: 4T).

Since the first phone building was then attached to the post office, Mayme Vining was both postmistress and the switchboard operator about 1908 (Lambert Buckner). Among the operators of the 1920s were Mrs. Hattie Meyers, Mrs. Myrtle Green, and Mrs. Ross Woods (Leland Garner). Mrs. George Zink worked there at the time of the 1933 fire (Otis, "Wanted Business Section," p. 3). After ten years, Mrs. Zink retired, and Mrs. Mayme Alspaw became the new operator in 1942.<sup>161</sup> Mrs. Arthur Parks also worked in the office (Phyllis Evans). The final switchboard operator was Mrs. Polly Spiker, who served the company from 1954 until the conversion to the dial system in 1965 (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3).

In 1961, the community became the third town in Morris County to agree to sell to the new Tri-County Telephone Company, that still serves the smaller towns in Morris, Dickinson, and Marion Counties from its headquarters west of Council Grove.<sup>162</sup> In December 1968, the conversion to dial was completed, following the burial of lines and the construction of the present brick building on the northeast corner of Fifth and Lyndon, the site first occupied by Dr. Walker's Drug Store.<sup>163</sup>

### **Power Companies**

For a number of years prior to 1920, Wilsey had its own gas company (Leland Garner). In 1909, C. R. Francis granted an assignment to the Wilsey Gas Company for sixteen acres of Mr. Wilsey's quarter section (MCNI: RT). The company apparently owned several wells, some of which Charles Roniger and Bill Cline drilled. Some wells were located on the property owned by the Robinson family, just south of the former Nellie Aikens residence (Leland Garner). Others were situated south of the present Larry Krause home and east of the west creamery site (Ruth Evans). At least one other well was located two miles south of town with the pipe line crossing the farm formerly owned by Maxine Grover (Lewis Richardson). Surprisingly, the natural gas was used primarily for lighting rather than heating (Ruth Evans). After the wells gave out, the railroad shipped in coal and dumped it into bins west of the Farmers Union Elevator and south of the Sisson Garage (Leland Garner). The Central West Utility Company then supplied gas to the community, but its gas mains were never placed underground in compliance

with the franchise granted the company. Then in 1941, the lines were enlarged and buried.<sup>164</sup> Eventually, the Greeley Gas Company of Herington began to supply natural gas to the community. That company was later purchased by Atmos Energy. In 1921, crews working for the Wilsey Light and Fuel Company began wiring homes and erecting poles, transformers, and street lights. Thomas Melvin then read the meters, and Bert Fay collected the light bill at the first of each month.<sup>165</sup> In 1947, the city council contracted for all-night street lighting.<sup>166</sup> In time, the local firm gave way to the Kansas Power and Light Company, which was later acquired by Westar Energy.

### **City Dumps**

Over the years, there have been at least four city dumps. One was located on the Robinson property, about one-fourth mile past South Street and west of 1800 Road. A second was situated in the two draws west of Gilmore Street, not far from the Krause home. In the 1920s, the town's youngsters enjoyed going to the dumps to collect old bottles to sell to the doctors, who were always short of containers for their medicines (Leland Garner). Later, the townspeople constructed another dump near the north edge of the railroad right of way one mile east and one mile south of the grade school corner - the intersection of 1800 Road and V Avenue (Phyllis Evans). The city opened a final one in 1961, along the northern edge of the railroad about one-half mile east of town (MNCI: RT). This dump was closed by a new federal law in 1976. Presently, Superior Systems collects the refuse weekly and hauls it to a landfill east of Council Grove (Wayne Evans). The local dumps virtually served as the community trading post over the year, for as soon as one individual deposited his refuse, another would drive down, check to see what had been left, and perhaps pick up something that the other had thrown away.<sup>167</sup> Only tree limbs and unpainted lumber are still permitted to be taken to the former city dump.

### **Sewer System**

In February 1960, city ordinance number 109 made provisions for the creation of a sewer system, following a vote of approval by the citizens at a special meeting held in the Community Building.<sup>168</sup> Construction then began in the spring. The cost of the project was set at \$89,000.<sup>169</sup> In January 1961, the local officials recorded a deed for the land containing the two lagoons and the city dump along the north side of the

railroad one half mile to the east of First Street (MCNI: RT). Then, in 1977, the bonds for the system were retired (Wayne Evans).

## **Water System**

Residents had always relied on private wells for their water, but by the 1980s, many wells in the western half of town had become contaminated with nitrates, causing more and more citizens either to buy bottled water or to haul water from other sources. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment authorized the drilling of five monitoring wells in town to locate the source of the contamination but failed to identify the cause. As a result, the public voted to develop a municipal water system in 2001.<sup>170</sup>

Through the efforts of Mayor Sylvester Sauder, the city council, and the consultant firm known as the Midwest Assistance Program of Lawrence, the city applied for and received funding totaling over one million dollars for the project. The funding included a \$541,200 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program, a \$400,000 Community Development block grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce, and a 40-year loan of \$118,200 with a 4.5% interest rate from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.<sup>171</sup>

Kramer Engineering of Topeka developed the plans for the new system. Workers of the Clark Well and Equipment Company of Great Bend drilled two wells, located five miles west and 3/4-mile north of Wilsey on property leased from Dean Miller. During the summer of 2005, a work crew from the Nowak Construction Company of Goddard laid the line from the wells to the city, following the old railroad right of way, and then installed the distribution system consisting of six-inch mains, hydrants, and valves. The meter wells and the service lines to residences were next installed. In late fall, workers of Gerard Tank and Steel of Concordia erected the twelve-foot diameter, 110-foot tall standpipe with a capacity of 92,000 gallons; utilizing a huge crane, the workers lifted one section on top of another, welded the two together, and then repeated the process until all five sections and the cap were in place. The standpipe was then painted during the winter. Following the wiring to connect the standpipe with the well and the connection of the service lines, the system began operations in March, 2006.<sup>172</sup>



Residents pay slightly more than \$30 a month for the first the 5,000 gallons of water used by a household. The fees are used to repay the U.S.D.A. loan and to establish a reserve fund required by the state to finance repairs and replacements of equipment that will arise in the future. At present, slightly over 100 households, including several outside the city limits, receive water from the new system.<sup>173</sup> In addition, plans are underway to create a rural water district that will purchase water from the city water system.

A water operator oversees the system. His duties include feeding chlorine into the system, monitoring the performance of the pump, daily testing of the water for chlorine levels, periodic testing for contaminants, investigating consumer complaints, reading meters, exercising valves and hydrants, keeping records, and making repairs. In September 2005, the city council hired Marc Evans for this position. Thirteen months later, Melvin Land became the second water operator.

## **VII. Schools**

### **Grade Schools**

Since the children of the earliest settlers had to walk to the Central School three miles north of the town site, several families soon organized School District No. 24.<sup>174</sup> By 1873, Frank Wierman taught a small number of students in a little frame building on the northwest corner of 1800 Road and V Avenue, where the John McFadden home now stands (Coffin, p.1). Before the founding of the town, the little school was called Mildred.<sup>175</sup>

With the coming of the new community, the first school must have become overcrowded immediately. Sometime in the mid 1880s, the townspeople moved the frame building to the open area between the hotel and the lumberyard, where it sat with one end turned toward the street (Wayne Evans) It then served as the office of Dr. Garey and Dr. Swann (Ruth Evans). The front half of the structure soon consisted of a small waiting room and a larger waiting area where the medicines were kept in a cabinet behind a counter. The rear portion contained an examination room and one other small room (Wayne Evans). After 1950, the little building was moved again to a spot west of the intersection of Vorse and Gilmore Streets. At that time, Ryle Carl, Sr., converted it into

a home for his daughter, Mrs. Roland Coover. Then in June 1961, the old school building was moved to its present location west of the Christian Church, where it served as the residence of Ruth Evans, then Velma Dike, and now Rita Falter. Consequently, the first school building, which predates the founding of the town, is very possibly the oldest structure in Wilsey.

The second school was constructed on the original site occupied by the first one. Although it was a much larger two-story, frame building, it too became overcrowded during the first decade of the 1900s. To ease this problem, Mrs. Davis, the teacher of the first three grades, then conducted her classes at the east creamery building on Main Street until the third school was completed. In order to construct the third building, C. R. Francis purchased the second structure, moved it to its present location across street to the south, and converted it into a home for his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Riegel (Ruth Evans). Today, it is the home of Joseph Orebaugh and serves as the Ministry House, distributing food and providing God's Word.

The third school was completed in 1909 (Lew Berry). It was a two-story red brick building with a full basement, four rooms on the first floor, and two rooms on the upper floor. Soon afterward, the high school was established in this building, eventually causing overcrowding once again, until the high school was relocated in its own structure (Leland Garner). Then, in the fall of 1927, the boiler exploded, and the subsequent blaze destroyed the structure.<sup>176</sup>

The fourth-grade school was constructed in 1928. This tan brick building consisted of four classrooms on the south and a gymnasium with a stage on one end on the north; the gym and stage sat below ground level. In 1953, the primary room was added onto the east side, and one of the existing rooms was converted into a library.

When Delavan Grade School was annexed to Wilsey in 1961, only the seventh and eighth graders were brought to the school because of overcrowding, so Margaret Goldsmith taught grades 1 to 6 at Delavan in 1961-62.<sup>177</sup> After the construction of a metal classroom for the seventh and eighth grades just east of the gymnasium in 1962, the Delavan school was closed.<sup>178</sup>

Following unification with the Council Grove and Dwight school districts and the decision to close the high school in the spring of 1968, the unified school board voted in April of that year to move grades six through eight into the high school building for the 1968-69 term.<sup>179</sup> Five years later, the board relocated the remaining grades in the former high school and deeded the grade school building to the Wilsey city council because the structure's roof was deteriorating (MCNI: 4T). In 1978, the council sold the building to Johnny Laizure of Lake Council Grove for \$7,500; he had hoped to remodel it into a home.<sup>180</sup> Dale Melvin later acquired the building and tore it down in 1983, using some of the bricks to construct his garage.

From 1973 to 2002, the former high school served as Wilsey's final grade school. The board changed the grade school's hornet mascot and red and white colors to the high school's wildcat emblem and green and white colors. Then in the summer of 1978, U.S.D. 417 art instructor, Sharon Mock, and some of her former students repainted the hallways and added wildcats and colorful cartoon figures to brighten up the building, making the grade school something of a substitute for the former high school.

For a few years, special education students from Council Grove were bussed to the structure. Later, the first four grades and the seventh and eighth grades were bussed to Council Grove. Finally, with only the fifth and sixth grades remaining in the structure, the school board voted to close the building at the end of the 2001-2002 school term.<sup>181</sup> Following a petition of Wilsey patrons protesting the board's decision, a special election was held on whether or not to close the school, and U.S.D. 417 patrons voted 494 to 354 to uphold the board's ruling.<sup>182</sup> In the fall of 2002, after 118 years, Wilsey students could no longer attend classes in their home town.

One of the grade school's beloved teachers was Ethel Wolgast. She taught first and second grade at Wilsey from 1952 to 1974, before transferring to Washington Elementary in Council Grove before retiring in 1979.<sup>183</sup>

## **High Schools**

The high school began as a one-year organization in the fall of 1911. It operated a two-year program in 1912-13 and 1913-14 and then developed into a four-year institution in

the fall of 1915.<sup>184</sup> At first, it occupied the upstairs of the third-grade school, and Mr. R. A. Postma served as its principal (Lambert Buckner). Later, it occupied the southeast room in the basement, one room on the ground floor, and the two rooms upstairs (Leland Garner). In the spring of 1916, Lambert Buckner, Cleo Camp Roy, and Robert Otis became its first four-year graduates.<sup>185</sup>

The Wilsey Rural High School was organized in June 1920, and designated as District No. 6. The board members were Arthur Black, Charles H. Brown, and John L. Roy. The normal training course was added to the curriculum that year to qualify the school for state assistance. There were but four teachers and 34 students that first year; nevertheless, the school had no extra space. Consequently, the district voted to construct a separate high school building in 1923.<sup>186</sup>

The builders completed the new structure in November, and the students and teachers moved in immediately (Leland Garner). The school was a two-story brick building with a gymnasium in the basement and the auditorium directly above it on the second floor. Three classrooms and two bathrooms occupied the first floor along with the upper portions of the boiler room and the gymnasium. Three classrooms, the study hall, the library, and the principal's office shared the second floor with the auditorium.

As the years passed, even this building at times became short of space as the enrollment swelled. In the 1930s, there were 96 students in school at one time.<sup>187</sup> The 25 graduates of 1933 comprised the largest class, but this class, like many others of the 1930s, would have been even larger had not the Great Depression forced some to stay home or to try to find work.<sup>188</sup> Later, the years of World War II again caused many to leave school and to enter the armed forces (Phyllis Evans). Following the war, the decline in population of the town and of the surrounding countryside continued to reduce the enrollment. Even the annexation of Delavan High School in 1953 failed to check this trend.<sup>189</sup>

In May 1953, the voters approved by a count of 161 to 116 an \$80,000 bond issue to build a gymnasium and to remodel the old gym as a lunch room and a home economics classroom.<sup>190</sup> A committee including Lester Evans designed the bleachers, locker rooms, rest rooms, and the concession area (Ruth Evans). The 500-seat, prefabricated

metal gymnasium was completed during the winter of 1953-54. Then the following summer, workmen took up the old gym floor, built a new floor even with the school's first floor using those boards and remodeled this new area above the old gym into a lunch room, kitchen, storage room, and home economics kitchen and classroom.<sup>191</sup> On Monday, September 13, cooks Della Cantrall and Maude Roether inaugurated the new hot lunch program by preparing the first meals in the new facility for students from the high school and grade school. Meals cost 20 cents for elementary students, 25 cents for high schoolers, and 35 cents for the faculty.<sup>192</sup>

After the new gym opened, the alumni association then held its annual meeting there on the Memorial Day weekend until the school building and the gymnasium were sold in 2002.<sup>193</sup> In addition, the gymnasium then became the site of the Morris-Chase League Tournament.

The first league Wilsey joined was Morris County, consisting of Council Grove, Delavan, Diamond Valley (Burdick), Dunlap, Dwight, Parkerville, and White City. Following the closure of Delavan, Diamond Valley, and Parkerville and the transfer of Council Grove, Dwight, and White City to different leagues, the Morris-Chase League was created. It consisted of Cedar Point, Dunlap, Elmdale, Matfield Green, Saffordville, Strong City, and Wilsey. With the closure of Cedar Point, Dunlap, and Saffordville, the league became the Morris-Chase-Marion League when Burns joined. Finally, it was renamed the Quad League, with the addition of Cassoday. The league was disbanded in 1967 when the remaining Chase County schools consolidated with Cottonwood Falls.

Basketball season was always anxiously awaited during the tenures of coaches -- George Cusick (1948-56) and John Goff (1957-67).<sup>194</sup> Mr. Cusick coached his 1955 team of Lynn and Ron Francis, Don Miller, Alvin Siegrist, and Jim Smith to a 21-3 season, including 18 straight victories, the Morris-Chase League and Tournament titles, a district title, and a fourth-place finish at the Peabody Class B Regionals.<sup>195</sup>

In 1959, Mr. Goff's Wildcat squad was even more successful. That year, the team won the Morris-Chase League and Tournament titles in February.<sup>196</sup> Then in March, the Wildcats won a district title and the Lebo Regional to become the first county team to qualify for a state tournament.<sup>197</sup> In the Class B State Tournament at Emporia, team lost to Plains 53-45 in the opening round to finish the year at 22-2. The loss at the state

tourney had broken a 22-game win streak. The members of the 1959 team included Darrell Harkness, Jerry Goldsmith, Larry Smith, Vernon Garretson, and Harold Stiver.<sup>198</sup>

The team's highest achievement came in 1961. Following an early season loss to non-league rival, Americus, the Wildcats swept through the league 10-0.<sup>199</sup> However, in the league tournament, they were upset by Elmdale 46-44.<sup>200</sup> Following a second loss to Americus, the team entered the Woodbine District Tournament and claimed that title by defeating Woodbine in overtime and Enterprise in the finals.<sup>201</sup> At Beverly Regional, the squad upset sixth-ranked Tescott and then Ada in the championship game to advance to their second state tournament -- this time at the Class BB Tournament in Dodge City.<sup>202</sup>

At the state tournament, the Wildcats pulled away in the fourth quarter to defeat Winona 54 to 47 in a tense, opening game.<sup>203</sup> In the semi-finals, the team beat the undefeated Bluff City Tigers 66 to 47.<sup>204</sup> Then on Saturday, March 11, 1961, the Wilsey Wildcats came from behind to defeat their league rivals, the Elmdale Cougars, 56 to 52 in the title game.<sup>205</sup> The victory was the first state championship for an Morris County basketball team.<sup>206</sup> The members of that 23-3 team included Bob Brown, Ken Francis, David Goldsmith, Dean Miller, Marvin Otis, and Larry Smith.<sup>207</sup>

The Wildcats' final basketball game was February 6, 1968, against Alta Vista, the team that had provided the opposition for the first game held in the gymnasium in January 1954. During the 14 years of playing in the new gymnasium, the Wildcats won five league championships (1954-55, 1958-59, 1959-60, 1960-61, and 1962-63), qualified for two state tournaments, claimed one state title, won over 200 out of about 300 games, and never finished lower than third place in league play.<sup>208</sup> Coach John Goff's record was 173 wins and 71 losses from 1956 to 1967, and he never had a losing season at Wilsey.<sup>209</sup>

John Goff, who had joined the faculty in 1954 and who had assumed the coaching position when Mr. Cusick moved to Ellinwood at the end of the 1955-56 year, had played on the Kansas State football team.<sup>210</sup> Because he liked football so much, he persuaded the community to add six-man football to the school's 1958 fall schedule.<sup>211</sup> Football, however, was only played for a few seasons before giving way to baseball in the mid-1960s.

On December 8, 1964, the school board members of Council Grove, Dwight, and Wilsey voted unanimously to unify.<sup>212</sup> The State Department of Education approved the application for unification in February and designated the new district as No. 417.<sup>213</sup> In the spring of 1967, the district encouraged students from Wilsey and Dwight to transfer to Council Grove in the fall, and so many did that Wilsey became the smallest high school in the state in 1967-68 with but 18 students. Instructors John Goff, Wayne Goldsmith, Ralph Mock, and Mary Jane Randle also transferred to Council Grove High School that fall while Principal R. W. Lewis became the principal of Council Grove's Washington Grade School. Then in the following January, the district board decided to close Wilsey Rural High School.<sup>214</sup> Consequently, the seven graduates of 1968 -- Frances Adam, Marsha Caley, Glenda Melvin, Earl Robinson, Lawrence Sigle, Irene Stander, and Charlene Wiggan's -- became the school's final class after 53 years. During that time, nearly 700 students were graduated.

### **Wilsey Bible Training Center**

In the summer of 2003, one year after the U.S.D. 417 board closed the grade school, the board sold the former school building and the gymnasium to Merle and Joan Rothwell of Lawrence for one dollar.<sup>215</sup> The Rothwell's then began an extensive remodeling of the school to prepare it to serve as a bible school. They removed a portion of the wall between the lunch area and home economics classroom to create a more open area for both dining and instruction; they also installed new fixtures in the bathrooms and remodeled the remaining first-floor classrooms into a lecture room, a combination office and computer room, and a small living quarters. In addition, they installed a central heating and air conditioning system.

The gymnasium has also been renovated. The bleachers have been removed, and the boards were used to convert the dressing rooms into dorm rooms. The concession area has also been converted into a small kitchen. A baptistry has also been added on the west side of the basketball court between dorm rooms.

