

JOHNSON, STANTON COUNTY, KANSAS

(Also known as Johnson City)

Written by Eunice Rumford

*Consultants: Mr. Charles E. Van Meter, Mr. William "Bill" Reynolds, and Mr. Elam Hilty,
All of Johnson City, Kansas*

Reference: The Johnson Pioneer

** Additional information added about certain people mentioned in this story*

Johnson is the county seat of Stanton County, Kansas. In 1930, the population was 635. Since 1920, it has increased in population by 137 percent.

Stanton County organized in the year 1887, was named in honor of Edwin M. Stanton, the secretary of war under the Lincoln administration. The territory of which Stanton County is composed was formerly a part of Hamilton County. The first town of any importance was named "Veteran." It was founded by Veterans of the Civil War and located about seven miles northeast of Johnson. The town was established in 1885 before the county was organized. It was moved to section 35, Township 28, range 41, and the name was changed to Johnson City in 1886 in honor of A. S. Johnson, once president of the Santa Fe Railroad and said to be the first white child born in Kansas. (Since this was written in 1936, other names have been found that claim to be the first white child born in Kansas.)

The chief occupation in Stanton County is wheat raising. Today Johnson has two school buildings: the Stanton Community High School and the Grade School.

Recreation in our area includes golf, tennis, a swimming pool (in Manter), the recreation clubhouse (in Johnson and Manter), baseball, football, and basketball. There are two churches, the Methodist and the Pilgrim Holiness. Clubs include the Farm Bureaus, Four H Clubs, society clubs, and Women's Council.

Just before entering the town of Johnson from the east on the U.S. 160, you pass the Charles E. Van Meter residence, a two-story English-style house, with lots of trees. As you leave the gradual sloping hill, you come to the city of Johnson. The cemetery is visible beyond the town on a higher hill. We then come to the main business center of town.

On the north side of the highway is the Rorick Cabin Camp that opened in 1929. Then there is the Phillips 66, managed by C. E. Wilson. On the south is the Bakery and Pioneer Offices. M. V. Hess completed the building in 1930. They are both equipped with entirely modern equipment.

We are fortunate to have Fiss and Son's Garage* at the corner of Main Street and Grant Avenue: which is one of the most attractive corners in Johnson. The building is of brick and tile with concrete floors throughout. The entrance to the garage workshop is from the north and they are prepared to do repairs of all kinds. The salesroom entrance is on Main Street. The White Eagle Company occupies the corner room.

The Liberty Theater opened on August 1, 1930, and there are two office rooms above it; one occupied by Dr. Hoover, a physician. A room north of the lobby is for the barbershop.

The owner, M. V. Hess, built the Hess Grocery Store in 1929. He also built the building occupied by the Gray and Rosel Dry Goods Company. The building is located in the middle of the block on the east side of Main Street, in the middle of the town. The front has two large plate glass windows. Counters are highly polished, medium brown with a golden oak finish.

R. C. Bowman operates the Johnson Cleaners, located on the east side of Main Street. One of the fifteen Maricle Company stores in the southwest is located in Johnson, on the east side of Main Street. Earl Welch is the manager.

The Golden Rule Oil Station is located on the northwest corner of Main Street and Grant Avenue. Elmer "Roundie" Kendrick* is the manager.

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Frier* own the Dodge Inn. It is located on the west side, in the heart of town, and is one of the popular eating-places.

The G and M Pharmacy is a busy store. It has a complete line of drugs, with a newsstand and an up-to-date fountain.

In 1930, Mr. Sheltar completed one of the finest buildings in Johnson. He uses the first floor for his law and real estate office. Steve W. Church has the south office. The upper story is divided into three rooms specially designed for office use.

Our recently organized library occupies two rooms in memory of Mrs. Sheltar. It is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Nowhere in all of the great southwest is there a more substantial building than the Johnson State Bank building completed in 1929. It is located at the corner of Main and Lincoln on the west side. Dr. Allen has his home and office in a two-story wooden building just south of the bank.

