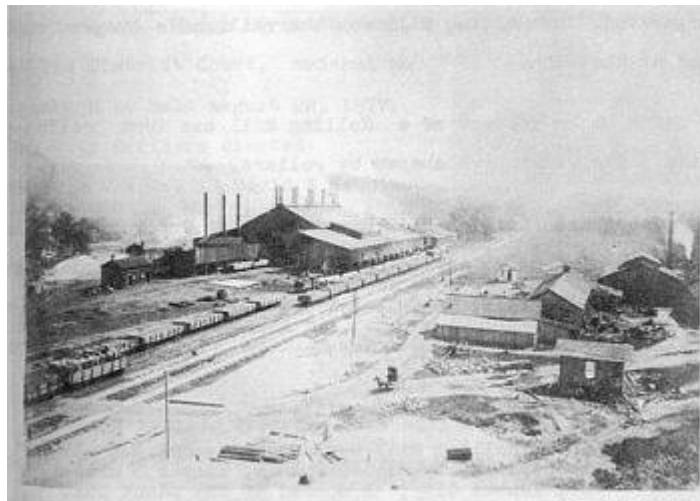


The Winding Valley and the Craggy Hillside

A History of the City of Rosedale, Kansas by Margaret Landis.
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Chapter III THE KANSAS ROLLING MILL



"THE LARGEST MANUFACTURING CONCERN IN KANSAS" - 1875 to 1883

The Kansas Rolling Mill was established in Rosedale in 1875. "Rosedale Grew Up Around The Rolling Mill." Located in the old City of Rosedale about a block north of Kansas City Avenue on Klondike Street adjacent to the railroad.

In the picture, the Kansas Rolling Mill with the Cooper Shop at the rear of the main building. On the right hand side is the Rosedale Coal and Mining Company.

The Railroad is that of the Missouri River, Fort Scott and Gulf at the time the Rolling Mill came to Rosedale. In 1879, the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad was incorporated. The Rolling Mill was the railroad's largest customer at that time.

The major product of a Rolling Mill was iron railroad rails. The rails were shaped by rollers.

The Kansas Rolling Mill Company was incorporated in the State of Kansas, April 14, 1875. Corporate records list: President, A.B. Stone; Secretary, Ira Harris; Vice-President, W.H. Harris.

The following details the Mill:

"Kansas Rolling Mill Company, Missouri. Works at Rosedale, Wyandotte County, Kansas, 3 miles from Kansas City; composed of the plant that was formerly at Decatur, Illinois, having been removed and rebuilt in 1875; it was first erected in 1870; has 11 heating furnaces, 2 hammers, 6 spike machines, and 3 trains of rolls (one 9, one 18 and on 20-inch), and a set of "universal" rolls attached to the 20-inch train; product, iron rails, fish plates, bolts, nuts, spikes, merch. bar iron, wrought drawheads, head chairs, etc.; annual capacity 35,000 net tons" [1]

About 100 families came to Rosedale with the Rolling Mill. After the Mill was located, Rosedale became a "boom" town.

By 1877, having the necessary population of 600, Rosedale was authorized to become a City of the Third-Class. Judge Hiram Stevens, of the District Court, ordered an election be held August 28, 1877. The City Officers elected:

Mayor David S. Mathias
Councilmen: John Hutchinson, Sr.
Henry Juergens
William Bowen
John Haddock
Benjamin Bousman
City Clerk ... Edward Blanford
Treasurer ... William Danks



D. S. Mathias
Superintendent of the Rolling Mill -
first Mayor of Rosedale.

Early records describe the Mill as being an attraction for sight-seers. The roaring furnaces, the clanging noise of the machinery and flying sparks presented a colorful show.

1883, The Kansas Rolling Mill closed due to a depressed economy and financial difficulties due primarily by the railroads changing from iron rails to steel rails.

The Wyandotte District Court ordered the property of the Kansas Rolling Mill be sold at a Sheriff's Sale to the highest bidder. Mr. James Parmalee, of Cleveland, Ohio, bid the property in at \$100,000. (December 6, 1883).

The property stood idle for some time then was occupied by the Kansas City Wire and Iron Works, A.G. Sutherland, Foundry and Machine Shops, Rosedale, Kansas. The old buildings have been torn down. Since 1922, The Trusswall Stone Company has been in business at the location of the old Rolling Mill property.

The closing of the rolling Mill was a big loss to Rosedale. Many families moved away leaving Rosedale a struggling little city. In the late 1880's, a business boom that started in Kansas City, Missouri spread to Rosedale. New industries and new families moved to Rosedale, bringing better times.

While the Rolling Mill was in operation in Rosedale for about 8 years, probably the only remainder of the Rolling Mill is to be found recorded in Real Estate Abstracts as:

Rolling Mill Lands
Rolling Mill Resurvey
Rolling Mill 2nd Addition to Rosedale
Rolling Mill 3rd Addition to Rosedale.

THE ROSEDALE COAL AND MINING COMPANY

The big iron works used 12 cars of coal a day to keep their 11 furnaces going. A local company was organized for the purpose of mining and furnishing coal for the Mill. The Rosedale Coal and Mining Company struck a 21-inch vein of coal at a depth of 335 feet. They expected to find a thicker vein by sinking another shaft 75 to 100 feet deeper. This vein of coal has since been identified with the one at Leavenworth and considered being of a higher quality than the fort Scott or Rich Hill Coal Fields. The dirt removed from the shafts was used to fill-in the streets.

The Mill was on the South side of the Railroad tracks and the Coal Mine was on the North side. In order to get the coal from the mine to the mill, it was necessary to cross the railroad tracks. If the railroad had permitted this, it would have meant a loss of revenue. The Mining Company even tried to convey the coal by an over-head chute, but the railroad stopped this also.

The mine was sealed at a safe depth and closed. This is now a part of the Frisco Railroad Yards.

THE THOR IRON WORKS

The Thor Iron Works - also known as "Kansas Iron Fence Company" started in business in 1878. It was located North of the Rolling Mill and across the tracks.

Their products included: bridges, iron fences, gratings, agriculture implements and other foundry-cast implements.

Later Thor Iron Works was consolidated with the Rolling Mill.

ORGANIZATIONS INFLUENCED BY THE ROLLING MILL

Rosedale Rolling Mill Beneficial Society - 1878. The Beneficial Society was organized as a "sickness and benefit" society and as stated in the preamble of their constitution: to take care of "the infirmities of life and the many accidents which happen to the employees of iron works, from time to time;"

The Society was supported by its members; "Each member shall pay one dollar entry fee and fifty cents a month" Any member who was "unable to follow his employment thru sickness or misfortune, shall receive six (6) dollars for thirteen weeks and three (3) dollars for six (6) months."

The Iron City Lodge No. 48 - Ancient Order United Workmen (A.O.U.W.) of Rosedale, was instituted under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Kansas, June 5, 1880.

Its membership was comprised of employees of the Rolling Mill and other business and professional men.

Pioneer Lodge No. 1 of the State of Kansas - Rosedale, Wyandotte County, Kansas was a subordinate Lodge of The Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers of the United States.

The Lodge was organized August 13, 1881 by men employed by the Kansas Rolling Mill.

[1] Directory to the Iron and Steel Works of the United States Embracing the Blast Furnaces, Rolling Mills, Steel Works, Forges and Bloomaries in Every State and Territory. American Iron and Steel Association - 1882. Pp. 149-150