

SCHOOLS

Finney County, Kansas

Written by Bernice Crooms

Consultants: Mr. George W. Finnup and Mr. William Pearce

** Additional information added about Albert Condra, mentioned in this story*

After Finney County, Kansas was organized on October 1, 1884, Albert Rust, County Superintendent, formed the county's first district on November 24, 1884. They did not build a school that year since the laws forbid communities from levying taxes or issuing bonds for building purposes unless that county had organized it one year earlier.

They taught school that winter in the Garden City Methodist Church beginning in 1884 and closed on March 17, 1885. The first standard institute held in Finney County occurred in July of 1885 in the same church building. There were 117 enrolled for the four-week term. The most considerable difficulty for the pioneer teachers had been the non-uniformity of textbooks. That burden was lifted when books arrived for the county.

A meeting of the school board held in the Congregational Church on August 20, 1885, was for selecting a schoolhouse site. Mr. C. J. "Buffalo" Jones was appointed to confer with contractors on plans and specifications for a building.

The committee that was appointed to canvas the district, reported 140 petitioners who favored voting \$10,000 bonds for a school building. The bond election carried only eight against and 333 in favor. A large percentage of the votes were by ladies who were determined to have the school, and they used all available vehicles to bring out voters.

Chosen were the plans of Stevens and Thompson due to the size and architectural beauty. The building was to be 60 by 70 feet, two-stories high, divided into eight rooms plus a 19-foot hallway through the center of the building and the entrance being through the base of lofty towers. P. H. Hall did the construction of the building for the sum of \$10,765.

The walls of the building were of brick and trimmed in stone. The building would cost about \$15,000 when completed. But it was not to be completed until the following spring, which meant the Methodist Church was again secured for the more advanced classes. The third and fourth grades were all held at the Congregational Church.

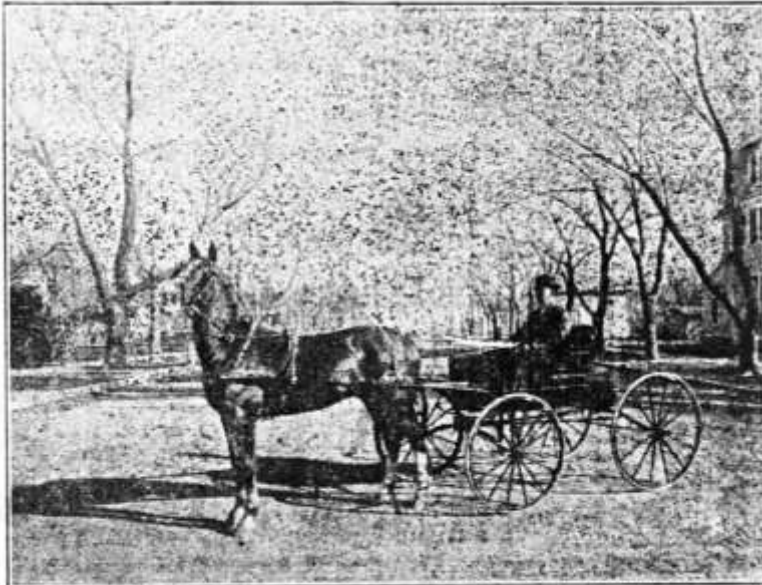
The school term began on October 12, 1885, and closed on June 18, 1886, with four teachers. In October of 1886, the first school building in Garden City was completed and celebrated with a housewarming.

On March 21, 1901, a fire destroyed the school. The fire department extinguished the flames at 5:30 a.m. On the way there, the firemen were almost exhausted from pulling against the heavy wind and deep sand on Stevens Avenue. The Hose Company No. 1 helped get the apparatus to the fire by Albert Condra*, who used his cart with his saddle horse. Regardless of the high heat from the intense flames, the fire brigade fought to save the burning building. Sheets of red-hot metal from the roof were carried a block away by the high wind. The Hook and Ladder Company and several citizens formed a bucket brigade to put out the fire set by the flying pieces of metal.

Newspaper Advertisement

ALBERT C. CONDRA

The Evening (Garden City, Kansas) Telegram – Tuesday, 2 Apr 1907



The Red Lion Livery Barn

Best Livery Accomodations in the City

A. C. CONDRA, Prop.

Phone No. 3

Garden City, Kans.

