RURAL TOWN ORIGINS
IN SOUTHWEST RENO COUNTY
JAMES E. SHEROW

BETWEEN 1886 and 1889, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company established or developed over 85 towns in Kansas. The total number is probably much higher, as the figure given represents only those towns of which some record exists of their establishment or development by the company. The vast majority of these towns have lost population and typify the passage of small rural town America. Romantic and idyllic visions appear in a person’s mind of this American way of life, which at the same time seems to be declining in importance as a viable lifestyle. Applied to rural Kansas towns, one overriding fact is often overlooked by those preoccupied with idyllic notions: these towns were primarily created as economic instruments to serve and benefit the railroad companies—their creators.

Throughout Kansas, the railroad, more than any other economic organization, was responsible for the pattern of small town development. The main concern in developing these towns was to channel agricultural products onto the company’s rails for transportation. Therefore, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway and other companies viewed town building throughout Kansas in terms of economics and not in terms of human community needs. Whatever benefited the company came first. The requirements of people living in some sort of stable, community relationship was seldom considered.

This other side to town building involves the ideals of community cooperation. But this requires a different foundation than that provided by the railroad companies. The social philosopher Baker Brownell, who has written extensively about small town life, enunciates the ultimate purpose which should guide the development of a community.

Beyond all this is the fact, always evident to those who look to living itself for their final information, that the community cannot be manufactured. It cannot be built like a house. Though intelligence is needed to maintain it, the community itself comes, like life, without machinery or artifice. For the community is not formulated for power, profit, wages, or production. It is the integrity of living. This suggests two methods of town building. One is for the purpose of serving a particular economic function. The second is with concern for providing the framework for successful community relationships. The railroad companies provided the former.

If the citizens of these towns failed to either develop a multi-economic base, or if they failed to promote harmonious community relationships, their towns sat upon a precarious economic foundation laid by the railroad companies. When the railroad companies lost their position as the main means of transportation in rural America, then scores of these towns withered to nothing.

How is it known that the development of small rural towns was little more than one part in a grand plan for economic empire? It can be shown by the manner in which these towns were created by the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company and other railroad companies. By the mid-1850’s, town building was a well established part of railroad building. In the 1850’s, the Illinois Central, a federal land grant railroad, had its own town building corporation. The railroad company had been denied by state law the right to create towns along its lines. This was because of the interest of local developers of already established towns in securing the passage of the rails through their towns. But the railroad company avoided the spirit of the law by forming another corporation—a town company—with nearly an identical board of directors. Thus the railroad company maintained control of town development along its lines.4

The Northern Pacific, a land grant company, had two townsite corporations to develop ex-


This map shows how Reno county appeared before the C.K.&N. was built. The towns of Arlington, Jordan Springs, Netherland (which was renamed Buffalo) and Turon are shown in the southwestern portion of this map. Old Langdon is the schoolhouse site in section 16 of Arlington township. This map of Reno county was published by the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Third Biennial Report of the State Board of Agriculture, 1881-1882 (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1883), p. 91.

extensive trade along its lines. The Northern Pacific, unlike the Illinois Central, built through uninhabited land. In order to make the railroad economically feasible, an extensive colonization program was undertaken to populate the area through which the line was to traverse. Townsites were established as conveyance points for the shipping of agricultural products. This was town building land grant style.1

The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company was not a federal land grant railroad. When it built through eastern and central Kansas in 1866 and 1867, it went through areas fairly populated with improved lands. In the western part of the state, most notably in the High Plains section, population density was low and few lands were improved. Nonetheless, the company took it upon itself to mark out town development along its own lines in both areas.

One might ascribe some altruistic motives to the Illinois Central and Northern Pacific for paving the way for many people to obtain a viable economic freehold in unsettled lands. This cannot be said for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company or any other railroad that built through south-central Kansas in the late 1880's. These lines sought an economic empire. Town building became no more than another capital investment. What follows is a description of the forces which brought about the creation of one such small

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This map shows how Reno county appeared after the C.K.&N. and the D.M.& A. were built. It is of interest to note that on this map Lerado is more developed than Turon. The site of Old Langdon is marked on this map. The development site of Langdon is marked with a large X. The map was published by the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Sixth Biennial Report of the State Board of Agriculture, 1887-1888 (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1889), p. 398.

