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THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF WEBB CITY, MISSOURI—
THE TOWN THAT JACK BUILT

A Problem Submitted to the Graduate Division in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science

APPROVED:

Problem Adviser

Chairman of Thesis Committee

Chairman of Graduate Council

By

Rosamond Burk Merker

KANSAS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

Pittsburg, Kansas

July, 1954

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LIST OF ABSTRACTS

The purpose of this study is to give the story of the first twenty-five years of Webb City, Missouri, "The Town That Jack Built," and the background for the formation of this typical midwestern mining town.

The material for this study has been collected from libraries, histories, newspapers, photograph collections, scrapbooks and other souvenirs treasured over the years, and personal interviews with formerly prominent mining men and descendants of the early settlers.

The historical sketch of Webb City has been made under three chapters: (1) the early history of Webb City; (2) the industrial and economic development of Webb City; and, (3) the educational and social development of Webb City.

The early settlement of this locality is but a repetition of thousands of others; the same trials, the same privations were here to be overcome which had always met those who have led the advancing hosts of civilization. Those who blazed the pathway of civilization of this locality were mostly from Kentucky and Tennessee. The study shows how this agriculture frontier was suddenly replaced by that of mining and traces the economic, political, and social growth of the community.

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..... richest zinc district in the world. Webb City is the central directing point of the ten-mile deposit starting in Oronogo, passing through Webb City, Cartersville, Johnstown, Prosperity, Porto Rico, and ending at Duenweg. The story of Webb City is told in the following crude poem found in the Webb City High School King Jack Year Book for 1928:

Sometimes it is a farmer that you'll see;
And yet again a miner it will be.
The farmer enters first and tills the soil,
Then sows the grain and harvests in the spoil -
When to the front the miner makes his way,
Then the merchant and manufacturer have their
say.
It is the story of Webb City I'd have you
know,
Of glories past and good old days of yore.

Location

"Country of the Six Bulls" was the earliest name known to have been affixed to the region of which Webb City was to be a part. The origin of the name is somewhat involved in history, but the most plausible explanation is that given by

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY HISTORY OF WEBB CITY

The story of the development of Webb City, located in Jasper County, Missouri, is full of exciting incidents and is important because it tells a story of progress, and perpetuates the name and deeds which have helped to mold the destiny of what was to become, soon after the turn of the century, the richest zinc district in the world. Webb City is the central directing point of the ten-mile deposit starting in Oronogo, passing through Webb City, Cartersville, Johnstown, Prosperity, Porto Rico, and ending at Duenweg. The story of Webb City is told in the following crude poem found in the Webb City High School King Jack Year Book for 1922:

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Judge John C. Cox,¹ one of the pioneer settlers of Jasper County.² Even though Cox was a mere lad,³ probably eight to fourteen years of age,⁴ he well remembered Edmund Jennings giving his description of a locality in Missouri upon his return to a community in Tennessee where Cox lived. Jennings had lived for about fifteen years on peaceable terms with the Indians in the far west in the "Country of the Six Boils." His pronunciation of the word "boils" was so corrupt that his listeners took it for "bulls." It was with difficulty that he made himself understood at all. He explained he referred to six boiling, bubbling streams that traversed the region. His description of the region including Cow Skin, Indian Creek, Shoal Creek, Center Creek, Spring River, and North Fork was as accurate as given by anyone fifty years later. According to Cox, identification was so clearly established that no doubt remained that this section was no other than present Jasper and surrounding counties.⁵

The Missouri State Legislature approved an act January, 1831, which provided that "all that territory lying south and west of Crawford County, which is not included in the limits

¹An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Jasper County, Missouri (n.p.: Brink, McDonough and Company, 1876), 14.
(Cited hereafter as Brink, Atlas.)

²Malcolm G. McGregor, The Biographical Record of Jasper County Missouri (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1901), 59. (Cited hereafter as McGregor, Jasper Co.)

³Brink, Atlas, 14.

⁴McGregor, Jasper Co., 59.

⁵Brink, Atlas, 14.

of any county shall be attached to said county of Crawford for all civil and military purposes, until otherwise provided by law."⁶ Green County was formed out of the territory temporarily attached to Crawford County in 1833. In 1835 Barry County, including what was later to become Lawrence, Dade, Barton, Jasper, Newton, and McDonald counties, was cut from Green County. From the western part of Barry, Newton County was created in 1839; this included the region that was to become McDonald, Jasper, and Barton counties.⁷ An act of the Missouri Legislature, approved January 29, 1841, created from the northern part of Newton County "a separate and distinct county to be known by the name of Jasper."⁸ In 1845, a strip three miles wide was added to Jasper County on the south, and in 1855 Barton County was created from the northern sections of Jasper County.⁹

The area of interest in this study, Webb City, located in the southwestern part of Jasper County in the northern part of Joplin Township, grew from the farms belonging to four pioneer settlers, William Armstrong Daugherty, Dr. David M. Whitworth, Elijah Webb, and Jabez Tall Foster Hatcher. The Daugherty and

⁶ McGregor, Jasper Co., 12.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Joel T. Livingston, A History of Jasper County Missouri and Its People, 2 vols. (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), I, 4. (Cited hereafter as Livingston, Jasper Co.)

Whitworth land lay in the eastern part of range thirty-three;¹⁰ the Webb and Hatcher claims, in the western portion of range thirty-two.¹¹

Early Settlers

To the locality now known as Webb City came Elijah Webb from Overton County, Tennessee, in 1856, and settled near the head of Turkey Creek where a large spring supplied his water needs. He brought a few slaves with him, but it is not known what became of them.¹² The Webb Cemetery east of Harmony Grove Church site is on the old homelace.¹³

The next year a son, John C. Webb, entered 200 acres of land¹⁴ where the town, Webb City, was laid out.¹⁵ By this time Webb had increased his land holdings to half a section never dreaming that the land for which he paid the government a few hundred dollars would yield him a snug fortune.¹⁶ The Webb City Souvenir gives the location of this original town site as "on the southern and western slopes of the Moon Range

¹⁰ Brink, Atlas, 52.

¹¹ Ibid., 44.

¹² Personal interview with Era Price Hatcher, June 13, 1954. (Cited hereafter as Hatcher interview.)

¹³ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 212.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Brink, Atlas, 49.

¹⁶ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 212.



When John C. Webb, founder of Webb City, was called for volunteers from the Central War, John C. Webb resigned from the Methodist Church of Webb City. At the expiration of his term, he entered the Confederate Army.²¹

¹⁷ The Webb City Souvenir (Carthage: The Carthage Press, 1901), I.

¹⁸ Hatcher interview.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ McGregor, Jasper Co., 17.

²¹ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 212.

of the Ozark Mountains in Southwest Missouri."¹⁷ A cousin of John C. Webb, Thomas Webb, settled just north and west of the present Mount Hope Cemetery about the same time that John C. Webb started his homestead.¹⁸

In August, 1857, Jabez Tall Foster Hatcher of Overton County, Tennessee, settled just south of the present city of Cartersville. Mrs. Hatcher was a sister of John C. Webb. The few slaves which they brought with them became free people as a result of the Civil War and did not remain in the immediate region.¹⁹

Before the Civil War the population of Jasper County was almost wholly of southern birth, and quite a number of her citizens were slave owners. Politically the people were Whigs or Democrats, the Democrats being in the majority; on the question of secession the people divided almost equally. After the beginning of the war bitterness between the two sides increased, and it was not long until hostilities broke forth in the county.²⁰

When Governor Jackson of Missouri, a Southerner, called for volunteers to defend the state during the Civil War, John C. Webb responded by joining the State Guard. At the expiration of his term, he entered the Confederate Army.²¹

¹⁷The Webb City Souvenir (Carthage: The Carthage Press, 1901), I.

¹⁸Hatcher interview.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰McGregor, Jasper Co., 17.

²¹Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 212.

During the entire course of the war the county became a field for almost constant irregular fighting, wholesale robbery, and useless destruction of property. All civil government was suspended, and the county was not permanently under the military control of either army. Especially was this true of the western two-thirds of the county. These conditions forced nearly all the inhabitants of the county to join either one army or the other or leave the county entirely. Many went to Texas and settled there permanently. Those of Union sympathies went to Kansas or farther north.²²

In July, 1863, a company of Federal troops killed Jabez Hatcher²³ and burned his home.²⁴ Thomas Webb and his son met their deaths at the hands of the guerrillas in 1864.²⁵ Those killed were southern sympathizers. Invading troops did not disturb the homestead of John C. Webb, and he returned to the county after the war to take up farming again.²⁶

The return of peace found Jasper County almost depopulated. Mail routes and post offices had been discontinued, and the courts and all local civil government, suspended. Those who had been Union men during the war were now Republican

²²McGregor, Jasper Co., 19.

²³Ward L. Schrantz, Jasper County, Missouri, in the Civil War (Carthage: The Carthage Press, 1923), 245. (Cited hereafter as Schrantz, Civil War.)

²⁴Hatcher interview.

²⁵Schrantz, Civil War, 250.

²⁶Hatcher interview.

in their politics. Bearing arms or sympathizing with the Confederacy disfranchised many Jasper County residents.²⁷ William Armstrong Daugherty²⁸ and Dr. David M. Whitworth²⁹ came to this area from Overton County, Tennessee, where they had known the Webbs and Hatchers, and settled in 1867 to the west of the present city limits. The Daugherty land lay north of that belonging to the Whitworths. The Daughertys made only a brief stop before going on to Texas, where they remained about a year before returning.³⁰ A former Negro slave and her son and daughter would not leave Daugherty when he set them free; they followed him to Missouri, to Texas, and back to Missouri again. After the formation of Cartersville, Daugherty moved to that town and obtained a small house in the southwest part for the faithful Negroes. Every morning at six o'clock they appeared at his place to work. After a time the son committed some indiscretion, and Daugherty gave him one hundred dollars with the instructions not to return. The Negro family attended the South Methodist Church of Cartersville; this was most unusual since Cartersville has always had the reputation of not allowing the sun to set on a Negro. When the old mother died, her funeral service was held in the church, and she was

²⁷McGregor, Jasper Co., 23.

²⁸Livingston, Jasper Co., II, 574.

²⁹McGregor, Jasper Co., 71.

³⁰Personal interview with Lee Daugherty, Sr., June 18, 1953.

buried in a winding sheet according to her instructions. The daughter later died in Carthage.³¹ Dr. Whitworth was one of the few doctors in the area and was much in demand. Starting on his circuit each Monday morning, Dr. Whitworth did not see his family again till the following Saturday or Sunday evening. His practice took him north to Oronogo, or Minersville, east to Carthage, and south to the present Diamond area.³² Today by automobile any point of Dr. Whitworth's circuit can be reached in about thirty minutes. In the years 1856 to 1873, the coming of the Webb, Hatcher, Daugherty, and Whitworth families formed the nucleus of a population which later became the citizenry of Webb City. ³⁵ Indeed it was lead!

Discovery of Lead

The popular story of the discovery of lead states that Webb plowed up a fair sized chunk of lead while working in his field. In the early seventies another farmer, named Carter, tilled the soil approximately one mile east of Webb's place. It was on his land that the town of Carterville originated simultaneously with the building of Webbville, Webb City; these two locations became the "Twin Cities." It was hard to tell where one ended and the other began except for Ben's Branch lying in the valley between the two towns;³³ the business districts were then and are now only one mile apart.

³¹Hatcher interview.

³²Personal interview with Mrs. George (Whitworth) Ober, June 27, 1953. ³⁵ Interview with Joan Potter, July 11, 1953.

³³Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 219.

During the development of the two towns, civic leaders made several unsuccessful attempts to consolidate them.³⁴

It was Ben's Branch that played an important part in the discovery of ore on the Webb place in June, 1873. E. T. Webb, son of the founder of the city, told John Potter, a Sentinel linotype operator, how his father had discovered ore. Webb made a habit of going down to the branch to visit with the Oronogo ore wagon drivers, who stopped there to water their horses on the thirty mile trek to the Granby smelter which was the only one in the area. One day he noticed a shiny rock-like object in one of the deep ruts cut by the wagon wheels. Could it be lead? Indeed it was lead!³⁵

The popular story of the discovery of lead states that Webb plowed up a fair sized chunk of lead while working in his cornfield. Jasper County histories dated 1883, 1901, and 1912 repeat this story with slight variations.

It is possible that both stories are correct since the watering place was on Webb's land,³⁶ and corn grows normally on the bottom land which would have been along the branch.

Webb took the chunk of lead to W. A. Daugherty for inspection; it proved to be lead. At Webb's request, Daugherty entered into partnership with him to sink a shaft and develop

³⁴Walter Williams, The State of Missouri: An Autobiography (Columbia: Press of E. W. Stephens, 1904), 312.

³⁵Personal interview with John Potter, July 11, 1953.

³⁶Ibid.

the land.³⁷ They obtained little success as it was impossible to keep the land from being put

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percentage of what they found. His policy of keeping the

land was wise. He was able to keep the farmhouse

and move into a fine brick residence which, surrounded by ex-

tensive grounds, became the heart of Webb City on the rise

west of the valley.⁴³

³⁷Hatcher interview.

³⁸Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 219.

³⁹Ibid., 212.