The Rothwell's purchased the brick building on the northwest corner of Fifth and Main, originally built for the Riegel Store and last used by the Dreams Come True Company, for seminars or retreats. They have also purchased several homes to house students

for their school. Those homes include the former Luella Young residence at 203 Main, the Filkin house east of First Street, the Patsy Filkin home at 701 Lyndon, the former Uarda Phillips residence at 604 North Street, the former Ora Otis home at 216 N. Fifth, the Rebecca Miller residence at 709 Lyndon, and the former local telephone company building at 405 Lyndon. They later sold the Riegel Store building to John Higgins, who lives in Arizona and brings youth to the community for a weekend in the summer. The Rothwell's remodeled the home at 203 Main and now reside there. The other structures were sold, and the old phone building and the old Otis home were razed in 2010.

Merle and Joan began classes in 2006, after the water system became operational. They are associated with Cavalry Chapel, which has churches and bible schools across the nation to train people to know the Word of God and to send them out to teach others about the Bible and to prepare them for eternal life. Merle offers Bible courses on-line and has been teaching a bible study open to the public every Sunday evening at the former high school since the summer of 2005.

## **VIII. Churches**

### **Christian Church**

The Wilsey Christian Church became the first church in the area when it was organized in May 1873, with 24 charter members. Among those 24 were Mary and Josiah Hinton (great-great grandparents of this compiler). William Knapp and Sam Keene were the first deacons, and I. Hammond and William H. Pirtle were the first elders. F. M. Hooten and W. B. Hinton also served as evangelists (Hanna, p. 3). The services of those early years were conducted in the first school building by Reverend Hooten, who later served as pastor (Otis, "Echoes," p. 3).

Following the founding of the town, the church prospered. On October 3, 1884, it was reorganized with 52 members. Mr. Wilsey gave the congregation the site across the street to the south from the school -- now occupied by the second school and converted into a home owned by Sharon Bufford. Construction of the church house was quickly completed. Then, the church acquired A. C. Bayless, its first pastor who lived in the immediate vicinity and who could devote most of his time to his congregation since he served only two other churches at White City and Highland. However, in the early



1890s, the church suffered a temporary setback, and services were held at irregular intervals because many moved away (Hanna, pp. 3-4).

In 1893, the church began to grow once more. Following the employment of Elder Hopkins in April to preach once a month for six months, the membership increased. The next year, an evangelistic revival led by Brother Cantrall over a five-week period resulted in 94 new members. Then in January 1899, the church was reorganized a third time, and Imri Zumwalt was hired as pastor for \$200 a year (Hanna, p. 4).

On July 5, 1909, the trustees purchased lots 10, 11, and 12 in block three from Harvey L. Meyers for \$300 in cash. The members then moved the church house to this location across the street from the northeast corner of the park. The following year, they added the south wing and the Sunday school rooms on the west. In 1935, the trustees purchased the old Presbyterian church building, moved it from the Central community to just west of the church house, and used it as annex (Hanna, pp. 2, 5). Then in 1956, the annex was moved north of the church house and connected to the building. Two years later, Lester Evans and Lambert Buckner remodeled the annex into classrooms (Lambert Buckner; Hanna, p. 2). The kitchen and bathrooms were added onto the north end of the annex in 1960. Then, the pastor's study was constructed east of the kitchen and rest rooms about 1980. In addition, the interior of the sanctuary has been remodeled over the years (Hanna, p. 2).

In the fall of 2006, the fellowship hall, kitchen, bathrooms, and classroom were demolished, and the pastor's study was moved offsite. A new hall, kitchen, pastor's study, two classrooms, changing rooms, and storage rooms were then constructed onto the north of the church house while bathrooms, a corridor, and a new entrance were added onto the west. The new facility was completed in 2007 and dedicated as the Wolgast Community Center, in honor of Mrs. Ethel Wolgast, a long-time Wilsey teacher, whose estate provided the funds to erect the addition and to fund a new scholarship program for county students.

In 1922, the trustees purchased the home at 603 North Street from Mrs. Lula Walker for a parsonage. Then several years after the arrival of Reverend Frank Anderson, who resided on a farm near White City, the trustees sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Sprecker (MCNI: 4T).

The church has several special activities. In 1910, Christian Endeavor was begun for the church's young people. The Builders Class Study Club was started in 1934 under the sponsorship of Mrs. Frank Riegel with sixteen charter members. The church conducts Vacation Bible School and Christmas programs annually. Also, the church has assisted the King Solomon Christian Service Camp near Abilene and the Cookson Hills Children's Home in Oklahoma for many years (Hanna, pp. 6,11). Moreover, several church ladies have volunteered time at the Care and Share Store in Council Grove in recent years.

A number of individuals have devoted themselves to the service of the church. Miss Rebecca Miller taught Sunday School for over 45 years, and Mrs. Ethel Wolgast taught classes for over 35 years. Miss Celestie Nelson taught Bible School for over 50 years, and Mrs. Elva Hanna served as church pianist and organist for over 50 years. Mr. Kenneth Hutchinson served as chairman of the church board for many years, and Reverend Frank Anderson was the church pastor from 1953 to 1978 (Hanna, pp. 9-10). A complete list of ministers is included in this work.

### **Presbyterian Church**

Wilsey's second church was probably organized in late 1885 or early 1886, for on April 19, 1886, Mr. Wilsey gave the trustees of the First Presbyterian Church the site of the present William Markley home at 311 North Street (MCNI: 4T). The congregation built the church house facing west and planted hedge along the other three sides. In back of the building, there was a small space to tie up the horses. Much of the time the church was without the services of a minister, but the congregation continued to meet regularly. Perhaps, because there was no minister, the congregation would converse for long periods and then conduct the services afterward regardless of the time. However, the membership in the immediate decreased, so in 1910, the congregation moved the church house to the Central community to the north of town (Ruth Evans). Then in 1935, the Christian Church purchased the church house and brought it back to Wilsey to be used as an annex for the Ladies Aide Society meetings and church-sponsored functions for teenagers.<sup>216</sup> Later, it was attached to the north side of the Christian Church house.

In 2006, the old structure was torn down and replaced with the Wolgast Center on the north end of the Wilsey Christian Church.

### **United Methodist Church**

The Wilsey Methodist Episcopal Church was organized on April 17, 1886, at the home of George W. Coffin. Mr. Coffin was chosen as secretary, and John B. Champion, George W. Coffin, John W. Evans, Ed Grow, and Frank M. Wierman were elected as the first trustees. The church joined the Herington Circuit, which the Reverend W. W. Kendall served as pastor.<sup>217</sup>

One year later, the Wilsey Circuit was established. It included the Delavan, Highland, Olive Branch, and the Wilsey churches. Around 1890, the Canning Creek congregation briefly formed a branch of the Wilsey church before becoming a fifth member of the circuit (Sheldon, p. 1).

During those early years, the congregation had no church house of its own. Services were conducted in the Presbyterian Church until 1890. For the following two years, meetings were held in the school, which proved to be small and inconvenient. Then from July 1892, to September 24, 1893, for \$60 a year, the congregation met at the Christian Church house since no regular services were held there at the time (Sheldon, pp. 1-2).

The Methodists held a second historic meeting at the home of George W. Coffin on May 29, 1893. On that date, they voted to construct their own church home on the northeast corner of what became block two of the Church Addition. John B. Doner built the 32-foot by 50-foot structure with an eight-foot square vestibule on the east side for approximately \$1,300. The first service was conducted September 24, 1893, with chairs and planks placed on boxes for seats. With the arrival of the pews, chairs, and pulpit, the church was dedicated debt-free on March 4, 1894, in the memory of Emma A. King at the request of her husband, William King of Philadelphia, who had contributed \$250 (Sheldon, pp. 2-3).

Throughout its existence, the church house has undergone several changes. In a 1911 general meeting, the members voted to enlarge the building with a basement including

a kitchen and furnace room; a league room, two class rooms, and a vestibule on the south; and a choir-pulpit loft and a vestibule on the north. This addition was also dedicated debt-free on October 8, 1911. Also, at that time, Nathaniel Henderson presented the church with stained glass windows, which were placed in the east wall, where the front entrance had originally been located. In 1961, the basement was remodeled, and the rest rooms were added. The north steeple was removed in 1966. The following year, the bell tower was lowered due to its deteriorating condition (Sheldon, pp. 5-8).

In 2009, the bathrooms were remodeled, and in 2012, a sloping walk-in entrance to the basement was constructed to make both the entrance and the bathrooms accessible to the handicapped.

The church has provided a parsonage for its minister since 1903 or 1904 when Robert F. Lilley built the first one west of the church. Three rooms were added to that parsonage in the 1920s with lumber from the Helmick Methodist Church. In 1965, Wayne Evans tore down the east portion of this two-story parsonage and constructed the present one. Once Reverend and Mrs. Aikens had moved into the structure, Mr. Evans dismantled the remainder of the old one and added the garage onto the west end of the new parsonage (Sheldon, pp. 5, 7-8).

A number of other important events have occurred since 1965. In 1968, the congregation changed the church name to the Wilsey United Methodist Church as a result of the union of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches. The following year, the Wilsey, Delavan, and White City churches became one parish, with the minister residing in White City. Then in 1970, the Delavan church united with the local congregation (Sheldon, p. 8). Five years later, the Santa Fe Parish was established with Wilsey joining churches in Bushong, Council Grove, Dwight, Dunlap, Kelso, and White City for the purpose of sharing resources and to promote cooperation between the member churches. In 1990, the Wilsey and White City churches ended their sharing of ministers, but from 1999 to 2004, Dwight and Wilsey shared pastors. Since 2004, Wilsey has employed its own minister.

Those individuals who have given many years of service to the church include Mrs. Viola Hertlein, Mrs. Zoa Campbell, and Reverend Dale Aikens. Mrs. Hertlein served as

the pianist and organist for 59 years. Mrs. Campbell served as the Sunday School Superintendent for many years as well. Reverend Aikens was the pastor from 1958 to 1969, and upon his retirement, he and Mrs. Aikens returned and made their home here. A complete list of ministers is included in this work.

## **IX. Recreational Activities**

### **Early Entertainment**

In the first years of the community, there were few recreational activities, so some of the men created their own excitement. One instance of this was the notorious “badger fight.” In the mid 1880s, nearly one hundred men and women gathered at the Doner Lumberyard to watch and to wager on the fight between a badger and Mr. Kimmel’s black Newfoundland dog. The “fight” was ghastly. The badger won in less than a minute, and the ladies left immediately.<sup>218</sup>

Another instance occurred soon after James M. Evans’s dog, Jack, killed a cat in the lumberyard. Mr. Evans refused to dispose of the carcass, so another fellow named Johnny decided to give the cat a “proper burial” by wrapping it in a dozen layers of heavy paper and hiding it above the forge in Mr. Evans’s blacksmith shop. After a week of July heat, the scent was such that even the dog did not appreciate it, so Mr. Evans moved the boards above the forge, then down fell the bundle, and out came the cat. Consequently, Mr. Evans ended up burying the cat after all.<sup>219</sup>

### **Recreation Centers**

Several recreation centers of some form have existed. In the 1890s, James Hill operated “The Joint” west of the park.<sup>220</sup> J. W. Cox ran pool hall in the same location in the early 1900s (Lew Berry). Also, the Meyers-Sheldon Building was used for roller skating and stage shows during the 1920s before it was torn down (Leland Garner). In 1945, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Figley began another recreation center in the Cushman Building (Otis, “Riegel Building,” p. 3).

Domino rooms have been located in several sites. The first one was in a room of the Harkness Recreation Center in the storage building north of the Wilsey Oil Company

site. Then in the 1930s, the domino parlor was moved behind the Davidson Cafe. Later, it was relocated in the old Sinclair station, and for a few years in the early 1970s, it occupied the back room of the current City Hall Building (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3).

### **Wilsey Park and the Chautauqua**

In the fall of 1884, the block designated as the park was plowed. The next spring, Allie Coffin, Ora Otis, and Ora Vorse planted the park's elm and mulberry trees. For the next fifty years, Mr. Coffin continued to trim these trees.<sup>221</sup> During the 1960s, the Lions Club removed several of the original trees, and the Hoe and Hope Club then planted some Bradford pear and golden rain trees. About 2003, Jay Metcalfe removed several more of the original trees.

A number of recreational facilities have been added to the park. Until 1933, the bandstand sat in the park until it was relocated on the west side of Fifth Street. A small baseball backstop was erected in the center of the park sometime before the 1950s. After the Hill Springs School was unified with Wilsey in 1959, a large merry-go-round and the east swing set were brought from the school playground and installed in the park's northwest corner. At about the same time, two basketball goals were also set up near the backstop. A shelter house for picnickers was built in the northeast corner by the Wilsey Lions Club and painted by the 4-H Club in 1972. Following the relocation of the grade school into the high school building in 1973, the small merry-go-round and the south swing set were moved from the school grounds into the park's northwest corner. In the spring of 1978, the Extension Home Unit repaired and painted all of the playground equipment (Phyllis Evans). In August 1978, the city removed the baseball backstop and installed the tennis court in the center of the park; five years later, the city added the concrete-block rest rooms in the park's southeast corner. About 1990, a gazebo was constructed in the south end, and the bell from the Central School was mounted in a small tower near the shelter house. In 2005, hydrants were installed beside the shelter house and the rest rooms when the city water mains were laid.

In previous years, the park was the site of a special activity, known as the Chautauqua. This event originated in Chautauqua, New York, in 1874, as a summer school and developed into a meeting lasting several days for recreational and educational purposes.<sup>222</sup> Wilsey's Chautauqua lasted five days during the 1920s with programs at 2

p.m. inside a large tent. The programs included musical groups, plays, magic acts, and dances. They were so popular that people came from miles around (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3).

Since 1980, the community has celebrated Independence Day in the park on July 3. Activities include a basket dinner, fireworks, and games for the youngsters. The Holiday Club and later the Lions Club have sponsored the event.

### **City Band and Other Musical Groups**

Perhaps even prior to 1900, the community had its own band. Local musicians officially organized it in 1924 and continued it until 1940. During the summer, the band gave concerts in the park every Saturday night. The bandstand remained in the park until after the 1933 fire. Then, the townspeople moved it to the lot formerly occupied by the Wigle Building (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). At times, it also sat in the middle of Fifth Street in front of the former Wilsey Market building and at the end of the street east of where the new fire station now stands.<sup>223</sup> One early band leader was Olaf Inkstrum, who was hired for \$10 a month.<sup>224</sup> During the early 1920s, the band contained one entire family, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Garner and their children -- Opal, Leland, and Cecil (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3).

In addition to the band, several other musical groups entertained the community over the years. The families of Dave Clayton, Ralph Stover, and Lloyd Garner all formed orchestras. Guy Allen organized still another group. Ora Otis and S. E. Neff were also well-known for their old-time fiddling. Singing groups have included the Clayton sisters and the Spiker sisters (Otis, "Riegel Building," p.3). Ralph Mock also organized the Wilsey Wildcat Singers when he taught music at the high school in the 1960s.

### **Baseball, Softball, and Football**

The baseball diamond was the site of much activity during the summer and fall. For over thirty years, the community had a town baseball team. In the 1930s, this team went to the semi-pro tournament at Wichita for two years but lost in the third round each time. In 1933, a men's softball team was organized, and in 1963, it won fifth place in the state tournament at Garden City. In the 1930s, there was a girls' softball team

managed by Bill Davidson, as well as the boys team run by George Porter.<sup>225</sup> In more recent years, there have been Pee Wee, Little League, and Junior League baseball teams for the boys, plus a team for the high school girls. Also, in the 1950s and early 1960s, the high school fielded a football team, which played on the outfield in the fall. However, by the mid 1960s, the high school replaced football with baseball.

The baseball diamond has changed somewhat over the years. In the early 1900s, there was a grandstand with a roof behind the backstop. In those days, A. W. Cushman sold crackerjacks and other treats, and a youngster could watch the game for a nickel (Doyle Mowrey). During the mid 1960s, the lights were added, and night games and tournaments often lasted until 11 p.m. or later. Soon after that, the present backstop was erected as a part of a grant from the Jones Foundation. The field was rarely used after the 1990s. In 2012, the poles and backstop were removed.

### **Theaters**

Movies were shown in Wilsey as early as 1915 by U. P. Edwards in the east creamery building. It was then referred to as “the opera house,” since plays were also performed there (Otis, “Wanted Business Section,” p. 3). Later, W. T. Campbell ran a picture show in the park and in the yard of his home (the present Jason Kovac residence) during the early 1920s (Otis, “Riegel Building,” p. 1).

Munson Peddycord also showed movies in an open-air structure called the “air dome” that sat on the east side of Fifth Street just north of the brick building in the middle of the block. The dome had wooden seats and a stage and screen at the back. Mr. Hobbs, the jeweler, operated the projector and showed three-reel features, which were usually cowboy films. The cost of admission was but a dime (Doyle Mowrey).

In 1924, Mr. Campbell purchased the Cushman Drug Store Building, and Doyle Mowrey and his father, John Mowrey, ran the Idle Hour Theater there (Doyle Mowrey). Since the building was small, the projection booth was directly above the box office, where Mildred Abell sold tickets.<sup>226</sup> Admission was a quarter for adults and ten cents for youngsters (Doyle Mowrey). The seats were folding chairs, and there was no concession stand.<sup>227</sup> However, Ben Hudson popped corn in bacon grease at his home, brought it to the theater, and sold it in one corner.<sup>228</sup> With as many as four intermissions



during reel changes, local people were hired to entertain the crowd.<sup>229</sup> Among the entertainers were pianists Dorothy Peddycord, Viola Hertlein, and Elva Hanna; saxophone players Ruth Coffin Garner and Dr. A. T. Swann; and cornet player Leland Garner. Despite the inconveniences, the theater was full nearly every night (Doyle Mowrey).

In this theater in 1929, Morris County residents saw their first “talking” picture entitled Words and Music.<sup>230</sup> Among those residents who saw it was Mrs. A. T. Swann, who seldom missed a show. Mrs. Swann had a practice of talking out loud to the annoyance of those sitting near her. Whenever Mrs. Swann “got tickled,” as she often did, the results were even more distressing since her distinctive “tee hee hee” laugh prevented others from hearing.<sup>231</sup>

In 1932, Frank Riegel converted the first floor of his old store into the Wilsey Theater (Otis, “Riegel Building,” p. 3). For two or three years, Doyle Mowrey ran the projector for two dollars a night while Celestie Nelson took tickets and sold popcorn (Doyle Mowrey). Other operators included Eldon and Loren Evans. They showed movies every Saturday afternoon and Friday, Saturday, and Monday nights (Ruth Evans). Mr. Riegel closed the theater in 1952 (Otis, “Riegel Building,” p. 3). The building was torn down around 1995.

## Library

The Wilsey Library was founded December 15, 1914.<sup>232</sup> Arthur Black started it in his store by asking those who liked to read to put in one dollar for the purchase of books. The contributors then drew titles and checked out their books (Ruth Evans).

In 1935, the Builders Class of the Christian Church, under the direction of their teacher, Mrs. Frank Riegel, collected books and reestablished the library in the storage building that sat north of the Wilsey Oil Company and was known as the Kinkel Building. The library was open one day a week with the class members and other interested individuals serving as librarian. For a quarter, one could obtain a library card and check out books.

