



A STREET SCENE IN WICHITA

WICHITA *The Peerless Princess of The Plains*

By W. E. HOLMES, Executive Secretary, Chamber of Commerce

ONE of the most important, and busiest, points on the Frisco System is Wichita, whose early "boosters" dubbed her "The Peerless Princess of the Plains." More recently, local newspapers have referred to her as "The Wheat Capital of the World." Between the two, the stranger gets a fairly adequate description of a modern city of 100,000 people, which was incorporated as a village only 52 years ago, when it was many miles from the nearest railroad and was famed only as an Indian trading post.

Wichita's first railroad handled, principally, two commodities—household goods and building materials for the first settlers on the millions of acres of undulating prairies in Southern Kansas, and cattle from the then almost unlimited ranges of the great South-

west, which were driven here by the tens of thousands for shipment to Kansas City, Chicago and other markets. Like Abilene, Dodge City and other early cattle shipping points in Kansas, Wichita enjoyed a long series of "hectic days," when thirst parlors were more numerous than "beauty shops" are now, and the fellow without a "six-shooter" was only half dressed.

As the "nester" gradually forced the cutting up of the great ranges into farms, and as the "ups and downs" of the cattle business practically compelled the early settlers to seek some other source of revenue, there developed in Southern Kansas the largest area of hard winter wheat in the known world. And while still more diversified forms of agriculture are being urged, with especial reference to the return to the soil

of the fertility exhausted by many consecutive years of wheat growing, it is the concensus of opinion of agricultural experts that Kansas will long continue to raise from 100 to 150 millions of bushels of hard wheat annually, but on a still smaller acreage, and that about the same conditions will obtain in Northern Oklahoma, where the quantity and quality of wheat grown has rapidly increased during the past few years.

It is interesting to note that whereas only a tiny fraction of the wheat coming to the Wichita market even ten years ago was milled locally, today Wichita is the fourth flour milling center of the world, being exceeded in output only by Minneapolis, Buffalo and Greater Kansas City. It is an equally significant fact that Wichita has also become one of the great livestock and packing centers of the country, drawing hogs, cattle and sheep from Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico. At the same time there has developed here one of the great horse and mule markets, Wichita dealers shipping many thousands of animals annually, principally to the South and South Atlantic States.