⁴⁰Personal interview with J. B. Gibson, June 7, 1954.
(Cited hereafter as Gibson interview.)

⁴¹Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 219.

⁴²Walter B. Stevens, Missouri the Center State 1821-1915,
4 vols. (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915),
I, 59. (Cited hereafter as Stevens, Missouri.)

⁴³Hatcher interview.



the land.³⁷ They obtained little success as it was impossible to keep the water out of the shaft.³⁸ The next year Webb put in his crops as usual. After gathering them he purchased a pump and other necessary equipment to "beat the water."³⁹

People in Jasper County mining area knew very little about pumps in those days. The early ones were literally horse powered; a relay of about seven horses, each working in two or three hour shifts, was required to keep one pump going.⁴⁰

After draining the ground Webb and Daugherty began the work of cribbing the shaft. In sinking the shaft to a considerable depth, they struck no lead excepting a stratum not more than one inch thick. In 1874 Webb became discouraged and sold his interest to Granville P. Ashcraft.⁴¹ However Webb did not sell his land but leased it to other miners for a percentage of what they found.⁴² His policy of keeping the land was wise, for he was soon able to leave the farmhouse and move into a fine brick residence which, surrounded by extensive grounds, became the heart of Webb City on the rise west of the valley.⁴³

³⁷Hatcher interview.

³⁸Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 219.

³⁹Ibid., 212.

⁴⁰Personal interview with J. B. Gibson, June 7, 1954.
(Cited hereafter as Gibson interview.)

⁴¹Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 219.

⁴²Walter B. Stevens, Missouri the Center State 1821-1915, 4 vols. (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915), I, 59. (Cited hereafter as Stevens, Missouri.)

⁴³Hatcher interview.



The John C. Webb brick home built in 1875. Later known as the Burgner place and then the Register building and was razed in the early 1920's. The building faced east on Webb Street; next door north of the present Elks building. From the Webb City, city office photograph collection.

⁴⁴ Livingston, Jasper Co., 1, 219.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 226.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 212.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ F. A. North, ed., History of Jasper County, Missouri (Des Moines: Mills and Company, 1883), 612. (Cited hereafter as North, Jasper Co.)

⁴⁹ Ibid., 613.

Soon after Ashcraft, an experienced miner, purchased an interest in the mine, he set a charge of powder⁴⁴ which caused the platform in the shaft to be literally covered with great chunks of lead. The shot opened up entrance to a cave-like pocket which was almost a solid pocket of lead.⁴⁵ During the second day of work the miners hoisted a chunk of lead weighing over 1,000 pounds.⁴⁶ This was the beginning of the mining activities in the Webb City vicinity; the miners who came to work the place settled around the mine forming the first population of what was soon to be the "Twin Cities." Within two years the area had changed from a quiet farming community to a bustling mining camp.

Municipal Development

Not only was John C. Webb the discoverer of lead in the Webb City area, but around his name centers the early development of Webb City as well. It was he who platted the town from his original farm acreage; sold lots; donated land for a church and a school; built the first house,⁴⁷ and later the first brick house;⁴⁸ erected the second hotel,⁴⁹ the first

⁴⁴Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 219.

⁴⁵Ibid., 220.

⁴⁶Ibid., 212.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸F. A. North, ed., History of Jasper County, Missouri (Des Moines: Mills and Company, 1883), 612. (Cited hereafter as North, Jasper Co.)

⁴⁹Ibid., 613.

church building, the first bank;⁵⁰ and took a great interest in the development of the town until his death from consumption at the age of fifty-seven, in 1883.⁵¹

Webb platted the town of Webbville July, 1875,⁵² and Elijah Loyd surveyed the area on July 26, 1875. Records dated September 11, 1875, show the town contained eight streets, seven alleys, and seventy-two lots.⁵³ Webb reserved a block for a church and a school site.⁵⁴ Ashcraft purchased a large number of city lots, built the second house in Webb City, and lived there for the next thirty-five years.⁵⁵ Newcomers built scores of houses that summer and moved in many from neighboring towns.⁵⁶

The next year, 1876, five additions to the city were recorded as follows: Webb's first edition August 24, 1876; Webb's second edition September 1, 1876; Andrew McCorkle's addition October 23, 1876; Bolen and Beebe's addition October 30, 1876;

⁵⁰Henrietta Crotty, ed., A History and Economic Survey of Webb City, Missouri (Webb City: The Webb City Daily Sentinel, 1937), 5. (Cited hereafter as Crotty, Webb City.)

⁵¹North, Jasper Co., 651.

⁵²Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 212.

⁵³North, Jasper Co., 609.

⁵⁴Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 212.

⁵⁵Ibid., 214.

⁵⁶Personal interview with Henrietta Crotty, June 20, 1953. (Cited hereafter as Crotty interview.)



Map of the original town site.

From the Brink, Atlas, 1876.

and Pittsburg Mining and Smelting Company's addition November 9, 1876.⁵⁷

The town had grown to such an extent that during the presidential campaign of 1876 the county court designated Webb City as a voting precinct; 241 votes were cast, 195 of them for the Democratic candidate.⁵⁸

"In December, 1876, W. A. Ashcraft, O. Jacobs, James Smith, J. E. McNair, and R. A. Sterling, acting under authority of an expression of the citizen taxpayers of the place, drew up and presented a petition to the county court praying for incorporation."⁵⁹ The court granted incorporation, and the above mentioned men by appointment became trustees. The board held its first meeting at the office of F. Bruen on the evening of December 11, 1876, and drafted the first ordinances of Webb City.⁶⁰

Because of the many needed improvements, the trustees levied a tax slightly in excess of the constitutional limit. Since the city taxes could not be levied and collected until the regular time of assessment, the trustees, anticipating returns from the city tax levy, hired policemen and other employees and paid them in city warrants. When the time came

⁵⁷North, Jasper Co., 610.

⁵⁸Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 214.

⁵⁹North, Jasper Co., 610.

⁶⁰Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 215.

for collecting the tax, voters contested the levy. At the trial the court declared the tax levy to be illegal. As a result, the city government did not receive the anticipated revenue for 1877 and 1878. City warrants went down to fifty cents on the dollar and the wheels of government for a time almost stopped. It was impossible for Webb City to collect its first taxes until it incorporated as a city of the fourth class in 1879.⁶¹

James E. McNair, selected as the first mayor of Webb City by the trustees, resigned after serving one month to become the first postmaster when that office was established.⁶²

Other business of the first board of trustees was the selection of L. Marx as the city marshal.⁶³ His services were soon in demand because of the arrest of James Missick which resulted in the "Blunt Raid" of January 25, 1877. Marshal Marx and his deputy placed Missick of Carterville in the city jail for drunkenness. A party of Missick's friends came from Carterville to Webb City and attempted to take the prisoner from jail. Not succeeding by forceful means, they procured bail and the party returned home with Missick. Four friends, bent on raiding Webb City, returned on the following morning. During their morning stay they hung around the saloon and threatened the mayor and police. That afternoon seven returned

⁶¹Ibid., 216. Jasper Co., 1, 218.

⁶²Ibid., 215. Co., 610.

⁶³North, Jasper Co., 610. 1, 218.

and galloped through the streets at full speed, firing promiscuously at people on the thoroughfare. The raiders shot Uriah Fishburn, "Monkey-wrench" Jones, and several other bystanders but killed none. The marshal shot a horse from under one of the raiders. He then rode to Oronogo and telegraphed to Sheriff Beamer at Carthage for help. That evening the sheriff and two hack-loads of special deputies arrived from Carthage; meanwhile the raiders had departed. Officers arrested a number of men for complicity in the affair and took to the county jail at Carthage two who could not give bail. There they overpowered the jailer, escaped, and were never retaken. George Hudson, who had given bail, was to be tried for shooting Fishburn. Since Fishburn died in a mining accident the very morning of the trial, the court freed Hudson for want of evidence. Justice finally caught up with Hudson; he was killed by a sheriff in Colorado while resisting arrest.⁶⁴

The same year saw a general building boom with six more additions being added to the town.⁶⁵ During the year 1877, active citizens organized the Webb City School District and built the first school house, a two-story frame structure containing four large rooms.⁶⁶

Until the close of the decade of the eighties, Webb City's only protection from fire was the bucket brigade brought into

⁶⁴Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 218.

⁶⁵North, Jasper Co., 610.

⁶⁶Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 218.

service for the emergency of the moment and without any recognized chief to control or command.⁶⁷

In 1877 the down town area was a collection of shacks and old type frame buildings of Hollywood style depicting frontier days with an occasional sporty wooden sidewalk. The lay of the present downtown streets can be traced from Easley's 1877 picture collection.⁶⁸ There was only one large brick house standing on the prairie, the Webb home, later called the Burgner place and still later the Register Building.⁶⁹

The area on the slopes of Moon Range of the Ozark Mountains in southwest Missouri, settled by a group of Overton County Tennesseans, the Webb, Hatcher, Daugherty, and Whitworth families, became prominent with the discovery of ore on John C. Webb's property. The problem of keeping the water out of the mines caused many disappointments, but when pumps were secured, the mining progressed rapidly. In a short time the area was transformed from one of farming to that of mining. The coming of the miners necessitated the establishment of law and order; that resulted in the formation of Webb City, Missouri, incorporated as a city of the fourth class in 1879.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 301.

⁶⁸ 1877 picture collection belonging to Harry Easley of Webb City, Missouri.

⁶⁹ Personal interview with Mrs. Alice (Creswell) Rozell, July 19, 1953. (Cited hereafter as Rozell interview.)

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CHAPTER II

INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WEBB CITY

The incorporation of Webb City in 1876 made possible the rapid industrial and economic development of the town. Because of the discovery of lead in 1873, on the farm of John C. Webb, miners moved into the district. The town was platted and businesses established to suit the needs of the ever-increasing number of miners. In time miners discovered zinc. This ore increased the value of the mines and enticed more miners to seek their fortunes in the newly developed mining region. The mines made Webb City. Since the value of zinc, commonly termed "jack," materially added to the wealth and growth of Webb City, the miners gave Webb City the appellation of "The Zinc City" or "The Town That Jack Built." In the Zinc City opportunities were unlimited and unexcelled. The poor man of today became the rich man of tomorrow; often luck took him from a shack to a mansion of magnificent proportions. A man could obtain a lease on a small amount of ground and perhaps make a strike almost immediately, or again work for years at a great outlay of time, effort, and money and find nothing. Many who were almost penniless became wealthy. Often some of these lost all in another mining venture; others were lucky and made more in a similar venture. The mines,

(Cited hereafter as Rullett interview.)

² Gibson interview.

as whimsical as Lady Luck, "made" or "broke" men; they made rich men poor, poor men rich, or poor men remained poor. The steady flow of the rich minerals, lead and zinc, made many wealthy men; they became the town's citizens and furthered the progress of Webb City, "The Town That Jack Built."

Mining

The mines of Webb City not only brought wealth and a nickname to the town, but they gave character to its general appearance. A glance in any direction from the town revealed their importance and their picturesqueness. At the end of most streets were glistening white mountains of chat or tailings; back of these were other chat piles, row upon row lost in the hazy distance. In the summer their whiteness reflected the sun's rays and heat; in winter they became snow-capped mountains. Centered here and there among these man-made mountains were the mines.¹

Far seeing mining men bought as much land as they could and leased all available acreage. They divided their purchased and leased ground into lots and leased or sub-let it to individual operators or to small companies.² Out of these leases and sub-leases developed the Center Creek Mining Company, Sucker Flat, and the Eleventh Hour Mining Company.

¹Personal interview with Harry B. Hulett, July 18, 1953. (Cited hereafter as Hulett interview.)

²Gibson interview.

The first mine shaft sunk in Webb City was dug by J. C. Webb, W. A. Daugherty, and a wandering miner named Murrell. This shaft was later named Pump Shaft Number One of the Center Creek Mining Company. Before the turn of the century, this shaft produced ore worth more than \$500,000. When the Center Creek Company began operation in 1877, on the former Webb farm area between Webb City and Cartersville, only lead ores had commercial value. When the miners struck zinc ore, the supposition was that the lead had "played out"; the owners then abandoned the mine. Since lead was discovered in shallow ground generally, it was not considered profitable to sink through the lime rock, which underlies all of this land; therefore no mining was done in the lime rock except where it was found in open or boulder formation.³

The early mines were shallow, only fifty to one hundred feet deep. A term used for such mines was soft ground, or disseminated deposits. The soft ground deposit was a big body of ore in soft ground which had to be timbered. The disseminated was a high faced deposit, sometimes one hundred feet, caused by underground streams flowing around lime bluffs. Until the nineties prospecting was done by digging test shafts.⁴

In the early days of mining the method of work was very primitive. The handwindlass and the horse-hoister were the

³The Webb City Gazette, February number, 1899, III, No. 1, 21. (Cited hereafter as the Gazette.)

⁴Gibson interview.



Number one pump station for the Center Creek Mining Company. The photograph was taken looking southeast toward the Missouri Pacific Railroad Station in the late 1880's.

The wooden flumes conveyed water from the pumping plant to the several hand-jigs then on the land. The flumes did not remain water tight, resulting in icicles along the leaks. From the Hulett photograph collection.