Following an affirmative vote by the residents in July 1938, the library was transferred to the Elm Creek Township Board, which then organized the present free library with but 537 books. The first library board included Mrs. Uarda Phillips, Mrs. Hazel Bullock, and Mrs. G. O. Sheldon, and the first librarian was Mrs. Edith Richardson. Later that year, the library was moved from the Kinkel Building to its present location north of the post office (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3).

The small, two-room white clapboard building was remodeled twice. In 1969, the back room received a new ceiling, new flooring, and new paneling to provide space for \$300-worth of books given to the library by the North Central Kansas Area Systems Library in Manhattan.<sup>233</sup> In 1978, the children of Mr. and Mrs. William Irwin gave the library a cash gift in memory of their parents. This gift was used to lower the ceilings, panel the walls, and add new lighting, new windows, and new shelving.<sup>234</sup>

By 1980, a larger building was needed. In December 1986, U.S.D. 417 Superintendent Jim Selby promised the library board an unused mobile unit on the school grounds in Council Grove for a dollar. On June 25, 1987, the library board signed a contract for the current 24-foot by 60-foot mobile building. On July 24, it was moved onto the site formerly occupied by the clapboard structure, and on November 21, an open house was held.<sup>235</sup> At first, the back portion was reserved for city council meetings, but when the brick fire station was remodeled as the City Hall about 2002, the library expanded into the back as well. Currently, the library has approximately 5,000 volumes.<sup>236</sup>

For a number of years after the grade school was relocated in the high school building, the teachers brought their students to the library to check out books for research and reading. This practice continued until the closing of the school in 2002.

Around 2002, the library received funds from the Bill Gates Foundation, a program to provide computers for libraries throughout the nation. The library board then purchased three computers, a printer, a scanner, and some software programs with those funds.<sup>237</sup>

Several ladies have succeeded Mrs. Richardson as librarian. Mrs. Polly Spiker was hired in January of 1950.<sup>238</sup> Then Mrs. Ruth Evans, who served for about twenty years before retiring around 1970 (Ruth Evans). Following Mrs. Josie Wigle, Uarda Phillips

served from 1972 to 1991.<sup>239</sup> Since that time, Shelly Cunningham, Ann Wittman, Christl Williams, and Lisa Owen have held the position. Marsha Filkin, the current librarian, has held the post since July, 2001.<sup>240</sup>

## **Lodges**

From the earliest days, the upper floor of the Francis-Riegel Store was used for meetings and lodges. In 1959, Mr. Riegel sold the former store building to the Masonic Lodge (MCNI: 4T). Then, the first floor of the lodge hall, as the structure came to be called, was remodeled into a kitchen and large dining hall with two rest rooms.<sup>241</sup>

The independent order of Odd Fellows (the I.O.O.F.) No. 434 became the community's first lodge on March 16, 1893. I. M. Campbell, Jacob H. Garey, Olaf Inkstrum, George W. Coffin, Charles Horton, and E. O. Raymond were the charter members.<sup>242</sup> Since about the 1970s, the Council Grove and Wilsey Odd Fellows met together in Council Grove.

The second lodge to organize was the Sunrise Chapter No. 324 of the Order of the Eastern Star. Ten ladies established it on October 31, 1908, with the assistance of the Herington chapter. The lodge was formally constituted on May 13, 1909, and members then gave contributions to purchase emblems and furniture while Dr. Garey presented the officers with badges. In 1935, the Alice McClurg Past Matron's Club was established as a study group to assist the chapter. And in 1959, the members celebrated the fiftieth anniversary with a special meeting open to the public.<sup>243</sup> The Eastern Star was disbanded in the late 1980s.

The Masonic Lodge No. 382 received its charter on February 17, 1909, and conducted its first meeting on March 13. The original petitioners included Frederick Brown, I. L. Croner, Cornelius Francis, Nathan Peddycord, William Vining, Cecil Feister, Bert Fay, J. Milton Brown, Herbert Jackman, Mark Coffin, Sherlock Middleton, and William McClurg. Soon after the fiftieth anniversary in 1959, Frank Riegel and Lewis Albert Coffin received 50-year pins.<sup>244</sup> The Masonic Lodge was discontinued in the late 1980s.

The Wilsey Rebekah Lodge No. 658 was begun by 95 people on May 4, 1921, and the charter was received the following October. In 1940, its Past Noble Grand Club was

organized.<sup>245</sup> In 1971, the lodge observed its fiftieth anniversary. In early 1984, the members formally disbanded the chapter.

### **Other Clubs and Organizations**

The Business Men's Club was organized with 12 charter members on April 15, 1912, at the office of I. L. Croner at the invitation of Dr. J. H. Garey to promote "the general good of the city." Officers elected that evening were: I. L. Croner, president; Albert Beam, vice president; Ralph F. Lilley, secretary; and W. M. Henderson; treasurer. The organization began meeting on the first Monday of each month, but the group was later discontinued, perhaps as early as 1917.<sup>246</sup>

On April 5, 1932, the Wilsey Community Club was organized with 37 members at the Wilsey Hotel to promote the interests of the town and the surrounding area. Officers of this group included C. J. Roy, president; Dr. R. F. Pierce, vice president; and George Edgerton as secretary/treasurer. The club met once a month with a meal at the hotel or a local eating place.<sup>247</sup>

In January of 1938 or 1939, the club was reorganized as the Wilsey Commercial Club with Harold Bobst as the president.<sup>248</sup> It continued to meet at the cafe or other stores occasionally until at least 1941.<sup>249</sup>

Thirty-four members organized the Wilsey Lions Club in 1956 with Mont E. Norman as the first president. With the goal of community improvement, the Lions constructed the park shelter house and served as caretakers of the park. In 1983, they erected street signs. They also sponsored the Little League Baseball teams and sent students to Boys State, Girls State, and the state band. In addition, local member Kenneth Hutchinson was elected district governor (Otis, "Riegel Building," p. 3). The club met at the Wilsey Cafe until it was closed. Soon afterward, the Lions Club disbanded. On April 8, 1999, the Lions Club was re-chartered with the Woodbine Club acting as sponsor. The club met at the Wilsey United Methodist Church on the first Friday of each month. It put up the flags at the cemetery on Memorial Day and Veterans Day and sponsored the Independence Day celebration and the Easter Egg hunt in the park. It also provided cookies to families new to the community and food baskets at

Thanksgiving and children's clothing at Christmas for needy families. This club disbanded September 17, 2013.

The Home Demonstration Unit and the Extension Home Unit have also been very active in civic affairs. The H.D.U. originally purchased the Warbler Building and maintained it as a community center. Both groups were set up to provide helpful tips to homemakers. However, the groups did other things, such as painting the playground equipment in the park (Phyllis Evans).

The H.D.U. was organized in 1924 and reorganized in 1947 as the Extension Home Unit. The twelve charter members of the latter group in 1947 included Mildred Bobst, Martha Brown, Mildred Dalquest, Marie Gant, Blanche Hailey, Erna Hensley, Nelle Hudson, Kay Say, Abbie Stander, Linnie Strouts, Edith Tompkins, and Pearl Tischhauser. Martha Brown and Nelle Hudson were also charter members of the first group.<sup>250</sup> The latter group disbanded before 2000.

The Hoe and Hope Club was one of Wilsey's newer organizations. Following its establishment on October 11, 1963, the club's community beautification projects won many awards. These projects included establishing an avenue of trees along North Street from First Street to the cemetery, landscaping the cemetery grounds, planting new trees in the park, and planting trees and a hedge in the vacant lots on the east side of Fifth Street between the current City Hall Building and the former brick fire station in the center of the block. The club transformed the cemetery by setting out numerous shrubs, building the stone work along V Avenue with rock from the old courthouse, constructing a small fountain and meditation bench north of the inner driveway, planting hedge and a small flower bed inside that same driveway, erecting a directory of the family plots also north of the inner driveway, and creating an avenue of flags for Memorial Day. The Hoe and Hope Club also helped restore the stone school house on highway K-177 north of Strong City.<sup>251</sup> Some of the members of the Hoe and Hope Club included Nellie Aikens, Vera Alspaw, Wilma Bennett, Elsie Cameron, Zoe Campbell, Mildred Dalquest, Lorena Francis, Doris French, Marie Gant, Blanche Hailey, Mrs. Ralph Loomis, Lura Meier, Inez Melvin, Uarda Phillips, Kay Say, Edith Tompkins, Edna Veal, and Bernice Yackle.<sup>252</sup> The members disbanded in 1995 and gave their funds to the cemetery for its upkeep .

The New Idea Club was started February 10, 1925 at the home of Agnes Lentell. The club held a family picnic in August and pre-Thanksgiving and pre-Christmas dinners. It donated money for community and county activities. Membership was limited to twelve, so when one died or moved away, another individual was invited to join. Charter members included Madge Bocook, Rena Otis, Agnes Lentell, Ida Baum, Bess Aikens, Edith Anderson, Eula Casad, Violet Evans, Grace Hart, Emma Illk, Nellie Root, and Grace Thomas. The club observed its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on August 3, 1975, at the Wilsey Community Building.<sup>253</sup>

The N. I. P. Club was organized in 1914. It met the second Wednesday of each month. Some of its members in the 1970s and 1980s were Marie Gant Buckner, Norma Campbell, Grace Eggleston, Lorena Francis, Doris French, Marie Good, Blanche Hailey, Anges Lentell, Edith Loomis, Marie Munsell, Reva Norman, Iva Person, Fae Rader, Kay Say, Linnie Strouts, Florence Garretson Tischhauser, and Thelma Tompkins.<sup>254</sup> N. I. P. stood for "Nothing in Particular." The club met at the Wilsey Cafe for lunch and then traveled to one member's home to play cards in the afternoon.<sup>255</sup>

The Linger Longer Club was organized in 1920 and met monthly. In 1988, Sadie Caley, Ethelene Cook, Marie Good, Viola Hertlein, Agnes Lentell, Uarda Phillips, Maude Roether, Fern Shearer, Helen Stander, Linnie Strouts, and Luella Parks Young were members.<sup>256</sup>

The Sunflower Improvement Club was created in 1914 by sixteen ladies living near the Sunflower School 3 and 1/2 miles southwest of Wilsey. In 1957, the membership included Vera Alspaw, Elsie Cameron, Ruth Evans, Hazel Garner,

Maude Hensley, Rose Hensley, Viola Hertlein, Velna Lindquist, Lila Markley, Caroline Niernberger, Stella Rohloff, Hazel Roy, Margaret Shubert, and Ethel Wolgast.<sup>257</sup>

Wilsey's newest group is the Senior Citizens Club. The senior citizens originally met in the Community Building; they currently convene at the City Hall. They enjoy activities such as playing cards and dominoes (Phyllis Evans). The late Bill Sampson had a prominent role in the club's first years.

Other organizations that have served the community were the Worthwhile Clubs, the Woodman, Workmen, and Royal Neighbors (Ruth Evans).

There were fewer organizations for the community's young people. These included summer baseball programs and the Wilsey Busy Bees 4-H Club. The 4-H chapter was founded in 1930.<sup>258</sup> Around 1980, the Delavan and Wilsey 4-H chapters were combined. Then, in the 1990s, the Wilsey and Burdick Hustler chapter were combined.

In the 1920s and 1930s, there was also a boy scout troop, which met in the two-room house of Babe Francis, which was one block east of the intersection of Vorse and Gilmore Streets. During the 1920s, C. L. Casad served as scout master (Leland Garner). In the 1930s, Alfred Campbell served as a leader for the troop.<sup>259</sup>

## **X. Special Celebrations**

### **Fiftieth Anniversary**

As the Fiftieth Anniversary of the community approached in 1934, a committee consisting of Bill Davidson, Earl Ray, Teresa Smirl, Helen Roy, Jesse Anderson, and Frank Phillips, Sr., was formed to plan the activities.<sup>260</sup> A few days prior to the May 15 festivities, Cal Brown organized a caravan of fifteen cars to tour the county and advertise the event.<sup>261</sup> The morning program consisted of a talk by E. L. Baker of the Herington Sun and a parade with floats representing the following businesses: the Davidson Cafe, the Wilsey Oil Company, Doyle Mowrey's Sinclair Station, the Frank Phillips Garage, the Art Sisson Garage, and the Frank Riegel Store. After a basket dinner, there was an old-timer's program with a fiddling contest, a pageant, and talks by Carrie Ramsey, Reverend T. P. Henry, and Jake Welcher, a 96-year-old man who had been born into slavery. Next, a 14-inning baseball game won by Americus followed. Then, a rodeo, a band concert, and a movie -- all free of charge -- rounded out the day's activities.<sup>184</sup>

In 1934, the business firms included Christensen's Drug Store, C.H. Brown and Son Oil Company (later known as the Wilsey Oil Company), Doyle Mowrey Sinclair Station, Frank Riegel General Merchandise, the Wilsey Hotel, Art Sisson Garage, Frank Phillips Garage, A. L. Scott Lumber Company, the Davidson Cafe, Teresa Smirl Beauty Shop, Bob Otis I.G.A. Store, John Mowrey Meat Market, Bert Fay Hardware, Baum's

Hardware, Nels Nelson Barber Shop, the Wilsey Theater, and the Farmers Union Elevator.<sup>263</sup>

### **Bicentennial Celebration**

To commemorate the nation's bicentennial, the community held a Pioneer's Day on Saturday, October 30, 1976. Dorothy Davis served as chairperson. Events included a parade, horseshoe pitching, volleyball, bingo, food concessions at the Community Building, an arts and crafts show in the gymnasium run by Sharon Mock and Donna Coover, a musical program directed by Ralph Mock from 7 to 9 p.m. at the school, and a street dance.<sup>264</sup> The parade began at 10 a.m. with 94-year-old Lew Berry serving as grand marshal. The grade school band, the Council Grove High School Band, floats, and antique cars were included in the procession. Additional activities in the park were a flea market, a carnival, and a horse-shoeing demonstration by Rosie Clymer.<sup>265</sup>

### **Centennial**

In early 1984, citizens began to prepare for the centennial. Charles Aikens organized the parade; Elvie Aikens, Dale Cook, Ethelene Cook, and Reba Sumner organized an arts and crafts show; and Luella Young assembled the music in the park. Though the anniversary was May 15, the date selected for the celebration was Saturday, May 26 since it began the Memorial Day weekend when the Wilsey Alumni Association would hold its annual gathering.

Festivities began at 10 a.m. with a parade down Fifth Street. Serving as Grand Marshal of the parade was 101-year-old Lew Berry, Wilsey's oldest citizen. Also selected as parade marshals were Charles Bacon, Mable Brady, Flora Brown, Fannie Francis, and Abbie Stander -- all of whom were in their nineties.<sup>266</sup> The parade featured horses, antique cars, and floats; one float depicted the founding of Wilsey with descendants of the four men who platted the original town sitting around a table drawing out the map.

At 11 a.m. in the city park, Harold Wilsey, nephew of John D. Wilsey was introduced, and then Marc Evans spoke about the town's history. Charles Vorse, grandson of Henry H. Vorse, dedicated the street sign for Vorse Street.



In the gymnasium, an arts and crafts show with thirty booths remained open until 5 p.m. Also in the gym were a commemorative stamp cancellation for the centennial and a baby picture contest of individuals who were fifty or older.<sup>267</sup>

Afternoon activities included "Music in the Park," a horseshoe contest also in the park, a kiddie carnival on the east side of the park, and a television show about Wilsey prepared by Jerry Hutchinson in the fire station (now the City Hall Building). That evening, Dennis Filkin and the Midwest Railway Band played for the dance at the tennis court.<sup>268</sup>

Food was available in four locations. The United Methodist Church ladies served lunch from 11:30 to 1:30 and supper from 5 to 7 p.m. The Wilsey Cafe remained open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The New Ideas E.H.U. served concessions in the gym, and the carnival also offered food.

The centennial celebration concluded Sunday with two final activities. At 9:30 a.m., congregants of the two churches met in the park for a combined service. Then at 12:30, the high school alumni reunion convened in the gymnasium for a basket dinner and program.<sup>269</sup>

In 1984, only five businesses remained on Fifth Street. They were the Dale Cook Hardware, the Wilsey Market, Maxine's Beauty Shoppe, Kovac's Korner gas station, and the Wilsey Cafe. Residential businesses included Peggy Douglas's reflexology office, Dale and Inez Melvin's ceramics, Walter Einfalt's body shop, and C & J Gift Shop owned by Charles and Joan Illk.

### **Present and the Future**

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Wilsey was growing, and in 1907, its population peaked at 374.<sup>270</sup> In 1934, the population stood at 299.<sup>271</sup> In 1984, there were 172 inhabitants.<sup>272</sup> In 2000, the population was 191.<sup>273</sup> In 2010, it was 153.

Obviously, the latter years of Wilsey's history have marked the decline of the community.

Wilsey's loss of population, businesses, and schools is indicative of a phenomenon that has transformed the Great Plains since World War II. Improved transportation in the form of the automobile ended the isolation of towns. The economic upheaval, beginning in the late 1920s, rendered the traditional 80- or 160-acre farm unprofitable, as only one family resides on land that five or more families occupied in 1930. The development of labor-saving machinery also reduced the need for farm workers. In addition, the centralization of business, itself a by-product of better transportation, further eroded the economic base of the small town.<sup>274</sup>

Still, Wilsey continues to survive after 125 years. Citizens may recall the past with both pride and sadness for what has passed, but all must also look forward to the future with hope. Just as each individual must place his trust in the Lord Jesus, let each citizen pray that the Lord will keep this community and its inhabitants in His care, for there is no future apart from Him.

**Echoes of Yesterday\***  
**By Henry Otis (1956)**

My parents moved from Iowa to Kansas in a covered wagon and on Nov. 7, 1870 located on the Neosho River near Strawn in Coffey County. During the summer of 1871, they located a claim 12 miles west of Council Grove. The reason they chose the prairie, was to escape the fever and ague which prevailed on the river bottoms. This year -- 1871, I arrived, the fifth child. My father, Matson Otis, traded the crop he had raised in Coffey County for native walnut lumber which he hauled to his claim and built a house 16 feet square. He dug a well and put up a sod stable. I am still using the same well, as our home stands where the old walnut house was built 82 years ago. He used oxen -- Bally and Dave. The Indians gave us very little trouble, usually roving bands coming every summer begging and stealing what they could. The storms were bad, sweeping across the open prairie.

Our worst fear was prairie fires. We all plowed fire guards 300 feet wide. In 1880 every one began talking railroad. J. D. Wilsey, my uncle, gave the railroad company the right of way across his quarter section and a plot [plat] for a town. That is how "our town" got its name. John Doner came and put in a lumber yard. The train came to a mile east of Wilsey and unloaded. All of us boys and men helped unload and the building of a town began in earnest.

O. C. Sheldon of Milledgeville, Ill. located a store building 24 by 60 ft. on Main [Fifth] Street. Mr. Sheldon and family came Nov. 1, 1884.

The early settlers had a way of life which we call hardships -- the slow, tedious oxen for farming power; digging rocks for fences, barns and homes and breaking the prairie for cultivation. These were strong, enduring people who found pleasure in the simple things of life, thus creating a bond of lasting endurance and leaving an inheritance of labor, love, progress and useful, honest lives.

\*Included within the following source:

Otis, [Ida] Mrs. Mac, "'Echoes of Yesterday' in Wilsey History," Council Grove Republican, April 5, 1965, pp. 1, 4.

## **Recollections of Early Days\***

**By Mertie Otis Melvin**

During one of the prairie fires my father, Matt Otis, took the team and went out south and brought Mrs. Frank Watkins and four children to his home. Mr. Watkins was gone and he said he knew Matt would take care of his family.

Rev. Hooten was the first preacher to come and we had church in the school- house. He would spend the night with families and at our house he slept on the floor with the

children.