Rural town in south-central Kansas, known as Langdon.

Rumors circulated throughout southwestern Reno county in 1884 that the Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska Railway and the Denver, Memphis and Atlantic Railway would build through the area. From 1875 to 1885, this area showed continuing agricultural development. In Langdon township, for example, all but about eight sections of sandhill land in its northwest corner were claimed by settlers. Its population neared 300, over 4,300 linear acres were fenced, and 2,300 acres of corn and 1,500 acres of winter wheat were planted. However, the lack of rail transportation slowed the pace of development. When the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe built through Reno county in the mid-1870's, the route went directly to Hutchinson from the east, then followed the Arkansas river northwestward, leaving the entire western and southern portions of the county without close rail connections. The residents of Langdon township had to travel 28 miles to Hutchinson when hauling their marketable goods.

4. Alfred B. Bradshaw. *When the Prairies Were New* (Turon: Arthur J. Allen, 1937), p. 24. For the sake of brevity, the Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska Railway Company will be referred to as the C. K. & N. and likewise the Denver, Memphis and Atlantic as simply the D. M. & A. The C. K. & N. was a branch of the Rock Island railroad company and at times referred to in the contemporary newspapers as the Rock Island.

5. Reno county register of deeds, "Numerical Index," Range 9, Township 25, June 1, 1872-June 1, 1924.

products. Consequently, the majority of the people in the southwestern townships of the county were excited at the prospects of having railroad transportation and the anticipated resulting commercial benefits.

Southwestern Reno county, before the building of the railroad, was dotted with very small hamlets. Generally, they were comprised of not more than two or three buildings. A general supply store, sometimes a schoolhouse, and a post office, with the latter often times doubling as a private residence, were all that comprised these sites. These have often wrongly been considered as early towns, which they were not. Towns maintaining a minimal population base did not appear in southwestern Reno county until the arrival of the railroad. Jordan Springs, Old Langdon, Buffalo, and Arlington were hamlets of this nature. Arlington, however, was a bit more substantial than the others, for it was on the Sun City trail, which was the major trade route throughout the area and served as a watering hole for Texas cattle on their way to Abilene when the area was open range. With the coming of the railroad, three of the above-named sites disappeared and the other changed from a watering hole and trading post to a railpoint.

In 1885, with the winds of change blowing more forcefully, Dr. John A. Brady arrived in the area. He had been a physician and the president of the Ohio Valley Cement Company in Louisville, Ky. He came to south-central Kansas with hopes of creating a great rail center. He began his undertaking by buying some land south of Buffalo and started building the boom town of Lerado. By October, 1885, Lerado was well on its way as indicated by a report to the Hutchinson Interior Herald.

The town site of Lerado was bought and surveyed six or eight weeks ago. The present status of the place is, several buildings, a lumber-yard, a concrete brick-yard, stage line to Kingman, and a weekly newspaper. This week Dr. Brown will start a boarding house, the material is on hand for Jenk’s new building, while a stage line to Hutchinson and a loan and insurance office is talked of. Old Buffalo town is not moved down yet. The town plat is beautiful, being nearly covered with fine trees.

Although Brady seemed to have the best prospects for a successful boomer, one other town’s developers were in competition with Lerado for the first of the lines built through southwestern Reno county—the D.M.&A.

Turon, the other boomer, also hoped to attract the railroad. This site was not as well developed as Lerado. Nonetheless, other factors besides building accruements affected the outcome of the contest that determined who would gain the passage of the railroad. Thus, at the same time when Lerado boasted of its fine buildings, Turon confidently asserted that it had virtually secured the D.M.&A.’s route through its town limits. One Turonite expressed this sentiment in the Hutchinson Interior Herald in October, 1885.

Our people are almost sure of a railroad now. Our neighboring town of Lerado, appears certain of the same road, but it is all up a stump, as the D.M.&A. have decided to come to Turon, if they can get the necessary bonds. The matter of bond issues proved one of two crucial aspects in the two towns’ struggle for the railroad.