Sunshine Lamp
Actual size

The fuel for the lamps was kept in "sunshine" barrels in the ground. The sunshine was paraffin mixed with a little kerosene. The spout contained a cotton wick which had a sixteen penny nail thrust through it. The burning wick was fed by the paraffin melted from contact with the heated nail. A hook fastened the lamp into a fitting on the miner's cap. The lamps were in general use until the turn of the century. Photograph taken from an actual lamp furnished by the courtesy of Harry Tarrant.

only powered devices to elevate the ore to the surface; to separate the mineral from the barren rock laborers used hand-jigs.⁵ The hand-jig was a box six feet square and three feet high. Hung inside this box was a screen, an iron sheet with small holes punched it; a pole, extending ten or twelve feet out, was attached to the screen. The operator of the hand-jig stood near the center of a board placed on two stones. This allowed the board to give easily with his rhythmic movements as he worked the end of the pole up and down. He placed crushed rock containing ore on the screen and allowed water from a flume to run over it as he repeatedly "jiggled" the contents of the screen. This forced the ore to sink to the bottom of the box through the screen while the foreign matter stayed on top. To keep the jig operating at the correct speed was an art not easily acquired. Because the pace of jiggling was grueling, the jig man "rested" by loading or unloading the ore box.⁶ Hand-jigs were still used by some independent miners until the late nineties. By this time most of them had given way to the great concentrating mills which formed a central milling agency for a number of small mines. At this time the Center Creek Company had ten

⁵Personal interview with Oll Rogers, June 27, 1954.
(Cited hereafter as Rogers interview.)

⁶Personal interview with Harry Tarrant, June 25, 1954.
(Cited hereafter as Tarrant interview.)



A primitive horse hoister.
From Klondike of Missouri (J. E. Lockwood, Agent), Carnegie
Public Library, Joplin, Missouri.

concentrating mills,⁷ the first one erected in 1885.⁸ The company also owned and operated one custom crusher and one tailing mill on its 210 acre lease.⁹

About 1880, the mine owners realized that the little, black, rosin-like substance, associated with lead and called "Black Jack", or zinc, had a commercial value. This ore became more valuable to the district than lead because it was more abundant, existing in the ratio of five to one.¹⁰ Previously miners, believing zinc worthless, threw it away. Realizing its value, the Center Creek Mining Company constructed its tailing mill in 1898 for the purpose of working over the waste material on top of the ground.¹¹

The reclaiming of waste material containing zinc offered a new opportunity to men in the mining industry. As a result "The Chatter", a new character, came into the mining picture. Men were given the name chatter because they made a business of reclaiming the mineral found in the chat piles. Men doing this reclamation profited by the waste caused by the poor mining facilities and the miner's ignorance of the value of the waste found in the chats or tailings. The chatters traveled in pairs. When they found a dump which they knew contained ore worth their time, they made the owner a

⁷Gazette, 21.

⁸Ibid., 23.

⁹Ibid., 21.

¹⁰Crotty interview.

¹¹Gazette, 23.

proposition to work over the chat and clean out the ore for a certain percentage. The chatter, upon agreement with the owner, set up his hand-jig, arranged temporary shelter, and went to work. His work was entirely legitimate; he was the scavenger of the mineral fields.¹²

Another mine, evidently operated on the same principle as the Center Creek Mining Company, was "Sucker Flat", located in the south part of town and in operation before 1882. Since records were lost, the early history of this mine is incomplete.¹³ This company had no concentrating mill and separated the ore by hand-jig. Ore from this mine found a market in England.¹⁴ Records state that mining was suspended for a time in this mine. In 1892 Sucker Flat under new management operated again. During an eight year period the ore from this mine brought its owners \$21,000.¹⁵

In this rich Webb City lead and zinc field, Joseph W. Aylor, in 1885, started and operated the Eleventh Hour Mining Company. Aylor owned the forty acre McCorkle Hill land and leased 120 acres from Mrs. Eliza Jane Chinn (nee Webb). By 1898 ore from five acres of the McCorkle Hill land brought Aylor \$1,250,000. Although he enriched himself from the McCorkle land during this period, he obtained no

¹²Stevens, Missouri, 59-60.

¹³Gazette, 78.

¹⁴King Jack Year Book (Webb City High School). (Webb City: Switzer Printing Company), XV, 68.

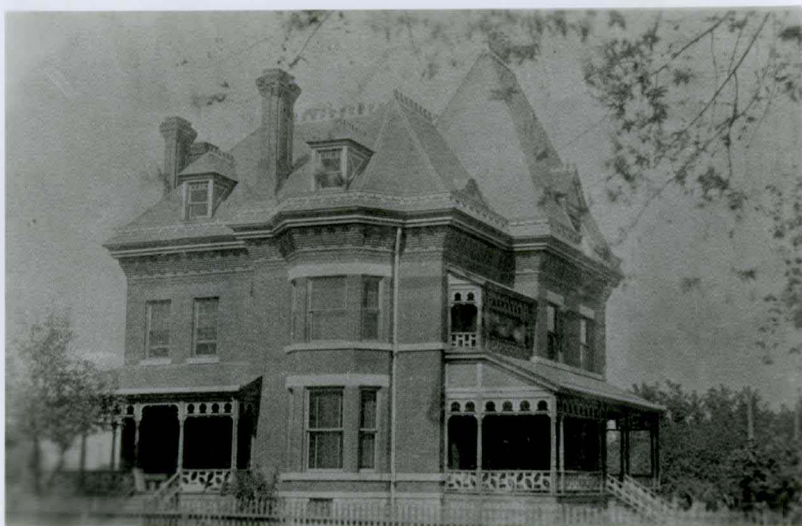
¹⁵Gazette, 78.



THE SUCKER FLAT MINE

This is a picture of a famous old mine, the Sucker Flat, taken ^{in 1882} ~~forty years ago~~. A shipment of ore is being prepared for England. There was no concentrating mill, and the ore was separated by a hand jig. In those days the ore was shipped in bags. This mine was owned by Postmaster General Noble.

Sucker Flat, located only five blocks south of the heart of the business district, was in operation as late as World War II. From the Webb City High School King Jack Year Book, 1922.



The Joseph W. Aylor three-story residence. This second brick house built in Webb City is located on the southwest corner of Daugherty and Webb streets. From the Webb City Gazette, February, 1899.

¹⁶ Ibid., 38-9.

satisfactory amount of mineral from the Chinn land. Because of the numerous failures of earlier prospectors working this land, and the apparent fact that the new owner had only been successful in finding ore at the eleventh hour, the mine became known as the Eleventh Hour Mining Company.¹⁶

In the early mining days the rough and ready miners not only employed crude methods of work but expressed themselves in crude practical jokes. This is illustrated by a story concerning a miner on the Eleventh Hour ground. The regular hoistman working for this miner did not show up one morning, and he hired a passing man to fill in for the hoistman. Work progressed till about noon; then the miner signaled he wanted five shots prepared. The helper sent them down in the tub or bucket, as it was called, but stopped it about eight feet from the bottom. He called to the man below, "Here's the shot all lit and ready to go." Since the shaft had no tunnels for escape, and its walls were smooth rock which offered no climbing advantages, the trapped miner called frantically to the hoistman who disappeared never to be seen again by the frightened miner. Every second the trapped man expected to be blown to bits. Desperately clawing at the shaft walls in a futile effort to reach the fuses hanging over the edge of the tub, he saw them rapidly grow shorter and shorter until they were out of sight. Suddenly the man realized there had been no

¹⁶ Ibid., 38-9.

¹⁷ Gibson interview.

explosion and that he was actually still alive. Later in the afternoon the weary man was able to make himself heard by passing miners who hauled him out. Inspecting the tub, they found the fuses had no shot on the other end. The miner often declared he would have killed the temporary hoistman had he ever found him.¹⁷

During the first twenty-five years of Webb City mining history, pioneer mine owners developed the Center Creek Mining Company, Sucker Flay, and the Eleventh Hour Mining Company. These mines continued operation with little stoppage through the turn of the century.¹⁸

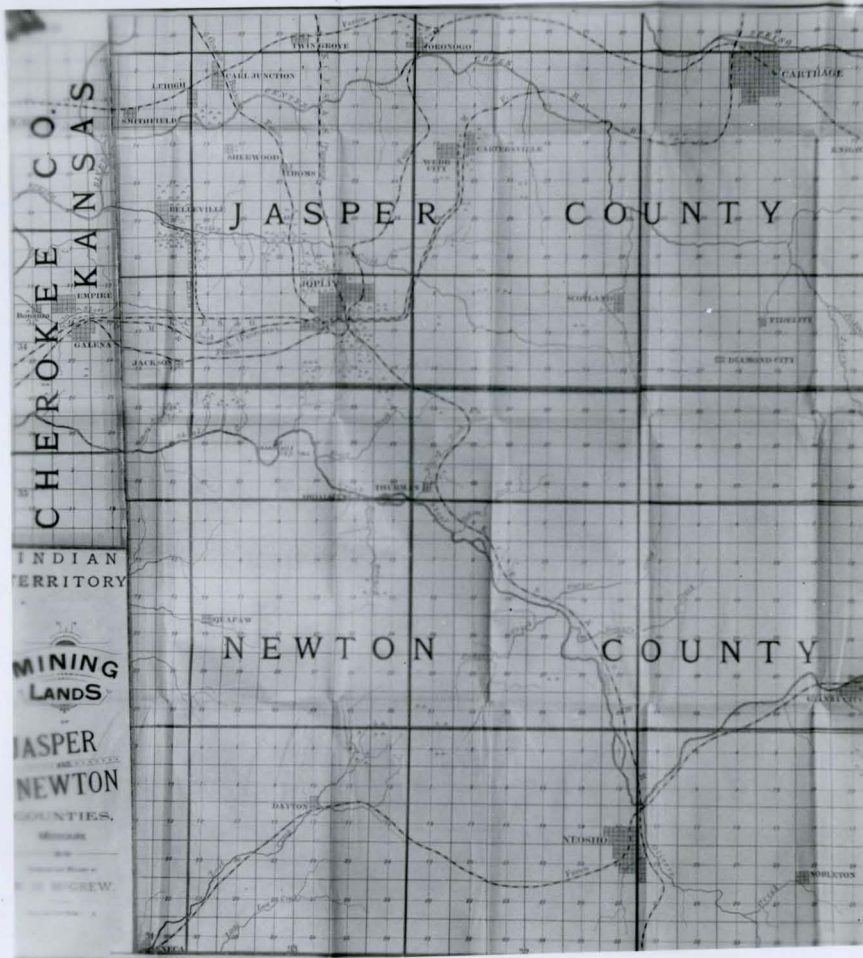
Later in the nineties the development of sheet ground mining revolutionized the entire mining industry. The sheet ground mines of the Webb City district did more than mines of any other section to make the zinc fields of Southwest Missouri. A former mine superintendent has defined sheet ground formation as follows: "Two minerals, lead sulphide, or 'galena', and zinc sulphide, or 'jack', are associated in well defined bands or large tabular deposits between parallel bedding planes of flint."¹⁹

In lead and zinc mining the broken ore and rock was called dirt. The assay proved whether it was pay dirt. Holes were drilled and squibbed (packing the hole with shot)

¹⁷Gibson interview.

¹⁸Rogers interview.

¹⁹Gibson interview.



Mineral district map of 1887.

From Map of Joplin Mineral District, Jasper County, Missouri, Rand, McNally and Company, 1887.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Gazette, 21-84.

one day, and the blasting and loading took place the next day. In loading the shovelers averaged twenty to thirty tons per day using a number two scoop. In the mill above the ground the ore descended from the storage bin or hopper to the rolls where it was crushed; a conveyor then carried it to the jig. In the jig water was forced up and down through stationary screens by the action of the plunger in an adjacent compartment.²⁰

The first successful pioneer mine in sheet ground mining was the Underwriters' Mine, familiarly known as the "Yellow Dog"; its name originated from the yellow houses near it. The Yellow Dog was perhaps the richest sheet ground mine in the section, yielding eight to ten per cent concentrate. A group of mines, opened up around it, were called "Red Dog", "Bird Dog", "Bull Dog", and "Black Cat" in keeping with the precedent set by owners of the Yellow Dog.²¹ Other mines having unique names were: "The Get There Mining Company", "Need More", "Crown Point", "The Opal", "The Wonder", "Good Enough", "The Free Coinage Lease", "Nugget Mining Company", "Rubber Neck Mining Company", and "Hell's Neck." Many others were found among those operating in the general area.²²

Mining from 1877 until 1883 was profitable. National crises had a direct effect upon the price of ore. Without

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Gazette, 21-84.

sufficient profit mining, which was an expensive process at the best, could not be carried on. The years 1883 and 1884 saw a sharp decline in the price of ore.²³ During the time the entire country was in the grip of the severe panic of 1893, prices sank even lower. It was not until 1896 that the prices again began to rise.²⁴ When the ore price was low, the mine operators cut down on their operations or ceased work altogether for a time. Merely suspending operation did not stop the outpouring of expense. If the owners intended to reopen the mines, water had to be kept out of the shafts. This was a very costly operation and became still more so if the water remained until supports and other equipment were damaged. Drainage was necessary not only because of the amount of water found in the mines, but because of the acid quality of that water. The acid, peculiarly known as "alkali", rapidly deteriorated mining equipment.²⁵ Many of the miners of the early days in western Jasper County had first obtained experience in the mines of the West where they were accustomed to alkali water. When they came to this part of the country and encountered the corrosive acid in the water, they called it alkali because to them the word meant bad water. The underground water in this region contained a weak carbonic acid

²³Ibid., 23.