When Semler's house burned all the men took hammers and saws and worked until a new house was built. The family stayed at our house until the house was built.

In 1881, my father went to Enterprise and broke prairie for \$1,00 an acre, and he came home with \$30.00 for clothes for all winter. My mother bought a bolt of unbleached muslin and dyed it with dye made from walnuts, and made our dresses and shirts. In summer she knitted stockings and in winter she braided straw hats.

My mother always said, "They were happy days," and I agree with her. The only time they were really discouraged was the grasshopper years.

### **Recollections In 1934\***

**By Mrs. Ida Ferris Pirtle**

My home was a large stone house on the Santa Fe Trail three miles southwest of Wilsey, and I attended the school known as Mildred. Many times, we saw moving wagons, sometimes as many as 50 together in a train, going west. Where the travelers camped there was a little boy's grave. The marker said, "Little Willie."

We had few neighbors, the nearest one a mile north. We hauled water from Diamond Springs to lay stones for our house. The spring was three miles west of our farm, and we often saw the ruins of an old fort. There had been two buildings made of stone. One tall end was left standing, which was about 25 or 30 feet high. My brothers got their lead from this old fort, to mold their bullets. There was a corral around the spring to keep their stock away from the Indians. There were no wire fences for years after we went to

Kansas. Prairie chickens were numerous and formed the bulk of our Rummer meat. There were also plenty of deer, antelope, rabbits and coyotes.

My parents, Mr, and Mrs. Sam Ferris lived there during the time of the grasshoppers. If we hadn't had aid from the eastern states, we would have starved. We lived on dried apples and Johnny cake. My uncle in Illinois sent us a barrel of pork, which we divided with the neighbors.

\*Included within the following source

Otis, QldaJ Mrs. Mac, "'Echoes Of Yesterday' In Wilsey History,"  
Council Grove Republican, April 5, 1965, pp 1,4.

### **Cross Section of 1890\***

The following is from a letter to Earl Ray from C. R. Horton. It gives a clear picture of Wilsey in that day.

I went to Wilsey in November of 1890. At that time John Seguine was running the hotel, and his son Will was helping him. Will is now in Topeka. Kate Seguine married Frank Meyers, who was running the butcher shop. Do you know what became of Jim Evans or Max Evans? Last I saw of Jim, he was working at the state hos-pital in Osawatomie.

Jack Doner was running the lumberyard. Last I heard of him he was in Cali-fornia. So was Jonas McNair. Old Uncle Jim Coffin lived upon the hill west of town. Milt Beachy moved to Newton. George Hillyer, who used to handle a world of cattle from Wilsey, is dead. I understand George Coffin used to parade the streets carrying the banner of the

People's Party. Harve and Bob Meyers ran the grocery and general merchandise store on the corner. Milt Kimmel ran the hardware and post office, Sam Sisson ran a shoe shop and Dad Hill, the joint.

Dad LaRue kept a boarding house for Fred. Babe Francis was general help out on any kind of work there was to be done, same with Frank Melvin. Matt Otis ran the livery stable, and Ora was chamber maid when Matt needed help. Our mutual friend Dr. Garey was always on the job, night and day. Everybody used to swear by him. Ed Anker and Joe Earlywine used to come to town once in a while, and Charlie Whiting was always on the job when anyone was in distress and always saw that nothing was wanted for.

There were Ed, Frank, and Mark Coffin, brothers of Allie, who were not afraid to get out and away from home, but I do not know their location.

Frank Riegel's father used to have a lake and raise carp and ship them all over the country for stocking ponds. Myself and Milt Campbell rustled around and organized the I. O. O. F. Lodge. The hall was up over the C. R. Francis Store.

\*Included within the following source:

Otis, [Ida] Mrs. Mac, "Cross Section of 1890,"

Council Grove Republican, April 6, 1965. pp. 1, 4.

## **Recollections of Mrs. Ruth McIntosh Evans\***

**Where could, you buy a dish of ice cream in Wilsey in 1900?**

**Ice Cream  
Vanilla \* Lemon \* Strawberry  
Soda Pop**

This hand-made sign was in the Wilsey Meat Market managed by Wm, McIntosh.

On the shelves along the wall were canned foods, A large bunch of bananas hung from a hook in the ceiling, and on the counter was a show case of candy, scales for weighing, paper and twine. In the corner was the big ice box, and in the center of the room stood the big heavy meat block with the cleaver, sharp knives and saws.

While I played in a big box by the window, I remember Dad cutting the roasts and steaks preparing to go out on his meat routes, either to the Delavan or Diamond Springs communities. Mother then took the smaller pieces of meat and cooked them in a big iron kettle in the back room. She would sell the cooked meat and broth for 10^ a half gallon.

Jack DeLong, Prank Adams, Billy Brown, Herbert Fisher, John Mowrey, Clarence Poff, Taylor Allen, C, A. Bocook and Raymond Stander are some of the later manager of the meat market.

When Mr. Brown and Mr. Fisher built the brick building, which is now the locker plant, they had a restaurant and meat market there, so the old meat market building became a harness shop. This was owned by Mr. John Knauber. Later this was owned by Lew

Sisson.

Raymond Stander was the last manager after it became a meat market again. These are some of my memories as I pass the empty old meat market of the past

\*Included within the following source:  
Otis, [Ida] Mrs. Mac, "Echoes Of Yesterday' In Wilsey History,"  
Council Grove Republican, April 5» 1965» pp. 1, 4

**A Friend of the Pioneer**  
**The Cottonwood Tree Speaks\***  
**By Mrs. Arthur Parks**

I am a native of Wilsey. Sometimes I feel that I am a part of the very town, itself.

Those who have known me, and watched me grow through the years, say that I am around 60 years old. T was brought here when very small from the Yakle farm, south of town. Joe Anker seems to remember the day I was planted in the good earth, just in front of the Ray Kimmel Store, which is now the Fay Hardware.

I have seen many changes take place along Main Street, and I have watched with interest the dreams that have been fulfilled in making Wilsey a better place to live.

When I was 25 years old, this town, along with those of the nation, was sending its young men off to World War I, and it was on Registration Day of 1918, that I stood



proudly to watch the band, and a large one too, play in view of the American Flag, the top tunes of "Give My Regards to Broadway," "Over There," and "Keep the Home Fires Burning."

Flickering oil, and gasoline lamps gave way to the modern convenience of electric lights, as families began the tasks of having their houses wired for electricity in 1921, after completion of months of work, spent in erecting poles, transformers, and street lights by crewmen of the Power and Light Company,

If I could recall but a few of the tales swapped by old timers, as they sat on the bench, beside me, I'm sure my branches would shake with laughter.

Why, there's times when Dick Sunter, Al Moler and Charlie Stiver would sit for hours, and reminiscence in the cooling shade of an afternoon sun and then on Saturday nights when the farmers came to town, they would congregate about me, to compare notes on how the wheat turned out, and how much it tested.

Several incidents in the past have made me quite sad. It was on a fall evening in 1927, that families had gathered about the tables for the evening meals, when the town was rocked by an explosion, that destroyed the grade school building. For a time, a stubborn wind threatened a number of homes in the path of the blaze.

Five years later, I again watched through the morning hours, as townspeople fought a disastrous fire that completely wiped out the drug store, meat market and grocery store.

Marty Richardson and I were the first to discover the fire that reduced the Community building to ashes, in the winter of '48. Not to be defeated by disaster, a new one was soon to be erected in its place.

At 11:30 each day, Nels Nelson made the trek from the barber shop to his home, for a well prepared Swedish lunch, and during his absence, jovial A.J. Coffin was on hand to cheerfully greet their customers, who came either to pass the time of day or go all out for a shave, shampoo, and haircut.

I've enjoyed the companionship of a good friend, Ora Otis. There's a pioneer who will vouch for all I say, and think about this little town. He looks most natural, as he saunters down the street, carrying a basket of fresh Rhode Island Red eggs to market.

And there's Henry Otis, He is going about moving the old telephone building a few feet farther north, from where it stood these many years. This building is now the library.

It's been easy to learn when the first of each month arrives, because Uncle Bert Fay is bound to appear on the walk, with his blackboard sign, that reads "Light and Gas bill due." Tom Melvin has seen to it that Ready Killowatt readings are up to date.

Though the chilling north wind caused me to realize the bleak intensity of winter days, spring seemed to fill the air, as I glanced down the street, to notice that petite, brown eyed girl, Helen Bocoock, on her way to school. Invariable, you would hear her whistling

“Sleepy Time Girl“ as she passed by.

I can usually judge the days of the week, because when I see F. S. Riegel leaving town at 4 a. m. in his truck, I know it is Tuesday, for sure. Two weeks ago, he failed me though. He didn't make the run to Kansas City that week, and I was all mixed up, until I saw Alfred Campbell come out of the post office with his mail at 9 a. m. Then I knew it was Sunday.

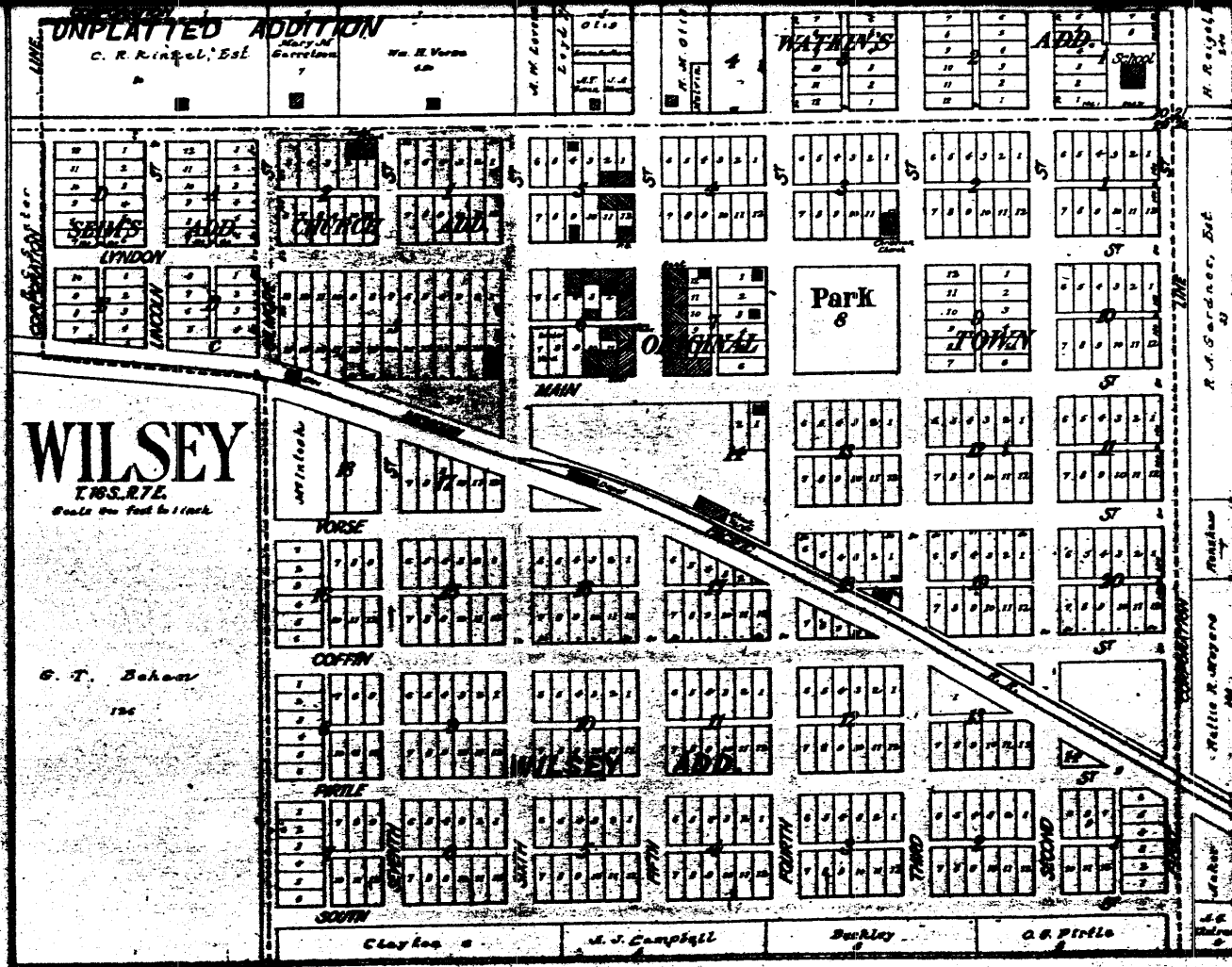
It was on Dec. 7, 1941, a day quite the same as any other, until radio brought news that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. Realization that Johnny Doughboy must again answer the call to arms, became evident to each individual. Service flags soon appeared in the windows of our homes, bearing as many as three stars, yes, and even four.

Sunday is the day of real interest to me, because it is then, I stand in silent tribute to My Maker, as I watch the folk around the country side, on their way to Sunday school and church, I have come to know those who are faithful, because ill wind, and bad weather doesn't faze their loyalty to God.

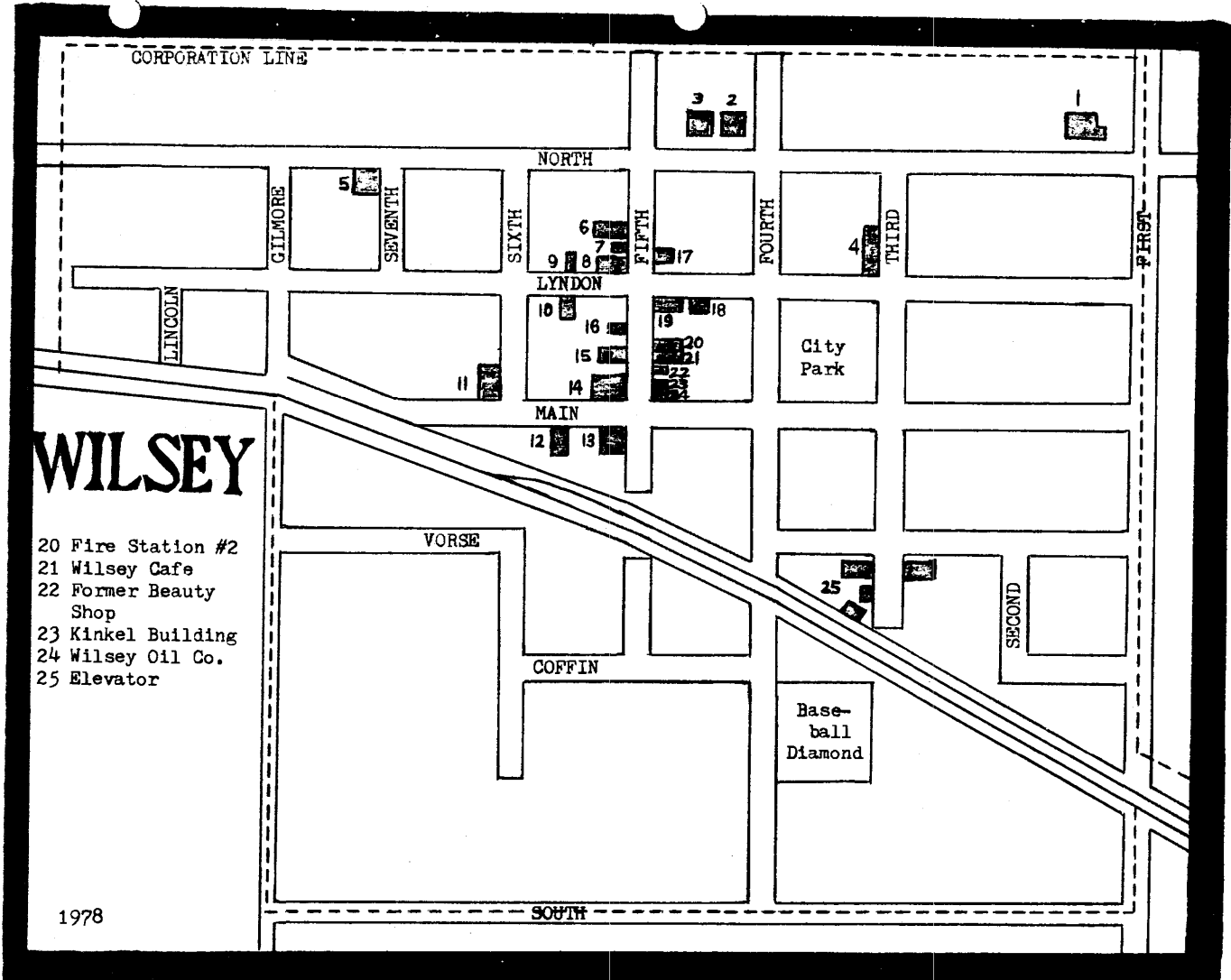
For some reason, it's been more quiet around here lately, than any time I remember during my existence, as a Monarch to this little town. Not a train whistle have I heard, not a streamliner going through town in the early morning hours. Here comes Agent Royce Duff, a bit sad about the whole thing. He says the Missouri Pacific strike is now in its 44th day. And now goodbye, but don't forget I'll be seeing you.

\*Included within the following source:

Otis, [Ida] Mrs. Mac, "Alums Have Date To Return Each Year To Wilsey,"  
Council Grove Republican, April 2, 1965, pp. 1, 4.



Standard Atlas of Morris County Kansas, Chicago: George Ogle, 1923, p. 12.



**WILSEY**

- 20 Fire Station #2
- 21 Wilsey Cafe
- 22 Former Beauty Shop
- 23 Kinkel Building
- 24 Wilsey Oil Co.
- 25 Elevator

1978

- 1 Former Grade School
- 2 Grade School (Former High School)
- 3 Gymnasium
- 4 Christian Church
- 5 United Methodist Church
- 6 Community Center
- 7 Wilsey Library
- 8 Post Office
- 9 Original Fire Station
- 10 Bus Barn
- 11 County Building
- 12 Lumber Yard Building
- 13 Lodge Hall
- 14 Cook's Hardware
- 15 Handi-Mart
- 16 Maxine's Beauty Shoppe
- 17 Tri-County Telephone Building
- 18 Former Telephone Office
- 19 Fire Station #1

Completed by the compiler

## Wilsey Population

### Morris County Census Figures\*

1891	181	1921	250	1951	284	1981	177
1892	145	1922	335	1952	264	1982	170
1893	150	1923	285	1953	272	1983	158
1894	217	1924	217	1954	257	1984	172
1895	210	1925	271	1955	260	1985	NA
1896	NA	1926	261	1956	257	1986	NA
1897	194	1927	302	1957	243	1987	NA
1898	140	1928	292	1958	239	1988	NA
1899	194	1929	278	1959	240	1989	NA
1900	212	1930	329	1960	246	1990	152
1901	166	1931	304	1961	260	1991	NA
1902	224	1932	307	1962	244	1992	158
1903	213	1933	308	1963	247	1993	NA
1904	257	1934	299	1964	246	1994	149
1905	247	1935	307	1965	245	1995	NA
1906	304	1936	311	1966	235	1996	NA
1907	374	1937	301	1967	225	1997	153
1908	312	1938	297	1968	216	1998	NA
1909	307	1939	301	1969	201	1999	149
1910	356	1940	311	1970	204	2000	191
1911	NA	1941	310	1971	185	2001	191
1912	314	1942	304	1972	198	2010	153
1913	305	1943	295	1973	189		
1914	290	1944	296	1974	196		
1915	291	1945	337	1975	200		
1916	282	1946	336	1976	200		
1917	247	1947	297	1977	209		
1918	330	1948	270	1978	203		
1919	277	1949	257	1979	194		
1920	280	1950	269	1980	191		

\*Included in the following sources:

Morris County Clerk. "Schedule 2 -- List of Inhabitants," Abstract of Statistical Rolls, County of Morris. 1891-1909.

