

VIEWS OF THE PAST



The History of Kansas City, Kansas in pamphlet series

Series 1: "OLD WYANDOTTE"

Sponsored by the Kansas City, Kansas Bicentennial Commission

SETTLEMENT TIME SEQUENCE

- 600 Hopewell Indians, first known inhabitants of the area
- 1541 Coronado reaches land (now Kansas) in search for cities of gold; may have come as far as Kansas City
- 1700 Area dominated by Plains Indians (Kansas, Pawnees, Osage)
- 1703 First recorded visit of a European -- Charles LeSeuer, member of a French mining expedition
- 1795 Morgan Boone is the first English speaking white man to visit area
- 1803 Louisiana Territory (including Kansas) purchased by United States from France
- 1804 June 26 -- Lewis & Clark expedition camps on Kaw Point on way west to explore Louisiana Territory
- 1820 Establishment of "Four Houses", Chouteau Brothers trading post
- 1825 United States Government pays Kansas Indians for lands they claim as hunting grounds, including Kansas City area
- 1826 "Caleece" Ferry, first gateway to the Kansas Territory, begins operation
- 1829 Government gives land (now Wyandotte and Leavenworth Counties) to Delaware Indians, relocating them from Ohio
- 1831 Moses Grinter, first permanent white settler, commissioned by United States Government to operate a ferry across the Kansas River
- 1832 Methodist Mission to Delawares established at White Church
- 1843 Wyandot Indians migrate from Ohio to Kansas; December 14 - purchase 25,000 acres from Delawares in what is now Wyandotte County for \$48,000
- 1854 Kansas becomes a territory
- 1856 Wyandotte City Town Company organized
- 1857 Quindaro established as a Free State port
- 1859 City of Wyandotte incorporated; population: 1,259

OLD WYANDOTTE



In December, 1856, ten land speculators came to the Kansas Territory looking for a place to build a town. They decided on a plot of land at the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers.

This land was owned and farmed by the Wyandot Indians. The Wyandots were a civilized tribe, with religious and educational backgrounds. However, several forced moves by the Federal

Government left little desire for the tribe to establish a permanent town.

Four of the ten land speculators, W.Y. Roberts, Thomas H. Swope, Gaius Jenkins and John McAlpine, were appointed to negotiate with the Wyandots for purchase of the land. The committee discussed the purchase with Wyandot leaders Isaiah Walker, Joel Walker and Silas Armstrong, and decided to form a partnership with these three influential Wyandots and abandon their former associates.

The seven men layed out the town site and filed their survey in Leavenworth on May 14, 1857. Although sales began at \$500.00 a share, soon the demand by settlers pushed the price to \$750.00 a share. The cost of land reached a high of \$1,000.00 a share for the last of the 400 shares to be sold.

The Territorial Legislature approved the incorporation of the Wyandotte Town Company on February 11, 1858. One year later, the Legislature passed two bills of great importance to the town company. The first bill incorporated the town company and the second created the county of Wyandotte. By this time, the Wyandotte Town Company was the temporary county seat and a thriving city with a population of 1,259 citizens.

FIRST SETTLERS:

MOSES GRINTER



Moses Grinter, the first permanent white settler in Wyandotte County, was sent in 1831 by the United States Government to establish a ferry across the Kanza (Kaw) River. This ferry crossing was to serve as a military link between Fort Leavenworth and Fort Scott. The first ferry on the Kaw was called the Military Ferry, then Delaware Crossing and Secondine Landing, and finally was named Grinter's Ferry. Traveler crossing the ferry paid \$.50 per person and \$2.00 per wagon to cross.

Grinter settled near the ferry, married Anna Marshall, a Delaware Indian, and raised a family of ten children. The Grinter family first lived in a log house, but in 1857 Moses Grinter began building the stately brick house, located at K-32 Highway and

South 78th Street, which is recorded in the Library of Congress as the oldest house in Wyandotte County.

Grinter House is a Kansas Historical Site maintained by the Kansas State Historical Society, Friends of Grinter, and the Junior League of Kansas City, Kansas.

CHOUTEAU BROTHERS

In the late 1700's, the Chouteau Brothers -- August, Pierre, Francis and Cyprian -- emigrated from France to settle in the Mississippi Valley. The Chouteaus had received permission from Napoleon to trade with the Indians of the Louisiana Territory. Their first trading post was established near St. Joseph, Missouri.

The brothers were pioneers in the trading business. For 50 years they explored the country and built their trading posts along the Kansas and Missouri Rivers.

The Four Houses Trading Post, built in 1820, was located near present-day Bonner Springs and served as the principal trade center for all of the Kansas Territory.

First among European emigrants in Wyandotte County, the Chouteaus built trading houses in 1828 and 1829 among the Shawnee and Delaware Indians in this area.

The Chouteau Trading Post, located northeast of the village of Turner, was said to be the most important area trading post in the 1840's.