

A Community of Opportunity

In an effort to identify what is and what used to be, this story lays the groundwork of Brewster's business story on Main Street. Betty Wolfe, Brewster Heritage Center director, developed the bulk of this walking tour in 1988 for Brewster's Centennial. (Due to limited space, the walking tour will focus on Kansas Avenue businesses)

Brewster was platted in August 1888 after the Rock Island had been built two miles south of the town of Hastings. Business buildings were moved from Hastings and rebuilt in Brewster.

- East Side -

It seems the first business in Brewster was the Chicago Lumber Company, operating as early as August 23, 1888. So the tour begins here at the south end of Kansas Avenue. Foster Lumber Company bought the business in 1914 and selling out in 1961. Jorgenson's bought the old lumberyard for machinery storage and Ed Rath owns the coal bins on the north.

Going north is the location of the Norm Brooks Implement Company (1911). In 1925, it was W.E. Hurlbut's tire shop and by 1930 it was McCall & Co. Roy Allison opened Allison Hardware and Plumbing in 1946. The Brewster Fire Alarm Co. opened here in 1971 moving in 1973. Lynn Fulwider then opened the Brew 'N Cue (1982-1988). The Fulwider girls used to sell fireworks from here and around 1995, Keith Horney had a taxidermy shop.

The next stop is believed to have been the Brewster Post Office (1914-17). In 1926 it was Scott and Son Clothing store. Carl Cutshaw purchased it in 1942, moved the front half to his farm for a granary. Kenneth Souders remodeled the remaining building as a home in 1947.

Next is the site of the Cutshaw Building where the Shirley Mercantile Store was. The post office was in south side of the building (1911-14) and the telephone office was upstairs. Lee Highland tore the structure down in 1969. The Heritage Center now owns the lot.

In 1921 the American Legion, Post #305, bought the next lot and built a brick addition to the existing bank building holding their meetings in the basement and renting the space upstairs. In the 1930s Dr. H.D. Thomas had an office in front and lived in back. It is now the Heritage Center Museum.

At the corner is the former Brewster State Bank, built in 1905. In 1919 a brick building was built. The bank consolidated with the Thomas County National Bank in 1936. The Co-op bought the building in 1943 and used it for offices. In 1975 the Library opened here.

Crossing the street to the north is a large stone building which began its "life" as a two-story school in Kirwin, Kansas. (see *Prairie Winds*, Winter 1998). In 1918-19, J.P. Horney of Brewster bought the stones from the dismantled school and had them shipped to Brewster and constructed the building which covers two lots. J.P. operated a general merchandise business here. The Red & White Grocery opened here and was operated by the Horneys until 1943. Arthur McAdams then ran it until Joe and Dewey Nelle Classi took over in 1947 and operated it until 1961. In 1963, the former grocery store was remodeled and opened as the post office.

The Horney Drugstore (Fred and Lee Horney) opened in the north half in 1925 and Tom Hevner took over in 1936 for a couple of years. Georgia's Cafe (Georgia Smith), 1944-47 and Bea's Cafe (Bea Starns), 1949-50s operated here. In 1980, the Senior Center opened here. In the early 1920s, silent movies were shown upstairs in the hall where there were also various forms of entertainment. There were also offices and apartments here over the years. Gerald Fulwider bought the building in 1947.

Next door, Knudson Bros. Hardware was located here in 1922 and in 1935, Lewis Hardware, Machinery, Undertaking and Furniture. The Co-op bought it in 1941 for their hardware store and then moved their grocery store here in 1944. Classis bought the building in 1961 moving the Red & White Grocery store here. Mike Baughn opened Brewster IGA in 1981 with Merle Metzlers running it for awhile. Bob and Vonita Wallsmith opened Brewster's Sure Fine Grocery in 1987. Arnold & Marilyn Schindler bought it in 1991 and Shane & Bonnie (Crabtree) Holm bought the store in 2003.

The earliest owner of the next site was James K. Morley (1888-1892). Charley Petty bought it and sold to Fred Desmond in 1905. Evan and Henry Knudson bought it in 1922 and turned around and sold it to Harold Webber for his Meat Market and Ice Plant in 1923. It was

in this business that the big fire of 1927 started. The present building was then constructed (also housing Knudson Hardware). J.P. Horney bought the north portion in 1929 and Lee Horney moved Horney's Drugstore here 1936. In 1945, Georgia Smith bought it and opened Georgia's Ready-to-Wear. Edna Archer bought the store in 1947 and ran Archers Clothing. In 1970 Bea Starns opened another cafe. The Store Next Door (Dewey Nelle Classi) opened in 1975. Pat & Robin Lehman operated the store in the 80s. By 1988 Don Hawkins had his swap shop here. Then Darlene Hileman ran a cafe here for awhile, it was later purchased by Tom and Juanita Aschenbrenner who had the "A" Cafe.

Next, F.H. Horney and L.G. Trombla operated an implement store here in 1906. In 1922 Evan and Henry Knudson had a pool hall and a later photograph identifies the business as Cohring and Craige Billiard Hall. The building burned in the '27 fire. The lot was empty until Don Horney added on to his hardware store in the early 80s.

