

NORTHEAST QUADRANT DRIVING TOUR

Welcome to the Dickinson County Historical Society's northeast quadrant driving tour. This drive will take you to the death site of Abilene Marshal Tom Smith and the site of the county's first permanent settlement. The route is approximately 50 miles in length and can take up to 2 ½ to 3 hours to complete.

Leave Abilene on old U.S. Highway 40, passing through Detroit. At the intersection of Highway 40 and Highway 43, turn right and stop at the Lamb's Point historical marker located on the right side of the road just south of the Union Pacific tracks.

William Lamb settled here in 1857 with his family and built an 18' x 22' log cabin. In 1858 they built a six-room stone house and soon a small village sprang up south and east of the Lamb home. A post office, named Smoky Hill, was established in the Lamb home in December of 1860. In 1863, the post office was renamed Lamb's Point, and later was called Detroit.

By 1867, the Union Pacific Railroad had moved through Lamb's Point and a depot was built just east of Lamb's home. Many of the early settlers first touched Dickinson County soil when they stepped from the train at Lamb's Point, as a depot was not built in Chapman until 1870. Later, in 1878, the railroad built a depot one-half mile west of Lamb's Point at the present site of Detroit. The other stores soon followed to the new location, ending the village of Lamb's Point.

The information on the historical marker is partially incorrect, in that Lamb's Point was not the first county seat and the railroad did not reach there until 1867. William Lamb was appointed as one of the first county commissioners by Governor Denver in 1858, and the first commission meeting was held in the Lamb home.

Turn around and continue north of Highway 43 (Mink Road) for 4 ½ miles to 2800 Avenue.

You have now arrived at the Bethel Cemetery. You can get out here and explore. All that remains of the Bethel Church are the steps. There is a marker on the south side of the steps with the history of the Bethel Church. The church and cemetery served the Moonlight community, which had its beginning in 1879 when a colony of seventy persons, all members of the Brethren Church, came to Dickinson County from Pennsylvania looking for land. They selected homesteads in the Moonlight community because of the gentle rolling hills. Their first priority was to build a church, which became the foundation of the community. Soon there was a general store, creamery, blacksmith shop, and a tobacco store built east of the church. The tobacco store did not last long in the religious community. On March 18, 1894, a post office was established in the general store. It was called Moonlight and served the community until 1905.

The grave of Catherine Eisenhower Pyke is located in the northwest corner of the cemetery near the shed. Catherine was the sister of President Eisenhower's grandfather, Jacob.

Continue driving north on Highway 43 (Mink Road) to the intersection of Highway 18. The farmsteads that you pass where those of the colonists from Pennsylvania that were served by the Moonlight business community.

Turn right and go east on Highway 18. Before you get to the Blue Ridge School, you will see a low ditch in the field to your left and north of the road. Due west of the school building in the northeast bank of this ditch was the location of a dugout where Marshal Tom Smith was killed. The dugout is no longer visible from the road. This is on private property, so we do ask that you do not trespass. In May 1870, Smith was hired by the town of Abilene to bring law and order to the chaos created by the Texas cowboys during the "Cowtown" heyday in Abilene. On November 2, 1870, Smith was killed by two homesteaders who had killed a neighbor in a fight over cattle and fences. Marshal Smith is buried in the Abilene cemetery. His grave is marked by a red granite boulder and is located in the southeast quadrant of the old part of the cemetery.

Continue east on Highway 18. You are entering the Chapman Creek Valley, the location of the first settlements in the county. Approximately 2 ½ miles east of the Tom Smith death site, you will turn left (north) on Paint Road at the Sutphen's Mill Christian Church sign. Proceed north for one mile to Sutphen's Mill. All that remains now is the church, which was built in 1887.

William "Bill" Sutphen came to Sherman Township in 1872 with his family. In 1878, he built a dam and flour mill and in the late 1870's a Congregational Church was built, followed by the Christian Church. In anticipation of the railroad coming up Chapman Creek, Sutphen platted a portion of his land into a townsite in 1885. The original town had four streets, with a later subdivision added. At one time, the town had a mill, cheese factory, blacksmith shop, gunsmith, creamery, general store, and a tin shop where tin cans were made for canning vegetables and fruit. The population of the town at the turn of the century was between 80 and 100 persons. The railroad never came to Sutphen's Mill, and today the population is two. There are no businesses left, but the Christian Church is still there with an active congregation.

Turn around and go back to Highway 18 on Paint Road. Turn left on 18 and proceed east toward Chapman Creek. About one-quarter mile before you cross the bridge, look to the north of the highway toward the tree-lined creek. About halfway between the two bends in the creek on the south bank of the creek is where George W. Freeman built his first log cabin. Freeman was the first permanent white settler in Dickinson County. He arrived here with his family in August of 1855 and built his cabin on the bank of the creek. The following spring, the creek flooded, and Freeman moved his cabin to higher ground on the south side of the highway, higher up on the east bank of the creek. The flood of 1869 reached his cabin again, and he moved his home for the third time.