²⁴Ibid., 19.

²⁵Rogers interview.

solution. When this solution passed through pyrite the result was ferris sulphate, or zinc sulphate, if in zinc ground. When it was exposed to air, it became ferric sulphate which ate away the iron pipes and other equipment.²⁶

With all the excitement of new found riches in mining, there were many failures and heartaches. A mine accident was always signaled by tying down the mine whistle, and fear lived in many hearts until the townspeople heard their loved ones were not among those injured or dead. Accidents were frequent, and since there was no Webb City hospital until 1905, the doctors received the injured men in their offices and gave them emergency treatment; then the injured were removed to their homes. Improper handling of dynamite and cave-ins (the miners were too greedy to leave enough ore for supports) led the list of causes of accidents along with general carelessness.²⁷

In the late nineties the prosperity of the mines expanded greatly as the result of the following: (1) general national prosperity; (2) the introduction of steam pumping machines for mine drainage, reducing the expense of that part of mining operation by nearly one-half; (3) the use of steam and air drills for cutting ore bodies, enabling the output to be nearly doubled without increasing the expense over hand drill

²⁶Personal interview with Bruce Williams, July 1, 1954.

²⁷Gibson interview.

²⁸North, Jasper Co., 613.

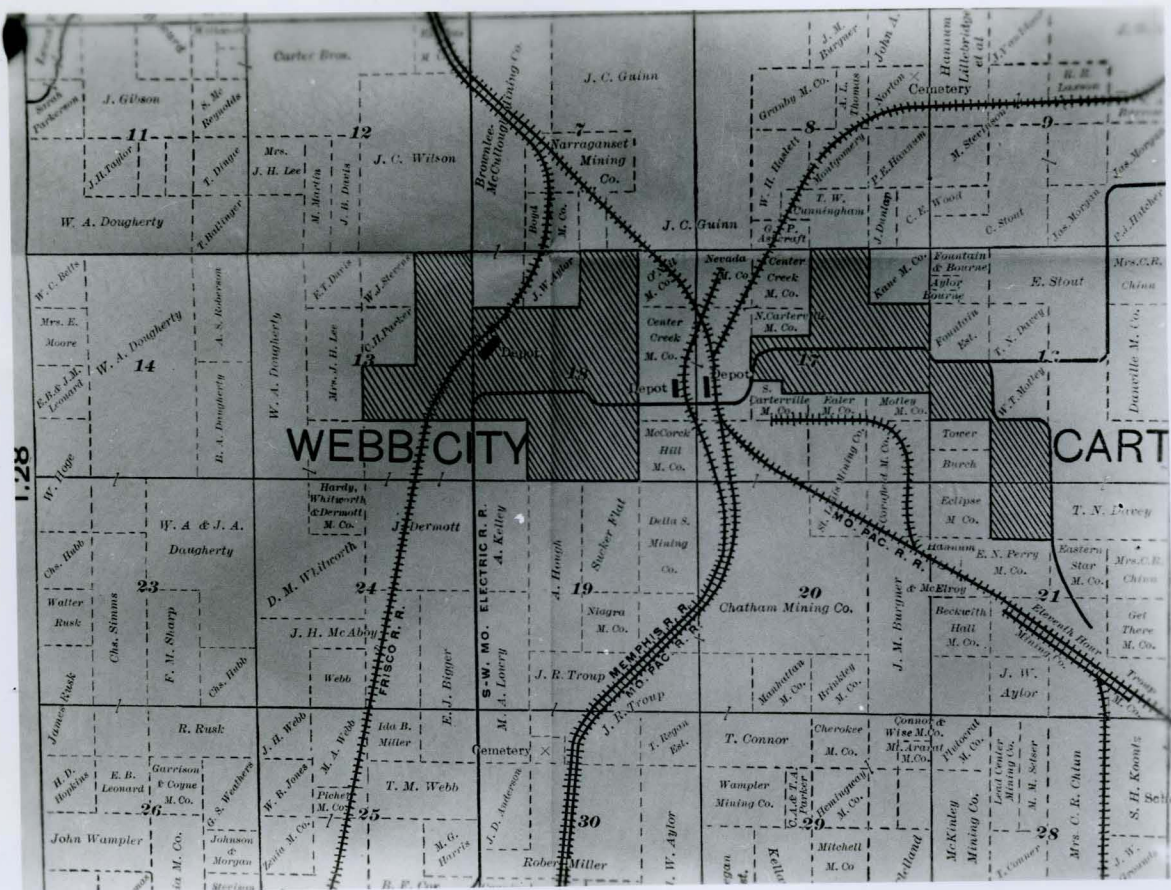
work; (4) the use of heavier and larger hoisting appliances, raising a largely increased quantity of ore at practically the former fixed charge; (5) the general construction of concentrating works averaging a capacity at least double that formerly built, which enabled the operator to crush and clean that amount of ore at a trifling increase in expense; (6) the general use of prospecting drills to determine the location and extent of ore bodies before shaft sinking; and (7) the unprecedented demand for ore bringing a higher price for the product through the wants of foreign markets and the demand of American manufacturers.²⁸

Housing

The quick growth of the mines brought about a housing problem soon after the platting of the town of Webbville in July, 1875. There was an urgent need for living accommodations for the many miners who came to work the first Daugherty-Ashcraft lease and for others who streamed in to try their luck on their own. One of the first accommodations was the two-story Transit House building, one hundred fifty by fifty feet. This hotel was located on Main Street in the east half of the second block east of Allen Street; it contained seventeen rooms "well furnished and ventilated for the accommodation of guests."²⁹

²⁸Gazette, 19.

²⁹North, Jasper Co., 613.



Webb City, Carterville mining area, 1898.

Forerunners of the real estate agents must have been quite busy that same summer as scores of houses were under construction, and many houses were moved in from Baxter Springs, Kansas, Granby, Carthage, and other nearby cities.³⁰

In 1876 John C. Webb erected the Webb City Hotel, a somewhat pretentious hostelry with wooden porticos and tall iron columns. This building had a sixty foot frontage on Webb Street, an eighty foot south ell, and a sixty foot north ell. On the first floor was an office, baggage room, sample room, parlor, dining room, and kitchen; on the second, there were eighteen guest rooms.³¹ In the early eighties it was enlarged and called the Western Hotel,³² later renamed the Atlantic House,³³ and then the Buffalo House.³⁴ The Western Hotel, containing thirty-two rooms,³⁵ was larger than the Transit House.

G. W. Scott built the Pacific House or Scott House, as many knew it, in 1877. The Pacific House was a two-story frame building, fifty by forty feet, and provided twenty good-sized rooms for guests. The building was destroyed by fire March 9, 1883.³⁶ The Scott House was located on the

³⁰Gazette, 9. of 1877.

³¹North, Jasper Co., 613.

³²Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 297.

³³The Daily Register, March 11, 1893, 3. (Cited hereafter as Register.)

³⁴Hulett interview.

³⁵Register, 3.

³⁶Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 297.



The old Webb Hotel twenty years later when it was known as the Buffalo House. The building was located on the east end of Joplin Street, the present site of the O'Neill building. A portion of the Times newspaper house. From the Easley photograph collection of 1877.

northeast corner of Allen and Main.³⁷



The old Webb Hotel twenty years later when it was known as the Buffalo House.

The building was located on the east end of

Joplin Street, the present site of the O'Neil

building. A portion of the Times newspaper

building can be seen to the immediate left of

the hotel. From the Hulett photograph col-

lection.

³⁷ Hulett interview.

³⁸ Register, 3.

³⁹ Gazette, 93.

⁴⁰ Register, 3.

⁴¹ Gazette, 99.

⁴² Ibid., 89-90.

⁴³ Register, 3.

northeast corner of Allen and Main.³⁷

In 1890 the Palace Hotel, a handsome three-story brick building at 210 Main Street, was opened for business.³⁸ By 1898 it was known as the Hotel Main.³⁹

The Arlington Hotel, a three-story frame building, located on the northeast corner of Hall and John streets, was erected in 1891.⁴⁰ In 1899 the hotel changed hands and went under the name The New Arlington. Its thirty rooms were re-finished and refurnished throughout.⁴¹

The Newland Hotel, boasting one hundred rooms and occupying half a block on the southwest corner of Allen and Church streets, opened its doors in 1891. On the ground floor the hotel maintained a large office, parlors, dining room, billiard parlor, cafe, bar, and convenient sample rooms. The entire building was "elegantly furnished with the most modern furniture," and the management provided excellent service and comfort for its guests. It was indeed a show place equal to any of its time.⁴²

By the late nineties the Hotel Main, Buffalo House, and the Arlington were dollar a day hotels, and the Newland charged two and two fifty.⁴³ The hotels were necessary to care for

³⁷Hulett interview.

³⁸Register, 3.

³⁹Gazette, 93.

⁴⁰Register, 3.

⁴¹Gazette, 99.

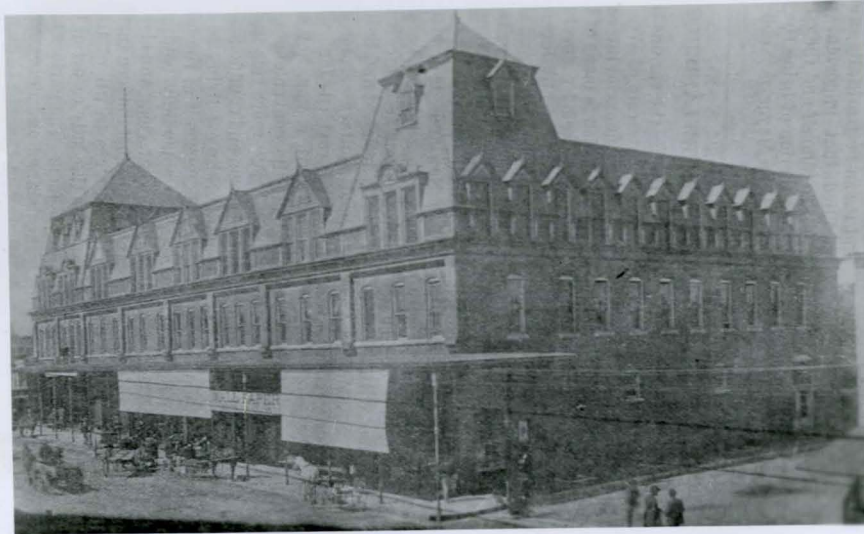
⁴²Ibid., 89-90.

⁴³Register, 3.



The Hotel Main, condemned in 1954.

From the Webb City Gazette, February, 1899.



night each night, were the meeting places for the making of business deals.⁴⁴

Large room. The Newland Hotel built by James O'Neil in 1891 at a cost of \$100,000. were good. From the Webb City Gazette, February, 1899. a very good room with a board could be had for three to three fifty a week.⁴⁵

The board included a well filled dinner bucket as well as breakfast and supper. For the miners who had no outside responsibilities, nine dollars a week was a good wage; this money allowed them to live and dress well.⁴⁶

The miner, working for wages, put in a nine hour day, six days a week. For a man with a good sized family, his

⁴⁴ Gibson interview.

⁴⁵ Rogers interview.

⁴⁶ Gibson interview.

the large numbers of people who swarmed in from the time the mines were opened. Mainly these people did not come to work in the mines; they were speculators, promoters of all types, mine operators, and ore buyers. Often a tenderfoot from the East was in this group, and knew he could tell the miners how things should be done. However he seldom was successful in his own mining ventures. The majority of the tenderfoot miners were looked upon with scorn. Some of these tenderfoot mining men were college graduates with mining training, but they did not understand the problems of the lead and zinc fields of this region. The hotels, bustling till past midnight each night, were the meeting places for the making of business deals.⁴⁴

Large rooming houses provided accommodations for many of the miners who worked as laborers. These, the homes and hotels, were good, bad, and indifferent. In the nineties a very good room with excellent board could be had for three to three fifty a week.⁴⁵ The board included a well filled dinner bucket as well as breakfast and supper. For the miners who had no outside responsibilities, nine dollars a week was a good wage; this money allowed them to live and dress well.⁴⁶

The miner, working for wages, put in a nine hour day, six days a week. For a man with a good sized family, his

⁴⁴Gibson interview.

⁴⁵Rogers interview.

⁴⁶Gibson interview.

wages were hardly enough to feed and clothe them much less provide a home that was more than a shack of one or two rooms. Men who were fortunate enough to have an interest in a development of their own and had any degree of success could, of course, provide better homes. The tradesmen, mine operators, and owners fared much better financially than the majority of the common laborers.⁴⁷

Housing accommodations had greatly increased from 1876 to 1900 to provide for the 8,501 new inhabitants of Webb City. In addition to the private dwellings and rooming houses for the business people and miners the Newland, Arlington, and Main hotels and the Buffalo House offered housing and food for promoters, mine operators, ore buyers, and the traveling public.

Business Firms

Simultaneously with the increase of population and construction of housing facilities in Webb City, various types of businesses developed in keeping with the needs and demands of a typical mining town.