Morris County Clerk. "Schedule 2 -- List of Inhabitants," Abstract of Agricultural, Population, and Other Statistics of Morris County. 1910-45.

Morris County Clerk. "Schedule 2 -- List of Inhabitants," Abstract of Agriculture, Horticulture, Population, and Other Statistics for Morris County. 1946-1953.

Morris County Clerk. Abstract of Population," U.S. Bureau of Census: Kansas State Board of Agriculture. 1954-76.

Morris County Clerk. Abstract of Population. 1977-84.  
 Morris County Clerk. Kansas Population. Certified by the Secretary of State.  
 1990-2001.  
 "Morris County Down 181...." Council Grove Republican. August 8, 2011, p. 1.

### **Ministers of the Christian Church\***

F. M. Hooten	Before 1884
F. M. Hooten	Evangelist
W. B. Hinton	Evangelist
Joseph Dunn	Until December 1884
A. C. Bayless	Until 1888
Elder Hopkins	April 1893
Bro. Phillips	1894
Bro. Palmer	1895
Bro. Bryan	Before 1899
Imri Zumwalt	January 1899 - 1904
R. E. Hill	1904
J. G. Engle	1905
K. W. Roland	1906
T. C. Perry	1907
F. E. Lee	1908
L. W. Meyers	Evangelist 1909
L. W. Meyers	1910 - January 1912
R. H. Murphy	May 1912 - 1913
E. W. Harrison	1913 - 1916
R. R. Yelderman	1916 - 1917
E. W. Harrison	1917 - March 1919
W. H. Nicholson	March 1919 - October 1920
A. C. Thorpe	February 1921 - November 1921
A. L. Digby	February 1922 - August 1922
A. E. Hattell	February 1923 - December 1923
A. R. Wallace	April 1924 - April 1926
J. W. Garrett	August 1926 - December 1926
W. H. Woolard	February 1927 - September 1929
J. W. Larimore	1930 - 1932
Lowell Renberger	February 1932 - 1935
Bert Sutton	1935 - 1937
Earl Anson	October 1937 - September 1938
Dwight Lewis	April 1939 - September 1940
J. C. Owens	November 1941 - June 1947
Robert Scott	1947
Robert Zwink	January 1948 - June 1949
Frank Anderson	July 1949 - August 1949
Dean Burton	September 1949 - December 1951
Dale McAfee	January 1952 - June 1953



Frank Anderson	June 28, 1953 - 1978
Ed Spencer	December 1978-1983
Albert Billingsley	1983 -
Tom Clifford Gallagher	
Steve Hanson	- 2004
Harold Brown	2004 -2013
Clarence Sumner	2013-

\*Hanna, Elva and others, History of the Wilsey Christian Church 1873-1973, pp.3-6.

### **Ministers of the United Methodist Church\***

W. W. Kendall	April 1886
Henderson Ritchie	May 1887
H. B. Foster	June 9, 1888
E. O. Raymond	August 1888
Charles G. Bear	March 1892
T. P. Henry	March 1893
J. H. Zabriskie	1897
T. P. Henry	1898
S. S. Squier	1899
N. J. Adams	1900
F. B. Ray	1901
A. L. Day	1903
P. C. Wyant	1905
W. H. Faucett	1908
J. J. Skinner	1910
J. C. Wilson	1914
J. H. Oliver	1918
Lee Darnell	1919
A. W. Way	1922
J. H. Anderson	1925
W. E. Burdette	1929
C. B. Dennison	1930
Charles Gerkin	1931
J. E. Gardner	1937
Robert B. Kendell	1940
Paul Matthaei	1941
Chaplain Owens (stationed at Delavan Airbase)	1943
J. J. Wilson (son of J. C. Wilson)	1944
C. W. Marlin	1946
A. Otis Beach	1948
O. W. Stanton	1952
William E. Berger	1957
Dale Aikens	1958

Wilbur Purvis	1969
Delbert Chance	1973
G. Jeffrey Allen	1979
William Carswell	1983
Connie Locke	1984
Gary Parsons	1985
Mark Stukey	1990
Steve Wiard	1992
Robert Call	1995
Mark Stukey	1999
Marvin Coffey	2001
Larry Nabors	2003
Duane and Deb Andres	2004
Christy Alexander	2009
Marc Frink	2012

\*Sheldon, Elizabeth, M. F. Amrine, and Eleanor Phillips, History of the Wilsey Methodist Episcopal Church, pp. 1-10.

#### **Mayors since 1947\***

Victor Peck (died while in office in 1948)	1947-48
Lester Evans (resigned)	1949
Roger C. Tompkins	1949-51
Arthur D. Parks	1951-53
Clinton A. Bocook (resigned)	1953
Dale Melvin	1953-55
LeRoy Francis	1955-63
Arthur D. Parks	1963-65
Clinton A. Bocook (resigned)	1965
Wayne Evans	1965-67
Lee Meier	1967-69
A. G. Sprecker	1969-73
Robert Lee Gatewood	1973-75
Roland Coover	1975-87
Kenneth Davies	1987-91
Irma Matthews	1991-93
Dan Young	1993-95
Kenneth Davies	1995-97
Jeff Falter	1997-99

Sylvester Sauder  
J. C. Sarratt

1999-2009  
2009-

\* Council Grove Republican, various April issues of years listed above, p. 1.

### The Number of Graduates and the Principals of Wilsey Rural High School\*\*

+1912	1 yr. pr.	R. A. Postma	1941	20	P. J. Isaacson
=1913	2 yr. pr.	Fred Borrell	1942	19	P. J. Isaacson
=1914	2 yr. pr.	Fred Borrell	1943	13	P. J. Isaacson
=1915	3 yr. pr.	L. H. Damon	1944	13	P. J. Isaacson
=1916	3	Lenore Thompson	1945	11	P. J. Isaacson
=1917	4	Isabella Mack	1946	7	P. J. Isaacson
=1918	7	Mr. Hadley	1947	13	P. J. Isaacson
=1919	9	A. L. Rieley	1948	11	P. J. Isaacson
=1920	4	A. L. Rieley	1949	15	P. J. Isaacson
=1921	2	D. E. Connor	1950	15	P. J. Isaacson
=1922	10	C. L. Casad	1951	16	P. J. Isaacson
1923	2	C. L. Casad	1952	13	P. J. Isaacson
1924	13	C. L. Casad	1953	17	T. J. Richard
1925	14	C. L. Casad	1954	16	T. J. Richard
1926	17	C. L. Casad	1955	16	T. J. Richard
1927	20	C. L. Casad	1956	14	T. J. Richard
#1928	16	C. L. Casad	1957	18	T. J. Richard
#1929	17	C. L. Casad	1958	11	Harry V. Samuelson
#1930	7	C. L. Casad	1959	13	R. W. Lewis
1931	19	Rankin P. Wellborn	1960	15	R. W. Lewis
1932	12	Rankin P. Wellborn	1961	16	R. W. Lewis
*1933	25	Rankin P. Wellborn	1962	13	R. W. Lewis
1934	19	Rankin P. Wellborn	1963	10	R. W. Lewis
1935	18-20?	Rankin P. Wellborn	1964	12	R. W. Lewis
1936	18	Rankin P. Wellborn	1965	12	R. W. Lewis
1937	11	Rankin P. Wellborn	1966	10	R. W. Lewis
1938	20	P. J. Isaacson	1967	10	R. W. Lewis
1939	16	P. J. Isaacson	1968	7	T. J. Richard
1940	12	P. J. Isaacson			

+Lambert Buckner.

=The Purple and Gold, Wilsey Rural High School, Wilsey, Kansas, 1926.

#Dale Melvin.

\*Thelma Tompkins.

\*\*All other information is from the following:

The 68 Wildcat, Wilsey Rural High School, Wilsey, Kansas.

## A Partial List of Fires

1. Riley Rush Meat Market - 405 Main (caused by defective flue) About 1887
2. T. C. Snodgrass Store - NW corner of Main and Fifth About 1889
3. Rubin Moyer Store - south of SW corner of Lyndon and Fourth About 1896  
(Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Bullock were living in the back of the store. While coming down the stairs, Mrs. Bullock upset a jar of kerosene on the steps, which ran down the steps and onto a hot stove.)
4. Wilsey Creamery - site of Maxine's Beauty Shoppe? About 1900
5. C. S. Berry Home -- location unknown Early 1900s
6. First Wilsey Depot - south of lumberyard & north side of railway About 1904
7. Wheeler Ferris Home - SE corner of Lyndon and Lincoln 1908
8. M. B. Otis Livery Stable -NW corner of Fifth and North 1905
9. Kinkel Hay Barn - NE corner of Lyndon and Sixth (struck by lightning}  
About 1909
10. Wierman Home -- location unknown About 1916

11. Brick Grade School Building - NW corner of North and First                      Fall 1927
12. West Elevator - SE corner of Main and Gilmore                                      Late 1920s
13. Otis Grocery Store & the Wigle Building - 105 & 107 Fifth                      March 27, 1933
14. Lodge Hall and Theater -- SW corner of Main and Fifth                      December, 1939  
 (The fire began in the projection booth, probably when the film broke and stopped in front of the lamp. The fire was confined to the booth but did \$400 worth of damage to the equipment. Eldon Evans was operating the projector. Frank Riegel, Lester Evans, and Nick Carter extinguished the fire.)
15. Albert Clayton Home - near the home at 709 South Street                      January, 1940  
 (Possibly a fire in a small stove destroyed his home. It stood near the home of his brother Dave Clayton.)
16. Max Sandford Home - 507 North Street    February 15, 1946  
 (The fire began around 10 p.m. and destroyed the seven-room home occupied by the Max Sandford family and owned by Mrs. Art Baum. The cause may have a defective flue in the heating stove in the dining room. Dr. A. T. Swann's home across the street caught fire four times but was extinguished. Mrs. Hattie Meyers' home 25 feet to the west was also saved. The Cory Albin home occupies the site today. Mrs. Meyers' home was torn down perhaps as early as the 1970s.)
17. Walter Buchman Home - location unknown    Sept. 28, 1947

(The home of Walter and Pearl Buchman, a one-story frame structure, was destroyed by fire. Wiring was believed to be a possible cause. Mr. Buchman was the high school custodian at the time.)

18. Freeman Barn - 205 South Second Street April 5, 1948

(Sparks from a trash fire were believed to have caused the fire that completely destroyed a barn on the Harold Freeman property.)

19. Community Building (Warbler Building) - site of current bldg. January 1, 1949

(The blaze completely destroyed the building. It began in the northwest corner near a flue, perhaps about 1 am., following a dance.)

20. Stander Locker Plant -- site of old fire station next to café July 23, 1949

(The fire started in the motor room and was confined there. The cause was unknown. There was no damage to the food in the lockers.)

21. Lodge Hall - SW corner of Main and Fifth January 3, 1950

(The interior of the second floor, the west wall, and part of the roof of the building were badly damaged by a fire. Celestie Nelson discovered flames burning through the west wall as she left work at 6:30 p.m. from the Riegel Store across the street to the north. The cause may have been a heating unit turned on about 3 p.m. for an evening meeting of the Eastern Star.)

22. Telephone Building -407 Lyndon November 14, 1952

(Around 5:30 p.m., fire damaged the switchboard, disrupted telephone service, and destroyed the living quarters of operator Mayme Alspaw. The office part of the building was saved. The fire may have started in the wiring in the ceiling.)

23. Marvin Caley Home - SW corner of Lyndon and Gilmore January 26, 1965

24. Chamberlain Home -NE corner of Coffin and Second May 14, 1976

25. Wilsey Lumberyard - NE corner of Main and Sixth March 10, 1977

26. Shop at Carl Farm -west of Gilmore & Vorse Street intersection  
February 15, 1983

(Fire broke out at 11:30 p.m. and destroyed the shop building and its contents at the Monte Carl farm. Monte and Illa heard an explosion and saw flames so high that there was no chance of extinguishing them. The loss was estimated to be in excess of \$100,000.)

27. Bill Markley home - 211 Fourth Street summer 2006

(Electrical wiring caused damage to home and severely burned Bill. The house was torn down and replaced with a mobile home.)

28. Abandoned Mobile Home - 508 Main - site of Wilsey Hotel October 19, 2007

(This fire began shortly after noon. It may have begun from equipment used while metal was being cut from the siding during salvage work. The crew had left only a short time before the fire was discovered. The trailer burned completely. It had been abandoned since Marie Allen died over a year before. Clyde and Peggy Douglas had first lived in this structure after they razed the hotel building.)

29. Angie Rohloff home - 506 North Street - November 7, 2012

(This fire began upstairs when an electrical heater was left on. The home was severely damaged and was torn down on December 16.)

30. Charles Illk gift shop and home - 101 N. Gilmore August 9, 2013

(This fire began in the wiring of the gift shop and damaged the mobile home as well.)

Sources:

- 1-4 and 6-10. [Tompkins], Thelma Burton, "Fires in Wilsey,"  
Wilsey Rural High School essay, ca. 1929-1933.
5. Lew Berry.
6. Inez Melvin.
11. Otis, Mrs. Mac [Ida], "Schools 'Few Short Termed Far Between' Schools a Problem," p. 3.
12. Dale Melvin.
13. Otis, Mrs. Mac [Ida], "Wanted Business Section of Wilsey Built on Square," p. 3.
14. "Wilsey Theater Fire," Wilsey Warbler, -- December 1939, n.p. Archived in "1933-1940 Scrapbook," compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 61.
15. "Wilsey Home Burns," Council Grove Republican, -- January 1940, n.p. Archived in "1940-1941 Scrapbook," compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 1.
16. "Wilsey Home Destroyed," Council Grove Republican, 15 February 1940, n.p. Archived in "1946 Scrapbook" compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 7.
17. "Home Burns," Council Grove Republican, 28 September 1947, n.p. Archived in "1947 Scrapbook," compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 31.
18. "Freeman Barn at Wilsey Burns," Council Grove Republican, 7 April 1948, n.p. Archived in "1948 Scrapbook," compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 19.
19. "Wilsey Fire Takes Community Building," Council Grove Republican, 2 January 1949, n.p. Archived in "1948 Scrapbook," compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 72.
20. "Blaze in Locker Plant at Wilsey Saturday," Council Grove Republican, 25 July 1949, n. p. Archived in "1949 Scrapbook," compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 52.
21. "Fire at Wilsey," Council Grove Republican, 4 January 1950, n.p. Archived in "1949 Scrapbook," compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 1.
22. "Fire at Wilsey," Council Grove Republican, 17 November 1952, n.p. Archived in "1952 Scrapbook," compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 41.
23. "Little Is Saved from Blaze," Council Grove Republican, 26 January 1965, p. 1.
24. "Wilsey Fire," Council Grove Republican, 17 May 1976, p. 1.
25. "Wilsey Lumberyard Destroyed by Fire," Council Grove Republican, 10 March 1977, p. 1.
26. "Fire Destroys Shop, Contents At Carl Farm," Council Grove Republican, 15 February 1983, p. 1. Archived in "1983 Scrapbook," compiled by Elva Hanna, p. 4.



- 27.
28. "Abandoned Trailer House Burns Friday at Wilsey," Council Grove Republican, 22 October 2007, p. 1.
29. Council Grove Republican, 8 November 2012, p. 1.
30. "Morris County Sheriff Report," Council Grove Republican, 15 August 2013, p.3

### **Postmaster and Postmistresses\***

The Wilsey Post Office was established on May 23, 1884.

<u>Postmaster</u>	<u>Date Appointed</u>
James S. Watkins	May 23, 1884
George W. Coffin	July 1, 1884
Joseph S. Lichty	November 30, 1885
Cornealius R. Francis	September 6, 1887
Milton J. Kimmel	June 25, 1889
John B. Champion	July 24, 1893
Wilbur M. Henderson	July 9, 1897
Mamie Vining	February 3, 1903
William T. Brown	December 16, 1914
Minnie Brown	November 20, 1926 (acting postmistress)
	February 16, 1927
Winfred H. Woolard	December 25, 1927 (acting postmaster)
Charles L. Roy	May 23, 1928 (died September 4, 1933)
Helen M. Roy	September 18, 1933 (acting postmistress)
Henry M. Otis	February 13, 1934 (acting postmaster)
	April 26, 1935 (retired February 28, 1949)
Velma R. Crowley	March 1, 1949 (acting postmistress)
	June 22, 1949 (retired June 26, 1981)
Diane M. Ecklund	June 27, 1981 (officer in charge)
	October 3, 1981 (transferred 1990?)

\*"Wilsey Post Office," U.S. Postal Service Library. National Archives. Washington, D.C.

### **Contract Post Office**

Evelyn Lee

February 8, 1996 (retired September 30, 2003)

### **John D. Wilsey Genealogy**

#### Phillippe Maten Wiltsee

Born: 1570 (probably Luxembourg)  
Died: 1632 (killed by Indians--Delaware River)  
Wife: (3rd) Sophia Ter Bosch

#### Hendrick Martensen Wiltsee

Born: 1623  
Died: 1712  
Wife: (2nd) Margariet Meyring

#### Theunis Hendricksen Wiltsee

Born: 1674 -- New York  
Died: ?  
Wife: Divertie (Deborah) Wilkes Barkman

#### Hendrick Theunise Wiltsee

Born: 1703  
Died: 1794  
Wife: Pieternelle Van de Boog

#### Teunis Wilsey

Born: 1726 -- Newtown, New York  
Died: ?  
Wife: Cornelia Bartley

#### Henry T. Wilsey

Born: 1753 -- Dutchess Co., New York  
Died: 1835  
Wife: Margareth Miller

#### Peter Wilsey

Born: 1778  
Died: ?  
Wife: Margaret Folkner

Tunis Wilsey

Born: 1803 -- New York  
Died: 1870 -- Leroy, Mower Co., Minnesota  
Wife: Nancy Lukins

John Derrick Wilsey

Born: 1828 -- near Binghampton, New York  
Died: 1920 -- Bloomville, Ohio  
Wife: Calpurnia Otis

Jay F.      Frank B.      Ora T.      John H.      Helen B.      Gladys  
B. ?      B. 1857      B. 1864      B. 1866      B. ?      B. 1876

Compiled by Jeneane and Harold Wilsey

**Early Residents of the Wilsey Area**

Compiled in 1932\*

Carrie Coffin Ramsey	1860	Alice Vorse Adams	1879
Charley Brown	1862	Charles V. Adams	1879
Charles Nelson	1864	Joe Earlywine	1879
Shara Blanchell Nelson	1864	Anna Mazel Francis	1879
Mrs. E. A. Reed	1866	Oscar Francis	1879
Jacob Welcher	1866	Arthur R. Sisson	1879
Minnie Berry Brundage	1870	Lewis Sisson	1879
Mary Cutler Bullock	1870	Mae Stover Stiver	1879
Bell Pease Wierman	1870	Ed Varcoe	1879
A. J. Coffin	1871	B. J. Hudson	1880
Kate Semler Peterson	1871	Nancy Hudson	1880
Lana Otis Pirtle	1871	A. M. Ray	1880
Ora Vorse	1871	Charles N. Roy	1880
Ed Bross	1872	John L. Roy	1880
Mae Stewart Edwards	1872	Lew Anker	1881
Henry M. Otis	1872	Maggie Miller Anker	1881
Ora G. Otis	1872	Effie Watkins Berry	1881
Etta Sester Blair	1873	Dora Whittington Earlywine	1881
Ida Hinton McIntosh	1873	Lillie Fay	1881
Charley Robinson	1873	Nellie Wierman Harkness	1881
Sarah Orton Wild	1873	Rosa Welty Irwin	1881
Charles Lyons	1874	Lillie Stephenson Jacobs	1881
Libby Coffin Sheldon	1874	Daisy Brown Love	1881
John Bersuch	1875	Katie Yakle Whittington	1881
Pete Bersuch	1875	E. C. Adams	1882
Ina Ricard Hudson	1875	Lew Berry	1882

Helen Marsh Thompson	1875	Mary Webber Bross	1882
J. B. Alexander	1876	Claude Brown	1882
Mrs. J. Mahffey Alexander	1876	Anna Buckner Eckhoff	1882
Will Ewing	1876	Alonzo Hinshaw	1882
W. A. Hanna	1876	America Olive Hinshaw	1882
Henry Yakle	1877	Fred Roy	1882
Jesse Anderson	1878	Richard Sunter	1882
Minerva Brundage Berry	1878	Henry H. Vorse, Jr.	1882
Carl Brown	1878	Mrs. Electa Bell Amend	1883
I. M. Campbell	1878	Grace Hall Gaston	1883
Jim Earlywine	1878	O. Lafe Edwards	1884
Ray Griffiths	1878	Hattie Sheldon Meyers	1884
A. L. Hailey	1878	Ada Johnson Morris	1884
Thomas C. Melvin	1878	Mrs. Sadie Garr Otis	1884
Sam Sisson	1878	Levi M. Peddycord	1884
T. J. Stiver	1878	Mrs. Frank (Estella) Riegel	1884
Mary Howard Strouts	1878	Mrs. Jennie Davis Robinson	1884
Will Whittington	1878	G. O. Sheldon	1884

### Early Residents of the Wilsey Area Continued

Compiled in 1932\*

O. C. Sheldon	1884
Lucy Yakle Whittington	1884
S. D. Brundage	1885
Roy Cameron	1885
Charles Fisher	1885
Lillian Meyers Kinkel	1885
Earl Ray	1885
T. P. Henry	1886
William Jansen	1886
Bert Fay	1887
Charles Harkness	1887
Mary C. Stover Young	1889
Josephine Webber Lloyd	1893

The date indicates either the year the individual came to Morris County or the year of birth.