Next in line is the H. T. Tuckers General Store. It has been at its present location since 1928, which is on the west side of Main.

On the west side of North Main Street is the Sigler and White Store, which was built in 1929 by D. L. Roberts, plus the T. M. Lumber and Hardware Company, established in

1924. It furnishes much of the materials used for many of the new buildings in this area. B. L. Young is the manager.

David Morris is the owner of the Morris Shoe Shop on the east side of North Main.

The Stanton County Courthouse faces the west on Main Street. Smith and English were the architects. It was occupied in September 1926.

Two blocks north is the Stanton County Community High School, built in 1932. Glen Thomas was the architect. It was made of brick and trimmed with buff tile. It is a modern class B school. The cost to build was \$66,000. Two blocks west and two blocks south brings us to the Grade School, facing Long Street. Built in 1888, it is steam heated by a gas furnace.

Going back to the center of Main, you will find the Cochreham Cabins that includes a small café.

On Grant Avenue is the home of the Johnson Motor Company, completed in 1930. It is the town Ford Agency and is owned and operated by Orin H. Norton.

The Methodist Church, built in 1886, has been remodeled. The membership today is 200. It is located on the south side of Lincoln Street. Facing east is the Pilgrim Holiness Church built in 1927. The membership today is 42.

One of the largest and best garages in Southwestern Kansas is located on the north side of Lincoln Avenue and half a block west of Main Street. It is the Buell Scott Motor Company, completed in 1929. It is structured of tile and brick with a plate glass front. It has a used car department and a workshop. It is a Chevrolet Agency and employs 12 people.

One block west and two blocks north of Main Street is a ten-room boarding house owned and operated by James A. Williamson*. There is a blacksmith shop 1½ blocks south of the Buell Scott Garage facing the east. It is equipped with modern machinery.

One of the largest businesses at \$400,000 yearly in Johnson is the Collingwood Lumber, Grain, and Implement Company. Fred Collingwood is the general manager. The company has two buildings, one for lumber and one is an implements stock elevator, capacity of 60,000 bushels. There are four elevators in Stanton County; they are in Johnson, Bigbow, Manter, and Saunders. There is also a new business in Johnson, which is the Johnson Cooperative Grain Company.

The railroad runs through the southern part of Johnson. A County Machine Shed has been constructed (1935) by the P.W.A. project. It faces the railroad from the north.

C. L. Burt of Hutchinson is the contractor for the modern Johnson Water System. Our natural gas line comes from Hugoton, which has received our greatest satisfaction.

The only paper Stanton County has is The Johnson Pioneer which is published weekly (Thursdays) at the rate of \$1.50 per year.

Additional Information
FISS AND SON'S GARAGE

HERMAN CARL FISS was born on 6 Apr 1863 in Germany. He arrived in New York with his parents, Christian Fiss (1818-1893) and Louisa Alamina F. Scharr (1825-1916), on 18 Aug 1863. He became a United States citizen on 21 Mar 1911 in Atwood, Rawlins County, Kansas. He married **IOLA MAY MARTIN**, daughter of Gilman Abel Martin (1830-1913), and Emeline Amanda Wright (1831-1911), on 28 Dec 1886 in Washington County, Kansas. Iola was born in the year 1875 in Ohio. (*The 1900 census record gives her year of birth as 1864.*)

Herman and Iola continued to live in Washington County after they were married and had the following children: **HERMAN "ROYCE" FISS** (1899-1967), **GILMAN "KIRK" FISS** (1901-1946), **NAOMI GAIL FISS** (1903-1903), and **EMMA LOUISE FISS WALKER** (1904-2006).

By 1910, the family had moved to Rawlins County, Kansas, where they were issued free homestead land in September of 1911. Soon after 1920, they moved on to Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas where Herman continued to farm. His wife, Iola died there in 1924.

Between 1930 and 1935, Herman opened a business in Johnson called "Fiss and Son's Garage". He and his sons, Royce and Kirk, plus his son-in-law, Forrest O. Walker, all worked together in the business.