With the rapid expansion of business it was soon necessary that some systematic manner of handling money and credit be developed in the town. The result was the establishing of

⁴⁷ Rogers interview.

⁵⁰ McGregor, Jasper Co., 157.

⁵¹ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 306.

⁵² Gazette, 95.

⁵³ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 306.

three banks, Webb City Bank, Exchange Bank of Webb City, and First National Bank of Webb City.

The Webb City Bank was established as a private bank in 1882, and so conducted by E. T. Webb until 1890 at which time it was incorporated under the laws of Missouri with a capital stock of \$30,000.⁴⁸ When it was first established, the bank was located on Webb Street across from the John C. Webb home; later the Webb City Hall, on the northwest corner of Allen and Main streets, was moved north one block and a new structure built on the site to house the Webb City Bank.⁴⁹

Joseph C. Stewart, former Superintendent of the Center Creek Mining Company, and in 1889 its manager, became interested in the formation of a bank.⁵⁰ In the summer of 1889 J. C. Stewart, together with his brother J. P. Stewart and the principal stockholders of the Center Creek Mining Company, organized the Exchange Bank of Webb City.⁵¹ J. C. Stewart became president; J. P. Stewart, cashier.⁵² During the panic of 1893, before which time the bank had loaned heavily to the mining companies which opened up in the district, the bank had to temporarily suspend until a realization could be made of its paper. The bank, however, suffered no financial loss on account of its temporary suspension.⁵³

⁴⁸Register, 4.

⁴⁹Hulett interview.

⁵⁰McGregor, Jasper Co., 157.

⁵¹Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 306.

⁵²Gazette, 95.

⁵³Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 306.

In 1891 a third bank, the First National Bank of Webb City, opened in its own building at number nine Allen Street. E. B. Allen, organizer of the bank, became its first president. The bank issued sight drafts upon all the principal cities in the United States and Europe, secured letters of credit, and negotiated and collected foreign and domestic bills of exchange along with its other regular business.⁵⁴ Together these banks took care of Webb City's enormous banking business.

While records show the history of the development of Webb City's three banks during the last quarter of the century, they do not give the time and development of each type of business. William J. Webb, a blacksmith,⁵⁵ and James Gammon in the mercantile business⁵⁶ were at least among the first to become established in 1875. The next year found a doctor⁵⁷ and an attorney⁵⁸ establishing their practices and the opening of the Barnes grocery and restaurant⁵⁹ along with a wagon maker's shop.⁶⁰ During the building boom of 1877 furniture,⁶¹

⁵⁴Register, 4.

⁵⁵North, Jasper Co., 652

⁵⁶Ibid., 625.

⁵⁷Ibid., 655.

⁵⁸Ibid., 642.

⁵⁹Ibid., 619.

⁶⁰Ibid., 622.

⁶¹Ibid., 629.

hardware,⁶² drug,⁶³ grocery,⁶⁴ and two mercantile stores⁶⁵ together with two livery stables⁶⁶ were among the business firms added to the town's growing business district.

Approximately at the same time an undertaking establishment came to Webb City in a round about way. Hancock and Lowe (only their last names are known) dealt in second hand goods, and in 1879 they took in a partner, S. Laur, who first added hardware, and later furniture and undertaking supplies to the establishment's merchandise.⁶⁷ Prior to this time the only aid a family had in time of death was that rendered by two deaconesses of the Presbyterian Church who went whenever possible to help prepare the bodies for burial.⁶⁸ Laur was the father of the undertaking business in Webb City. The Webb City Cemetery Ordinance of 1887 established the Webb City Cemetery and provided for burial facilities at the cemetery.⁶⁹

⁶²Gazette, 109.

⁶³North, Jasper Co., 626.

⁶⁴Ibid., 644-5.

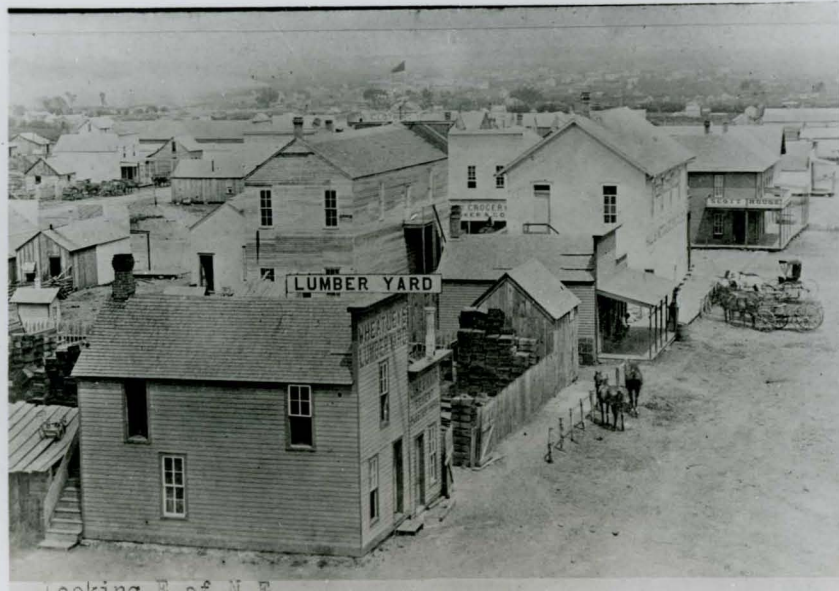
⁶⁵Ibid., 618, 621.

⁶⁶Ibid., 632, 641.

⁶⁷Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 297.

⁶⁸Crotty interview.

⁶⁹Revised and Republished Ordinances of the City of Webb City, Missouri, Revision of 1891 (Webb City: The Times Electric Power Press, 1891), 123, No. 45, September 26, 1887. (Cited hereafter as City Ordinances.)



Looking E of N E
from top of the residence of J C Webb. About 1880

A street scene about 1880. The tall white building in the upper right hand portion of the picture was the Webb City Hall and just across Allen Street can be seen a portion of the Scott House. From the Harry Hulett photograph collection.

⁷⁰ Personal interview with Mrs. Raymond (Spracklen) Ball, July 18, 1953.

⁷¹ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 298.

⁷² Register, 2.

In no time at all photography became another Webb City business. It is not known if the party who took the photographs of the town scenes in 1877 was established as a photographer in Webb City or came from another town, but a permanent photographer, E. E. Spracklen, did arrive in 1880 and set up business in a tent between the Memphis and Missouri Pacific tracks. His business soon became so flourishing that he was able to move to a building on Allen Street. Spracklen became an important citizen of the community and in the nineties held the office of mayor.⁷⁰

In a mining center like Webb City no enterprise was more needed than that of building the necessary machinery for the reduction of ores to their commercial state. In the Webb City Foundry, started in 1881, the district had such an enterprise.⁷¹ Perhaps this became the noted Webb City Iron Works of the nineties.⁷² Undoubtedly there were other like businesses of which no record can be found.

One of the outstanding businesses established in the nineties was the Twin Cities Roller Mills that soon became the S. H. Veach Milling Company. Built in 1891 with a mill capacity of 150 barrels of flour per day, the mill had a

⁷⁰Personal interview with Mrs. Raymond (Spracklen) Ball, July 18, 1953.

⁷¹Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 298.

⁷²Register, 2.

20,000 bushel capacity elevator in connection with it.⁷³

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proud of many of its enterprises; there developed, however, from the time of platting of the town less desirable businesses in keeping. The Twin Cities Roller Mills, destroyed, gambling by fire in 1930. From The Webb City Gazette, 1885, because 1899. was a mining community made up of all types of people, it became necessary to pass city ordinances regulating dramshops,⁷⁵ prohibiting and suppressing gambling,⁷⁶ and outlawing bawdy houses.⁷⁷ The ordinances did not provide fines stiff enough to curb operation of these undesirable businesses; the owners were glad to pay such fines in order to keep operating.⁷⁸

⁷³ Gazette, 85.

⁷⁴ Register, 23.

⁷⁵ City Ordinances, 70, No. 25, October 5, 1885.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 154, No. 62, October 5, 1885.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 150, No. 59, October 5, 1885.

⁷⁸ Rozell interview.

20,000 bushel capacity elevator in connection with it.⁷³

Golden Gate, Gold Leaf, and a lesser grade of White Rose were the three popular brands of flour milled under the Veach management.⁷⁴

Other businesses developed rapidly throughout the remainder of the century with the exception of the period between 1893 and 1896 previously mentioned. There were frequent changes in ownership in some lines of business. Webb City was definitely geared to the mines; when the mines prospered, so did the town.

Webb City, as with other mining towns, became justly proud of many of its enterprises; there developed, however, from the time of platting of the town less desirable businesses in keeping with a typical mining community—saloons, gambling houses, dance halls, and bawdy houses. As early as 1885, because this was a mining community made up of all types of people, it became necessary to pass city ordinances regulating dramshops,⁷⁵ prohibiting and suppressing gambling,⁷⁶ and outlawing bawdy houses.⁷⁷ The ordinances did not provide fines stiff enough to curb operation of these undesirable businesses; the owners were glad to pay such fines in order to keep operating.⁷⁸

⁷³Gazette, 85.

⁷⁴Register, 2.

⁷⁵City Ordinances, 70, No. 25, October 5, 1885.

⁷⁶Ibid., 154, No. 62, October 5, 1885.

⁷⁷Ibid., 150, No. 59, October 5, 1885.

⁷⁸Rozell interview.

At the close of the century the "elite" of the bawdy houses resided above Charley Parker's saloon on the southeast corner of Allen and Daugherty streets. The girls of this house were noted for their beauty, perfect taste in selection of clothing, and proper decorum; when they appeared on the street, they looked neither to right nor left. When they were seen about town, it was impossible to detect these girls from the other fashionably dressed young ladies. They were good customers of Hoffman's Music Store; they purchased only the better sheet music for voice, guitar, and piano. Mrs. Van Astor herself could not have made a better dressed or more proper appearance than did the "Madam" of this house with her fine horse and buggy.⁷⁹

East Daugherty and East Main were known as Red Hot Street; no "lady" walked on the east side of Allen Street in that area. In fact, it was not safe to walk there where all forms of vice reigned. The madams of the various houses appeared in court every Monday morning to pay the fines for each girl in their houses. If a madam did not appear, the house was raided and the girls thrown into jail until the fines were paid.⁸⁰

Gambling halls were wide open and often worked in connection with bawdy houses. Bob Boatright, the proprietor

⁷⁹Personal interview with Mrs. Ben Holt, Sr., June 29, 1954. (Cited hereafter as Holt interview.)

⁸⁰Rozell interview.

of three of the gambling halls, engaged in a far more lucrative activity as well.⁸¹ Boatright, commonly called Buckfoot, was a handsome man with dark hair and a handlebar mustache. He was well liked in the town, and on the whole the townspeople did not think of him as a swindler. Undoubtedly their opinions of him were influenced by his deeds. Whenever a death occurred in a family that could not afford a burial, a paper, called a subscription, was passed around town; those caring to contribute placed their names and the amount they gave to aid the family in distress on the subscription. Buckfoot's name was always on the list with twenty-five dollars for an adult's death and ten for a child's.⁸² If a man lost his last cent in one of Buckfoot's gambling halls, Boatright was always good for a grub stake for the loser to make a fresh start. Even though the townspeople disapproved of his illegal source of income, many admired the way he provided for his parents. He never attempted to swindle any one of the local area, nor attempted to conceal his activities from the townspeople. His major concern was the Athletic Club with headquarters in the brick building facing west on Tom Street just north of Daugherty. At this time foot racing was popular over the country, and the main activity of the club had to do with that sport.

⁸¹ Personal interview with L. D. Bowman, June 20, 1954.
(Cited hereafter as Bowman interview.)

⁸² Holt interview.

⁸³ Bowman interview.

However other sporting events were handled but not to so great an extent. The advance agents for Buckfoot were called his "Colts"; it was they who interested foot racers from all over the country and invited them to join the Athletic Club in Webb City. These recruits trained here for a short time and then went to another locality where they "joined" another athletic club. The manner in which Buckfoot's confidence games worked was as follows: For example, there was a racer named Bill, actually belonging to the Buckfoot gang, who joined a club in Texas. A Buckfoot Colt soon after approached a wealthy person in that region and offered to arrange a race with the supposedly Texas Bill against a member of the Athletic Club of Webb City. The Texan was told the race could be "fixed" to let Bill win. The wealthy man generally fell for a "sure thing" and came to Webb City for the race. The money, bet on the coming race, was placed in a safe in the Athletic Club. Invariably it disappeared; the safe, a double one, opened into an adjoining room. The foot races were held on the prairie just north of the ice plant. Just before the supposed winner, Bill, reached the finish line, he fell and lost the race thus causing the outside to lose his bet. Because Webb Citians knew in advance who would win the "fixed" race, few local spectators ever attended the races. Occasionally a man was allowed to win, but as a rule the gamblers chose few victims from the same locality.⁸³

⁸³Bowman interview.



The Webb City Ice Plant built between

1882 and 1893 by James O'Neil and E. T.

Webb. In 1893 the plant had a working

capacity of twenty-five tons per day.

From the Hulett photograph collection.

84

Register, 1.

85

Tarrant interview.