At the next location were a number of small businesses. One of the earliest ones noted was the S.H. Wheeler & C.E. Mallory Real Estate office in 1907. A photograph from the 20s identifies Beeby's Suitatorium: Cleaning and Pressing and Fee's Parlor (barbershop). This was also the location of the Peacock and the Brooks and McArthur Barbershops. After the '27 fire, an Art Deco building was constructed here and by 1938 Ray Craige ran a pool room here and carried some drugs. In December 1944 the entire contents of Craige's Store were destroyed by fire. After four months of hard work they re-opened as a "straight" drugstore. Floyd Emel owned the business for a year (1948-49) and sold it back to Ray Craige. Ray ran it until 1963 when Bill Dunlap purchased it and it became "Dunlap Sundries." Don Horney opened Horney's Sentry Hardware in 1974. Tom Aschenbrenner now owns the building.

Next was the location of Hein Hall (1906-14). This was where IOOF #597 and M.W.A. met. Meetings, wrestling matches, and such were held upstairs. The Merchants Cafe (F.E. McNutt) and the Brewster Bakery (Zelvan Patterson) were here in 1927 at the time of the fire.

Early photographs of Brewster (c. 1910) identify the next building as the Farmers Hotel and a real estate office. An early owner, L.H. Shults, operated a general merchandise business. In 1916, Wesley Emahizer bought the business in the north half. He had a general store downstairs and rented rooms upstairs. 1919 he bought the south half, this he turned into a ten room Rooming House. The building was severely damaged in the 1927 fire. Emahizer rebuilt the store immediately after the fire. The brick building housed the East Side Hotel, East Side Cafe, East Side Barbershop, and a general store. Some of the barbers were: McArthur Copus; Charlie Maxie, and Kenneth Gee. E.A. Berry bought the building in 1944 and ran Berry's Cafe and B.E. Roller purchased it in 1959. Eddie Hutton owned and operated a pool hall here in the early 1960s. The building was torn down in the spring of 1974. Today the metal building of the Craft Peddler (built c. 1991) fills the lots down to the former Horney Hardware Store.

Alex Showalter bought the next lots to the north from the Town and Land Co. in 1912 selling to C.E. Mallory & J.B. Parker in 1915 who built the Brewster Garage. Charley Mallory installed a gas pump about as soon as he opened the garage. It then sold to Glenn Horney in 1917 and to Joe Shalz in 1919. After Joe Shalz purchased the garage, he had an addition built onto the south. His wife, Helen, had a recreation parlor in here in 1939-40. Kenneth Gee had a barbershop in the southwest corner of the building. Bennie Baird bought it in 1943 and ran a welding and repair shop. In 1947, Bob Baird joined him. In 1960, B.A. Hutton purchased the building and Ed Hutton is now the owner.

Norm Brooks bought the next property in 1927 and moved his Implement and Pump Store here. Osborn Auto Electric Co. was here in 1939-40. 1943 Farmers Co-op bought and remodeled it as a shop. Francis Lewallen bought it in 1965; Brewster Alarms in 1973; Milan Berry bought it in 1984 and opened Brewster Auto Parts. Tom and Juanita Aschenbrenner now own and operate TJs Tire and Repair Shop.

The corner lot was the location of the First Brewster State Bank in 1889. The building was moved from Voltaire (Sherman County). G.W.L. Martin bought the property for his home in 1904. It was then sold several times: E.T. Smith (1909), Floyd Smith (1910), Alex Showalter (1912), John Kellogg (1913), Homer Standish (1915) and Joe Shalz (1919). Farmers Co-op purchased the lot in 1944, removed the house, filled in the basement and leveled the ground for a machine yard. In 1965 Francis Lewallen bought the property and it was then

sold to Brewster Alarms in 1971. By 1988 it belonged to Ron Lewallan.

Crossing the street, is the location of another garage built by Charley Mallory in 1927, Ted Touslee operated the business known as the Brewster Chevrolet Garage. In 1944 Rex Smith bought it (Smith Motor Co.). Glen Finley bought it in 1947 and his brother Leonard had the back of the shop (Glen's Motor and Square Deal Shop). It was George Kleinsorge's Welding and Repair Shop from 1972 until 1987. In the early 90s, Vernon Patten opened a parts store here.

- West Side -

Across the street to the west is the former Liberty Theater built by C.E. Mallory in 1925 which also housed his real estate office. Mallory showed silent movies until 1928, when he installed talking picture equipment. The Liberty Theater closed in the 30s. Henry Goetsch reopened it in July 1944. A year later, the theater was leased to Bennie Baird. Howard Bray had an electrical shop here for a short time in 1946. In October 1946, Mr. and Mrs. F.M. Kahle of Wallace and their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Moore of Monument, purchased the theater, later turning over the management to Lee Baird. The Liberty Theater closed for the last time in July 1957. Gerald Fulwider had been the last owner and operator. Harold Norton purchased the building in 1962 and made it into his machine shop.

Before heading south, it needs to be mentioned that on the lot just north of the former theater was Doc and Hilda Gibson's City Cafe (1930-1941).