Just east of the bridge, turn left at the intersection and travel north on Quail Road a short distance to the cemetery (Sutphen Mill Cemetery) on the left side of the road. You may get out and stretch your legs here. Freeman's third homesite was on the east side of the road across from the cemetery. He preempted 160 acres and purchased the land for \$1.50 an acre. The walled section of the cemetery is the Freeman family plot where Freeman's first wife, Sophrona,

who died in the spring of 1856, is buried. George and Sophrona's daughter, Priscilla, who was the first white child born in the county on January 17, 1856, is also buried here. She died in August 1856. Freeman was appointed the first county Probate Judge when the county was organized in 1858 and was appointed County Commissioner in 1861. He also served as Justice of the Peace for many years.

Continue driving north on Quail Road and turn right onto 3100 Avenue. Proceed east for one mile and turn left onto Rain Road. Continue north for three miles to Upland.

The first settlement of the Upland community began in 1870 when Peter Olson homesteaded in the vicinity. During the year 1871, more settlers moved into the area. By 1898, there was a need for a post office. The town and post office got their names from the location which was on the divide between Chapman Creek and the Republican River on the upland prairie. At one time, Upland had a population of approximately 30 persons and was the birthplace and home of two of the largest and most successful mutuals in Kansas. The Kansas Farmer's Mutual Insurance Association was chartered June 2, 1899. Later, in December of 1940, the name was changed to Upland Mutual Insurance, Inc. The Farmer Mutual Telephone Company was founded in 1903. At one time it had 14 exchanges. Both of these mutuals were strictly co-operative.

The telephone company was closed out in the early 1970's and the building razed. The insurance company moved to a different location. The insurance building is all that is left of Upland and is now used as a private residence. There are a total of seven residences and a city park in Upland. At one time there was a store and a creamery. The town was never plotted or incorporated.

Turn right at the Upland intersection (3400 Avenue) and proceed east for two miles to Trail Road. Turn right again and travel south for one mile to 3300 Avenue, then turn left again and drive east for one-half mile to Tulip Road. This will take you to the Alida Community Church and what was the Tell Community.

Tell was founded soon after the Gfeller families came to Kansas from Switzerland and homesteaded the land in 1885. Peter H. Gfeller and Adolph Gfeller settled south of where the church is located and other Gfeller families located on farms nearby. The Alida Community church was built here in 1881. The Gfeller brothers built a general store and a cheese factory. The cheese factory was in the basement and the store and post office on the ground floor, with living quarters for Adolph and his family on the second floor. The stucco building is still standing across the street from the church building. John Ritter also had a blacksmith shop at this location. P.H. Gfeller named the hamlet Tell after Swiss hero and patriot, William Tell. The Tell post office was discontinued in July of 1890.

Turn around here and go back west ½ mile to Trail Road, turn left and drive south on Trail Road to 3200 Avenue. Turn right here and drive west on 3200 Avenue to Sage Road, turn south on Sage Road and go to Highway 18. Along this road you will pass the Good Hope Cemetery. This is where George Freeman and his second wife, Nancy, are buried. This cemetery also has a

veteran from the War of 1812, named Thomas W. Murphy, who lived to be 107 years old. He spent his last years at the county poor farm east of Abilene. Get out and stretch your legs at the cemetery if you choose.

When you reach Highway 18, you are at the Wesley community. The big two-story frame house now stands where the church once stood. On the southeast corner was the old Wesley school. The post office stood on the southwest corner of the intersection. The community was first called "Norman Corner". In 1872 the Wesley School District #42 was organized, and a school was built. The first two schools built burned down. Before the church was built in 1882, services were held in the schoolhouse. The church, Good Hope Methodist, held services at this location until 1947. The building was razed in 1960. Wesley once had a post office, lodge hall, and creamery, as well.

Turn right onto Highway 18 and proceed west one mile to Rain Road. Turn left and travel south on the blacktop road toward Chapman. Cross under the interstate and turn left on 2650 Avenue the gravel road at the transformer station/Casey's Corner. Take this road east until you come to the Chapman Creek bridge. Stop on the bridge and look to the right. You will see rapids going over the rocky bed that was the Chapman Creek Ford. This is where the military trail forded the creek and is also where the Butterfield Stage Line crossed the creek in 1865. A stage carrying newspaper correspondent Bayard Taylor and famed Indian scout Kit Carson turned over at this crossing, drenching the occupants and causing a delay of this trip.

Continue to the east after crossing the bridge. On the left you will see an old stone house that has been incorporated into a newer home. In 1857 John Erwin came to the area, picked out his land and returned to Illinois for his family. In the spring of 1858, he filed his claim and built a log cabin where the stone house now stands. Because of the location near the ford, other settlers took up claims around Erwin, and in 1860 a post office was established in the log cabin. It was named Farmington and Erwin was the postmaster. A store was built just east of Erwin's log cabin with William Blakely in charge. The post office was moved to the store and was renamed Chapman Creek. George Snyder bought the store in 1871. The store is long gone, but you can still see most of the foundation east of the Erwin home. This is on private property, so we ask that you do not trespass.