Unlike land grant railroads, the D.M.&A. and C.K.&N. solely financed their costs with county and township bonds and general corporate stock. With the coming of the railroads through this area, the fates of boom towns or of hamlets depended on whether or not they attracted railroads to build through to them. Consequently, the pressure to vote and secure bond issues insuring the passage of a given line was tremendous.

The second aspect revolved around economic incentive, that is, which town developers gave the railroad the most to build through it. The D.M.&A. did not own any part of either Lerado or Turon. So it was left to the towns to offer an inducement for the railroad to build through them, or else the alternative was for the railroad to build its own town. Usually incentive entailed a generous right of way through the town plat, 51 percent of the town company’s holdings and sometimes an extra cash payment besides the voted bond issue. These two aspects—bond issues and incen-


8. Ibid., p. 5.


11. Ibid., October 17, 1885.
Lerado—Ledger.

LE DADO, RENO COUNTY, KANSAS.

BLACK BROS.—Proprietors and Editors.

THURSDAY, NOV. 11, 1886.

Lerado, which was surveyed in 1885, was one of the towns in southwestern Reno county which competed for rail lines through the area. The Lerado Ledger, November 11, 1886, compared the town’s advantages with the rival town of Turon.

tive—set the stage for an intense struggle between the boom towns of Lerado and Turon.

As the D.M.&A. representatives were surely cognizant of the competition between the two towns, it was possible that they played one against the other. The D.M.&A. was building from Kingman in the south to St. John to the north. There was speculation that it might pass somewhere near Jordan Springs as well as either Lerado or Turon. In fact, Jordan Springs had little chance of securing the D.M.&A., but the D.M.&A. attempted to convince the residents otherwise. It was probable that the railroad encouraged the rumor to force both Turon and Lerado to pass their bond issues.

Apparently, by January, 1886, prospects for Lerado appeared bleak. It was reported that Brady had become discouraged with his efforts to secure the D.M.&A. line and had sold his interest in the town. However, Brady hung on, and by July, 1886, he had received encouragement about prospects for Lerado when once again the course of the D.M.&A. seemed headed through Lerado. The bond issue seemed to be the crux of this matter once again as this report to the Hutchinson Interior Herald exemplifies.

The president of the D.M.&A., in company with Dr. Brady, visited Lerado this week, had a talk with the people, and submitted a proposition to build his road into the town within six months, provided bonds were voted.

12. Ibid., October 24, 1886.
13. Ibid., January 2, 1886.
Turon's Second Railroad.

Last Saturday an election to vote bonds for a branch of the D. M. & A. railroad from Turon to Iuka was held in Pratt county, and carried in all the townships voting, by majorities that were practically unanimous. The grading contract of the branch was let before the election to Chas. Collins, contract to be valid if the bonds carried. Mr. Collins was here Saturday evening and informed us that he would commence throwing dirt within ten days, in fact he expects to commence work the latter part of this week.

It is generally understood that the company will push this branch to an early completion, and trains will likely run into Iuka before Christmas.

This also secures for Turon the end of a division. It is not only about the right distance for a division but also because two branches will start from this place, one to Iuka and one to Hutchinson.

The prospects of Turon have always been bright, but its prospects are fast becoming realities, and it will not be long when instead of saying we will have four railroads and a population of 2,500 the roads will be realities and the census will show the population.

With railroad connections in all directions and manufacturing already commenced, Turon is bound to grow. Let her boom.

RAILROAD RACKET.

We clip the following railroad news from the Hutchinson News of last Saturday:

E. E. Surveyors.

The Midland, or Frisco, survey corps will be here to-night, coming down Cow creek from Lyons. They have run the Burttton line, and after having this one run will make a proposition. The pole that is the longest will get the persim'

The Ft. Smith corps is now in the field and will be in Hutchinson by the middle of November.

The Great Rock Island.

A big lot of scrapers and grading material came in to-day for the Rock Island folks, and they are getting ready to begin grading in Reno county soon. The surveyors are setting the grade stakes to-day on avenue D. The right of way has been bought and within the past ten days over forty thousand dollars of Rock Island money has been invested here. Mr. Low says he will have cars in here by March if the winter will allow.

The C. B. & Q. Folks.