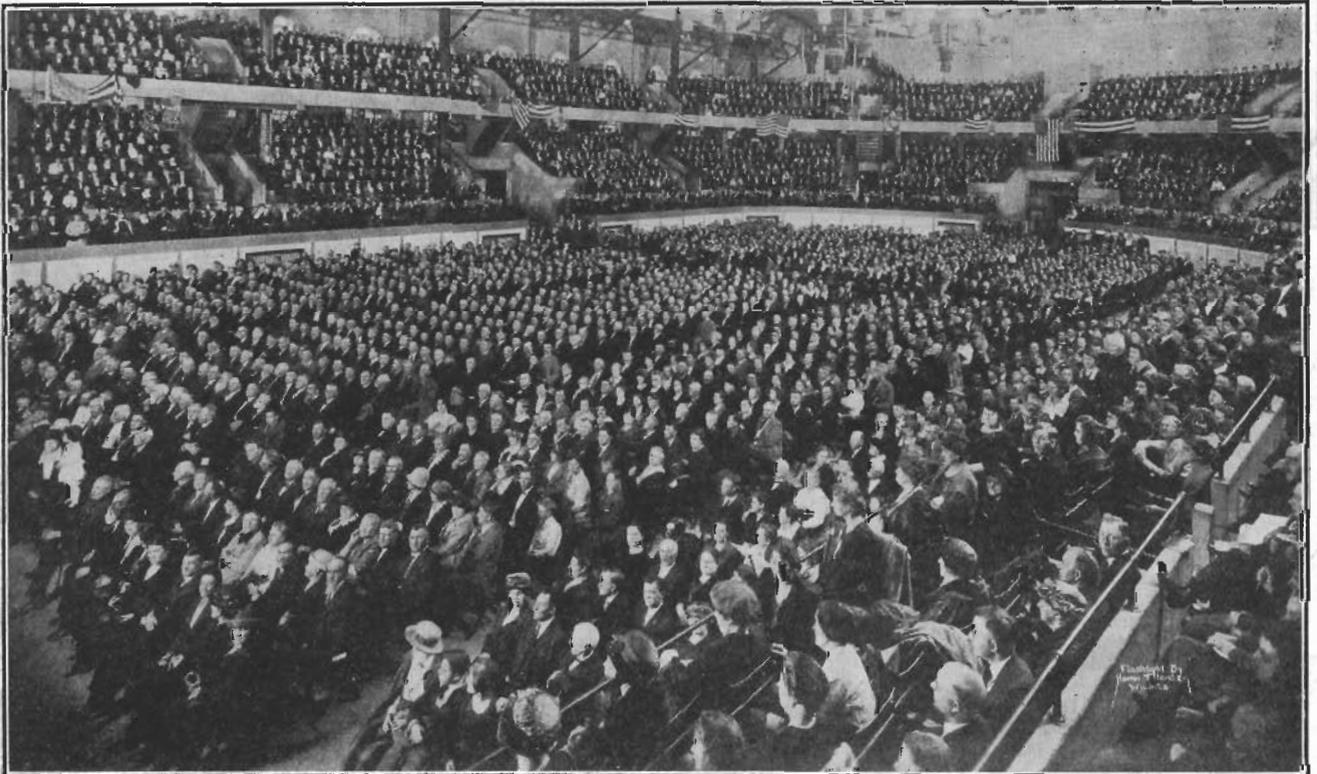
It is equally interesting to note that tens of thousands of acres of Kansas and Oklahoma land considered only a few years ago as fit for grazing purposes now produce the big share of the world's broom corn crop, the major portion of which is marketed through Wichita concerns. And while, of course, the

major portion of this enormous tonnage goes to all sections of the country, Wichita broom factories will produce more than 1,000,000 high-grade brooms in 1924.

While it must ever be admitted that agriculture is the basis of Wichita's prosperity, it is a singular and interesting fact that hundreds of thousands of acres of the very poorest so-called "farm land" in Southern Kansas and Northern Oklahoma now comprise the great "Mid-Continent Oil Field," whose annual production of "liquid gold" totals figures beyond the comprehension of the average man. This has brought much prosperity to Wichita through the investment of this "new money" in hundreds of beautiful homes, and in banks, industrial enterprises and business of all kinds.

What the future holds in store for Wichita, so far as oil development is concerned, no one can safely predict. At this writing, several hundreds of thousands of acres of land almost **within** sight of the city have been taken under lease **by the** most noted oil companies operating in the Middle West, and a very extensive drilling campaign will be under way by January 1.

Since some long prices have been paid for leases, especially in the Arkansas Valley, it is felt that the geologists must have made some very encouraging reports to their principals, particularly as the leasing



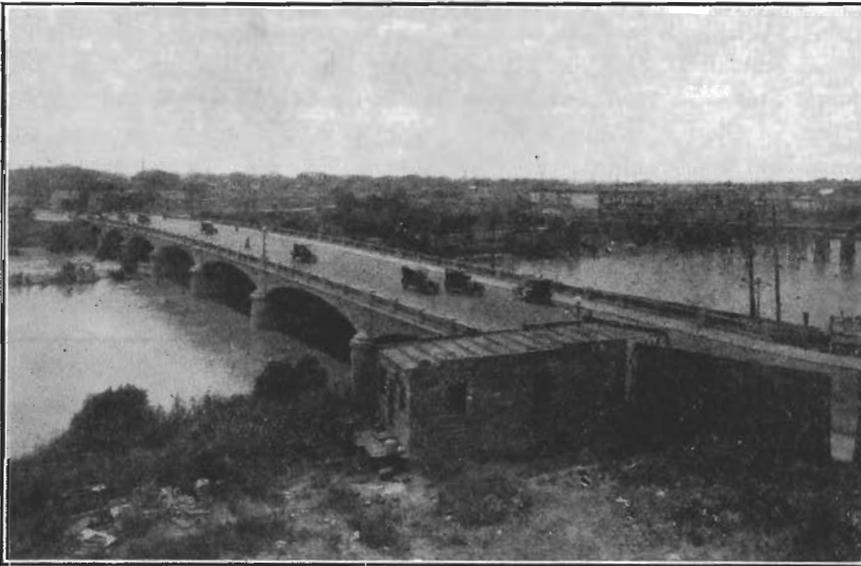
INTERIOR OF "FORUM"—WICHITA MUNICIPAL CONVENTION HALL

