

CHAPTER IX

TOWN OF KNOX

Knox, the county seat of Starke County, was surveyed and laid out in the year of 1851 and is located on the south bank of Yellow River in the northeast quarter of section 22, township 33 north, range 2 west (Center Township), and at this time (1914) contains two thousand inhabitants in round numbers. There has been a slow but sure increase since its organization owing to the fact that it had no railroad until



STARKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, KNOX

the year 1882, when the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad was built through the county. Then the town began to grow and make some progress. The C. I. & S. R. R. was built through in the year of 1886, which naturally boomed the town to some extent, until we now have a fine Bedford stone courthouse erected in 1898 at a cost of \$130,000 and several miles of brick streets and also several gravel streets within the corporate limits of the town.

RAILROADS OF STARKE COUNTY

Those railroads mentioned above were not the first railroads built in the county. The old Louisville, New Albany & Chicago was the first railroad built through the county and runs north and south through the west part of the county. Situated upon this railroad is the Town of San Pierre, formerly called Culvertown. This railroad was built in the year 1852 and Culvertown was the nearest railroad station to Knox and, in fact, the only railroad station in the county, until the construction of the P., F. W. & C. R. R. which was built in the year of 1856. This road, too, missed the county seat and left Knox six miles to the south.

Then soon after came the building of the P. C. C. & St. L. Railroad, which too, like the others mentioned, missed the county seat to the west about ten miles. Then came the building of the C. & E. Railroad in the same year that the N. Y. C. & St. L. Railroad was built through Knox, but it too like the others mentioned missed the county seat by ten miles and ran south of Knox and headed for Chicago. The building of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad was in the year 1896. This also passes clear through the county but runs through the southern part of the county, also missing the county seat. This gives us seven railroads through Starke County, two of which go through Knox, the most of them being double tracked, making it quite convenient for the traveling public so far as railroads are concerned, a thing entirely unknown and undreamed of by the first settlers of the county. What a difference in the mode and manner of traveling today from what it was in the early days of Starke County!

Knox with her railroads, telephones, electric lights, water system and sewerage, is keeping pace with the times. Notwithstanding all that we have missed in the way of railroads in the county seat, we have with the two railroads running through the town a handsome and pleasant town to live in, a town where we can purchase anything from a cambric needle to an automobile or threshing machine.

MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

Knox is a healthy town, being possessed of as fine water as can be found anywhere, and lies on an inclined sandy soil fifteen feet above the water level of Yellow River.

The first telegraph office in Knox was established with the building of the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad in the year of 1882.

Telephones were introduced for the first time in Knox in the year of 1898, and although it was a rather weak affair it has grown to its present magnificent proportions. It is now so the people can talk to each other from the farms as well as the town people, a thing not known or thought of by the early settlers of the county.

The electric lighting system was established in the year 1895—another wonderful improvement over the old-fashioned tallow candle used in our boyhood days. We have an electric light plant here, but

we are now getting our current from Plymouth, Indiana, which makes it cheaper for the patrons who use it. The old plant here will be kept in readiness so that if anything should happen to the Plymouth line we will have the use of the electric lights at all times just the same.

Speaking of the modern improvements of Knox it should not be overlooked that we have a sewer system completed during the year of 1913 at a cost of \$21,000 which adds greatly to the development of the town and a great thing to the citizens in the way of convenience and health of the city from a sanitary standpoint.

Thus it is that all modern improvements must come sooner or later to any town that has the pride to keep on the forward march to better and more useful improvements.

Brick paving has not been turned down in Knox, for since we paved the first streets in 1892 we are still keeping in sight of that very important improvement, having just completed the paving of Main Street (1914) from Delaware Street to the south line of the corporation, making that one of the best streets in the town. North Main Street, Water Street and part of Mound Street and Heaton Street were paved in 1913, together with the pavement made on all four sides of the public square and Main Street from Water Street to the south line of the corporation. All of which gives the town an air of beauty and business-like appearance, due to an enterprising town wherever you see those improvements going on. Cement sidewalks are a common thing, but you will observe that with the exception of a few board walks we had braved the deep sand and dirt streets for many years gone before.

Another great improvement in Knox is her water system, established in the year 1909, which adds greatly to the convenience of all who take water, as it affords water for lawns as well as house use, demonstrating the fact that the good people of Knox see the advantage of those improvements as well as her neighboring towns and cities.