Herman passed away on 27 Dec 1957 in Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas and buried next to his wife, Iola, at the Johnson Cemetery.

Additional Information
ELMER "ROUNDIE" KENDRICK

Thanks to Elmer and Arlyn Kendrick's daughter-in-law, Barbara (Houf) Kendrick, for providing photographs and many of the details.

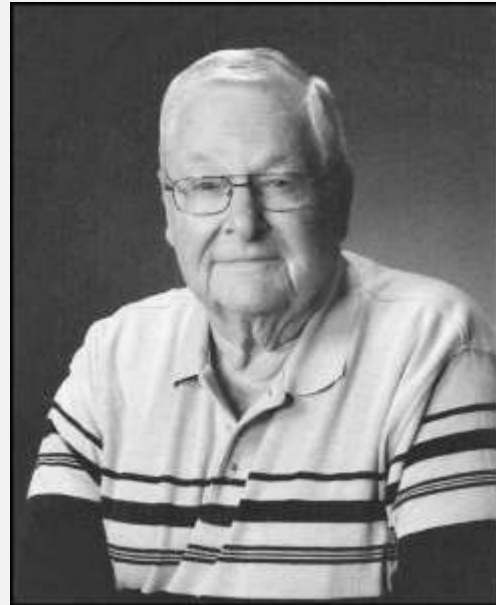
ELMER THEODORE "ROUNDIE" KENDRICK, son of Stephen Edward Kendrick (1864-1942) and Mary Reichert (1863-1919), was born on 10 Aug 1903 in Tecumseh, Johnson County, Nebraska. The 1910 census reveals that they left Nebraska and moved to Brazoria County, Texas. By 1920, his parents had moved the family on to Beaver County, Oklahoma where they

lived in a three-room sod house. About 1922, and still single, Elmer moved to Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas. The 1930 census reveals he was managing the Golden Rule Oil Station in Johnson.

On 25 May 1931, Elmer married **ARLYN AUDREY BENDER**, daughter of William John Bender (1867-1933) and Rosella Helmich (1875-1936), in El Dorado, Butler County, Kansas. Elmer and Arlyn met in Johnson, Kansas while he was working as a mechanic and she was a local schoolteacher. Arlyn was born on 19 Jan 1903 in Alfalfa, Caddo County, Oklahoma. Their son, **RONALD K. KENDRICK** was born on 20 Sep 1934 in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas.



ELMER & ARLYN (BENDER) KENDRICK



RONALD K. KENDRICK

Ron Kendrick was married to Barbara Jeanette Houf (1936-2020), daughter of Harry Walter Houf (1909-1989) and Doris Jeanette McMelvey (1913-1980), on 23 June 1957 in Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado. They had five children: **MARK KENDRICK**, **GARY KENDRICK**, **BRET KENDRICK**, **JULIE (KENDRICK) BRINCKS**, and **LYN (KENDRICK) FINNEGAN**.

Elmer Kendrick eventually bought the Golden Rule Oil Station that he managed. His son, Ron became owner soon after his mother passed away in 1969. Both Elmer and his son, Ron, were also lifelong farmers.

After Arlyn (Bender) Kendrick died on 27 Sep 1969, Elmer married **BECKY DUNCAN SCHILLING** on 4 Apr 1974.

Elmer died on 11 Jan 1987 and buried next to his wife, Arlyn, at the Johnson Cemetery in Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas. Their son, Ronald Kendrick, was also buried there. He died on 4 Feb 2018 at the Parker Adventist Hospital in Parker, Douglas County, Colorado.

Additional Information

JOHN H. FRIER

JOHN HENRY FRIER, son of William D. Frier (1858-1898) and Mary Emily Landon (1851-1900), was born on 1 May 1888 in Russell, Russell County, Kansas. He married **ADA M. WALLACE**, daughter of George Wallace II (1846-1911) and Agatha Snyder (1852-1920), on 27 Apr 1910 in Great Bend, Barton County, Kansas. Ada was born on 22 Oct 1883 in Rush County, Kansas. Three children were born in their marriage: **JOHN "ELWIN" FRIER** (1912-2005), **EMILY AGATHA (FRIER) WARTMAN** (1916-2015), and **FRANK W. FRIER** (1926-2003).

