

CELEBRATIONS AND OCCURRENCES OF INTEREST

Finney County, Kansas

Written by Delora Black

As told by George O. Abbot, an old settler of Finney County

** Additional information added about Charles Jesse Jones (Buffalo Jones)*

The largest Fair ever held in Western Kansas happened in Garden City, in 1886. Many of the surrounding counties joined in the exhibitions. George Abbott*, then 19 years of age, was attending a country school Northwest of Garden City. The schools in the counties decided to have a map-drawing contest. Mr. Abbott felt he could not draw very well, as his interest was in machinery and steam engines. Therefore, he got permission from his teacher and from the county superintendent to build a miniature steam engine.

The fair had lots of horseracing and a booking office where they sold chances on the race. The weather was hot, and the horses stirred up a cloud of stifling dust while running the races, but this did not interfere with the spirit of the race. Everyone seemed to have a good time.



"Conquered at last, by C. J. Jones"

C. J. (Buffalo) Jones* brought his herd of buffalo to the fair for an exhibition. He had two buffalo hitched to a wagon, but it was harder to guide them than a horse.

After the fair, some folks who did not have transportation getting them back to town rode the horse-drawn streetcar. The city extended the streetcar from town, to the fairgrounds, just for this day.

There was a good exhibit of farm machinery used in those days and the best of Western Kansas livestock. It was an excellent fair. There was a demonstration of 'well rigging,' and they did not know how vital that was to become later on. A while afterward, there were so many windmills with wells all over the country that men would jokingly remark that they would eventually use up all of the wind.

Then the often-held rodeos became significant to the history of Western Kansas. After the old style of raising cattle on a large scale gave way to the improved more modern methods, the old-time cattlemen wanted something to remind them of the old days. Therefore, they organized the rodeos, trying to make them as true to life of the early days as possible. They would usually last from two days to maybe a week. People would come from many miles around to attend the rodeos. Some would come in covered wagons and camp in them while the rodeo lasted.

When Mr. Abbott was a young man, he desired to be a cowboy, but the ranchers in Finney County would not take on a tenderfoot. He recalled a group of cowboys passing his house while he looked out the window, watching them. The scene so impressed him that he still remembers it. They wore fancy spurs, leather chaps, and big hats. Their saddles, too, were fancy, and they had the flash and color of the way cowboys were usually pictured. On their sides, they carried big six-shooters. As they passed by Abbott's house, they came upon an area with prairie dogs, pulled out their guns, and took potshots at them. Another bunch of cowboys, about a dozen in number, went on a big celebration all by themselves. After a visit to one of the local saloons, they lined themselves up along the railroad tracks, and as the train came through, they shot the windows out of the passenger cars, poisoning the engineer against cowboys forever. In addition, they frightened the passengers to death. Mr. Abbott just happened to be a fireman for this same engineer later on. The engineer still remembered the incident, hating all cowboys because of it.

Cowboys coming to town were generally out for a good time. Cowboys coming to town were generally out for a good time. They would sometimes lasso chimneys and pull them down as they went along their way.

Horse thieves were common in those early days. The ranchers had a law all their own for their protection. Nevertheless, even if there was a shooting or a hanging, the ranchers never told about it. They usually kept it quiet. One, in particular, was when the sheriff had chased a notorious horse thief for a long time. Ed Wert, the sheriff, chased him to Syracuse, Kansas, and caught him asleep in a railroad house. The man

was known to be a very tough hombre and had bragged, “He would never be caught alive.” The sheriff was taking no chances. He kicked open the door and shot him before he could reach his guns. Later they nailed him up in a goods box and sent him to Garden City on the train with a note attached to the chest that read, “Here’s your man.”

At a ranch near Garden City, two cowboys got into a quarrel, and one called the other something he did not like. The one whom he had “called the name” did not have a gun on him at the time, but at the first opportunity, he grabbed one of his comrade’s guns and shot the man before he knew what was happening.

The stories generally told of the Southwest are greatly exaggerated. There were a few killings in those days, but saying they were common everyday things was not correct. When it came to western stories about killings, those stories gave much more credit than was due.

** For additional information about George O. Abbott & Charles Jesse “Buffalo” Jones, see Finney County story... “GEORGE O. ABBOTT, AN OLD SETTLER AND PERSONAL FRIEND OF BUFFALO JONES AND JOHN STEVENS.”*

Additional Information

CHARLES JESSE JONES
“Buffalo Jones”



Photograph provided by Laurie Oshel, Assistant Director at the Finney County Historical Society Library in Garden City, Kansas

CHARLES JESSE "BUFFALO" JONES, son of Noah Nicholas Jones (1814-1883) and Jane Munden (1822-1901), was born on 31 Jan 1844 in Tazewell County, Illinois. When he was 21 years old, Charles left home to attend the Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. Two years later, he left Illinois for the state of Kansas.