The Athletic Club afforded gamblers excitement and some citizens amusement, but another club, the Commercial Club, became the institution prominently identified with the growth of Webb City. The Commercial Club, founded in 1889, made possible the locating of many of the town's business concerns and enterprises. Listed among these were the Twin Cities Roller Mills and Newland Hotel. The club promoted civic improvement. Streets were improved, sidewalks were laid, and new roads leading to the town were opened to make Webb City the hub of the surrounding community.⁸⁴

Thus can be seen the development of the business life of Webb City from the few stores of a mining camp to the establishments representing all major concerns connected with the development of a prosperous community life centered around mining.

Public Utilities

Although Webb City was incorporated in 1876, it had no post office for two months. Of the Twin Cities Carterville had a post office first. Since a postal regulation stated that two post offices could not be established closer than three miles apart unless an unnavigable river ran between the two towns, Webb City had to go to Carterville for its mail.⁸⁵

⁸⁴Register, 1.

⁸⁵Tarrant interview.



Allen Street looking north at the turn
of the century during a Fourth of July cele-
bration. From the Hulett photograph collec-
tion.

1877, and J. E. McEair was appointed the first postmaster, serving under Republican administrations. The post office was determined, from the Hulett photograph collection, to be close to First Street. When Democrats came into office, Lingle (only his last name is known) was appointed and moved the post office to the middle room of what is now Slitz Bar on the present Main Street. Lingle was accused by the postal inspector of being short on his books. One evening Lingle called Ellen Marquis to the office to help go over the books with him and

Then a few quick-witted Webb Citians obtained the cooperation of their state representative. Ben's Branch, separating the Twin Cities, went on a rampage, for a day or so a year and remained for the balance of the time a very small branch indeed. The representative arrived at the desired time by train which became water bound from the overflow of Ben's Branch. After having to wade across the branch in the hip boots which he had brought along for the purpose, he was able to verify that the stream was unnavigable. Quickly, before the water had a chance to go down, the representative wired the proper authorities that it was impossible for the townspeople to cross the branch safely, and that Webb City needed a postoffice of its own.⁸⁶

Regardless of how it came about, according to Mrs. Otto (Marquis) Gosch, a post office was established January 13, 1877, and J. E. McNair was appointed the first postmaster, serving under Republican administrations, as nearly as can be determined, from 1877 to 1885. This post office was located close to First Street on Allen. Miss Ellen Marquis was McNair's assistant. When the Democrats came into office, Lingle (only his last name is known) was appointed and moved the post office to the middle room of what is now Slitz Bar on the present Main Street. Lingle was accused by the postal inspector of being short on his books. One evening Lingle called Ellen Marquis to the office to help go over the books with him and

⁸⁶ Rozell interview.

Personal interview with Mrs. Otto (Marquis) Gosch, June 20, 1954. (Cited hereafter as Gosch interview.)

the inspector. Miss Marquis was accompanied by her younger sister. The evening was cold, and Lingle went out into the yard to get some coal for the stove. He was followed by the inspector. Just as the inspector disappeared from the view of the young women, they heard a shot. The inspector returned saying Lingle had killed himself. There was always a great deal of doubt in the minds of the two Marquis girls that Lingle's death was suicide. In view of the supposed shortage, however, the inspector's story was accepted. Two years later the postal authorities, notifying the widow that there had been a mistake and no shortages were to be found, cleared Lingle's name. Christopher Columbia, a bondsman for Lingle, served the remainder of Lingle's term. With the return of the Republican party, under Benjamin Harrison's presidency, Ellen Marquis, who had become Mrs. Dodge, was appointed postmaster and served until 1893. While Mrs. Dodge was postmaster, she decided to move the post office to the north end of the Humphrey building which is now the Bradbury building. Because it was not safe in those rough mining days to tell that the office was to be moved, it had to be done quietly and quickly. When the townspeople appeared for their mail one morning, they found no post office; Mrs. Dodge had moved it in the middle of the preceding night. Dave Mock was the next Democratic postmaster; he moved the office to the middle of the Newland block.⁸⁷ When William H. Haughawout became the

⁸⁷ Personal interview with Mrs. Otto (Marquis) Gosch, June 20, 1954. (Cited hereafter as Gosch interview.)

Republican postmaster in 1898, he felt that the fixtures in the office were of an inferior quality and were inadequate for the business. He moved the office to the Webb building on Webb Street and put in a new set of fixtures consisting of 200 call boxes, 500 combination lock boxes, and a large vault with an improved safe.⁸⁸ After receiving six postmasters and five locations, the post office remained in the last named building until the erection of the present post office building nineteen years later.⁸⁹

Webb City received its first telephone service when Charles W. McDaniel, pioneer telephone man of Southwest Missouri, installed an exchange licensed by the American Bell Telephone Company. Equipment was primitive. Switchboard signals used to attract the operator's attention to a calling subscriber were bells with attached pendulums or "targets." Wires, largely iron, were strung along trees and buildings. A competing telephone exchange was set up in 1896 by G. M. Manker and W. C. Stewart.⁹⁰ The J. W. Ellis family, aided by Mr. Ellis' son-in-law, Jim Richards, solved the two company telephone problem for its own use. Richards, having a grocery store, had telephones of both companies installed side by side to enable him to receive calls from all possible customers. When a member of the Ellis home wished to call the residence

⁸⁸ Gazette, 106.

⁸⁹ Gosch interview.

⁹⁰ Crotty, Webb City, 10.

of Mr. Ellis' sister, who had a phone of the other company, the one calling rang Richards, who in turn called the desired party on the other phone; by his holding the two receivers (ear pieces) together the families were able to converse.⁹¹

September 26, 1889, was another important day in the history of Webb City. The Webb City and Carterville Water Works Company was incorporated on that date.⁹² The water supply, furnished by springs on the banks of Center Creek two and a half miles north of town, flowed through a filter of four feet of gravel before being pumped into the mains. James O'Neil developed the company at a cost of \$130,000.⁹³ Thus Webb City took one step more toward becoming a better and more up-to-date town.

The ever-growing mining town was in need of transportation facilities. By 1899 Webb City was serviced by four railroads-- Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis; Missouri Pacific; St. Louis and San Francisco; and the Frisco daily interurban. In addition there was an electric railroad, said to be the longest electric railway in the world, running from Carthage, Missouri through Carterville, Webb City, and Joplin to Galena, Kansas, a distance of twenty-eight miles.⁹⁴ Mule cars provided transportation from Webb City to Carterville from 1889

⁹¹Personal interview with Mrs. Cloia (Ellis) Burk, July 4, 1954.

⁹²M. Ohlander, comp., Webb City and Jasper County, Missouri Illustrated, 1906-1907 (n.p.: M. Ohlander, 1907), n.p. (Cited hereafter as Ohlander, Webb City.)

⁹³Register, 2.

⁹⁴Gazette, 10.

to the time of the formation of the Southwest Missouri Electric Railway Company.⁹⁵ The new electric cars were unloaded from the Missouri Pacific Railroad station at the east edge of Webb City; a great crowd gathered to watch mules pull the new equipment to a car barn in the western portion of the town. People lined the sidewalks in deep snow to witness this event.⁹⁶ Again there was great excitement on the day of the first trial run of the electric cars. Improper hookup of the current caused sparks to fly in every direction adding to the excitement.⁹⁷ The offices and car barn for this Southwest Missouri Electric Railway Company were located in Webb City. The following year the track was extended to run from Joplin, via Webb City and Carterville, to Prosperity. In 1896 the Jasper County Electric Road and the Joplin and Galena Electric Railroads were purchased by the company.⁹⁸ Throughout the century rapid extension of track miles and the location of the electric railroad company in Webb City made the town the heart of electric communication service. Not only had Webb City developed a water system and postal service to be looked upon with pride, but she had increased her connections with the outside world by means of the telephone and rail transportation.

⁹⁵ Ohlander, Webb City, n.p. *Directory of 1902.*

⁹⁶ Personal interview with Edward Justin, July 4, 1953.

⁹⁷ Gibson interview.

⁹⁸ Ohlander, Webb City, n.p.

Mining made Webb City. The mines gave to the town wealth which brought business concerns. With the realization of the value of zinc and the development of sheet ground mining came the rapid expansion of the town known as "The Zinc City" or "The Town That Jack Built." Not all miners or business men were successful, but an increase of 8,501 inhabitants caused building to boom. Private homes, rooming houses, hotels, and structures to house the new business firms were built in great numbers. By 1902 the outstanding offices and business firms of Webb City included those of: thirteen physicians, sixteen lawyers, twenty-three groceries, six butcher shops, seven restaurants, seven dry goods stores, three banks, nine saloons, and four livery stables.⁹⁹ In direct contrast to the socially offensive businesses that naturally follow a mining town, the Commercial Club of Webb City did a great deal to improve the standing of the community. Wealth in the hands of civic minded citizens promoted and established public utilities. These concerns indicated the emergence of Webb City from a typical rough mining town into a more conventional type of community.

⁹⁹ Daily Sentinel's Webb City Directory of 1902.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF WEBB CITY

The rapid growth of Webb City posed numerous problems of educational and social life. Many people of innate culture and refinement were among the cross section of life represented in this early day mining camp; it was they who sought to establish educational training for their children and meet the demands of community needs. This group of potential leaders were not long in putting their ideas into action. They organized the community into a school district, established newspapers, formed the nucleus of various church groups, lodges, and other organizations. Thus the educational and social development of Webb City was in full swing well before the turn of the century.

Schools

When John C. Webb platted the town in 1875, he set aside a school site. Webb realized that for the town to prosper families must be induced to settle, and that even in the early days of settlement of a new area educational facilities played an important part.

By the formation of the Webb City School District in 1876 and the building of the old Central, a four-room frame school house, during the winter of 1876-1877, the foundation of the



The first school in Webb City, the old Central. From the Webb City High School King Jack Year Book, 1922.

developed for about five years.⁴ Because of overcrowded conditions, the superintendent had to hear high school recitations in a little cloak room at the foot of the east stairs in the old Central building. Upon completion of the West Side school in 1892, the high school was moved to that

¹Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 218.

²Register, I.

³Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 417.

⁴Ibid., 419.

school system was laid.¹ Little is known about the school population or course of study until 1888. In that year seven teachers had the full responsibility of seven hundred pupils in the extremely overcrowded seven room school house (three rooms had been added by this time).² Floating population and overcrowded conditions were not conducive to close division of grades. As far as the students were concerned, they considered themselves classified upon being assigned to the "big geography." The course of study was, by necessity, fitted to the needs of the students who appeared the first day of school. Not much else could have been done considering the motley crowd, representing all walks of life and varying degrees of previous training, that assembled. A "strawberry festival" with the entire community taking part was held in lieu of regular graduating exercises in 1888, the first year of high school work.³ High school departmental work was not developed for about five years.⁴ Because of overcrowded conditions, the superintendent had to hear high school recitations in a little cloak room at the foot of the east stairs in the old Central building. Upon completion of the West Side school in 1892, the high school was moved to that

¹Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 218.

²Register, 1.

³Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 417.

⁴Ibid., 419.



West Side School facing east on Cedar Street. An addition was built on the north end of the building after the turn of the century. Destroyed by fire February 22, 1926. From The Webb City Gazette, 1899.

⁵ Ibid., 418.

⁶ Crotty interview.

⁷ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 419.

⁸ Gazette, 13.

⁹ Register, 1.

¹⁰ Tarrant interview.

¹¹ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 417.

¹² Register, 1.

building and occupied one room. By 1894 the enrollment increased to such an extent that two rooms became necessary.⁵ The old Central School was not used after 1893 and was razed to make way for the new Central to take its place in 1894; this new structure housed both the high school and a grade school.⁶ It was in this building that departmental work had its birth under A. G. Young's superintendency⁷ in 1895.⁸ The Webb City superintendent of schools in the nineties considered the teaching of a variety of subjects by use of a magic lantern, utilizing the light of the sun, to be of great value and purchased several such lamps for classroom use.⁹

The forerunner of the present day high school queen was the Queen of the Columbus Day Parade. During the close of the century the parade was quite an affair with the town participating wholeheartedly.¹⁰

Meanwhile the elementary schools were developing. A four room brick grade school, the Webster in the northeast part of town, was erected in 1889¹¹ and none too soon as the school population was increased by 214 necessitating the hiring of five new teachers.¹² This year was well remembered for the small pox scare, for only fourteen pupils remained in

⁵Ibid., 418.

⁶Crotty interview.

⁷Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 419.

⁸Gazette, 13.

⁹Register, 1.

¹⁰Tarrant interview.

¹¹Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 417.

¹²Register, 1.



The new Central High School facing east
on Webb Street. Razed in 1931. From the
Hal Wise, Jr. photograph collection.

Addition built on south side after the turn
of the century. Condemned December 1931
and replaced by a new building the follow-
ing year. From the Webb City Souvenir, 1901.



WEBSTER SCHOOL BUILDING.

Facing east on north Allen Street.

Addition built on south side after the turn of the century. Condemned December 1937 and replaced by a new building the following year. From the Webb City Souvenir, 1901.