In 1920, John and Ada were living in Fairview, Barton County, Kansas. In 1929, they moved to Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas. The 1940 census reveals that they were the proprietor of a local hotel and café in Johnson, which was the Dodge Inn.

John passed away on 2 Jul 1947 and was buried at the Russell City Cemetery in Russell, Russell County, Kansas. Ada died on 17 May 1988 and burial was at the Johnson Cemetery in Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas.

Additional Information

JAMES A. WILLIAMSON

JAMES ANDSON WILLIAMSON, son of Francis Elijah Williamson (1844-1931) and Ary Melissa Henthorn (1850-1921) was born on 23 Jul 1870 in Washington County, Iowa. On 28 Jul 1899, he married **MARY CORA YOUNG**, daughter of McKenzie Benjamin Young (1839-1910) and Catherine Shafer (1842-1899), at Independence, Montgomery County, Kansas. Mary was born on 2 Nov 1873 in Auglaize County, Ohio. They lived in Independence after they were married but soon traveled west to make their home in the southwestern part of Kansas. Census records reveal that in 1910, James and Mary were living in Lincoln, Grant County, Kansas. By 1930, they were living in Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas where James was managing a local hotel. By 1940, he was working as a rural route mail carrier for Stanton County, Kansas.

Mary Cora Young was married once before her marriage to James Williamson. She married James Alspaugh on 26 Dec 1890 in Auglaize County, Ohio. They had one son, Harvey H. Alspaugh who was born on 1 Jan 1893 in Caldwell, Sumner County, Kansas. Records indicate Mary and James Alspaugh were divorced and soon after 1920, Harvey took his stepfather's name, Williamson. Harvey died on 30 Jun 1974 in Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas.

James A. Williamson died on 31 Jan 1957 and Mary Cora Williamson died on 15 Sep 1966. Both died in Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas, and buried there at the Johnson Cemetery.

James and Mary Williamson had two daughters:

MARGARETTE KATHERINE "MAGGIE" WILLIAMSON was born on 16 Jan 1900 in Independence, Montgomery County, Kansas. On 1 Dec 1916, Maggie married Hartwell John Noble, son of Norman Henry Noble (1840-1917) and Clarissa E. Seely (1845-1922), in Las Animas, Bent County, Colorado. Hartwell was born on 30 Jul 1882 in Wilson County, Kansas. Maggie died on 4 Dec 1924 in Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas and Hartwell died in 1949. Both were buried at the Johnson Cemetery. Two children were born in their marriage: Norman "Lynn" Noble and Mary Catherine Noble.

ARY "PEARL" WILLIAMSON was born on 23 Aug 1904 in Independence, Montgomery County, Kansas. About 1926, she was married to Wayne "Jimmy" Gaskill, son of William Jason Gaskill (1872-1937) and Cora Ross (1874-1967). Jimmy was born on 31 Aug 1906 in Wright County, Missouri. About 1937, Jimmy and Pearl left Stanton County, Kansas, and moved to Newcastle, Weston County, Wyoming. Jimmy died there on 1 Oct 1972. He was buried at the Greenwood Cemetery in Newcastle, Wyoming.

Three children were born in their marriage: Rodney "Keith" Gaskill, Verna (Gaskill) Atkinson, and Kenneth Vernon Gaskill. Pearl's second marriage was to Cedric Lee Bennett. Cedric was born on 21 Jun 1901 in Wilmington, Will County, Illinois. He passed away on 14 May 1983. He was buried at the Johnson Cemetery in Johnson, Stanton County, Kansas, next to his first wife, Ferne Etta (Herrin) Bennett. She died in 1965.

Pearl was living in a community called Gran Prairie that is in the Dallas, Texas area at the time of her death. She died on 12 Jan 1996 in Arlington, Tarrant County, Texas, and buried at the Johnson Cemetery in Johnson, Kansas.