This water system was installed at an expense of about eighteen or twenty thousand dollars and accommodates a greater part of the town. The people living outside of the water zone are occasionally petitioning the town council to extend the water mains, giving water privileges to some who had been without that very great advantage. In fact, it will be only a short time until the whole town will be in reach of water for house use as well as for lawn purposes. No town can boast of fine green lawns unless it has water privileges on account of the very dry seasons that are sure to occur.

Knox has all the modern improvements that belong to other towns of its size and anyone purchasing property for the purpose of making this a home will find it to be equal in respect to all the facilities found in towns of even greater population. The people living in Knox are kind and neighborly, all living for each other's good, always ready and willing to do some act of kindness wherever it will do the most good to the greatest number of its inhabitants.

It was in the year of 1898 that the corporate limits were extended, taking in all that part of sections 22 and 23 not already incorporated

within the boundary lines of Knox, making the corporation to now contain two square miles, one mile north and south by two miles east and west. This increased our population and gave us more revenue for taxes to keep up the school expenses of the town.

No place in the county could have been chosen by those commissioners appointed in those cold and bleak days of perpetual hardship in the year of 1850 as better adapted to the purpose than the present site of the county seat. It is nearly centrally located in the county and extending to the south from Yellow River, which runs along its northern boundary covered over with oak timber and a sandy soil, the soil that predominates throughout most parts of the county.

Knox was incorporated in the year of 1871, just twenty years after it was surveyed and laid out and its officers have kept the wheels of business interest revolving around until we have at this time all the improvements of a modern town. The town officers are found on another page as well as the officers for North Judson and Hamlet.

We have in Knox some fine buildings, dwellings, business houses, courthouse, jail and sheriff's residence, churches and schools that are hard to beat in a town of its size.

The first buildings put up in Knox were of rude construction, similar to the former buildings built by our pioneers who chose to locate in the country (or swamp) at that time, but as advancement proceeded thus came better and bigger buildings until we have a town for which we should all feel justly proud, which would appeal more closely to those now living who saw and experienced the pioneer days and early settlement of the county soon after its organization.

Fine brick business houses and hotels and residences dot the town all over and more being built each year. The Fitz Hotel was opened up in the year 1895 by Joseph Fitz, who built and still owns the building, which is now leased by Messrs. Bogan and Andres, who run it on the principle of a first-class hotel. This hotel is provided with all the modern improvements and is patronized to its full capacity, being favorably located on Main Street near the track of the N. Y., C. & St. L. Railroad, with paved streets and cement sidewalks adding to its attractions as a comfortable place for the traveling public. It was during this year (1914) that a new addition was built to this hotel, making more room to accommodate the many guests that stop at this house.

The Fay Hotel situated on the southeast corner of Pearl and Washington streets is a fine brick building, built in the year 1895. It, too, is a place well worthy of being patronized and its genial proprietor, T. J. Fay, is ever ready to wait upon his customers and willing to do all he can to make them feel contented and happy while they are stopping with him. Near the courthouse makes it convenient for patronage, which it merits every day in the week.

The first hotels built in Knox have long since given way to our new and modern hotels just spoken of, just like the old citizens who have to give room for the rising generations to take their places to control and conduct the business started by them when they too were young and vigorous.

THE PRESS

The first newspaper ever published in the county was called the Starke County Press, which was established by Joseph A. Berry in Knox in the year 1861, and after passing through several hands, is now owned and published by Henry F. Schricker under the name of the Starke County Democrat, which has a wide circulation and is published on Wednesday of each week.

The Starke County Republican is also another weekly paper published in Knox by John L. Moorman. This too has a large patronage. Mr. Moorman has been the editor and publisher of this paper for several years, having bought the plant in the year 1898, and is comfortably located in his own building on south side of Lake Street. This paper is published on Thursday of each week.

CHURCHES

The first Methodist Church was built at Knox in the year 1856 and Elder Munson was the first Methodist minister to preach from that pulpit. It has only been a few months that the Methodists dedicated their present new and magnificent church building which was constructed at a total cost of \$12,000 and stands as a monument to the energetic efforts of the pastor and members and people of the town and vicinity who so liberally contributed toward the building of this fine church building. With the electric lights and with steam heat, finished with all the design imaginable the Methodist Episcopal Church is a building which marks the energies and law abiding and religious citizen of this town.

The present Christian Church was built about ten years ago and is located on the southwest corner of Delaware and Pearl streets and has a good membership. This building is constructed of cement blocks and has a basement all of which is finished off in a neat and workmanlike manner with a heating plant and pipe organ, the only pipe organ in the county. Much credit is due to the pastor and church board for the building of this neat and commodious building, standing erect and ever a monument to those who so liberally contributed toward the building where the Christian denomination can meet and worship in their own house and also hold their weekly Sunday School for the benefit of all who attend the same, which is conducted by competent instructors.