Messrs. L. A. Bigger and J. F. Greenlee returned this morning from their meeting with the C. B. & Q. directors, at Salina. They report an enthusiastic meeting, and say that all arrangements were made for pushing the schemes to completion as fast as possible. The stock necessary to building is now subscribed, and a survey will be made from Salina to Hutchinson within the next thirty days. The survey from Concordia to Salina has already been completed. The Minneapolis folks, who for a while

Newspaper editors in the rival towns of Laredo and Turon developed a war of words over respective advantages of their communities. Because Turon offered the necessary incentives to the railroad to build through there, the D. M.&A. extended its tracks to the town limits in December, 1886, and the optimism of the Turon editor in the above article dated November 4, 1886, was justified.
In 1887 the C.K.&N. also built through Turon, and Lerado developers admitted defeat. This photograph taken [looking east] in 1978 shows a Lerado building, possibly the opera house. It is the only structure left standing in the Reno county community that died when railroads bypassed it and built through rival towns.

By the middle of August, according to the Hutchinson Interior Herald, Lerado appeared on the D.M.&A. line. In terms of development, Lerado was in a period of rapid growth. As its own newspaper, the Lerado Weekly Ledger, attested: "We have a $25,000 system of Water Works with three miles of water mains. We have a large steam flouring mill. We have three massive and substantial brick buildings and a fourth undergoing construction." Listed among the businesses of the town were a bank, the newspaper, a brick company, a restaurant, a drug store, grocery stores, a dry goods and clothing store, a blacksmith, a lumber yard, a hardware store, hotel, bakery, three physicians, a meat market, a livery barn, a lawyer and a veterinary surgeon. The opera house was the fourth building undergoing construction, and was a 60-by-80-foot, two-story structure. It had an ornamental galvanized iron front. The upper story housed the stage and raised seats were provided for viewing convenience. The bottom story was divided off for businesses. This was quite an impressive structure by any standards for this area at that time.

The water system, considering that Lerado was a boomer, was also quite unique to the area. Lerado contracted the system with the Fairbanks and Company in St. Louis. A huge windmill was erected on a hill and pumped water into a large wooden storage tank measuring 20 feet deep and 20 feet in diameter. The tank was placed on top of a 40-foot tower constructed of 12-inch square timbers. This then fed the water mains. Lerado by simply establishing a water system made itself progressive by comparison to the surrounding towns. Nevertheless, as Lerado discovered, it took more than a water system and a group of growing businesses to lure a railway line.

This was evident by October, 1886, when the following brief statement appeared in the Hutchinson Interior Herald. "Many of our farmers are working on the D.M.&A. railroad, which is nearly graded through Grove town-

15. Ibid., August 31, 1886.
16. Lerado Weekly Ledger, November 11, 1886.
ship." A glance at a map of Reno county reveals that Lerado does not lie within Grove township.

The cause of the railroad's change of plan can only be deduced from clippings from the local newspapers in the two boom towns. The editors of the two papers had developed a war of words over respective advantages of their communities and both showed little fear of overstatement and boasting. The Turon Rustler proclaimed the following in October, 1886.

Track is being rapidly laid this side of Kingman and will probably reach Turon in about fifteen days. The branch of the D.M.&A. from Turon to Luka will be pushed rapidly, and no doubt completed this fall if the bond propositions carry in Pratt county.

A month later the Lerado Ledger retorted:

In the face of their defeat, however, the Turonites have worked themselves into the belief that the D.M.&A. has made them a proposition to affect that if they will extend the time ninety days and give, in addition to the township bonds, $5,000 and 51 percent of their town site, that the road will be completed to that point.

The line, as the editor tacitly admitted, did not go through Lerado. He tried to brush this fact off lightly:

Mr. Mallory, of the D.M.&A., was anxious to build the main branch of the road to Lerado, but was compelled to go west of us on account of the contract with Kingman county.

However, what the Lerado editor obviously forgot was incentive. Had Lerado offered what Turon did, the D.M.&A. assuredly would have passed through Lerado.

Obviously, Turon was disappointed with the delay of the building by the D.M.&A. Nevertheless, Turon paid the additional price for the road's passage. The Turon editor showed a better awareness of the current state of affairs as exemplified by the following statement in the Turon Rustler.

