

► Highway

Continued from front page

ie H. Cinotto

Cinotto. He preceded her in death. Survivors include one son, David L. Cinotto of Kansas City; a brother, W.T. Hembree of Leawood; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be 3 p.m. Tuesday at Mt. Moriah & Freeman Chapel, I-435 at Holmes Road. Burial will be at Mt. Moriah Cemetery. Family will receive friends from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday at the Mt. Moriah & Freeman Funeral Chapel, which is handling all arrangements.

ine Gates Hardy



Romanzi of Pittsburg; and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents. Funeral services will be 1:30 p.m.

Hardy

Monday at Friskel Funeral Home at Frontenac with the Rev. Mark Wenzelburger officiating. Burial will follow at Garden of Memories Cemetery. Family will receive friends from 7 to 8 p.m. today at the Friskel Funeral Home, 230 E. McKay, Frontenac, where friends may call after 3 p.m. today. Arrangements are under the direction of Friskel Funeral Home of Frontenac.

"Since 1883"

Brenner

Mortuary



114 E. Fourth Pittsburg, Ks
231-5600

STEWART (EWAN),

Nathan A. "Bucko," 16, of 818 S. 200th St., Pittsburg, was pronounced dead early Monday morning, March 18, 2002. Services will be 11 a.m. Monday at Brenner Mortuary Chapel with Pastor James Sukraw of the First Church of the Nazarene officiating. Burial follow at Highland Park Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 7 to 8 p.m. today at the chapel, where friends may call after 10 a.m. today to sign the register. The casket will remain closed. Arrangements are under the direction of Brenner Mortuary, 114 E. Fourth St., Pittsburg.

BURKE,

Sandra Lou (Gooch), 61, of Pittsburg, died Friday, March 22, 2002. Graveside services will be 10 a.m. Tuesday at Mt. Olive Cemetery with Pastor Daryl Gaddy of Lighthouse Tabernacle officiating. Burial will follow the services. The family will receive friends from 7 to 8 p.m. Monday at Brenner Mortuary Chapel, where friends may call after noon Monday. Arrangements are under the direction of Brenner Mortuary, 114 E. Fourth St.,

tributed invitations to all the states formed from the Louisiana Purchase to send delegates to the city on Nov. 15 and 16, 1915, to organize an international highway running from Winnipeg in Canada to New Orleans on the Gulf coast.

The route was to be named the Jefferson Highway, in memory of Thomas Jefferson, who was president at the time of the Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803. The slogan for the highway became "From Pine to Palm."

United forces

News of the proposed highway intrigued business leaders in eastern Kansas, including several Crawford County businessmen. The invitation from New Orleans indicated Kansas City and Joplin were logical terminal points for a portion of the highway, but where the road would pass between those points was still undetermined.

As a result, Kansas leaders realized they would have to compete with Missouri to get the route.

Highway enthusiasts from area commercial and good roads associations met in Fort Scott on Oct. 27, 1915, to discuss the proposed route. The Crawford County Good Roads Association sent as delegates its chairman, Arthur H. Shafer of Pittsburg, and president, James H. Seeley of Girard.

Those attending the Fort Scott meeting decided to push for a route including Paola, Pleasanton, Fort Scott, Girard, Pittsburg and Columbus. However, another Kansas group meeting in Ottawa a week later wanted the highway to go through Ottawa, Garnett, Humboldt and Parsons.

"The eastern Kansas delegation would now be challenged at the New Orleans convention not only by Missouri, but by this mid-state rival as well," a 1978 paper on the Jefferson Highway written by Michael Jackson, a PSU history graduate student, said.

Once the 50 Kansas delegates to the New Orleans convention arrived, squabbles began.

"Men stood on chairs, whistled, catcalled, shouted, and stamped, all in an attempt to drown out the voice of their opponents," the *Pittsburg Daily Headlight* reported. "And all the usual tricks of a political convention were thrown in the shade by some of the twists given to the meeting by experienced parliamentarians."

On the convention's second day, state directors for the highway established the main terminal points as New Orleans and Shreveport, La.; Muskogee,

Okl.; Joplin, Kansas City and St. Joseph, Mo.; Des Moines; Minneapolis, Minn.; and Winnipeg.

The directors also announced the route between Joplin and Kansas City would be decided by a contest between Kansas and Missouri. Whichever state had the most road rock for the highway completed by the first Monday in September 1916 would be awarded the official route.

For the Kansas portion of the highway, directors rejected the Ottawa-Parsons proposal and chose the route passing through Pittsburg, Girard and Fort Scott. The exact location was left to the counties through which the highway passed.

Bourbon and Crawford county delegates returned to a cheering crowd at the Frisco Railroad depot in Fort Scott. The *Headlight* attributed selection of the route through Pittsburg and Girard to the extensive involvement of Crawford County representatives.