19 John C. Veach stated in a personal interview of June 20, 1953, "the lumber from the old Central School was used in the building of the first two-story house on the east end of the nine hundred block on West Broadway." (Cited hereafter as Veach interview.)

school. The scare, however, did not greatly effect rehearsals of drills after school at which time students would tell of the number of new red flags denoting contaminated homes over the previous days count.¹³ By 1890 a systematic course of study was put into use in the elementary grades.¹⁴ The Franklin building was erected¹⁵ and helped to relieve the overcrowded conditions, but this was not enough to keep up with the ever rising tide of students which reached 1,278.¹⁶ In the spring of 1891 school was opened in a building known only as the little Mineral Ridge School¹⁷ evidently in the Mineral Ridge addition in the northwest portion of the town. The building was not used after completion of the West Side School the following year. In addition to the three regularly established schools of 1893, classes were held in the Holiness Church located in the southeast part of town and in the old Mormon Church on Allen Street.¹⁸ This was necessary because of the razing of the old Central School¹⁹ to make way for the new building and the fact that school attendance continued to grow.

¹³Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 417.

¹⁴Ibid., 418.

¹⁵Ibid., 419.

¹⁶Register, 1. Jasper Co., I, 418.

¹⁷Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 418.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹John C. Veach stated in a personal interview of June 20, 1953, "the lumber from the old Central School was used in the building of the first two-story house on the east end of the nine hundred block on West Broadway." (Cited hereafter as Veach interview.)

Another grade school, the Eugene Field, was added soon after the turn of the century.²⁰

Arbor Day celebrations in the schools were really clean-up days. Students were requested to clean up the yards at home and pile the rocks in a convenient spot for the draymen to haul away free of charge.²¹

Early in the nineties James J. Nelson, a prominent land owner in Webb City, offered to give the town one-half the amount received from each lot sold in his Nelson addition to the amount of \$10,000 if the town would match the amount toward the building of a co-educational college. The laying of the corner stone as the Nelson Collegiate Institute, non-sectarian, in 1894 was an imposing spectacle with all the societies in the county assisting the Masons in the ceremonies and participating in the mile long parade.²² The effect of the actual ceremony was almost spoiled by the appearance of a tornado-like cloud, high wind, and a deluge of rain. The horses became frightened by the umbrellas blown from the hands of the spectators, and away ran the horses dragging the wildly careening buggies with the owners in hot pursuit.²³ Soon thereafter the Baptists offered to match the \$20,000 Webb City had

²⁰ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 418.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Personal interview with Mrs. Olive (Nelson) Gibson, June 23, 1954. (Cited hereafter as Olive Gibson interview.)

²³ Veatch interview.



regular four year academic work,²⁶ a normal, and a business course.²⁷ Only two degrees were given, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.²⁸ Certificates were issued to those completing the normal course.²⁹ The class of 1895 was the first one to graduate from the college.³⁰

Nelson Collegiate Institute, facing
east on College Street. From Hal Wise,

²⁴ Hal Wise, Jr. photograph collection.

²⁵ Announcements of Webb City College for Young Men and Young Women (Carthage: Carthage Printing Company, Art Printers, 1898), 13. (Cited hereafter as College Bulletin.)

²⁶ Ibid., 15.

²⁷ Ibid., 20.

²⁸ Ibid., 15.

²⁹ Ibid., 20.

³⁰ Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 420.

raised if they were allowed to go ahead with the building of the college, and it was so arranged.²⁴ An 1898 Webb City College bulletin tells of the school which was located in the western portion of the town on high ground comprising eight acres from which the entire town and much of the surrounding countryside could be seen. The building contained electrically lighted and steam heated classrooms, "a room for gymnastics and training in physical culture," a library, office, parlors, dining room, kitchen, residence rooms, and bathrooms with hot and cold running water on every floor, making all together nearly a hundred rooms.²⁵ The training offered by the college was one year preparatory with the regular four year academic work,²⁶ a normal, and a business course.²⁷ Only two degrees were given, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.²⁸ Certificates were issued to those completing the normal course.²⁹ The class of 1896 was the first one to graduate from the college.³⁰

²⁴Olive Gibson interview.

²⁵Announcements of Webb City College for Young Men and Young Women (Carthage: Carthage Printing Company, Art Printers, 1898), 13. (Cited hereafter as College Bulletin.)

²⁶Ibid., 15.

²⁷Ibid., 20.

²⁸Ibid., 15.

²⁹Ibid., 20.

³⁰Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 420.

Only women students were allowed to board at the college which provided accommodations for one hundred.³¹ Boarding pupils were required to wear uniforms consisting of a plain dress. Except during the months of September and May, a Franklin gown and Oxford cap were added to the uniform dress on Sundays and for all public occasions. Military uniforms were furnished at cost for the men students. Two boarding halls were located near the college, one for men and the other for women; here they boarded on the cooperative plan. Others chose to live in private homes.³² A few of the "simple" rules governing the students follow: "It is hoped that young ladies will not receive the company of young gentlemen during the week. Gentlemen callers and difficult lessons cannot be companions;" "Day pupils are not allowed young gentleman company to and from college;"³³ "Parents will please limit their daughters' correspondence. Much depends upon chaste, elevating correspondence;"³⁴ and "Students in the male and female departments are to have no communication, either verbal or written, further than true politeness requires."³⁵ The school had become so well established by 1905 that it was one of the sites considered for the location of Southwest

³¹ College Bulletin, 34.

³² Ibid., 35.

³³ Ibid., 36.

³⁴ Ibid., 34.

³⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁴⁰ Gazette, 100.

Missouri Normal, and many were bitterly disappointed when Springfield won the site.³⁶

Newspapers

An important part of public education is that played by newspapers. Webb City's first newspaper, the Webb City Weekly Sentinel, began publication in 1879 and became a daily paper in 1890. At the close of the century its offices were located at the junction of Webb and Joplin streets under the management of H. D. Routzong.³⁷

Milholn and Single (only their surnames are known) purchased the materials used in publishing the Galena Messenger at Galena, Kansas, and started publication of the Webb City Times in December, 1879. Single bought out his partner the next year and assumed full control as proprietor and editor.³⁸ In the middle eighties Jesse Zook, editor, gained for the Times an enviable reputation in the field of journalism.³⁹

The Daily Register, located on Webb Street between Main and Daugherty printed its first issue under the management of W. A. Snodgrass in 1891.⁴⁰ This paper was later to boast of having the first woman reporter in the area, Miss Alice Cresswell. After marrying her "boss," Arthur Rozell, she later

³⁶Personal interview with Eli Switzer, July 11, 1953.

³⁷Gazette, 97.

³⁸North, Jasper Co., 613.

³⁹Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 298.

⁴⁰Gazette, 100.

took her publisher-husband's place as editor upon his death in 1912.⁴¹

During the nineties two other newspapers, the Webb City Star and the Record, for a time influenced the life of the town and chronicled its daily events.⁴²

With the publication of five daily newspapers--the Webb City Times, the Webb City Daily Sentinel, The Daily Register, the Webb City Star, and the Record--the town was well represented by the press in the late nineties.

Churches

The cultural development of Webb City improved with the growth of its schools and newspapers. However, religion as well as education had its place in the life of this community. Several of the early settlers of the region that soon became Webb City attended the Harmony Church, organized in 1870, and located just west of Duenweg. A roster of the original members included the names of the J. C. Webb, W. A. Daugherty, and J. W. Aylor families.⁴³

In November, before the incorporation of Webb City, a Union Sunday School was organized by a band of Presbyterians who met in Webb City Hall.⁴⁴ The first church service, held

⁴¹Rosell interview.

⁴²Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 420.

⁴³North, Jasper Co., 608.

⁴⁴Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 217.

soon after the formation of the Sunday School, was conducted by Donald K. Campbell, a Presbyterian supply pastor from Joplin. Finding only a few present for the service, the minister opened the windows and sang the gospel until the congregation increased to thirty-three.⁴⁵ Rev. Campbell continued Sunday afternoon services in this location for three years.⁴⁶ In March 1877 with nine charter members, the First Presbyterian Church was established in Webb City.⁴⁷ The Sunday School enrollment of this church increased to such numbers that it became necessary to obtain permission to conduct its services in the recently completed Central School. At this time over 200 regularly attended Sunday School. During the severe winter of 1877-78 Mrs. Wheatley and Mrs. Hull, deaconesses of the church, extended the influence of the church by helping to care for the many pneumonia patients, and by assisting in the preparation of the bodies for burial resulting from that sickness.⁴⁸ Early in 1879, the Presbyterians purchased a former dance hall and saloon and remodeled it for a place of worship. Thus in the words of their pastor,

⁴⁵Henrietta M. Crotty, The First Presbyterian Church of Webb City, Missouri (Webb City: The Switzer Printing Company, 1942), 9. (Cited hereafter as Crotty, Presbyterian Church.)

⁴⁶E. E. Stringfield, Presbyterianism in the Ozarks; A History of the Work of the Various Branches of the Presbyterian Church in Southwest Missouri, 1834-1907 (n.p.: n.p., 1909), 166.

⁴⁷Crotty, Presbyterian Church, 9.

⁴⁸Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 217.



The Central Methodist Episcopal Church, South, replaced by a new church one-half block north in 1909. From the Webb City Souvenir, 1901.

Social Activities

Just as a community must have facilities for educational and religious development, it is necessary to provide a

⁴⁹Crotty, Webb City, 12.

⁵⁰Ibid., 17.

⁵¹North, Jarvis Co., 650.

⁵²Crotty, Webb City, 5.

⁵³Daily Sentinel's Webb City Directory for 1902 (Webb City: Webb City Daily Sentinel, 1902), n.p.

Dr. J. F. Shepherd, "This change from saloon and a dance hall into a house of worship shows early the mission of the church to change from sinful to sacred use material things as well as human lives."⁴⁹ They were not able to build their own sanctuary on Third and Webb streets until 1889.⁵⁰

The Methodists through the generosity of one of their members, John C. Webb, were presented a lot and a completed substantial brick church building in 1882; this church was located across the street south from the Webb home on the corner of Joplin and Liberty streets.⁵¹ Webb, at the time of the church dedication, was bedridden by an illness that caused his death the following year. A special telephone was installed at his bedside to enable him to hear the service. This was a Union Church at first, but with the development of other churches it became the Central Methodist Episcopal Church, South.⁵²

By the turn of the century Webb City had two Presbyterian, three Methodist, two Christian, a Baptist, Holiness, and Latter Day Saints churches to administer to the spiritual needs of the town.⁵³

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⁴⁹Crotty, Webb City, 12.

⁵⁰Ibid., 17.

⁵¹North, Jasper Co., 650.

⁵²Crotty, Webb City, 5.

⁵³Daily Sentinel's Webb City Directory for 1902 (Webb City: Webb City Daily Sentinel, 1902), n.p.

release from the work-a-day world in the form of some social activity. Lodges of the eighties and nineties filled this need by playing an important part in the social life of the community. With the formation of Lodge No. 512, A. F. and A. M. in 1882 and the chartering of the Reynolds Post, G. A. R. during the following year, the social life of Webb City was not long in getting under way.⁵⁴ Another important lodge was the Knights of Pythias instituted in 1887.⁵⁵ The masquerade ball, given in December of that year,⁵⁶ and the reception and banquet for the Knights of Jasper and Barton counties and Galena, Kansas, in the early nineties⁵⁷ were two outstanding events long remembered by the socially minded of that day.

When the Grand Opera House was constructed in 1883 on the southeast corner of Main and Allen,⁵⁸ on the site of the burned out Barnes restaurant,⁵⁹ the town was able to present current plays. One of the major speaking attractions in the nineties was presented by William Jennings Bryan.⁶⁰

Webb City's band history dates back to the fall of 1882 with the formation of the Webb City Silver Cornet Band. With only eleven instruments the band reportedly produced excellent

⁵⁴Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 300.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., 305.

⁵⁷Ibid., 412.

⁵⁸Ibid., 298.

⁵⁹Ibid., 301.

⁶⁰Gibson interview.



Grand Opera House

From The Webb City Gazette, 1899

Webb City Band of 1887

Band uniforms consisted of red plush jackets, blue flannel pants, patent leather leggings, and white duck caps.

From the Hulet photograph collection.



Webb City Band of 1887

Band uniforms consisted of red plush jackets, blue flannel pants, patent leather leggings, and white duck caps.

From the Hulett photograph collection.

⁶¹ North, Jasper Co., 612-3.

⁶² Hulett interview.

music.⁶¹ A young musician of the day, however, stated that the uniforms were so outstanding that the people cared little if they played well or not; they especially wanted to get a good look at the group as they marched down the street.⁶²

In 1887 there appeared an organization known as the Webb City Democratic Flambeau Club which was a political marching club that played an important part in every campaign until World War I. The company of 150 men wore attractive uniforms of white duck with red helmets, leggings, and other trappings to match. By drilling nightly in the early part of the campaign, they became a splendidly drilled organization and were ever in demand. In the campaign of 1892 the Democrats of Columbus, Kansas, had planned to close the campaign with a big rally on the Saturday night before the election and invited the Webb City group who refused because of the loss of business it would mean to leave the day the miners were paid. Columbus would not take "no" for an answer and on the day of the rally made arrangements to send a special train for them and to hold the parade until they arrived. Six men with bicycles were sent out to notify the members Saturday morning. Mine operators were asked to pay off the men as early as possible, and the wives asked to do the week's trading for the men. The train pulled out at seven that evening, and the

⁶¹North, Jasper Co., 612-3.