To say that we are not disappointed in the failure of the D.M.&A. to build into Turon on the bonds voted would be to state what is untrue, but it does not mean that we have lost the road, it is only delay.

The optimism of the Turon editor was soon justified, for the D.M.&A. extended its tracks to the town limits of Turon by December 23, 1886. As for Lerado, this left the C.K.&N. as the keystone for its future. Both towns had contended for the line, and the victor had not yet prevailed. If the C.K.&N. did not build to Lerado, the consequences would be grave for that community.

It came as no surprise when M. A. Low, president of the C.K.&N., visited Arlington in August, 1886, and named that city a point on

21. Turon Rustler, October 14, 1886.
22. Lerado Weekly Ledger, November 11, 1886.
23. Ibid.
24. Turon Rustler, November 18, 1886.
Towns like Arlington and Turon were products of industrial technology with their economy dependent upon the railroad. Their survival was usually insured only as long as the railroad remained the main source of transportation. Unless they enlarged their economic base or provided other community values, they were at the mercy of the technology that created them. This photograph of the Main street of Turon was taken about 1908.

the railroad line.\textsuperscript{25} Shortly thereafter, a bond vote for the C.K.&N. was taken. The voters of Langdon, Grove, and Bell townships, even without knowing the exact route the road was to take through the county, voted overwhelmingly for the bonds. Grove township carried the bond measure by a 117 to two vote, as Langdon similarly did by a 63 to four count. Bell township had a few more hesitant voters, but still largely supported the proposed bond by registering 80 votes for it and 15 against it. The election approved the bond for $4,000 per mile of track laid and the C.K.&N. soon thereafter came to Reno county.\textsuperscript{26}

Early in July, 1886, citizens of Arlington circulated a petition through Langdon township asking that their town be named a point on the C.K.&N. line.\textsuperscript{27} But the Arlington people did not feel secure about obtaining the railroad until November 11, 1886. At that time, the editor of the Turon \textit{Rustler} reported: “The permanent location of the Rock Island has been established from Hutchinson to Arlington and the contracts for building let clear through the county.”\textsuperscript{28} Arlington had also helped enhancing its own appeal to the C.K.&N. It provided incentive; the C.K.&N. had come into possession of 51 percent of the Arlington town company.\textsuperscript{29}

When the C.K.&N. survey team first platted its proposed road, it passed five and one-half miles north of Lerado. Lerado thought it had the road and became very distraught by the outcome of the first survey. As the C.K.&N. surveyors worked in Arlington establishing grades and the site for a depot, two representatives from Lerado, Dr. Brown and a Mr. Martin, pressed their cause to the head surveyor.\textsuperscript{30} At the same time, M. A. Low and C. L. Ewing—the right of way man for the C.K.&N.—occupied their time in Hutchinson securing the right of way through the county. The Hutchinson \textit{Daily News} noted their plan. “They [the grading crews of the C.K.&N.] will begin at Partridge and grade through to Turon first and then grade this end of the road when that is completed.”\textsuperscript{31} Nonetheless, the battle as to who would secure the road was far from over.

Apparently, Brown and Martin successfully accomplished their lobbying mission with the surveyor. A second survey was undertaken which put the line a mile north of Lerado. Finally, a third located the line at the northern edge of the town.\textsuperscript{32} It appeared that Lerado had acquired its future. On December 23, 1886, a short feature ran in the Hutchinson \textit{Daily News} entitled, “On to Lerado,” which stated:

Dr. J. A. Brady, of Lerado, is in the city to-day. He says that it is now definitely settled that the Rock Island goes to Lerado, and in a conversation, by telephone, with Mr. E. L. Preston, . . . that he was ordered by the company to

\textsuperscript{25} Hutchinson \textit{Daily News}, August 17, 1886.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., September 1, 1886.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., July 24, 1886.
\textsuperscript{28} Turon \textit{Rustler}, November 11, 1886.
\textsuperscript{30} Hutchinson \textit{Interior Herald}, November 20, 1886.
\textsuperscript{31} Hutchinson \textit{Daily News}, November 22, 1886.
\textsuperscript{32} Lerado \textit{Weekly Ledger}, December 9, 1886.
locate the road to the city of Lerado immediately. This will give Lerado quite a boom. If there is any man in Kansas, who deserves success, it is a rustler like Dr. Brady.\textsuperscript{30}

However, not all shared such good will towards Lerado. The Hutchinson \textit{Interior Herald} sadly noted that:

It will be a terrible joke on Turon if the Rock Island railroad goes to Lerado, as the citizens of that place claim it will. But we suppose Lerado will enjoy it.\textsuperscript{31}

The Turon \textit{Rustler}, as expected, printed some very bitter rejoinders.