\*Otis, Mrs. Mac [Ida], "Complete History with 1932 List Early Residents" Council Grove Republican, April 7, 1965, pp. 1, 4.

## Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Businesses\*

### Original Town -- Block 4

#### Lot 7-8

1886 A. Walker  
1906 Frank S. Riegel  
1948 Adolph Sprecker  
1952 Frank Phillips, Sr.  
1953 Joanne Gieswein  
1964 Tri-County Telephone (S7-S8)

The Walker Building was originally a drug store. Frank Phillips, Sr., tore it down. The telephone building is now located here.

### Original Town -- Block 5

#### Lot 8

1885 Reinhardt Klatt  
1885 Frederick Klatt  
1885 James O. Hill  
1886 Conrad Seim  
1886 Harvey A. Walker  
1904 Harvey L. Meyers

There may have been a blacksmith shop here.

#### Lot 9

1886 Theodore Gallagher  
1904 Harvey L. Meyers

This building was the first fire station and jail. It is a storage building now.

#### Lot 10

1886 Theodore Gallagher  
1891 James M. Evans  
1891 James E. Evans  
1892 Metta Evans  
1894 Franklin J. Evans  
1896 Hattie R. Meyers  
1939 City of Wilsey

This was the site of a blacksmith shop.

#### Lots S11-S12

1885 W. H. Pirtle  
1886 James Evans  
1887 John B. Doner  
1890 W. A. Jordan  
1890 Jacob H. Garey  
1891 J. V. Mitchell  
1892 O. H. Deming  
1893 Agnes Kimmel  
1893 Jacob H. Garey  
1946 Henry Otis  
1958 Carrie Otis  
1974 Velma Crowley  
Curt Brammer

This was the site of the post office. It is now the Curt Brammer home.

#### Lots C11-C12

1885 W. H. Pirtle  
1887 John B. Doner  
1890 W. A. Jordan  
1891 Henry W. Riegel  
1900 Jacob H. Garey  
1946 Henry Otis  
1958 Wilsey Library Board  
1958 Elm Creek Township  
Library

This was once the site of the telephone office. The original building became the library. It was replaced with the current mobile unit in 1987.

#### Lots N11-N12

1885 W. H. Pirtle  
1887 John B. Doner  
1890 W. A. Jordan  
1891 Henry W. Riegel  
1900 Jacob H. Garey  
1946 Henry Otis  
1946 R. Harvey Figley  
1948 Wilsey H.D.U.  
1961 Elm Creek Township

The first building housed the Warbler. The Community Building sits on this lot.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Businesses\***

Original Town -- Block 6

Lots N1-N3  
 1884 Harvey L. Meyers  
 1888 Sophia Sheldon  
 1890 Hattie R. Meyers  
 1913 A. C. Harkness  
 1915 Gabriel Frank  
 1930 Bert Fay  
 1933 Martha Stewart  
 1934 W. H. White

This was the site of the Meyers-Sheldon Building. Later, it was the site of the Sinclair Station. It was torn down.

Part of 1-2  
 1884 Harvey L. Meyers  
 1884 J. S. Litchy  
 1887 J. W. Mays  
 1888 Martha Jones  
 1888 Josiah Kimmel  
 1891 Agnes Kimmel  
 1902 Robert Ray  
 1904 I. L. Croner  
 1925 Bert Fay  
 1932 Lillie Fay  
 1934 W. H. White

This was the hardware store until 1966. It was torn down.

Part of 1-2  
 1884 Harvey L. Meyers  
 1921 Carrie Ramsey  
 1930 Bert Fay  
 1934 W. H. White  
 1953 Nels Eland  
 1961 Robert Sisson

This was the site of the Ramsey Cream Station. Then, it was the home of Nels Eland. Finally, it was Maxine's Beauty Shoppe.

Lots S1-S2  
 1884 Harvey L. Meyers  
 1915 W. D. Southern  
 1925 William Wigle  
 1939 Lizzie S. Wigle & Bessie Newkirk  
 1953 Nels Eland  
 1961 Robert Sisson

This was the site of the Mowrey Meat Market & Powers Drug Store. The building burned in 1933.

Lot 4  
 1884 John Forbes  
 1889 G. W. Coffin  
 1890 Hattie R. Meyers  
 Art Baum  
 1959 Ida Meyers Baum

This was the Baum Garage. Later, it was the Phillips Garage & the Banks Garage. It was torn down.

Lots 7-8  
 1884 John B. Doner-Lot 7  
 1885 John B. Doner-Lot 8  
 1886 John Muehleisen  
 1892 R. F. Lilley  
 1913 A. L. Scott Lumber Co.  
 1952 Hussey Lumber Co.  
 1952 James Albin  
 1973 Dennis Filkin

This was the lumberyard. It was destroyed by fire in 1977.

Lot 9  
 1884 J. W. Seguine  
 1892 Thomas C. Snodgrass  
 1894 Andrew Yakle  
 1894 Samuel Ferris  
 1894 Thomas C. Snodgrass  
 1894 Samuel Ferris  
 1896 W. D. Southern  
 1901 Jacob H. Garey  
 1941 A. T. Swann  
 1955 Mildred Swann

Lot 9 was the site of the office of doctors, Jacob H. Garey and A. T. Swann. The office had earlier been the first school house. It is now a home and is located west of the Christian Church.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

### Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Businesses\*

Original Town -- Block 6

<u>Lot 10</u>	<u>Part of 11-12</u>	<u>Part of 11-12</u>
1884 J. W. Seguine	1885 Amos W. Hampton	1885 Amos W. Hampton
1892 Thomas C. Snodgrass	Thomas C. Snodgrass	Thomas C. Snodgrass
1894 Andrew Yakle	1894 Andrew Yakle	1894 Andrew Yakle
1894 Samuel Ferris	1894 Thomas C. Snodgrass	1894 Thomas C. Snodgrass
1894 Thomas C. Snodgrass	1902 C. R. Francis &	1902 C. R. Francis &
1894 Samuel Ferris	Frank S. Riegel	Frank S. Riegel
1896 W. D. Southern	1911 Frank S. Riegel	1906 A. W. Cushman
1902 J. E. Anderson	1966 Dale Cook	1917 Albert Beam
1904 Harvey L. Meyers		1921 Elmer Alexander
1912 W. H. Mott		1924 W. T. Campbell
1912 W. T. Hooper		1937 Anthony E. Amend
1912 F. D. Wallace		1946 Victor Peck
1914 Nora Williamson		1949 Frank S. Riegel
1916 Mabel Burke		1959 Lloyd Banks
1916 C. N. Hull		1971 Maxine Grover
1917 F. A. Robertson		
1920 George Huehn		
1921 E. G. Davison		
1949 Mamie Anderson		
1956 Clinton Anderson		
1959 Clyde Douglas		
	This was the Riegel Store. Then, it became the Dale Cook Hardware, Dreams Come True, and Cavalry Chapel Bible School.	This was the Cushman Drug Store. Then, it was a movie house, a drug store, a cafe, and the Banks Garage. It was torn down in 1978.

The Wilsey Hotel was located here. It was torn down about 1970.

<u>Part of 11-12</u>	
1885 Amos W. Hampton	
Thomas C. Snodgrass	
1894 Andrew Yakle	
1894 Thomas C. Snodgrass	
1902 C. R. Francis &	
Frank S. Riegel	
1905 W. D. Southern	This building housed the
1932 Ora Otis	Otis I. G. A. Store, C. & J.
1951 Sadie Otis	Market, Handi-Mart,
1969 Mac Otis	and the Wilsey Market.
1975 Charles Illk	
1977 Robert Miller	
1978 Elmer Belt	
1979 George Harder	
1988 Wilsey Market, Inc.	

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

### Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Businesses\*

Original Town -- Block 7

Lots 2S-3  
 1885 C. R. Francis  
 1886 James O. Hill  
 1893 Hattie R. Meyers  
 1923 Harvey L. Meyers

Site of Francis Store.  
 Later deeds for this  
 site are under homes.

Lot 4  
 1890 James O. Hill  
 1891 Henry W. Riegel  
 1906 J. W. Cox  
 1940 Bert Fay  
 1946 Lloyd Shearer

This was the site of the Cox  
 Blacksmith Shop.

Lot 12E  
 Wilsey State Bank  
 1926 Wilsey Mutual  
 Telephone Co.  
 1964 Tri-County Telephone  
 1966 Joseph N. Spiker

This was the telephone  
 company building. It was  
 torn down in 2011.

Lot 7S  
 1885 G. W. Coffin  
 1908 E. M. Davis  
 1915 Clayton Otis  
 1927 Lillie Otis Sisson &  
 Anthony E. Amend  
 1928 A. T. Swann &  
 Anthony E. Amend  
 1951 Wilsey Oil Company  
 1957 Orville Bullock  
 1973 Wayne Evans

The Coffin Store was here.  
 The Wilsey Oil Co. followed.

Lot 7N  
 1885 G. W. Coffin  
 1886 C. R. Francis  
 1906 Lewis Sisson  
 1906 Harvey L. Meyers  
 1922 Frank S. Riegel  
 1950 Wilsey Oil Company  
 1957 Orville Bullock  
 1973 Wayne Evans

This was the second site of  
 the Francis-Riegel Store.  
 It became part of the Wilsey  
 Oil Company.

Lot 8  
 1884 G. W. Coffin  
 1884 McQ. Green  
 1885 Conrad Seim  
 1885 L. A. Newcomer  
 1886 Elizabeth Jackson  
 1888 Wm. Holdinghausen  
 1888 Richard Stewart  
 1889 John B. Champion  
 1906 Jacob H. Garey  
 1906 C. H. Brown  
 1910 William Ullrich  
 1911 Ralph Swartz &  
 Otho Strahl  
 1911 Charles R. Kinkel  
 1950 Wilsey Oil Compan  
 1957 Orville Bullock  
 1973 Wayne Evans

This is the Kinkel Building.  
 The original structures were  
 torn down. The Champion  
 General Store and several  
 meat markets were located  
 here. This building was used  
 for storage by the Wilsey  
 Oil Company.

Lot 9S  
 1884 Graphton Hartman  
 1885 William Hanke  
 1890 James O. Hill  
 1892 G. W. Coffin  
 1899 A. J. Coffin  
 1929 C. W. Davidson  
 1937 Dave Person  
 1945 Mamie Anderson  
 1946 Louis Anderson  
 1951 Wilsey Oil Company  
 1957 Orville Bullock  
 1973 Wayne Evans

The Davidson Cafe was here.  
 It was later a beauty shop.

Lot 9N  
 1884 Graphton Hartman  
 1885 William Hanke  
 1890 James O. Hill  
 1892 G. W. Coffin  
 1899 A. J. Coffin  
 1945 Lizzie Coffin  
 1945 William Fulton  
 1957 Troy Parks  
 1970 Dorothy Davis

This was the barber shop.  
 Later, it was the Wilsey Cafe.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

### Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Businesses\*

Original Town -- Block 7

Lot 10S  
 1884 Lillie Hartman  
 1885 William Hanke  
 1887 Mahlon McNair

Lot 10N  
 1884 Lillie Hartman  
 1885 William Hanke  
 1887 Mahlon McNair

Lot 11S  
 1885 Henry H. Vorse, Sr.  
 1885 Mrs. J. C. Gilbert  
 1898 I. W. Pirtle



1906 A. J. Ham  
 1907 Catherine Brown  
 1915 Robert A. Baum  
 1946 C. Raymond Stander  
 1970 Elm Creek Township

This building housed the Brown Meat Market & Cafe, Baum Hardware, Stander Locker Plant, and the second fire station. It was torn down in 2012.

Lot 11N

1885 Henry H. Vorse, Sr.  
 1885 Mrs. J. C. Gilbert  
 1898 I. W. Pirtle  
 1904 Jacob H. Garey  
 1924 Frank S. Riegel  
 1965 City of Wilsey

This building was torn down about 1960. It was the site of Dr. Pierce's Dentist Office and several businesses were here.

1906 A. J. Ham  
 1907 M. E. Brown  
 1908 Nathan T. Peddycord  
 1912 Levi M. Peddycord  
 1948 Mary Peddycord  
 1953 Dale Melvin

This was the site of the Peddycord Blacksmith Shop and the air dome.

Lot 12S

1885 Henry H. Vorse, Sr.  
 1885 William Hanke  
 1887 John B. Doner  
 1889 Jacob H. Garey  
 1901 Rosa Adams  
 1904 W. T. Brown & H. H. Fisher  
 1906 W. T. Brown  
 1907 Jacob H. Garey  
 1937 Clinton A. Bocook  
 1946 C. Raymond Stander  
 1949 Frank S. Riegel  
 1965 City of Wilsey

This was the site of the McIntosh Meat Market. Several other meat markets were also located here. It was torn down about 1960.

1906 Nathan T. Peddycord  
 1912 Levi M. Peddycord  
 1953 Dale Melvin

This was also part of the Peddycord Blacksmith Shop.

Lot 12N

1885 Henry H. Vorse, Sr.  
 1885 William Hanke  
 1887 John B. Doner  
 1887 C. M. Beachy  
 1893 Wilsey StateBank  
 1896 George B. Hillyer  
 1902 W. O. Sturgeon  
 1902 Wilsey State Bank  
 1936 Anthony E. Amend  
 1953 Frank S. Riegel  
 1965 City of Wilsey

This was the Wilsey State Bank until 1932. It was later the fire station. Now, it is the City Hall Building.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Businesses\***

Original Town -- Block 15

NE Corner

1914 J. A. White  
 1914 Theo B. Seitz  
 1920 H. E. Roach  
 1920 Malcolm Davis  
 1925 Frank S. Riegel  
 1959 Wilsey Lodge #382

The wood-frame Francis-Riegel Store was moved here. It was then the Wilsey Theater and the lodge hall. It was torn

NW Corner

1914 J. A. White  
 1914 Theo B. Seitz  
 1920 H. E. Roach  
 1920 Malcolm Davis  
 1925 Frank S. Riegel  
 Helen Pierce  
 1967 James Albin  
 1973 Dennis Filkin

Buildings of the lumberyard occupied this site.

Center

The depot occupied this site until it was destroyed by fire about 1904. The second depot was located here until LeRoy Hudson moved it to the Council Grove City Lake about 1962.

down around 1995.

Original Town -- Block 18

Lots 1-6 and 11-12

- 1906 John C. Morgan (lots 1-6)
- 1907 John C. Morgan (lots 11-12)
- 1908 C. H. & E. C. Dennis
- 1910 Wilsey State Bank
- 1910 Farmers Union Corp. Assoc.
- 1949 Jay and Leroy Francis
- 1953 Leroy Francis
- 1965 Gary Dalquest

This was the east elevator.

Church Addition -- Block 3

Lot 26

- 1902 Arthur Sisson
- 1945 Frank Montgomery

This was the Sisson Garage.  
It is now the county building.

Railroad Right of Way

The west elevator stood north of the railroad on the southwest corner of this block until it burned down about 1926.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 1

Lots 1-2

- 1885 Christian Church
- 1910 C. R. Francis & M.E. Riegel
- 1911 Frank S. Riegel
- 1967 Clarence Phillips

C. R. Francis moved the school from across the and converted into a home.

Lots 3-4

- 1886 J. P. Rush
- 1888 Henry Pierce
- 1890 Jacob Cooper
- 1895 Electra Amend
- 1910 R. E. Keene
- 1916 W. S. Montgomery
- 1919 Mae Hanthorn
- 1939 W. W. Hanthorn
- 1944 Dicea Munsell
- 1953 Marion White
- 1956 W. H. Thomas

R. E. Keene built this home.

Lots 5-6

- 1906 Edgar Coffin
- 1911 Robert Hill
- 1991 J. G. E. Mack
- 1914 William Skinner
- 1917 Maud Riegel
- 1931 Charles Nelson
- 1935 Sarah Nelson
- 1944 Dicea Munsell
- 1953 Marion White
- 1956 W. H. Thomas

Edgar Coffin built this home.  
It was torn down long ago.

Lots 9-10

- 1905 Albin K. Williams
- 1912 Elsie Newfarmer
- 1919 J. H. Goms

1923 J. M. Barlow  
 1927 John Aikens  
 1929 Sarah Nelson  
 1946 Arthur D. Parks  
 1956 Gary Dalquest

Albin K. Williams built this residence.

Original Town -- Block 2

1898 Henry S. Evans (lot 6) - stable  
 1902 Henry S. Evans (lots 4-5)  
 1915 Henry S. Evans (all remaining lots)  
 1944 Dale Melvin (lot 6)  
 1953 Dale Melvin (all remaining lots)

No homes were ever built on this block.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 3

<u>Lots 1-2</u>	<u>Lots 3-4</u>	<u>Lots 5-6</u>
1885 M. H. Peak	1886 Hiram Elliott	1886 Presbyterian Church
1892 G. W. Coffin	1886 W. H. Pirtle	1910 Albert Beam
1894 A. J. Coffin	1887 Omer G. Pirtle	1918 Charles Arend
1898 Henry Evans	1897 C. R. Francis	1923 Eva Hailey
1944 Dale Melvin	1903 Elsie Gardner	1942 Arthur Hailey
Raymond Jensen	1913 E. H. Gardner	1944 Harold Bobst
	1923 Ora G. Otis	1948 Luther Campbell
	1951 Sadie Otis	1971 Alfred Campbell
	1953 Mary Burns	1975 Walter Campbell
	1969 Lloyd Burns	1977 David Good
	1972 Wilma Sampson	1977 William Markley
	1976 Michael Bachura	
	1978 Glen Filkin	
Dale Melvin sold the first house which was moved to the Council Grove City Lake. He moved the present house, formerly owned by Will Francis, from the Delavan area about 1957.	This house was torn down in the 1990s. J. R. Filkin moved in the mobile home.	Albert Beam built this house after the Presbyterian Church was moved away. It was damaged by fire and replaced with a mobile home about 2006.