⁶²Hulett interview.

special, stopping all other trains, was given a clear track through. Within five minutes after the train arrived at its destination, the parade was on its way. Later the club was served a "sumptuous repast" by Colonel Lang, marshal of the day.⁶³

The gala Leap Year Ball, given by the young ladies of the town in 1888, was held in the Grand Opera House. One of the amusing rules of the evening was "Gentlemen will conduct themselves in a lady-like manner." At twelve o'clock the hostesses escorted their "willing subjects" to the dining room of the J. A. Craig restaurant for a splendid supper. Following the meal the young men were taken home in carriages.⁶⁴

The famous first yearly Stag Party was given by the royal entertainers Charles Ebert and Will H. Wright. The guests spent such an enjoyable evening playing cards and telling jokes that it was decided to make the party an annual event.⁶⁵

Another important social group was the fire department. Until the volunteer group was organized in 1889, Webb City had no other protection from fire but the bucket brigade, brought into service for the emergency of the moment and without any recognized chief to control or direct. On two different occasions during this time, fire threatened the business center of the town. One of the fires started at the Barnes

⁶³Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 229-30.

⁶⁴Ibid., 304.

⁶⁵Ibid., 422.

restaurant, located on the southeast corner of Main and Allen streets, and destroyed buildings covering half a block. It was during this fire that Charles Evans, hoping to prevent an explosion, became a hero by rushing into the burning frame grocery building to get an open box of explosives that was kept on hand as part of the grocery stock. No one was happier than he when he escaped unharmed with the explosives.⁶⁶ The other fire began in what was known as the Scott or Pacific Hotel and swept everything along Allen Street up to Parker's Saloon on the north end of the block. By heroic effort of the fire fighters Parker's Saloon was pulled over into the ruins thus preventing further damage to nearby buildings. Although several buildings on the opposite side of the street were ignited by flying sparks, the bucket brigade was able to save them. Guests of the hotel were forced to flee for their lives. One man came running out of the building wearing "a plug hat, a dress coat over his night shirt, and carrying his trousers and shoes." Another gave a splendid interpretation of Mephistopheles in the Black Crook (a popular spectacular play of that day) as he, wearing a suit of red flannel underwear, jumped from the second story of the burning building.⁶⁷ Fortunately there was no loss of life.⁶⁸ It was because of these two fires that the voluntary group, consisting of two

⁶⁶ Ibid., 301.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 303.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 300.

companies, was organized and furnished hand hose carts. In 1900 a paid fire brigade was organized with four or five men at headquarters on First and Allen streets with only horses and a fire wagon for equipment. One of the original hose carts was the only equipment at the sub-station in the west portion of the town; it was manned when needed by volunteers who were paid for their services.⁶⁹ The Webb City Division No. 11, of the U. R. K. P. was organized in 1892 and won a number of honors in contests with other fire companies of the surrounding area.⁷⁰

As the mines made Webb City, the educational and social facilities of the town helped to mold the citizenry. John C. Webb realized the importance of a school by setting aside a lot for that purpose when he platted the town. During the same winter the town was incorporated and a school was started. The old story of overcrowded conditions in the development of school facilities was repeated over and over. No sooner was one building finished than there was a need for still another. The establishment of a college represented another step forward in the cultural development of the community. Newspapers played their part by furnishing the town with five sources of news during the nineties.

Religion as well as education had a definite place in the life of the community with the formation of the Union

⁶⁹Ibid., 302.

⁷⁰Ibid., 422.

Sunday School under the direction of the Presbyterians and the Union Church established by the Methodists. By the turn of the century ten churches held regular services.

Lodges, a city band, a political marching club, the fire department, and popular plays presented at the Grand Opera House provided activities for the socially minded. Thus by 1900 Webb City was a socially mature, well developed, respectable community.

Shortly thereafter a few settlers came from Tennessee to the region Jennings had described. But it was not until 1856, when the Elijah Webb family from Tennessee settled in the region, followed by the James Hatcher family the next year, that a community sprang up which in less than a quarter of a century was to become Webb City, an important and rapidly growing mining camp.

The early settlers of the Webb City vicinity were part of the vast numbers who were moving westward in search of richer land, more freedom from restraint, and better opportunities in general. The forefathers of many citizens of Webb City were from North Carolina; they had settled in Tennessee for a time and shortly moved out to Missouri. Thus they followed the familiar pattern of many a pioneer family--always moving on in hopes of bettering themselves.

The population of Jasper County was almost wholly of southern birth, but on the question of secession, there was practically an equal division. During the entire course of

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The story of the development of Webb City, Jasper County, Missouri, starts with the early nineteenth century when the region was known to Tennesseans as the "Country of the Six Bulls"; the name resulted from Edmund Jennings' stories of his experiences in the area. Shortly thereafter a few settlers came from Tennessee to the region Jennings had described. But it was not until 1856, when the Elijah Webb family from Tennessee settled in the region, followed by the Jabez Hatcher family the next year, that a community sprang up which in less than a quarter of a century was to become Webb City, an important and rapidly growing mining camp.

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The population of Jasper County was almost wholly of southern birth, but on the question of secession, there was practically an equal division. During the entire course of

the Civil War the county was a field for continuous irregular fighting. By the end of the war in 1865, the county was almost depopulated.

After the Civil War with the return of soldiers and some former residents, agriculture again became the major pursuit in the immediate area and continued so until John C. Webb discovered lead bearing ore on his ground while plowing in 1873. Systematic mining of the land leased from Webb was begun in 1874 by W. A. Daugherty and G. P. Ashcraft. The miners who came to work the mines developed by these two men formed the population of what was soon to be the "Twin Cities." Many of these miners were pioneers in the earlier far west frontier followed by that of the Rocky Mountain and Sierra Nevada regions. A number gained experiences in one or more of the following: the gold fields of California; the Comstock Lode at Virginia City; the Black Hills rush; and the Colorado lead producing region. After trying their luck in those regions various miners came to the Southwestern Missouri mining area which developed rapidly following the Civil War and into the twentieth century.

Here again, as in other mining areas, can be found the familiar pattern of the wandering miner giving up his free and easy way of life to become the employee of large companies and working fixed hours at regular rates of pay. Those who were lucky in finding ore either established a company themselves or leased to others for further development.

The raw, brawling, turbulent mining camp obtained its first semblance of permanency by being platted in 1875. In the next year alone, five additions to the city were made. The rapid growth of the town resulted in its being declared a voting precinct and incorporated in 1876. With the continued expansion of the city, business grew with great rapidity. Grocery, mercantile, furniture, and hardware stores were established. Along with the professional people such as doctors and lawyers, wagon makers and livery stablemen plyed their trade. Saloons, dance halls, and bawdy houses sprang up in keeping with the rough mining element. Banks, hotels, and other symbols of a more civilized community appeared as well. There soon developed two areas in the town: one, on the east side of Allen Street for a space of three or so blocks and extending on east, represented all the forms of vice usually associated with a mining district; on the other, the west side of Allen Street, were the more substantial and respectable forms of business which served all in the community.

One About 1880 the mine owners began to realize that "Black Jack" or zinc ore had commercial value. Greater mining advantages opened up since zinc existed in larger quantities than lead. As a result the population and businesses continued to grow. It became necessary to further develop educational facilities. The school district, established in 1876 with one school, was badly in need of additional

during area of the world. This was true up to 1916 when the

classroom space in 1888. By the close of the century three grade schools and one high school building had been added to the Webb City school system. A four year college course was offered by the Nelson Collegiate Institute for those wanting to further their education. Another form of education was found in the publication of five newspapers in the nineties (two were of long standing) furnishing their readers with the latest local, national, and foreign news of the day.

Religion had its place in the community with early formation of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches. By the turn of the century there were ten churches administering to the spiritual needs of the town.

Social groups were as much a necessity as churches and schools. Lodges, a city band, the Webb City Democratic Flambeau Club, and the Fire Department gave opportunities for a number of Webb Citians to participate in some form of social activity.

Reviewing the forty-four years covered in this survey, one realizes the efforts of the early pioneers and their successors in bringing about the formation of Webb City. From a humble, primitive beginning the town, the outgrowth of a miner's camp, developed into a solid, industrious community that by the turn of the century was well established with a number of golden years of continued growth ahead of it. Webb City was yet to become known as the largest zinc producing area of the world. This was true up to 1916 when the

mining center shifted to the Oklahoma fields because it was possible to extract ore much more cheaply there.

The leaders of the town were characterized by their stamina, foresight, imagination, and inventiveness. However this was not enough, for without "Lady Luck" on the side of the founders of Webb City, the pioneers would have been at a loss to establish "The Town That Jack Built."

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Bowman, L. D.	June 20, 1954
Burk, Mrs. Cloia (Ellis)	July 4, 1954
Daugherty, Lee, Sr.	June 18, 1953
Gibson, J. B.	June 7, 1954
Gosch, Mrs. Otto (Marquis)	June 20, 1954
Hatcher, Era Price	June 13, 1954
Holt, Mrs. Ben, Sr.	June 29, 1954
Hulett, Harry B.	July 18, 1953
Justin, Edwin	July 4, 1953
Ober, Mrs. George (Whitworth)	June 27, 1953
Potter, John	July 11, 1953
Rogers, Oll	June 27, 1954
Rozell, Mrs. Alice (Creswell)	July 19, 1953
Switzer, Eli	July 11, 1953
Tarrant, Harry	June 25, 1954
Veach, John	June 20, 1953

Joplin Residents

Crotty, Henrietta	June 20, 1953
Williams, Bruce	July 1, 1954

Resident of Redlands, California,
formerly of Webb City

Gibson, Mrs. Olive (Nelson)	June 23, 1954
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Photographs

Photograph collection belonging to Harry Easley of Webb City.

Photograph collection belonging to Harry Hulett of Webb City.

Photograph collection belonging to Hal Wise, Jr. of Webb City.

Portrait of John C. Webb hanging in the Central Methodist Church of Webb City.

The Webb City, City Office photograph collection.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A. Population of Hays City

1876	700 ¹
1880	1,586 ²
1883	2,300 ³
1889	4,346 ⁴
1890	5,043 ⁵
1898	8,000 ⁶
1900	8,201 ⁷

APPENDIXES

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- ¹Brink, Atlas, 22.
 - ²Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 212.
 - ³North, Jasper Co., 612.
 - ⁴Census taken by city to determine whether there was sufficient population to become a third class city.
 - ⁵Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 336.
 - ⁶Gazette, 10.
 - ⁷McGregor, Jasper Co., 51.

Appendix A. Population of Webb City

1876	700 ¹
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1883	2,300 ³
1889	4,348 ⁴
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¹Brink, Atlas, 22.

²Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 212.

³North, Jasper Co., 612.

⁴Census taken by city to determine whether there was sufficient population to become a third class city.

⁵Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 318.

⁶Gazette, 10.

⁷McGregor, Jasper Co., 51.

Appendix B. Population of Jasper County

In this Study

	<u>White</u>	<u>Negro</u>	<u>Total</u>
Allen - Principal street of the city runs north and south 1860 of city lying east of this street. Later as East Side; later lying west. Webb renamed Main Street.	6,883	Between 200 and 300	7,183 ¹
1870	14,790	138	14,928 ²
Austin - Second north of Joplin, from Baptist College (present city park) to Cronogo.			32,019 ³
1880			50,500 ⁴
Cedar - South west of Allen from First to Ayler.			84,018 ⁵
1890			
College - Fourteenth west of Allen.			
1900			
Church - East south of Main and from Webb runs east city limits.			

Baugherty - First north of Main and Joplin streets. Electric
railroad line on this street.

First - First south of Joplin and Main.

Fourth - Fourth south of Joplin through city limits.

Galena - Third north of Main and Joplin, from Madison east
to city limits.

Joplin - Runs west from Webb Street to city limits. Later
Way.

¹Brink, Atlas, 11.

²Ibid. later renamed Austin and connected with street already
called Austin.

³Livingston, Jasper Co., I, 224.

⁴Ibid., 318. are numbered north and south from this

⁵Ibid., 436. later renamed Broadway, connecting with
east which was renamed at the same time.

Ten - First east of Allen.

Webb - First west of Allen, from Fourth to city limits.

Appendix C. A Guide to the Streets Mentioned
in this Study

Allen - Principal street of the city, runs north and south, parts of city lying east of this street are known as East Side; those lying west, West Side. Later renamed Main Street.

Austin - Second north of Joplin, from Baptist College (present city park) to Oronogo.

Cedar - Tenth west of Allen from First to Aylor.

College - Fourteenth west of Allen.

Church - First south of Main and from Webb runs east to city limits.

Daugherty - First north of Main and Joplin streets. Electric railroad line on this street.

First - First south of Joplin and Main.

Fourth - Fourth south of Joplin through city limits.

Galena - Third north of Main and Joplin, from Madison east to city limits.

Joplin - Runs west from Webb Street to city limits. Later renamed Broadway.

John - Second north of Main, from Oronogo to city limits east. Later renamed Austin and connected with street already called Austin.

Main - Runs east from Webb to city limits. Streets crossing this street are numbered north and south from this street. Later renamed Broadway, connecting with Joplin Street which was renamed at the same time.

Tom - First east of Allen.

Webb - First west of Allen, from Fourth to north city limits.