The \textit{Lerado Ledger} is now rejoicing over the fact that the Chicago, Kansas & Nebraska road has been located to Lerado.

It is a common practice in the "dense forest" to count their chickens before they are hatched and this is one of the cases in which they have done so. The C.K.&N. has not located a single mile of road this side of Arlington, but when they do it will be to Turon.\textsuperscript{32}

A week later came the following.

A "dense forest" correspondent in the Ledger in the benighted region, says they feel even more certain of getting the Rock Island than of Brady being called to the throne of Bulgaria. Brady never had a ghost of a show to be king of Bulgaria until the RUSTLER advocated his claims and if he stands in with the RUSTLER we'll get it for him yet, but as for the Rock Island, we won't run it through swamps and "forests" in Kansas, consequently it will be run on an air line from Arlington to Turon.\textsuperscript{33}

And soon thereafter Brady must have felt he had a better chance of becoming the king of Bulgaria than he had of securing the passage of the C.K.&N. Brady ignored the demands of incentive, so consequently he lost the road for his town.

Brady was a stubborn man. He thought his offer of land for a depot, the right of way and for a switching yard would be inducement enough to lure the C.K.&N. He thought Ewing and Low were not serious about their demand for 51 percent of the Lerado Town Company, but he was mistaken.\textsuperscript{34} By the end of January, Brady seemed to have recognized impending disaster waiting for his enterprise at Lerado.

On January 31, 1887, the Hutchinson \textit{Daily News} reported on some of Brady's new investments.

Dr. J. A. Brady, Lerado's leader and boomer, was in the city Saturday, and realizing our future greatness, invested in $5,500 worth of city lots in G. C. Millar's addition.\textsuperscript{35}

The disappointed developer was out to recover his losses.

Meanwhile, the construction of the railroad from Arlington resumed. By the end of February, Ewing had purchased the right of way and the work west of Arlington began in earnest. As the editor of the Hutchinson \textit{Interior Herald} succinctly stated: "It looks a good deal like Turon had busted Lerado in the Rock Island railroad fight."\textsuperscript{36}

Brady was finished. He abandoned his dreams for Lerado and moved back to Louisville, Ky. On March 17, 1887, the Turon \textit{Rustler} reported that a number of Lerado's

\textsuperscript{33} Hutchinson \textit{Daily News}, December 23, 1886.

\textsuperscript{34} Hutchinson \textit{Interior Herald}, January 1, 1887.

\textsuperscript{35} Turon \textit{Rustler}, January 13, 1887.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., January 20, 1887.

\textsuperscript{37} Bradshaw, \textit{When the Priories Were New}, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{38} Hutchinson \textit{Daily News}, January 31, 1887.

\textsuperscript{39} Arlington \textit{Enterprise}, February 25, 1887; Turon \textit{Rustler}, February 24, 1887; and Hutchinson \textit{Interior Herald}, February 26, 1887.
Railroad builders wanted trade centers developed about every ten miles along their tracks. With the death of Lerado, a new town, Langdon, was built between Arlington and Turon by the C.K.&N. and local speculators. Land for the townsite was purchased from three Langdon township farmers with the C.K.&N. defraying 25 percent of the accrued cost and receiving in return 51 percent of the town company stock. When the town company resold the land, its officers made a nice profit from town lots and excess land sales. The above photograph shows the C.K.&N. (Rock Island) depot at Langdon, as it appeared in 1890. A 1915 photograph, below, shows the main street of Langdon looking east.
citizens were moving into its town. The facts of this move were sent to the Hutchinson Interior Herald by a Turonite and noted in its March 19, 1887, edition.