“Hose Company No. 1 had help in getting the apparatus to the fire by Albert Condra, who used his cart with his saddle horse”.

Additional Information

ALBERT C. CONDRA

ALBERT CRITTINGTON CONDRA, son of William Harrison Condra (1849-1929) and Nancy Jane Howard (1853-1898), was born on 16 Jul 1880 in Cedar Spring, McMinn County, Tennessee. In 1885, the family was living in Pleasant, Butler County, Kansas.

In 1907, Albert was living in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. There, he was the owner of the Red Lion Livery Barn.

On 20 Mar 1907, he married ELLA HENSHAW (15 Dec 1884 - 20 Jun 1957) in Garden City, Kansas. Ella was the daughter of Barney Henshaw (1841-1928) and Leah E. Raber (1844-1923). The marriage ended quickly. *(They may have divorced (or the marriage annulled) between 1907 and 1910. The 1910 census shows Ella living with her parents and as a widow. The 1910 census gives Albert C. Condra living in Great Bend, Barton County, Kansas and single.)*

In 1915, Albert was back living in Garden City, Kansas. By 1919, he had moved on to Pocatello, Bannock County, Idaho. He soon returned to Kansas.

In 1925, Albert married ERBIE MAYBELLE MCPHERSON, daughter of James H. McPherson (1852-1883) and Abigail Teagle (1858-1950). Erbie was born on 15 Mar 1881 in Kosciusko County, Indiana. She was first married to Jesse Carl Hinds and later divorced.

In about 1929, Albert and Erbie left Kansas and moved to Idaho. There Albert worked as a cattle buyer.

Albert died on 28 Jul 1955 in Garden City, Ada County Idaho. Erbie passed away on 31 Jul 1972 in Boise, Ada County, Idaho. Burial for both was at the Meridian Cemetery in Meridian, Ada County, Idaho.

Newspaper Wedding Announcement THE FIRST MARRIAGE FOR ALBERT C. CONDRA

A QUITE HOME WEDDING

The Daily Reflector (Garden City, Kansas) 21 March 1907

Miss Ella J. Henshaw and Albert Condra were married last evening at eight o'clock at their future home in the west part of town. Only a few friends and relatives were present. They were a brother (*John Edgar Condra*) and sister (*Beulah N. Condra*) of Mr. Condra, Miss Nettie Brown, and Mr. Leach.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. C. Henshaw and has lived in Garden City only about three years and during that time, has formed many firm and true friends by her pleasant disposition.

Everybody in town knows Albert Condra and all the old settlers have known him from a boy.

He has carved out his own success. In fact, there is no young man in town who stands higher in the estimate of the people in general. He started in business for himself only a few years ago without a dollar of help from anyone and has built up one, if not the best livery business in town.

They served the wedding dinner at the Griggs cafe.

Newspaper Obituaries

ALBERT C. CONDRA

The Idaho Statesman, 29 Jul 1955

ALBERT C. CONDRA, 75, died at his home early Thursday following a long illness. Mr. Condra was born in Tennessee on 16 Jul 1880. He came to Idaho 23 years ago from Garden City, Kansas. He was a retired cattle buyer.

His wife, Mrs. Erbie Condra of Boise, a brother, Ed Condra of Seattle, and two stepchildren, Mrs. Earl F. Robinson of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Carl Lands of Miami, Florida survive him.

Services will be conducted at 2 p.m. and Neal Folwer will officiate. Interment will be at the Meridan Cemetery in Meridan, Idaho.

ERBIE MAYBELLE (MCPHERSON) CONDRA

The Idaho Statesman, 1 Aug 1972, Page 19

MRS. ERBIE M. CONDRA

Graveside services for Mrs. Erbie Maybelle Condra, 91, of 110 West Thirty-Fifth, who died Monday at a Boise nursing home, will be conducted at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Meridian Cemetery by Neal Fowler.

She was born 15 Mar 1881, in Indiana. She married Alfred C. Condra. He died 28 Jul 1955. She was a member of the Jehovah's Witness Church.

Survivors include a daughter, Mrs. Edna Robinson, Miami, Florida; a son Carl Hinds, Miami; and several nieces and nephews.

Cemetery Headstones
MERIDIAN CEMETERY
Meridian, Ada County, Idaho



Headstone photographs provided by Amanda Fox