<u>Lots 7-8W</u>	<u>Lots 8E-9</u>	<u>Lot 10</u>
1903 Harvey L. Meyers	1903 Harvey L. Meyers	1903 Harvey L. Meyers

1907 J. C. Bashor  
 1910 John Leeson  
 1910 Nathan Peddycord  
 1912 Levi M. Peddycord  
 1948 Mary Peddycord  
 1948 Wayne Evans  
 Marc Evans

J. C. Bashor built this house with Lew Berry's assistance. It was remodeled in 1961.

Lots 11-12

1903 Harvey L. Meyers  
 1910 Christian Church  
 The church house was moved to this site from block one in 1909.

1907 J. C. Bashor  
 1908 Christoph Keefer  
 1908 Charles Hanna  
 1911 E. G. Dargatz  
 1912 O. H. Burton  
 1917 J. W. Edwards, Jr.  
 1919 Owen Andrews  
 1928 A. E. Amend  
 1944 Violet Evans  
 1951 Emmet Blanton  
 1951 Joanne Gieswein  
 1953 Glen Melvin  
 1966 Wayne Evans  
 Marc Evans

J. C. Bashor built this house. Wayne Evans bought it and sold it to Wayne Goldsmith, who moved it to the Council Grove City Lake.

1910 Christian Church  
 1961 Mary Ruth Evans  
 1978 Wayne Evans

This house was moved from south of the Ryle Carl home in June, 1961. It was formerly owned by Roland Coover. Earlier, it had been the first school and the offices of Drs. Garey and Swann in different locations.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 4

Lots 1-2

1884 J. B. Doner  
 1887 Emma A. Meyers  
 1897 Belle Wierman  
 1898 S. J. Peterson  
 1937 Nellie Shubert  
 1945 Mildred Ida Zink  
 1945 Nellie Shubert  
 1950 Walter Hensley

S. J. Peterson built this home. It was torn down about 1970.

Lots 3-4

1904 J. L. Taylor  
 1904 N. O. Smith  
 1908 Francis B. Fay  
 1917 Jane Fay  
 1918 Leana Fay Gangwer  
 1919 Charles Fulton  
 1921 Nelle Hudson  
 1971 James Roy Hudson  
 1971 Kirt Gentry

It was cut up and sent out here as a home for Mr. Wilsey. It is one of the oldest homes.

Lots 5-6

1885 Conrad Seim  
 1886 Delos Houghton  
 1887 Nichalos Lafon  
 1888 James H. Lafon  
 1893 W. D. Southern  
 1895 Andrew Yakle  
 1896 Robert Meyers  
 1898 Andre Yakle  
 1903 Ora G. Otis  
 1943 F. M. Wierman  
 1951 Sadie Otis  
 1969 Mac Otis

It was torn down in 2011.

Lots 7-8

1886 A. Walker  
 1906 F. S. Riegel  
 1948 Adolph Sprecker  
 1952 Frank Phillips, Sr.  
 1953 Joanne Gieswein

Lots 9-10

1884 Harvey L. Meyers  
 1888 Julia Sheldon  
 1890 Hattie R. Meyers  
 1902 Ruth Anderson  
 1951 Lambert Buckner  
 1952 C. A. Bocook  
 1953 Dale Cook

Lots 11-12

1901 Reuben J. Smith  
 1902 Wheeler Ferris  
 1903 Harvey L. Meyers  
 1908 Nettie A. Frank  
 1908 A. W. Cushman  
 1917 Maud Wakefield  
 1931 Lambert Buckner

Frank Phillips, Sr. tore down the Walker Building and built the present home.

In 1964, Tri-County Telephone bought S7-S8 and constructed their brick building.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 5

<u>Lots 1-2</u>		<u>Lots 3-4</u>		<u>Lot 5</u>	
1884	Harvey L. Meyers	1886	James M. Evans	1886	James M. Evans
1888	Sophia Sheldon	1894	Franklin J. Evans	1894	Franklin J. Evans
1894	Julia Sheldon	1897	Hattie R. Meyers	1897	Hattie R. Meyers
1907	A. J. Ham	1921	Ida Rebecca Baum	1921	Ida Rebecca Baum
1908	R. F. Lilley	1952	James Albin	1966	Velma Dike
1919	Jess Lentell				
1919	H. Wakefield				
1921	Maude Wakefield				
1931	J. C. Hertlein				
1932	I. L. Croner				
1962	Mildred M. H. Koclanes				
1963	David E. Person				
1978	Ruth McEnterfer				

This home was torn down about 1960.

A. J. Ham built the house about 1905 with the help of Lew Berry.

The first home burned in the 1940s. James Albin built the present one.

<u>Lot 6</u>	
1898	J. W. Pirtle
1900	I. F. Hastings
1902	Abbey J. Henderson
1916	Amanda Richardson
1919	Sarah Ellen Mowrey
1930	Ernest O. Bross
1930	Ida Otis

I. F. Hastings built this home. It was torn down Dec. 2012.

Original Town -- Block 6

<u>Lots 9-10</u>	
1959	Clyde Douglas

The Wilsey Hotel occupied this site. After it was torn down about 1970, the Douglasses moved in the mobile home. It burned in 2012.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 7

<u>Lots 1-2N</u>		<u>Lots 2S-3</u>		<u>Lot 5</u>	
1885	C. R. Francis (lot 2)	1885	C. R. Francis (lot 2)	1886	William D. Garr
1886	Reuben Moyer (lot 1)	1885	James O. Hill	1887	Henry Riegel & S. Keene
1891	C. S. Moyer (lot 1)	1893	Hattie R. Meyers	1906	Henry W. Riegel
1896	Reuben Moyer (lot 1)	1923	Harvey L. Meyers	1918	James Richardson
1900	Hattie Meyers (lot 1)	1930	Leland B. Garner	1944	Fern Shearer
1920	Ida Baum	1945	William Fulton	1948	Wray Hight
1935	Nora Fisher	1947	William McNeese	1960	Walter Hudson
1940	Walter Wild	1948	Curtis Hougland	1971	Eugene Ray
1944	Alice Adams	1957	Mayme Alspaw	1978	Daniel Freeman
	Raymond Van Fossen	1974	Clarence Sumner	1978	Harry Brown
	Robert Wayman	1978	Glen Richardson		Bruce Scott
			Velma Dike		

This home was torn down in the 1990s. Bob Wayman then built the current home.

This home was built by Mr. Brundage. It was torn by Mr. Richardson. He replaced it with the mobile home.

The original house was torn down in early 1970s. Daniel Freeman combined this lot with lot 6 and built the present home in 1977.

<u>Lot 6</u>		<u>Lot 12E</u>	
1888	J. V. Mitchell		Wilsey State Bank
1892	C. R. Horton	1926	Wilsey Mutual
1896	Everett Davis		Telephone Company
1899	G. W. Coffin	1964	Tri-County Telephone
1899	R. C. McClintock		Company
1901	A. J. Coffin	1966	Joseph N. Spiker
1945	Lizzie Coffin		
1948	Curtis Houghland		This was the site of the local
1948	Bertha Filkin		telephone company. It was
1974	Glen Filkin		torn down in 2011.
1974	Art Astle		
1976	Roland Coover		
1978	Daniel Freeman		
1978	Harry Brown		
	Bruce Scott		

The original home was torn down in the early 1970s. Daniel Freeman combined this lot with lot 5 and built the present home in 1977.

Original Town -- Block 8

City Park

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 9

<u>Lots 7-8</u>		<u>Lots 9-10</u>		<u>Lots 11-12</u>	
1905	R. F. Lilley	1905	R. F. Lilley	1904	R. E. Hill
1919	U. P. Edwards	1905	William Wilkinson	1904	A. J. Jones
1946	Hobart W. Marple	1916	Jacob Boll	1904	A. F. Mowrey
1968	Norman Stander	1944	Daisy Griffiths	1904	Jacob H. Garey
1978	Jesse Francis	1958	Charles L. Francis	1905	A. S. Snodgrass
	Bill Blosser	1970	Maxine Grover	1905	William Wilkinson
		1971	Jim Veal	1916	Jacob Boll
			Dana Richardson	1944	Daisy Griffiths
			Jim Richardson	1968	Edgar Zink
Norman Smith built the home for Mr. Lilley about 1905.		Jim Albin moved in the Central School and remodeled it into a home in the 1950s.		This home burned around 2000. Roland Metcalfe later moved in the mobile home.	

Original Town -- Block 10

<u>Lots 1-2</u>		<u>Lots 3-4</u>		<u>Lots 5-6</u>	
1902	Synthia Adams (lot 1)	1905	Charles Hanna (lot 3)	1904	Mayme Vining
1915	Della Henry	1905	Elmer Hanna	1922	Louisa Whittington
1920	Synthia Adams (lot 1)	1910	Salatis Keene	1954	Lloyd Banks
1926	Annie Vorse (lot 1)	1932	Jane Hanthorn	1976	Robert L. Gatewood
1936	O. C. Sheldon (lot 1)	1935	Walter Hanthorn	1978	Reginald O'Brien
1944	Orville Bullock	1945	Joseph Spiker		Eleanor Phillips
	Brad Richardson	1951	Frank Phillips, Sr.		
		1963	Frank Phillips, Jr.		
This home was built by Mr. Roy.				The father of Mayme Vining built this house. It was burned down about 2002 because of its deteriorating condition.	

<u>Lots 11-12</u>	
1905	Charles Hanna
1911	William W. Wilkinson
1918	Sarah A. Roy
1946	Illa Francis Travis
1949	W. D. Alspaw
1949	Lucy Francis
1963	Orville Bullock
1963	William Sampson
1973	Richard L. Peterson
1975	Ramona Sampson
1978	Frank Phillips, Jr.
1978	Glen Filkin
	Jessie Fletcher

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 11

<u>Lots 1-2</u>		<u>Lots 9-10</u>		<u>Lots 11-12</u>	
1905	John Adams	1906	George Ewing	1906	J. W. Thomas
1905	Andrew Yakle	1942	Elsie Ewing	1906	Harvey L. Meyers
1907	Otis Logan		Scott Coover	1928	Ora Bullock
1908	F. M. Wierman			1942	Elsie Ewing
1913	O. M. Taylor			1969	John Peterson
1956	Thelma Parks				Scott Coover
1973	Rex Lee				
1974	Velma Dike				
1975	Clinton Glessner				
	Scott Coover				

John Adams built this home.

This home was torn down in the 1970s or 1980s.

Mr. Peterson moved the home here from block 19 lot 6.

Original Town -- Block 12

<u>Lots 1-4</u>		<u>Lots 5-6</u>		<u>Lots 7-9</u>	
1906	Henry H. Vorse	1886	J. H. Larue (lot 5)	1886	Hannah Brundage 7-8
1924	Frank S. Riegel	1901	Matson B. Otis (lot 5)	1890	Catherine Pierce 7-8
1925	S. D. Brundage		& B. F. Evans	1899	Jacob Berry 7-8
1949	Troy Parks (1-6)	1905	Harvey L. Meyers (lot 5)	1905	Nannie Gurley 7-8
	& Luella Parks Young	1912	Salatis Keene	1911	Isham Hedgespath
	Merle Rothwell	1918	A. T. Swann	1912	R. I. Bullock
		1922	Oscar Larson	1914	Maude E. Riegel
		1925	Harmon Brundage	1945	Roy Bullock
		1949	Troy Parks	1948	L. E. Hemphill
		1965	Floyd Phillips	1952	Russell Parker
			Alvin Smith		
			Terry Rohloff		
			Merle Rothwell		

Troy Parks built this home in the late 1950s.

This home was torn down in 2012.

This home was torn down in the 1980s or 1990s.

<u>Lots 10-11</u>	
1902	Irve Bullock
1902	Hattie R. Meyers
1903	Clista Bullock
	Oscar Riegel
1951	Lloyd E. Hemphill

This home was torn down.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)



**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 13

<u>Lots 1-2</u>		<u>Lots 3-4</u>		<u>Lots 7-8</u>	
1904	S. D. Brundage	1906	J. W. Cox	1892	Hannah Brundage (8)
	Hattie R. Meyers	1906	John L. Adams	1910	Mary Bullock (7)
1922	A. R. Pirtle	1909	H. A. Miller	1936	Elvie Bullock
1922	George Fisher	1913	R. A. Baum	1976	Clarence Sumner
1950	Russell Parker	1915	Catherine Brown		
1953	Agnes Lawrence	1929	Kirk Hart		
1977	Edward Kovac	1931	J. F. Richardson		
		1944	Jay Francis		
		1960	Robert Sisson		
		1967	Mable Brady		
			Raymond TenEyck		

This home was torn down about 1980.

This small house was torn down about 1970. Clarence Sumner built the current home here in 1977.

<u>Lots 9-10</u>		<u>Lots 11-12</u>	
1886	Hannah Brundage (9)	1889	Mary Brown
1903	J. S. Brundage (10)	1926	Oscar Riegel
1911	Daniel Houdesell		
1924	Oscar Riegel		

This home was torn down about 1960.

This home was torn down many years ago.

Original Town -- Block 14

<u>Lots 1-2</u>	
1884	Henry Riegel
1886	Riley N. Rush
1890	Henry Riegel
1893	O. G. Pirtle
1928	R. T. Brown
1952	Della Cantrall
	Dennis Buchman

The original home burned about 1887. O. G. Pirtle built the present one.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 15

No Homes

Original Town -- Block 16

<u>Lots 7-9</u>		<u>Lots 10-12</u>	
1917	Lawrence Detrich	1913	O. M. Taylor (lot 12)
1939	Lucina Stover	1913	Rebecca James
1939	Vera Alspaw	1914	F. E. Taylor
1967	Lee Coover	1915	Maude E. Riegel
		1916	O. M. Taylor
		1916	J. J. Brown
		1919	Clarence Poff
		1921	Lloyd Garner
		1949	Royce Duff
		1954	Dave E. Person
		1957	Iva Parsons
		1978	Estelle Rohloff

This house was built for  
Moss Taylor.

Original Town -- Block 17

<u>Lots 7-8</u>		<u>Lots 9-12</u>	
1913	O. M. Taylor	1913	O. M. Taylor
1916	J. J. Brown	1916	J. J. Brown
1917	Una Allen	1917	Henry Wenz
1921	Nettie Evans	1919	O. M. Taylor
1952	Glen Richardson	1919	Clarence Poff
1967	Beulah Richardson	1919	O. W. Smirl
		1948	Lawrence Brown
		1955	Frank Brown
		1971	Jesse Wayne Goldsmith

Original Town -- Block 18

No Homes

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Original Town -- Block 19

Lots 1-2  
 1907 R. I. Bullock  
 1911 E. G. Dargatz  
 1911 Rosa Sheldon  
 1920 Ogilvia Sheldon  
 1936 Orville Bullock  
 1944 Jesse Ortez  
 1953 Jessie Bargas  
 1969 Clarence Phillips

Lots 5-8  
 1906 Charles E. Fisher  
 1908 William McClurg  
 1926 D. A. Wild  
 1945 R. Harvey Figley  
 1947 Mont E. Norman  
 1949 G. O. Sheldon  
 1958 Tjark Riemann  
 1964 John Peterson  
 1969 Charles Dalquest  
 Rohloff

Lots 11-12  
 1907 O. P. Morgan  
 1918 F. R. Wycoff (9-12)  
 1942 Martha Hazel Freeman  
 1969 Gary Dalquest  
 Monte Carl

Charles Fisher built this house. It was moved to block 11, lots 11-12 in 1969.

O. P. Morgan built this home. The house was sld and moved three miles east and one mile north of Wilsey by Dennis Filkin in 1973.

Original Town -- Block 20

Lots 1-4  
 1908 Mildred Armstrong  
 1921 Alice Hudson  
 1940 Leonard Eugene Boll  
 1942 Roger Tompkins  
 1976 C. C. Hutchinson

Lots 5-6  
 1909 Clista Bullock  
 1909 R. F. Lilley  
 1923 August Bruckner  
 1956 Maxine Bruckner  
 Mike Davis

Lots 7-8  
 1907 E. A Ramsey  
 1925 John F. Aikens  
 1929 Clinton A. Bocook  
 1934 Jesse Anderson  
 1938 C. L. Glasener  
 1961 Edgar Crampton  
 1967 James Erickson  
 1967 Morris Co. Savings & Loan  
 1976 John Chamberlain

This home was built as a barn in Lewis Berry's pasture, moved here, and remodeled.

This house was built by Sam Bullock. It was moved from the J. M. Brown farm by August Bruckner. It was torn down in the fall of 2012.

Pete Corwin borrowed the money and had the house built in the late 1920s or early 1930s. It was badly damaged by fire in 1976 and later torn down. A mobile home was later moved onto the site.

Lots 9-12  
 1906 W. A. Frontin  
 1926 George Miller  
 1944 George Fisher  
 1946 A. R. Sisson  
 1950 Jessie Sisson  
 1950 Donald Campbell  
 1950 Guy Horton  
 1966 Norris Duane Johnson  
 Tom Kinish

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Conrad Seim's Addition -- Block A

<u>Lots 1-3</u>		<u>Lots 4-6</u>		
1887	Abram Rhodes	1887	William Hawley	The house on lots 4-6 was torn down in the late 1950s.
1888	Eliza Bullock	1887	J. B. Doner	
1893	Robert F. Lilley	1888	Loduska Ferris	
1918	Richard Sunter	1889	Hattie R. Meyers	
1923	Ethel Sunter	1894	Agnes Kimmel	
1964	Lee Meier	1925	Bert Fay	
		1932	Lillie Fay	
		1957	Mayme Alspaw	
		1961	Lee Meier	

Conrad Seim's Additon -- Block B

<u>Lot 1</u>	<u>Lot 2</u>	<u>Lots 3-4</u>	
1887	Mary Hampton	1887	John Houser
1891	D. C. Webb	1891	James Coffin
1892	G. W. Coffin	1903	John A. Hedges
1915	Tharze Lentell	1912	Julia Carter
1927	Clement Plott	1941	Clyde Carter
1927	James L. Roy	1975	Charles Illk
1965	Marvin Caley Roger Heaton		

The home built on lots 1-2 burned in 1965. The Caleys then moved a mobile home to the site.

This home was built by John Houser. Mr. Illk tore it down and replaced it with a mobile home about 1975. It was damaged by fire in 2013.

<u>Lots 7-8</u>		
1890	G. W. Coffin	The original house on lots 7-8 burned. Mr. Roy moved one in from lots 6-7 of block 3 of the Church Addition.
1893	A. J. Coffin	
1894	G. W. Coffin	
1899	R. C. McClintock	
1901	Charles R. Kinkel	
1902	Wheeler Ferris	
1903	Harvey L. Meyers	
1924	Charles Roy	
1928	Jesse Anderson	
1948	Eunice Barber	
1949	W. D. Alspaw	
1957	Maxine Hankins	
1958	Roy Alspaw	
1958	Verlan Deemy	

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

### Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\*

#### Conrad Seim's Addition -- Block C

	<u>Not Lot Numbers</u>
1889	Ben Vassar
1891	Samuel Cutler
1906	Calvin Cutler
1910	Richard Sunter
1910	C. B. Otis
1949	Roy Alspaw
1958	Verlan Deemy
1976	Charles Illk

It was torn down many years ago.