Tuesday a party of Lerado gentlemen were over here to see what kind of proposition they could get to move their business and residence houses to Turon. The matter was talked over and our citizens made them a proposition. Yesterday M. H. Potter and H. H. Carr went over there and the contract was signed to move over eleven residence and four business houses. The moving will be commenced immediately.

Further evidence of Lerado's disintegration appeared on October 20, 1887, when the Lerado Ledger announced it was giving away town lots to those who would stay on or develop the property. By the end of July, the track had reached Hutchinson and in four more weeks it had reached Turon's city limits. Although the C.K.&N. had become a reality in southwestern Reno county, there still remained one problem left for the railroad to solve.

There seems to have existed among those who planned and built these railroads the need for a trade center, or one might say, town, for approximately every 10 miles of track laid. With the death of Lerado, a void came to exist between Arlington and Turon. The railroad company approached town development through the vehicle of the Reno Town Company. It had already filled the gap between Hutchinson and Arlington with Partridge, and now prepared to fill the gap between Arlington and Turon.

Two men, known for their speculative activities in the area, played a major role in the town company. They were J. B. Brown and L. A. Bigger. Bigger was the mayor of Hutchinson. Also on the town company board sat the C.K.&N. corporate hierarchy. This convenient arrangement allowed the C.K.&N. to oversee the operations without doing the work. It placed into the hands of competent local speculators the actual workings. Furthermore, this form of interlocking directorship conformed to state law, as no law existed to prevent it. So it was in 1887, Bigger and Brown, working closely with the C.K.&N. company, made plans to buy land and start a new town.

Quick to catch wind of a land deal, three farmers in Langdon township, Adolph Wending, Samuel Wending, and R. C. Miller tried to entice Bigger and Brown into a cooperative venture. Informing Bigger and Brown that they owned land in a contiguous area, the three farmers extolled its virtues as a good location for a townsit. Bigger demanded full ownership of the land involved, but the farmers tried to hold it out for a 49 percent ownership. In the end, Miller and Samuel Wending agreed to sell 240 acres for a return in money. Adolph Wending sold 120 acres for an equivalent return of the land value in town company stock. Thus Langdon was formed.

The land sale for Langdon was financed by the C.K.&N., defraying 25 percent of the accrued cost. For this the C.K.&N. received control of 51 percent of the stock in the town company. The land was purchased from the three sellers for a total of $9,750, of which $2,520 was the stock value of Adolph Wending's share. The town company resold the land for a grand total of $14,915 which enabled its officers to make a tidy profit from town lots and excess land sales. And what was gained by all of this? A new townsit, but not a community.

Some valuable insights can be gained from the experiences of Langdon, Turon, and Partridge. Essentially they were a product of industrial technology. The railroad, if not the most important aspect in developing the Plains as a farming region, was certainly a very crucial one. In an area where there existed no natural means of transportation for crops, and a lack of natural building materials, the railroad was essential. Not surprisingly then, the peo-

40. Turon Rustler, March 17, 1887.
41. Hutchinson Interior Herald, March 19, 1887.
42. Lerado Weekly Ledger, October 20, 1887.
43. Turon Rustler, August 31, 1887.
44. Lewis Atherton, Men on the Middle Border (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), pp. 56.
45. Town Company Record Books—Partridge, "Kansas Town and Land Company Collection," Ms. Dept., KSHS.
47. Mary Adams, "History of Langdon, Kansas" (presented to the high school assembly, Langdon, 1924), p. 4.
48. Town Company Record Books—Langdon, "Kansas Town and Land Company Collection," Ms. Dept., KSHS; Reno county register of deeds, "Numerical Index," No. 9, June 1, 1873-June 1, 1884. The account of A. Wending's transaction was taken from Adams, "History of Langdon," p. 4.
people in and around Langdon township in 1886 took advantage of the first opportunity to support the building of a railroad through their area.

When the railroad was built, the people soon learned of their economic dependence upon it. Brady discovered this when the C.K.&N. bypassed Lerado. The people of Turon and Arlington adapted to it when they were forced to give 51 percent of their town companies’ holdings to the railroad. Three farmers in Langdon township realized the railroad’s power when not allowed to share in town lot selling with the railroad’s land company. These people, grudgingly or otherwise, conformed to the railroad because their economic survival was at stake.