The Roman Catholics have their own building, a neat little brick church on the north side of Washington Street about three blocks east of the courthouse. Situated upon a good gravel street and surrounded by a good neighborhood it is well patronized at their services as is also their Sunday School. This building was first built by the St. Paul's Evangelical Church, but later sold to the Roman Catholic denomination, who, as every other class of church workers, can meet in their own building both for public worship and Sunday School. Those people make it a point to attend strictly to their own business, never interfering

with their neighbors, but coming and going always with a smile for those that deserve it and rather do an act of kindness whenever occasion requires it.

The Free Methodist Church located on the southwest corner of Delaware and Main streets is well patronized and has excellent preachers, also has a full attendance at their Sunday School, which speaks well for those faithful workers in their church, always giving a helping hand to those that are needy. Their membership is something like forty but increasing as time rolls on. No class of Christian workers are more sincere in their belief than is the Free Methodist, always preaching and practicing what they conscientiously believe to be right at all times and on all occasions.

The Latter-Day Saints also have their own church building here, located on the east side of Heaton Street, which has a fairly good number of members, and they hold their meetings sometimes every week and sometimes when their preacher is most convenient to participate in the meetings. They are a kind and good people and are very conscientious in their belief.

There are other classes of religious societies in Knox, as the Seventh-Day Adventists and some known as the Church of God, some Evangelists and Baptists and a few others not here mentioned but they have no church building of their own, holding their meetings in rented rooms or halls, but working faithfully in the class that they hold to be right, all serving God according to the dictates of their own conscience.

CHE MAH

The smallest man in the world lives in Knox. His name is Che Mah. He was born in China in the month of April in 1838, which makes him at the present time seventy-six years old. He only weighs forty pounds, he measures just twenty-eight inches high. He landed in the United States in 1881, being at that time forty-three years old. Mr. Mah has traveled quite extensively through this country and before leaving the old country he appeared in person before all the crowned heads of Europe. He is married and lives on East Washington Street in Knox and owns considerable property here and is considered perfectly reliable, and is fair and honest in all his dealings and is highly respected by all who know him.

A comparison of Mr. Mah with other small people of the world would perhaps be of some interest to those who read of this "little man." Tom Thumb was thirty-one inches high. He was born in New York in the year of 1837. Mrs. Tom Thumb measured thirty-two inches in height. She was also born in New York in the year 1842.

This fully demonstrates the fact that Che Mah is the smallest man in the world. Living peaceably with his neighbors and believing that honesty is the best policy is the universal aim of Mr. Che Mah.

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS

Real estate men are as common as well as a very useful thing in all towns, and Knox is very fortunate in having several to her credit, as the names below will indicate: Dukes, Silverman, Dr. S. I. Brown, Charles Laramore, A. L. McKinney, Charles Lundin, William P. Fletcher, and some others who look after those wishing to buy or sell always with an aim of bettering their conditions.

How natural it is for the human family to keep moving from place to place seeking new fields of adventure, but such is life, all of which is to the interest of the real estate agent who of course is always willing and interested in trying to better your condition.



MAIN STREET, LOOKING SOUTH, KNOX

Insurance is a thing we should all look after, as a loss by fire means much to the owner. Your property should at all times be insured. We have a number of agents in town, so all can be served in that line, thus protecting ourselves from loss by fire should we be unfortunate in having a call of that kind. The following is a list of the insurance agents: Harry E. Johnson, Herbert R. Koffel, Henry C. Rogers, James C. Fletcher, Joseph N. McCormick, Charles Laramore, J. G. Kratli, Charles S. Lundin, Harry Hays, Robert D. Peters, A. W. Swartzell, Newton Brothers.

The following is a list of the practicing physicians: Dr. D. O. White, Dr. Harry Bell, Dr. W. C. Schwier, Dr. S. I. Brown with Dr. H. S. Stoddard, dentist, and Dr. George F. Brand, dentist.

The practicing attorneys are Charles H. Peters, James C. Fletcher, Charles S. Lundin, Robert D. Peters, Thomas Hurley, Henry R. Robins, William J. Reed, Chester Pentecost, E. L. Magruder.

The prominent lodges, church clubs and societies in Knox are Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Modern Woodmen of America, Maccabees, Royal Neighbors of America, Lady Rebekahs, Lady Maccabees, the Grand Army Post, the P. E. O. Society, Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Ladies Aid Society of the Christian Church, the Ladies and Pastors Union of the Methodist Episcopal

Church, the Book Club, the Whist Club, and Literary clubs, the Epworth League and the Christian Endeavor are the two young people's religious societies. Those organizations reflect much credit upon the people of Knox.