"If Pittsburg had not sent as many delegates, the route would have gone to Parsons," the *Headlight* reported.

Yet, the excitement and unanimity county representatives demonstrated at the New Orleans meeting became short-lived.

Cost vs. benefit

Several days after the delegates returned, men from Pittsburg and Girard assembled in Pittsburg for an open meeting of the Crawford County Good Roads Association. At this meeting, the group decided the Crawford County portion of the highway would pass through Beulah.

How to pay for the highway, of course, became another major topic for discussion.

Under the state law at the time regulating road construction financing, the cost for building the highway would be shared by townships and landowners along the route. Townships were obligated to pay one-fourth of the expense, with landowners paying the rest.

Highway promoters estimated the road would cost \$1,500 per mile to construct. (In comparison, a common estimate for highway construction today is \$1 million a mile.)

That figure would mean a tax of 10 cents per acre for those with land closest to the highway. Those at the Pittsburg meeting assured residents the expense would be offset by the advantages of having a good highway nearby and subsequent increases in property values.

The highway further was touted as a way to bring education and culture to isolated rural areas.

As soon as the cost estimates were revealed, opposi-

tion to the highway surfaced.

A group of 35 Beulah-area farmers met a few days after Christmas in 1915 to organize an anti-Jefferson Highway organization. The farmers believed the \$1,500 per mile cost estimate was too low. They also remained skeptical of the advantages the road was predicted to bring.

Pittsburg leaders said they would help Beulah build its portion of the highway, but warned other routes were available if Beulah-area residents did not want the road.

More controversy surrounding the highway emerged early the next year.

At a February 1916 meeting of Jefferson Highway supporters in Fort Scott, W.D. Konantz of Arcadia proposed the Commercial Highway, a road leading from Pittsburg north to the northeast Crawford County coal fields, should be upgraded to become part of the highway from Pittsburg to Arcadia and then to Fort Scott.

The Arcadia route, however, would leave Girard cut off from the Jefferson Highway, confirming earlier suspicions of Girard leaders that their city would be bypassed.

Pledges of financial support for the highway through the county also were slow to come in.

Spokesmen seeking to have Commercial Highway join the Jefferson Highway attributed the delay to "foreigners" living in the area. These "foreigners" — mostly immigrants working in the coal mines — were accused of failing to file property deeds with the proper county officials.

Short of expectations

By September 1916, the decision to include the Commercial Highway as part of the Jefferson Highway was completed. Plans called for construction of a chat road 23 miles long through Croweburg, Arma, Franklin and Pittsburg.

Just before Christmas, the national Jefferson Highway Association announced that there would be two routes between Kansas City and Joplin — the eastern Kansas route through Pittsburg and the western Missouri route.

Ironically, the Kansas route roughly approximates present-day U.S. Highway 69, while the Missouri route goes along part of what is now U.S. Highway 71.

"It's interesting that there was the 69-71 rivalry even back then," Roberts said.

The Crawford County portion of the highway was completed several years later. However, the road never lived up to expectations.

According to interviews in the late 1970s with a number of residents involved with the road, the highway through

Crawford County was so narrow that when two cars met going opposite directions, one vehicle had to pull off the road. The road was also described as rough and full of sharp curves.

In downtown Pittsburg, the Jefferson Highway Garage was built around 1915 by Tim Keltner, who had no connection with the group supporting the highway. The business later became the Samson-Keltner Auto Supply Co. and Osage Auto Supply. County register of deeds office records show Osage Auto Supply as owner of the building.

With the automobile revolution of the 1920s and changes in federal highway laws, the Jefferson Highway faded away.

Congress passed the first federal highway funding act in 1916, mainly to benefit rural mail and farm-to-market routes, and then approved a second highway act in 1921. In 1926, Congress passed the highway numbering system in use today, ending the era of highways named after individuals or places.

Nevertheless, other vestiges of the highway still exist.

Jefferson Highway addresses are found in cities along the route from Osseo, Minn., to Baton Rouge, La., a barn with "Jefferson Highway Farm 1917" stands along the former route in a small Iowa town and the Minneapolis-based Jefferson Lines bus company which serves southeast Kansas is named after the highway.

Although not a success, the story of the Jefferson Highway illustrates the importance of unity, cooperation and determination. As the *Headlight* reported on Nov. 17, 1915, after the New Orleans convention:

"This trip of our men proves that going after a thing usually gets it. They went there with a determination to win and they did win. Some thought it would be no use for them to go. The result proves there is nothing like trying, however."

Staff Writer Harold Campbell can be reached at hcampbel@morning-sun.net or 231-2600, Ext. 237.

Funeral Line Update

Dial 231-0166,
1 for News & Information,
then the 4-Digit extension

4004

Sponsored By:

"Since 1883"

Brenner

Mortuary

316-231-5600
114 East Fourth

Two Palestinians attack army post a day before resumption of truce talks