

The Winding Valley and the Craggy Hillside

A History of the City of Rosedale, Kansas by Margaret Landis.
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Appendix III UTILITIES WATER

Water and water rights are of prime interest to any community, especially a pioneering, new place. When Rosedale was a new town, Turkey Creek was a clean, placid stream. When the Kansas Rolling Mill came to Rosedale in 1875, the Mill was built on the banks of Turkey Creek and water was pumped from the creek for industrial purposes; also used for many household purposes.

The City had a well on Kansas City Avenue (now Southwest Boulevard). This well was probably the source of supply for drinking and cooking as evidence by Rosedale Ordinance No. 21, dated September 27, 1879:

"Section 1. That no person shall at any time pump or use water from the City well on Kansas City Avenue near the Rolling Mill Store in the said City, for any other purposes than for drinking and cooking and drinking herein applies only to drinking water for persons."

As the City grew other wells were dug. Cisterns were built to store water and "to catch rain water." A neighborhood pump was located by Burns Grocery in Gray's Park.

August 13, 1881, Ordinance No. 41 granted a franchise to the Rosedale Waterworks Company. The Officers of the Company: D.E. Jones, President; Dr. L.A. Wohlfarth, Secretary; D.J. Watkins, Treasurer. The Waterworks Company purchased a tract of land 198 feet by 330 feet from Richard Fitzgerald and Bridget Fitzgerald for a reservoir. The reservoir was to be built on the bluff at an elevation of 147 1/2 feet with a capacity of ten to twenty thousand barrels. The large steam pumps of the Kansas Rolling Mill were to be used to pump the water from Turkey Creek to the reservoir. The Rolling Mill was to be paid one cent for every three barrels of water raised.

Excavation for the reservoir was made and walls were built. The Rolling Mill closed in 1883 and no further work was done on the water-works. This plan, although not completed, reveals the ingenuity of the pioneers of Rosedale and their desire for self-sufficiency.

Realizing the need for City water, Rosedale, in 1897, voted bonds for \$25,000. The money was to be used to pipe water from the Missouri City Limits. A meter was placed at the State Line. Rosedale purchased water from Kansas City, Missouri in wholesale lots and sold it to residents at a small profit. "It is accredited with being

the first municipal water-works in the state." By 1912 Rosedale had about 17 1/2 miles of water mains serving approximately 1140 consumers.

After Annexation, Rosedale's water came from the Kansas City, Kansas Water and Light Department. In the spring of 1929, the Board of Public Utilities was created by an act of the Legislature. Laurence E. Wilson, of Rosedale, served on the Board of Public Utilities 26 years. A. Bauer, a Superintendent of the Rosedale Water Department continued with the Kansas City, Kansas Water Department. He worked for the Water Department 50 years. Sidney Martell also served the Rosedale and Kansas City, Kansas Water Departments for many years.

ELECTRICITY

April 12, 1890, forty-two incandescent lights were turned on for the illumination of the streets of Rosedale.

Electricity for general domestic purposes was furnished by the Standard Electric Light Company, a subsidiary of the Kansas City Light and Power Company.

After Annexation, electric current came from the Kansas City, Kansas Municipal Plant at 12th and Missouri River.

GAS

In 1879, The Rolling Mill Company drilled a test hole near the Mill searching for gas. At 220 feet they found a flow. Drilling deeper, at 330 feet, a bed of coal was found and an increase of gas.

On about the same strata of rock, another hole was drilled on Dr. Bell's farm; gas and a two-foot vein of coal was found. Several other holes were drilled including the Geyser Mineral Springs in which there was a pocket of natural gas. This gas accidentally caught on fire and burned for years. It was a "sight-seeing" attraction. This recreational area was also called "Burns Park."

Wyandotte County Gas Company furnished gas to Rosedale. By 1912 the Rosedale office had 1,500 customers.

TELEPHONE

In 1879 the first Telephone Directory of Kansas City was published. Listed in this directory:

Station D - Rolling Mill Office
Station E - Rolling Mill at Rosedale

Prior to 1919 there were two separate telephone companies: Bell Telephone and Home Telephone. Residents could have a choice of companies but business firms, of necessity, subscribed to both telephone companies. The two telephone companies merged August 1919.

The Rosedale Telephone Office was on the second floor at 1000 Southwest Boulevard. (Over the Kansas Building and Loan Association.) This office was closed 1929.

In the August 16, 1929 issue of the Rosedale Independent, V.A. McGilvray wrote:
"The Rosedale District has lost its identity in our telephone directory. No more
Rosedale numbers. They have all been changed to Logan and Valentine. Dial phones
have been placed in service over the entire district"