It was in the year of 1852 that Prof. John Russel had this to say while addressing a large and highly intellectual meeting: "Long before the period of written history, there existed an order of men, known only to the initiated. It is the oldest human society in existence. The dim twilight of the early ages rested upon its broad arch, yet through every period of its existence has it been the agent of onward progress."

While it is true yet some may question the statements as to the age of societies, nevertheless some are modern, some very old. Away back during the pioneer days the people never forgot their home and its associations in the old world, and of course how natural for them to organize lodges, clubs, societies, schools, churches, Sunday schools and other associations, temperance societies, agricultural societies, reading circles, study clubs, all of which came about from a natural inclination, established in the minds of the people long before their advent into the new world.

In summing up the location, the membership, the number of persons that belong to the religious denominations, their location and their life it would be well to quote what Mr. Ball says concerning his views as published by him in his "Review" of Northwestern Indiana: "Some of the denominations have succeeded much more than others, in maintaining church life and in securing a fair amount of growth. The real good accomplished cannot be estimated by any standard or measurements known in this world. Some churches die and some live. As it is with man, so it is with organizations, who can tell what is really failure and what is success? In the realm of the moral and spiritual, neither wealth nor numbers can be a sure criterion by which to determine what God at last will call success. From the words 'well done' when written by the great Judge there will be no appeal."

From the above it will be seen that long ages ago societies existed in the old world and would it not be natural that those things would exist at the present time?

All societies are based upon the one thought and principle, that is to do some good in this world, that when all things here shall cease to exist, there shall be a compensation eternal beyond the star-lit heavens for all who are deserving of it.

ELEVATORS, ONION STORAGE HOUSES AND LUMBER

Knox has a grain elevator situated on the line of the C. I. & S. Railroad near the depot. Since 1910 it has been owned and controlled by Guy M. Wells, who buys up all the corn, wheat, oats and other kinds of grain from the farmers, always giving them the full benefit of the best prices obtainable anywhere. Mr. Wells, by his honesty of purpose and square dealing, has established a fine trade in that line. He keeps suffi-

cient help at the elevator at all times to wait upon those that bring their crops to him.

He is a young man who lives among us and owns considerable property in the town and is entitled to a good patronage. He has a coal yard at which he has for sale a large quantity of both hard and soft coal which he delivers to any part of town for his customers, at a fair and reasonable price. Mr. Wells opened up this coal yard in 1905.

Mr. Wells also owns a large onion storage house, which he built during the year 1912. This building is situated on the C. I. & S. Railroad, west of the depot, where he stores many hundred bushels of onions and holds them until the price advances. He will then ship them by the car-load to the best markets. He also lets to the farmers space in his storage building where they can store their onions at a nominal cost, which saves the farmers the unnecessary expense of building a storage house of their own. This is a large building, said to hold 30,000 bushels of onions at one time.

You can form some idea of the magnitude of the onion raising in the county when in all little towns you can see large onion storage houses like those in Knox, and several in the country. Besides Mr. Wells' storage house there are others, among which is the Horvitz Brothers' onion storage house, situated on the line of the C. I. & S. Railroad near the depot, which Mr. Horvitz says will hold 20,000 bushels of onions.

The Horvitz Brothers came from Chicago and built this building in the year 1912, and they too have a good patronage. Buying and shipping as well as storing keep them busy.

Then there is, located on the line of the C. I. & S. Railroad immediately west of Mr. Wells' storage house, another storage house built in the same year of something near the size of Mr. Wells' building. That too is doing a good business in the onion trade. All the onion raisers give employment to many persons that are needy and the money they receive from this source is a great benefit to them.

Then there is that ever wide-awake man, Rudolph R. Kline, who is a great raiser of onions and has several buildings here and at ToTo or Rye and at or near Lena Park. He is constantly on the move, looking to the raising, the storing and the shipping, as the seasons and the prices will admit. Many persons have been employed to work in the onion fields for those people from the time they begin to prepare the ground for the crops in the spring until the onions are all harvested in the fall, and the crops are either shipped or housed in the big buildings built and prepared for that purpose. Ralph Kline, a son of R. D. Kline, is actively engaged in the same business with his father.

It has only been just a few years since the raising of onions has been carried on so extensively in this county. However, the prices vary greatly during the different seasons. Sometimes, as I have said before in speaking of the onion raising, they would bring a good price and some seasons the price would be very low. The prices for 1912 were very poor and the prices for 1913 were certainly very encouraging. Then in the

year 1914 the prices were anything but good, but we all have to learn we must meet those conditions as they come.