Charles "Buffalo" Jones was a cofounder of Garden City, Kansas. He was appointed by his friend, President Theodore Roosevelt, as the first game warden of Yellowstone National Park. He was known as a preserver of the American Buffalo. Zane Grey wrote about Buffalo Jones in his book, *The Last of the Plainsmen*.

He married **MARTHA J. WALTON**, daughter of William B. Walton (1816-1879) and Sarah M. Webster (1819-1902) on 20 Jan 1869 in Troy, Doniphan County, Kansas.. Martha was born in Dec of 1845 in the state of Indiana.

Martha passed away on 27 Oct 1907 in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. Charles "Buffalo" Jones died there on 1 Oct 1919. Burial for both was at the Valley View Cemetery in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas.

They had six children:

WILLIAM GRANT "WILLIE" JONES was born 9 Jun 1870 in Troy, Doniphan County, Kansas. He died on 29 Nov 1882, at the age of 12 ½ years. He died from Lung Fever and was buried on a hill north of Garden City. (*Valley View Cemetery.*)

LULU JONES, born in 1871, died on 1 May 1876 in Sterling, Rice County, Kansas.

CORA JONES was born and died on 21 Oct 1876 in Sterling, Kansas. Burial for Lulu and her sister, Cora, was at the Sterling Cemetery.

CHARLES EDWARD "EDDIE" JONES, was born in about 1877. He died of diphtheria on 20 Sep 1887 at the age of 10. Burial was at the Valley View Cemetery in Garden City.

OLIVE WALTON (JONES) WHITMER BROWN was born on 10 Aug 1881, in Garden City, Kansas. She lived in Topeka for many years where she was an advertising and publicity director, and at one time operated her own publicity bureau. Her first marriage was to Charles R. Whitmer on 19 Oct 1902 in Topeka, Kansas and divorced on 22 Sep 1921 in Alexandria, Virginia. They had one son, Charles R. Whitmer, Jr. (1907-1995) who lived in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In 1937, Olive married George Garwood Brown. On 28 Apr 1961, Olive died in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. She was buried at the New Carlisle, Indiana Cemetery, located near the area her mother was born.

JESSIE IRMA (JONES) PHILLIPS was born on 23 Jan 1892 in Garden City, Kansas. Jessie married Ralph Greenleaf Phillips on 13 Nov 1917 in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. They had one child, a son, Alex H. Phillips. Jessie died on 9 Sep 1942 in Cook County, Illinois and buried at the New Carlisle, Indiana Cemetery, near her sister, Olive.

Newspaper Obituaries

MARTHA J. (WALTON) JONES

From the book... *FINNY COUNTY, KANSAS OBITUARY ABSTRACTS & DEATH NOTICES, 1879-1911*

2 Nov 1914 Newspaper Obituary

Mrs. Charles J. Jones died of a paralytic stroke in Topeka. Services at the First Christian Church this morning, were conducted by Rev. J. R. Robertson and assisted by Rev. H. S. Booth.

Interment was in the Garden City (Valley View) Cemetery where her two sons, Wille and Eddie are buried. Survivors are her husband and two daughters, Mrs. Olive Whitman of Topeka and Miss Jessie Jones of Lawrence.

CHARLES JESSE "BUFFALO" JONES

THE MADISON DAILY LEADER, Madison, South Dakota · Friday, 3 Oct 1919

BUFFALO JONES, BIG GAME HUNTER, DEAD

Topeka, Kansas, October 3 – Charles Jesse Jones, was known throughout America as "Buffalo" Jones, the famous cowboy, big game hunter, and friend of the late former president, Theodore Roosevelt, died here last night as a result of jungle fever contracted during his last trip to Africa in 1914.

Buffalo Jones became famous when he organized a band of cowboys in 1911 for an expedition to Africa to rope big game.

He was five years game warden at the Yellowstone National Park. Mr. Jones also won fame when he crossed the buffalo with domestic cattle and produced a hybrid animal known as the Cattalo (*Beefalo*).

Garden City, Kansas, in the heart of the sugar beet country in southwestern Kansas and a famous town in the range country, was founded by Mr. Jones. At one time he is said to have owned half the city.