In 1865, Erwin built the two-story stone house to replace the old log cabin. It was the largest house along Chapman Creek and soon became the center of pioneer hospitality. When the Butterfield Overland Dispatch Stage Line started their route through Dickinson County in 1865, they used the ford at Chapman Creek near Erwin's home. A stable was built just south of Erwin's place on the east side of the creek. This became a relay station for the stage line, the first one west of Junction City. Abram Sanborn set up a blacksmith shop at the stage barn where he cared for the stage line horses and those of other settlers. The Erwin home is still a private residence and we ask that you do not trespass, but enjoy this beautiful home from the road.

Continue driving east on 2650 Avenue until you reach the St. Patrick's Cemetery. Early church services in the lower Chapman Creek valley were held in the log cabins of John Erwin and

Michael Hogan. During the early 1860's a stone church was built a short distance east of Erwin's place and was called St. Patrick's Church. Many early settlers on the lower Chapman creek were of Irish extraction, a distinction that is carried through today by the Chapman High School Fighting Irish. Fate met the St. Patrick's Church when the tornado on June 11, 2008 reared its ugly face and destroyed this landmark. The St. Patrick's Chapel memorial using the original stone was completed in 2010. This is a great place to stretch your legs as you will be able to see where most of the first settlers to the Chapman Creek area are buried.

Drive back west to Rain Road, turn left, and continue south into the town of Chapman. When the Union Pacific Railroad reached Chapman in 1866, the present town site was laid out. In 1870 the railroad built a depot in Chapman and Scott Poor took over as agent. The Chapman Post Office was organized and set up at the depot with Scott Poor as postmaster. This depot was eventually moved to Old Abilene Town in Abilene, where it had been used as an opera house and community theater. It was disposed of due to its poor condition. After the city of Chapman was organized and built up, the old Chapman Creek ford area around Erwin's house was phased out. Snyder moved his store to Chapman and the stables were abandoned when the stage line was discontinued after the coming of the railroad.

Turn around and go back to the blacktop road, turn left and continue to the south into Chapman. Turn right at the 4-way stop sign at the section of Old Highway 40. Travel west on 5th Street until you get to the west edge of Chapman where you will see a sign directing you to the Indian Hills Golf Course. Follow the signs until you reach the top of Indian Hill and the entrance to the Indian Hill Cemetery. Travel west along the north side of the cemetery. Turn left at the fence and travel a short distance south until you come to the historical marker erected by the Chapman Charmers E.H.U. Stop here and look to the west to see the old Military Trail and Butterfield Stage Line ruts which were made there in the early 1800's until around 1866, when heavy wagons along the route was discontinued. The trails have been cleared of trees and if you leave the cemetery and go back on Old 40 Highway, there have been three markers that have been put up, which include history of the trail. The Indian Hill cemetery contains several interesting burials, including that of Grace Victoria Greeley King, who was a niece of Horace Greeley, the famous "Go west, young man" New York newspaper editor who was a Democratic candidate for president in 1872. (Bayard Taylor, the correspondent who was overturned in Chapman Ford, was one of Mr. Greeley's correspondents).

If you want to have a picnic lunch, return to the 4-way stop in Chapman, turn right, and travel three blocks before turning left. Continue on until you reach the Chapman City Park, where you can enjoy a picnic lunch. There is a swimming pool for the children, and plenty of shade and play equipment.

After a rest, return to the 4-way stop, turn left on Old Highway 40 and travel west towards Abilene. Make sure to read those markers before heading back towards Abilene. About 2 ½ miles west you will see the remains of a large old cottonwood tree on the left side of the road, across the railroad tracks. It was here that the first county seat, Newport, was located near Oat Road and Old 40 Highway. This town was formed in 1857. There was a territorial law that stated

that a company that plotted and laid out forty acres into a town was entitled to a claim of 160 acres. Another requirement was occupancy. A party consisting of Nicholas White, H.M. Rulison, and Dr. Gerot formed themselves into a town company and plotted the town of Newport. Log cabins were erected and an 18' x 20' log store was built. In 1858 when Dickinson County was organized, Newport was the only plotted townsite in the county and was named the county seat. The county seat was moved to Abilene in 1861 after a heated dispute over where the seat should be located. It was established in Abilene after a general election. There are no visible traces of Newport today.

According to Patrick Quirk, a member of the UPRR bridge building gang, the town of Newport was located in this area about 100 feet south of the railroad. Quirk said that the tree was just a small sapling when he first saw it. During this time, there were virtually no trees on the prairie, just along the creeks and riverbeds. A tree growing on the upland prairie would have been very noticeable.

About three-fourths of a mile beyond the Newport townsite is the Lone Tree Creek Union Pacific Railroad bridge with stone abutments. The railroad reached this location in the fall of 1866 and ran out of stone. The crew returned to Junction City for more stone to be quarried. They returned after the stone had been cut, finished the bridge and forged their way into Abilene in the spring of 1867.