Because the railroad established trade centers—towns—and made possible the farming of the Plains, the people who lived in the area or in the towns were always at the mercy of forces larger than themselves. From their inceptions, small towns like Langdon depended upon the technology which created them. They were the market where the agricultural products in the surrounding area flowed to find its way to market. It was also the outlet where farming families purchased their needs and wants. So long as the railroad remained the main source of transportation, then Langdon and like towns had a function. If these towns did not enlarge their economic functions or provide community while the railroad declined as an instrument of transportation, these towns lost their economic base and their doom was virtually assured.

**Alleged Photo of Jack McCall**

Among the photographs accompanying Joseph G. Rosa’s article, “J. B. Hickok, Deputy U. S. Marshal,” in our Winter, 1979, issue, was one purported to be of John alias Jack McCall, the man who murdered Hickok in 1876.

Unfortunately, the word “alleged” was omitted from the caption and the author received a number of inquiries which have prompted the following comment which, we hope, will set the record straight:

I first saw the photograph in 1965 when it hung in the Old Style Bar at Deadwood, S. D. It was about eight by ten inches in size, and in the same frame was a small tintype from which the enlarged print had been made. Attached to the picture was a label which read: “The One and Only Picture of Jack McCall.” When I questioned the bartender he said that it was his understanding that a former owner had obtained it about 30 or 40 years before, but from whom he did not know.

It was 1969 before I acquired a copy of the alleged McCall photograph and I promptly lodged a copy of it with the Kansas State Historical Society for preservation in the event something happened to the original (a practice I have followed for many years with Hickok-related items). Somehow, my usual note of explanation was not included or became lost. Consequently, the editor published the photograph in good faith as being authentic.

Having examined the photograph on numerous occasions and endeavored to get beyond the Old Style Bar’s story, I must admit that the man in the photograph bears little resemblance to the 1876 descriptions of Jack McCall:

“Never did a more forbidding countenance face a court than that of Jack McCall,” wrote the correspondent of the Chicago Inter-Ocean whose comments were published August 17. “His head, which is covered by a thick crop of chestnut hair, is very narrow as to the parts occupied by the intellectual portion of the brain, while the animal development is exceedingly large. A small, sandy mustache covers a sensual mouth. The nose is what is commonly called ‘snub.’ Cross eyes and florid complexion, and the picture is finished.” To which the Yankton Press and Dakotaian, December 5, added: “His face is one which would not recommend him to a casual observer as a man free from guilt, while his actions made it manifest that he is possessed of a fair share of animal courage.” In short, the man in the photograph exhibits few of the physical characteristics described by the press.

If not McCall, who then, I wonder, was the man who stares so hard at the camera as if prematurely angered at being mistaken for one of the most infamous cowards in the West?
The Messenger.

EUREKA, KANSAS, AUGUST 8, 1885.

Entered at the post-office at Eureka, Kansas, as second-class matter.

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One year, in advance.

DEMOCRATIC COUNTY CONVENTION.

A democratic county convention is hereby called to meet at the court house in Eureka, Kansas, at 11 o'clock, a.m., on Saturday, September 14th, 1885, to nominate candidates for sheriff, register of deeds, county clerk, county treasurer, surveyor and coroner; the delegates from townships composing the Third district will also nominate a candidate for county commissioners.

The several townships will be entitled to the following representation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eureka</th>
<th>1st ward</th>
<th>2d ward</th>
<th>3d ward</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eureka township</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall River</td>
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<td>Jansville</td>
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<td>Lane</td>
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<td>Madison</td>
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<td>Otter Creek</td>
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<td>Pleasant Groves</td>
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<td>Quincy</td>
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<td>South Salem</td>
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<td>Ball Springs</td>
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<td>Shell Rock</td>
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<td>Sterling Creek</td>
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<td>Twin Groves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is recommended that the primaries be held in the several wards and townships on Saturday, September 7th, at 3 p.m., unless individual committees shall give notice of a different date. Each primary should elect its full quota of delegates and alternates in addition. Should there be any other candidates for county central committee, for the ensuing year.

In case of the democratic county con...