#### Conrad Seim's Addition -- Block D

No Homes

#### Conrad Seim's Addition -- Block E

<u>Lots 1-3</u>		<u>Lots 4-5</u>	
1889	Metta Evans	1888	Frederick Larue
1891	G. W. Coffin	1888	S. A. Cutler
1893	James S. Briggs	1889	V. O. Bateman
1894	Hattie R. Meyers	1891	Samuel Cutler
1914	Lillie May Brownell	1894	George W. Cutler
1936	Emory Brownell & Nellie Plummer	1900	George L. Barber
1943	Fred Stalter	1904	C. S. Berry
1955	Clarence Stalter	1934	Mamie Anderson
1955	Elwood H. Sheldon	1946	Ben E. Hudson
1961	Harris Varcoe	1949	Clinton B. Anderson
		1950	Jesse Anderson
		1952	Emma Milleson
		1953	Maude Roether

This house may have been built by Mr. Hedges about 1907 or 1908. It was later bulldozed after Mr. Harris's death.

Mr. Berry moved his home from his farm to this site. It later burned. Mrs. Roether moved her home here from her farm southeast of Wilsey in the 1950s.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Watkins Addition -- Block 1 (School Lot)

1908 School District 24  
1973 City of Wilsey  
1979 Chan Blim

Watkins Addition -- Block 2

<u>Lots 1-4</u>		<u>Lots 7-12</u>	
1907	Oliver Stover	1910	W. A. Mosholder
1932	Bell Wierman	1966	Henry Say
1945	Nellie Harkness		Charles Paph
1945	Flossie Stover		Doug Williams
	Welby Mitchell		
	Brian Gensman		

Lew Berry helped build this house for Oliver Stover.

Lew Berry helped build this house for W. A. Mosholder.

Watkins Addition -- Block 3

<u>Lots 1-3</u>		<u>Lots 4-9</u>		<u>Lots 10-12</u>	
1907	Arthur Black	1907	John L. Adams	1907	Nathan T. Peddycord
1927	Clair Casad	1908	T. C. Snodgrass	1914	William N. Ramsey
1937	Rankin Wellborn	1910	F. M. Lyon	1932	Carrie Ramsey
1937	J. C. Hertlein	1954	Thomas C. Richard	1944	William Irwin
1951	P. J. Isaacson	1972	Joseph Williams	1971	Frank Munsell
1965	Ora Bullock Leon Arnold				

This house was built for Arthur Black.

This house was built for John Adams.

Nathan Peddycord had this home built for him.

1976 E10-E12  
Lloyd Hanna  
Harold Siegrist

Mr. Hanna had this home built for him in 1976.

Watkins Addition -- Block 4

(Half block only)

1925 Rural High School District 6  
Merle Rothwell

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

### Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\*

Wilsey Addition -- Block 1

No Houses

Wilsey Addition -- Block 2

Lots 7-10

1920 A. G. Ekstrum  
1949 George Porter  
1963 F. A. Springer

This home was torn down in 2013 or 2014,

Wilsey Addition -- Blocks 3 and 4

No Houses

Wilsey Addition -- Block 5

Lots 7-12

1966 R. I. Bullock  
Maxine Parker

This house was moved  
from Mr. Bullock's  
farm east of town.

Wilsey Addition -- Blocks 6, 7, and 8

No Houses

Wilsey Addition -- Block 9

Lots 1-2

1914 Ellen Vorse  
1920 Andrew Allen  
1925 Wilsey State Bank  
1930 Jacob Yakle  
1939 Everett Chapman  
1944 Loren Lewis Richardson  
1946 Edith Richardson  
1966 Mary Helen Richardson  
1976 Kenneth Rogers  
1976 Jesse Wayne Goldsmith

Lots 3-12

1920 Emma Mosholder  
1966 Marvin R. Caley  
1977 Norman R. Stander  
Arthur Shane  
Earl Davies  
Myron Riedel

Mr. Stander built his new home  
here in 1977.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

### Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\*

#### Wilsey Addition -- Block 10

##### Lots 1-12

1913 J. G. E. Mack (lot 1)  
1913 Jennet W. Bentley (lots 1-6)  
1919 Magnus Nelson  
1943 Frank Phillips, Sr.  
1949 Lester B. Evans  
1960 Roland Coover  
Mike Seadeck

B. I. Bentley constructed this house.  
Mr. Coover removed the second story  
and remodeled in 1961.

#### Wilsey Addition -- Block 11

##### Lots 1-6

1913 O. M. Taylor  
1916 J. J. Brown  
1917 Henry Wenz  
1918 John Hammer  
1918 National Hay Co.  
1922 Fountain L. Cook  
1923 Reuben E. Hailey  
1929 William Janzen  
1945 Frank Phillips, Sr.  
1959 Buell McIntosh  
1969 Harry Walker  
Steve Dix

Mr. Phillips tore down the first  
house and built the present one  
about 1945.

#### Wilsey Addition -- Block 12 (Baseball Diamond)

1922 City of Wilsey (gift from J. D. Wilsey)

#### Wilsey Addition -- Block 13

No Houses

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)



**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Wilsey Addition -- Block 14

No Lot Numbers

	<u>House # 1</u>	<u>House # 2</u>
1903	Maggie Hudson	There was once a very small house between the first house and the railroad.
1911	John W. Hudson	
1932	E. G. Davison	
1949	Edgar Zink	
1967	Norris Duane Johnson	

This house was torn down perhaps in the 1970s.

Wilsey Addition -- Block 15

No Houses

Wilsey Addition -- Block 16

	<u>Lots 1-2</u>
1910	R. B. Coffin
1918	A. J. Coffin
1924	A. J. Butts
1924	Nettie Butts
1926	C. A. Bocook
1927	E. S. Adams
1944	Ralph Bullock

Mr. Bert Coffin moved in an old school house and remodeled it. It was torn down in 2015 and replaced with a mobile home.

Wilsey Addition -- Block 17

No Houses

Wilsey Addition -- Block 18

1895	Ira M. Campbell
1899	George B. Horton
1900	William McIntosh
1948	John A. Parks
	Albert Billingsley
	Betty Burnett

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Church Addition -- Block 1

<u>Lots 1-2E</u>		<u>Lots 2W-3</u>		<u>Lots 4-5E</u>	
1902	Abby Henderson	1902	Abby Henderson	1902	Abby Henderson
1906	Ida Henderson	1906	Ida Henderson	1910	Lewis I. Berry
1919	Fred I. Walker	1924	Josephine A. Loyd	1943	Leroy M. Francis
1922	Lula Walker	1951	Richard L. Gant	1967	Fannie L. Francis
1922	Trustees of the Christian Church	1956	Leroy Francis		J.C. Sarratt
1961	Adolph Sprecker	1967	Fannie Francis		
		1971	Howard E. Strouts John Hein		

Mr. Henderson built this home. It was torn down in the fall of 2012.

Lawrence Strouts built this home for his parents about 1973. Leroy Francis remodeled it.

Lew Berry built this home.

<u>Lots 5W-6</u>		<u>Lots 7-8</u>		<u>Lots 9-10</u>	
1902	Abby Henderson	1904	E. G. Williams	1904	E. G. Williams
1907	Ella M. Hopper	1904	Charles R. Kinkel	1904	Charles R. Kinkel
1910	J. M. Fitch	1906	A. J. Ham	1905	A. T. Swann
	Henry Robison	1906	Henry H. Vorse	1906	Charles R. Kinkel
1923	Helen M. Thompson	1907	F. M. Lyon	1906	Harry W. Farrar
1936	C. R. Stander	1925	Amy Lyon	1912	Medora Coffin
	Bonnie Chapman	1937	Frank S. Riegel	1918	Anna Tischhauser
		1942	Lee E. Byrn	1926	Josephine A. Loyd
		1946	Della Henry	1951	Richard L. Gant
		1965	Joseph N. Spiker	1953	Jennie S. Robison
		1966	Larry Richardson	1965	Hazel Garner
		1976	Herman Illk Christopher Karras		Gerald Moller

This house was built for the Hoppers.

A. J. Ham built this house and sold it to Henry H. Vorse.

A. J. Ham built this house for Mr. Farrar.

<u>Lots 11-12</u>		
1904	E. G. Williams	
1906	Charles R. Kinkel	
1906	A. J. Ham	
1907	Jacob H. Garey	
1925	Anna Tischhauser	
1942	Mack C. Hensley	Mrs. Tischhauser moved this house to lots 11-12 from her farm south of town. Douglas Aldrich then moved it to Council Grove about 1978.
1954	Clinton A. Bocoock	
1959	William C. Graves	Harold Bowser moved in the mobile home about 1984.
1959	Henry Waltz	
1960	Ruth Neff	
1977	S. E. Neff	
1978	Douglas Aldrich Harold Bowser	

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: Range 7 Townships 16-17. (Includes all deeds before 1910)

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

Church Addition -- Block 2

Lots 4-5  
1910 United Methodist  
Parsonage

The first parsonage  
was built about 1904.  
It was torn down in 1965,  
and the current parsonage  
was built.

Lot 6-8W  
1904 James Coffin  
Lucy A. Coffin  
1910 F. E. Taylor  
1914 Rebecca James  
1921 W. T. Campbell  
1927 Clement V. Plott  
1937 Forrest G. Plott  
1946 Harry S. Cook  
1961 L. E. Hemphill  
1973 Lee Meier

Lots 8E-11  
1904 James Coffin  
1904 George B. Horton  
1909 Oscar Francis  
1919 Mrs. Ella Mowrey  
1941 Joseph E. Mowrey  
1941 Raymond E. Griffiths  
1942 Nels Nelson  
1957 Clarence F. Nelson  
Jeff Falter

The house was built by  
the younger George W. Coffin.

Church Addition -- Block 3

Lots 4-5  
1904 E. M. Davis  
1904 A. J. Ham  
1906 Clarence Hepler  
1911 R. F. Shubert  
1937 Clive O. Shubert  
1939 Nellie Shubert  
1940 A. H. Jacobs  
1944 F. Pearl Buchman  
1962 Clinton A. Bocook  
1971 Orville Smith  
Kinish  
Rohloff

A. J. Ham built and sold  
the house.

Lots 6-7  
1904 E. M. Davis  
1910 Lucetta J. Kerns  
1910 A. C. Harkness  
1912 Charles J. Roy  
Clinton B. Anderson  
1950 Jesse A. Anderson  
1952 A. A. Orton  
1955 M. M. Orton  
1971 Morris County  
1972 James K. Albin  
1972 James E. Bowers  
1977 Ralph Jr. Hertlein  
Sylvester Sauder  
Roger Heaton

This house was built for  
Mr. Roy. Mr. Orton moved  
it one mile south of Herington  
in the early 1960s. James  
Bowers then moved in an army  
barracks and remodeled it  
into a home.

Lots 8-9E  
1902 Arthur Sisson  
1912 Albin K. Williams  
1922 William E. Wigle  
1939 Bessie Newkirk(1/2)  
1959 Josie Wigle

This home was probably  
built by Albin K. Williams.

Lots 9W-13  
1902 Arthur Sisson  
1945 Dave Person  
1949 Obed Martin  
1962 Laura B. Martin  
1970 Arthur R. Miller  
1978 Rebecca L. Miller

This home was built by  
the younger G. W. Coffin.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: 4 Tracts.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: Range 7 Townships 16-17. (Includes all deeds before 1910)

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

**Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\***

The Unplatted Addition

	<u>Gymnasium Site</u>		<u>Velma Crowley Home</u>		<u>Britt House</u>
1880	Matson B. Otis	1880	Matson B. Otis	1880	Matson B. Otis
	Martha J. Otis		Martha J. Otis		Martha J. Otis
1905	Thomas C. Melvin		Henry Otis	1913	W. D. Southern
	Henry Otis &	1959	Carrie Otis	1922	John A. Mowrey
	Mertie Melvin	1974	Velma Crowley	1939	Anthony E. Amend
1953	Wilsey Rural High		Marcie Gieswein		Edna Mowrey
	School Dist. # 6			1949	Ernest O. Bross
	Merle Rothwell			1963	Howard E. Boyd
				1977	Harry Brown
					Roger Britt
The house was moved to the Gillespie farm in 1953 so the gym could be built.**		Matson B. Otis built the first house here. Henry Otis built the current house in 1930.			

	<u>Swann House</u>		<u>Ray Crowley House</u>		<u>Dryer House</u>
	I. W. Pirtle	1880	Matson B. Otis	1880	Matson B. Otis
	Lana Pirtle	1913	Martha J. Otis	1888	I. W. Pirtle
1919	John Rieth	1919	F. M. Wierman	1899	Elisha J. Palmer
	Emma Rieth	1919	Oliver C. Loyd	1919	F. M. Wierman
1930	A. T. Swann		Josephine Loyd	1922	Bell Wierman
	Alfred A. Swann	1928	Fannie Rodman	1922	Dr. A. W. Lovene
1955	Mildred Swann		Ray Crowley	1923	Wilsey State Bank
	Tonya Vice	1968	Howard E. Boyd		Lana Pirtle
	Samantha Brammer	1977	Robert L. Gatewood	1930	L. R. Fleming
This house caught fire on 11/7/12 and was torn down 12/16/12.		1932	Isabelle Sandford		Wilsey State Bank
				1945	Frank Montgomery
				1947	Bertha E. Peck
				1963	Dewey Brewer
					Carol Dryer

	<u>Gant Mobile Home</u>		<u>Phillips House</u>
1880	Matson B. Otis	1880	Matson B. Otis
1890	Samuel Ferris	1890	Samuel Ferris
1894	T. C. Snodgrass	1894	T. C. Snodgrass
1902	C. R. Francis &	1902	C. R. Francis &
	Frank S. Riegel		Frank S. Riegel
1907	Henry H. Vorse	1907	Henry H. Vorse
1924	Frank S. Riegel	1924	Frank S. Riegel
1925	C. H. Brown	1925	C. H. Brown
	Martha Brown		Martha Brown
1958	Frank Phillips, Sr.	1958	Frank Phillips, Sr.
	Uarda Phillips		Uarda Phillips
1973	Marie Gant		Seadeck
1976	Gary Dalquest		Mel Land

It was moved away. Mr. Phillips built this house in 1958.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: Range 7 Townships 16-17. (Includes all deeds before 1910)

\*\*Leland Garner.

## Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\*

### The Unplatted Addition

	<u>Lee House</u>		<u>Higginbotham House</u>
1880	Matson B. Otis	1880	Matson B. Otis
1890	Samuel Ferris		I. W. Pirtle
1894	T. C. Snodgrass	1908	William N. Ramsey
1902	C. R. Francis & Frank S. Riegel	1911	Mary M. Garretson
1907	Henry H. Vorse		George Garretson
1924	Frank S. Riegel	1941	Frank W. Garretson
1925	C. H. Brown		Florence Garretson Tischhau.
	Martha A. Brown	1979	Richard Higginbotham
1960	Harry Brown		
	Maurice Lee		

John B. Doner built this house.

John B. Doner built this house.

	<u>Carl House</u>		<u>Kinkel House</u>
1886	F. M. Wierman	1886	F. M. Wierman
1892	B. B. Foster	1892	B. B. Foster
1907	Charles R. Kinkel	1907	Charles R. Kinkel
	Blanche K. Alspaw		Blanche K. Alspaw
1961	Ryle Carl, Sr.	1961	Ryle Carl, Sr.
1978	Tony Carl		

Ryle Carl, Sr., built this house about 1961.

This house was built by John B. Doner. It was torn down in the early 1970s.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: Range 7 Townships 16-17. (Includes all deeds before 1910)

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

## Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\*

### Homes Outside the City Limits

	<u>Jason Kovac House</u>	<u>Gardner House</u>	<u>Brad Richardson House</u>
1873	M. K. & T. Ry. Co.	1877	W. C. Gardner
1876	George W. Young	1881	Rachel A. Gardner
1880	George B. Smith		1912 Alonzo Hinshaw
1880	Lydia Smith		1958 Mabel Brady
1883	Charles W. Talmadge		1968 Glen Filkin
1883	Henry W. Riegel & Laura E. Lilly		Cavalry Chapel
1918	George E. Lilly & Charles F. Riegel		Brad Richardson
1934	Frank S. Riegel		
1949	Adrian Hensley		

This house was on the corner south of the Kovac home. It surrounded by trees and could not be seen from the road. It was torn down many years ago. No trace remains. It may have been built as early as 1877\*\*\*

This house was torn down in the 1990s. Dennis Filkin

1954 William F. Boyer  
Jason Kovac

moved in the present one in  
the 1990s.

Henry W. Riegel built  
this home.

Ed Kovac House  
1877 W. C. Gardner  
1881 Rachel Gardner  
1884 B. F. Stump  
1895 Alonzo Sisson  
1900 Frank Anker  
1903 Joseph Anker  
1904 Frank Anker  
1904 William Anker  
1953 Joe & Willard Anker  
1965 Chester L. Smith  
1968 Edward F. Kovac

Gant House  
1877 W. C. Gardner  
1881 Rachel Gardner  
1884 B. F. Stump  
1895 Alonzo Sisson  
1897 Amanda Sisson  
1922 A. C. Ekstrum  
Selma Peterson  
1949 M. E. Norman  
Kevin Gant

Riegel House  
1877 W. C. Gardner  
1881 Rachel Gardner  
1884 B. F. Stump  
1895 Alonzo Sisson  
1897 Amanda Sisson

Oscar Riegel once had a home  
south of the Gant house. It  
was torn down many years  
ago.

Mr. Sisson built this home.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: Range 7 Townships 16-17. (Includes all deeds before 1910)

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

\*\*\*Ruth Evans.

### Recorded Deeds of Wilsey Homes\*

#### Homes Outside the City Limits

Whittemore House  
1908 O. C. Pirtle  
1934 Lana E. Pirtle  
1935 Myrl Estelle Pirtle  
1953 Clinton A. Bocook  
1953 James W. Whittemore  
1976 Dale Whittemore

Buckley House  
1911 C. B. Henderson  
1914 T. W. Buckley  
Lula Buckley  
1933 Claude Buckley  
Luther Campbell  
1942  
1949 Clinton A. Bocook  
1953 James W. Whittemore  
1976 Dale Whittemore

Roether House  
1910 Andrew J. Campbell  
Luther H. Campbell  
1952 Everett Smith  
1968 Edward Roether

O. G. Pirtle built this  
house.

The Buckley house burned.

A. J. Campbell built this  
house.

Krause House  
1912 Albert Clayton  
1912 David R. Clayton  
1949 Madge Brown  
1952 Margaret Goldsmith  
Larry Krause

Albert Clayton once had

Carl House  
1891 James S. Watkins  
1893 Frank P. Melvin  
1896 Wilsey Creamery  
1903 George B. Horton  
1903 Francis M. Wierman  
1909 E. W. Stream  
1909 Albert Aspelin

a small house east of the present one.

1911 Willard P. Storm  
1916 Gord T. Beaham  
1944 Ryle J. Carl, Sr.  
Monte Carl

Monte Carl tore down the first house and built a new one in 1974.

\*Morris County Register of Deeds, Morris County Numerical Index: Range 7 Townships 16-17. (Includes all deeds before 1910)

\*\*Lew Berry. (Notations to the construction of homes)

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