Since speaking of Mr. Wells' coal yard I will just say here that the Long & Thompson coal business is carried on quite extensively in connection with their lumber yard.

Those gentlemen have a good trade in both branches of their business, delivering coal and lumber to all parts of the town, besides what they sell to the country trade—all of which convinces anyone that they are doing a good business in their line.

This lumber yard was owned and controlled by William Bollman several years ago. This was the first lumber yard established in Knox of any consequence. Mr. Bollman, after running it for some time, sold it to S. C. Close, who in the year of 1902 sold it to Mr. John W. Long, and in 1912 Mr. Bert Thompson purchased a half interest in the business, which has continued to grow and increase in business at the old stand.

Another onion storage is located on the line of the New York, St. Louis & Chicago Railroad, east of the depot. It is owned by Rogers & Harter, where they have been storing their onions each year. It is a feature of good judgment and success to see the interest those people take in the industry that usually pays so well. Now the onion raising is not all, for some of those men have been dividing their business by raising potatoes and also giving part of their time to raising peppermint, which is grown in great quantities in some parts of the county. Some of those farms are provided with stills where the oil is made from the mint. A few miles east of Knox there are several extensive fields of this mint raised each year, also in the neighborhood of Bass Lake and Lena Park, where it is grown in large quantities. Several parties that raised it in small quantities during the last year are planning to go into it more extensively during the coming year.

The grist mill that was built here in 1898 and owned by Mr. William Guyatt was sold by him to Mr. Forlick, who owned it a short time until it burned down, in 1914. The elevator owned by him also burned with the mill. This was a great loss to Mr. Forlick and also to the town in having to lose so valuable an enterprise as this mill and elevator was to the community.

The Knox Metal Wheel Company, an enterprise that was carried on so extensively, is closed down for the time, but it is said to be closed temporarily, with the view of opening up and continuing the manufacture. That it will do so is the sincere hope of all the citizens of Knox.

KNOX POSTOFFICE

The postoffice in Knox is located in a room in the Fitz Block on the west side of Main Street and is very convenient for the patrons of that office.

Willis P. McCormick is the postmaster, with his assistants Miss Agnes

Laramore and Constance Stephens, the office is well cared for, being in good and safe hands, all of whom administer the affairs of the office in a business-like manner, courteous and obliging, always ready to wait upon the patrons of the office.

This office was raised from a fourth-class office to a presidential office in the year of 1896, during the time that Joseph J. Cannon was postmaster. In February, 1912, during Mr. Charles Laramore's incumbency in that office it was made a postal savings depository.

There are four free rural routes out of Knox. The mail carriers go every day except Sunday over those routes delivering the mail to the farmers at their doors. The mail is conveyed in wagons made suitable for that purpose, being enclosed to protect the carriers from the inclement weather, which is the worst during the cold and frozen days of our long winters. Some of the carriers use automobiles, which can now be used quite successfully as we have good gravel roads on most of the mail routes.

The rural mail carriers upon those routes are: No. 1, Perry Rogers; No. 2, Schuyler L. Fletcher; No. 3, Bert Lundin; No. 4, Harry Wallace.

Each one of those carriers have some twenty-five or thirty miles in distance in their routes and the way they deliver the mail to the farmers is worthy of the praise and admiration of all the patrons that they have to deal with.

Knox has the following classes of business, occupations, professions and institutions: Lawyers, doctors, dentists, schools, churches, garages, liveries, restaurants, drygood stores, clothing stores, hardware stores, millinery stores, tailor shops, stenographers, blacksmith shops, milk stations, shoe shops, notion stores, printing offices, cigar factories, fire station, harness shops, grist mill, lumber yard, town hall, ministers, school teachers, janitors, delivery wagons, transfer wagons, steam laundry, insurance agents, dress makers, plumbers, barber shops, abstractors, saloons, metal wheel factory, cement block factory, lodges, telephone exchange, paper hangers, brick masons, carpenters, plasterers, painters, depots, railroads, hotels, banks, coal yards, public halls, grocery stores, furniture stores, postoffice, paved streets, gravel streets, water plant, electric plant, sewer system, milk wagons, express companies, merchants, drug stores, bakeries, real estate agents, opera house, second-hand store, loan agents, pickle factories, onion storages, oil station, elevators, teamsters, telegraphs, contractors, courthouse, jail and sheriff residence, preachers, teachers, musicians, societies, ball club, printers, weavers, tanners, drays, fire company and draymen.