With the exception of two lots at the south end, the lots on the block to the south are now owned by the S&T Telephone Company. But it was once filled with a variety of businesses. The first one on the corner was a filling station built by Charley Mallory in 1917. He sold to W.R. McAdams in 1920 who sold to Dolor Roulier in 1923. Dolor sold to Service Oil in 1926. Bill Parker bought the station in 1955 and sold to Dunlap Service in 1969. In 1973 Ron Lewallen bought it and took out the gas pumps and operated Ron's Repair.

To the south was once the location of Dolor Roulier's Implement store. It burned in 1930 and Roulier rebuilt, attaching the building to the filling station. This was also part of Parker's purchase in 1955. A 1949 photograph mentions the post office in the south part of the building (until 1963), though it is uncertain when it was first located there. Moore's Fun Club (1975), D&J Cafe (1983), Prairie Land Insurance (1976) and the Craft Peddler (1984) were also at this location.

The next two lots were early businesses moved from Hastings. First, the Levi Showalter Restaurant (1889-1891). Later the home of Lulu McAdams (1920) which burned in 1930. Next the Emmet L. Melvin Meat Market (1889-1891). Charles Petty bought the lot in 1892. And on the next lot was the V.F. Warren General Mercantile Store (1888).

Moving south is the site where in 1902 Charles Petty moved the Rock Island Hotel and renamed it the Petty Hotel. J.F. Douglas bought it in 1905, then Herman Riedel in 1906, who sold to Emilie Werner in 1909. The hotel was known as Avenue Hotel; then as McArthur Hotel when L.A. McArthur purchased it in 1917 and later owned by Ella McArthur (1938).

Next was where the Band Stand stood. It was used by the City Band and for auctions.

The last two lots of the block now belong to Farmers Bank and Trust (who purchased Brewster National Bank in 1994). The first lot is where the Golden Belt Hotel was constructed by Sam Fulwider and E.W. Albright in 1906. Fulwider lived above and operated a butcher shop below until 1911, James D. Crawmer owned the building in 1919 and C.E. Mallory bought it in 1921. Al Winchip ran the hotel in 1924. Then Clarence Agnew and George Krout both ran the hotel and Jim Baird bought it in 1946 selling to John E. Miller in 1955.

On the corner was the site of the first store built in town, C.W. Tynan General Merchandise (1888-1889). Charles Petty bought it in 1910 and moved in a larger building. Floyd and Max Smith managed the store for Petty. Farmers Co-op bought it in 1918 for a grocery store and Walt Strain managed it until 1943. Co-op sold the building to IOOF Lodge #597 in 1955. It was purchased by the Rebecca Lodge #644 in 1976 and they sold to the Brewster National Bank in 1981. The bank constructed a modern building on the two lots.

South across the street was the location of Jacob Brothers Mercantile in 1899. Floyd Smith, Sr. owned a grocery store here in 1910 and A.L. Schramling owned it in 1913. This became Farmers Union Grocery Store in 1916 and operated here until they moved north across

the street. The Farmers State Bank was here in 1920 and ran until 1927. In 1945 Farmers Co-op opened a telephone company which sold in 1955 to S&T Telephone. Alvin Helin bought the building in 1973 and Sally's Kitchen opened there, later Judy Dunlap ran Judy's Cafe. J&N Upholstery did business here in the late 80s. Helin sold the building to Curt and Sandi Bear in 1991/92. Kelli Bear had a beauty shop there and then a day care center, operated by Dawn Bear and Debra Bear. Today it is the headquarters of the Kansas Cattlemen's Association.

The next lot was once G.W. Strain's grocery store (1890) and had a post office in the back room. In 1904, H.E. Jacobs bought the property and sold to R.T. Hemming in 1910. Roy Fry bought it in 1932 and sold it to the Co-op in 1946. This now belongs to S&T Telephone.

Coming to the next lot it should be noted that the rest of the block now belongs to Frontier Equity. This lot is where the R.T. Hemming residence (1906-early 30s) stood.

Next, City Cafe operated by Harold Lacefields in 1925-26 was located here. Rex Smith bought it in 1960 and moved Smith Motor Co. here. Bill Ogan's Helping Hand Automotive was here in 1977 and the Co-op bought the building in 1979.

Then the site of the Amiel Sondag Blacksmith Shop (1905-1943). Sondag bought this shop from Herny Burdine in 1905, built on and added a gas pump around 1910. Lem Fulwider bought the building in 1943 and Co-op bought it in 1982. The building was razed.

On the next lot was the first Brewster restaurant owned by Mrs. Ellen Scott in 1889. R.T. Hemming bought the lot in 1906.

Next to the restaurant was Brewster's first hotel, the Rock Island Hotel, owned by M.A. Duff. The hotel was rented from Mr. Duff by the Murphy Bros. in 1888. In 1894 it was owned by Henry Wolzfeld who leased to A.P. Wilson in 1899. The lots were sold to A.E. Keppel in 1923 and to Brewster Home Oil in 1924. The filling station was constructed at that time. Farmers Co-op bought it in 1942.