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Small park colors area on Central

(Editor's note: This is the ninth in a series of "then and now" articles on places of interest in Kansas City, Kan., compiled by area historian Margaret Landis in observance of the 100th birthday of KCK in 1986. Much of the information has appeared in *The Kansan*.)

(Transcriptions are presented without changes except to improve readability.)

A razed and rubbed triangular tract of land at 726 Central has been transformed from an eyesore into a park described as a "little beauty spot."

The park once was the site of an historic building in Kansas City, Kan.

The building between 7th and 8th streets on Central (at Simpson and Central Avenues) was known as the "Flat-Iron" buildings because of its triangular shape.

It was built by Samuel Newell Simpson, for whom the street was later named and after whom the area was later named the "Simpson Block."

Simpson came to Wyandotte from Deerfield, N.H., in 1877 and established a real estate business. His brothers were associated with him and later his sons joined the company.

Simpson is said to have helped lay out the general area of KCK between 7th and 8th streets. And, according to city officials, he also helped plot the town of Lawrence as well as a town adjacent to the east lines of Kansas on the banks of the Kansas River adjoining Kansas City, Mo. - the town of Riverview.

Simpson Real Estate Dealers had offices at 722 Central Avenue and also 549 Minnesota Avenue.

At the time of its construction, believed to be in the 1880s, the "Flat-Iron" building was the site of the Normandy Hotel and The Central Bank of Kansas. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was located there in 1898. It also has housed apartments, a real estate office, tavern and pool hall and bicycle shop. It was razed in the 1950s.



Things have changed a lot since the postcard scene of Central Avenue between 7th and 8th (top) taken in 1909. The scene today (bottom) is vastly different, with a little park (with park house) occupying space once graced by the "flat-Iron" building. *Kansan* photo by J. Bradley Burgess.

The park was dedicated by city officials and neighborhood leaders Saturday. It is a project of the city's Community Development Department and seven neighborhood development groups that used their CD funds for the improvement. The Central Avenue Betterment Association also aided in the development. Dolores Gay is chairman of the project committee.

The acquisition of the land and the construction of the park cost about \$65,000.