campaign was preceded by the most extensive core drilling operations ever known in this section. And while Wichita banks have been fairly flooded with "lease money," it is confidently believed that this is only a fraction of the wealth that will result from the extensive operations which promise to bring a forest of oil derricks to the very gates of the city.

It is particularly gratifying that it can be truthfully said that since the early eighties, Wichita has neither "enjoyed" nor "suffered" a "boom." Its growth has been logical, gradual and well balanced. Its splendid railroad facilities, represented by the Frisco, Santa Fe, Rock Island, Midland Valley, Missouri Pacific, Orient and Arkansas Valley Interurban, have made it possible to build here a jobbing center of no mean importance.

Aside from the milling and packing interests before mentioned, Wichita is fast developing as an industrial center, its principal products being:

Feeds (Poultry and Stock)
 Feed Grinders
 Fertilizers
 Flour
 Fuel Tanks
 Gasoline
 Gasoline Lamps and Lanterns
 Grain Graders
 Structural Iron
 Lithographing
 Lubricating Oil Tanks and Pumps
 Machinery
 High-power Gasoline Mantles
 Monumental Work
 Gas Oil
 Ornamental Iron Work
 Gasoline Pumps (Visible)
 Radiators
 Refinery Equipment
 Builders' Sheet Metal
 Sheet Metal Products
 Silos
 Stereotyping Machinery
 Tankage
 Tile
 Tractors



OVER THE BRIDGE IN WICHITA

A Scene of Rare
 Beauty
 and in the Heart
 of a
 Thriving Business
 Section

Acetylene Equipment
 Advertising Novelties
 Aeroplanes
 Alfalfa Feed
 Alfalfa Mill Machinery
 Automobile Accessories and Springs
 Batteries, Storage
 Brick, Face and Common
 Brooms
 Butchers' Supplies
 Butter
 Cabinets
 Caskets
 Castings, Iron, Aluminum, Brass and Bronze
 Concrete Mixers
 Cooperage
 Cornices
 Corrugated Culverts
 Cut Stone
 Embossing Dies
 Distillate and Fuel Oil
 Drilling Tools (Oil and Gas Well)
 Engravings and Etchings
 Farm Trailers

While advantageous transportation facilities have done much to make it possible for Wichita to become an industrial center, local manufacturers attribute no small part of their success to the fact that they have been able at all times to recruit a labor supply that is unexcelled, being practically all white and 100 per cent American. Such successful men as Mr. W. C. Coleman, founder of the great Coleman Lamp Company, whose products are sold throughout the world, declare that no American community has more ideal labor conditions than Wichita. And this, in no small part, they attribute to the fact that Wichita has kept pace with its educational, recreational, church and social development.

The pride of Wichita's educational system is its million-dollar high school, situated on the largest tract of ground used exclusively for public school purposes in the United States—seventy acres, almost in the

heart of the city. Here also is located the Theodore Roosevelt intermediate high school, costing \$600,000, with many acres devoted to well-planned athletic fields, and with about twenty acres devoted to practical agricultural demonstration work, for which the school system received federal aid under the Smith-Leever act. Wichita has four other intermediate high schools of the finest and most modern type, and is now planning another great high school on the west side of the Arkansas River, to care for that rapidly growing section of the city.

Wichita does not have to send its youngsters away from home to give them a first-class college education, for this opportunity is provided in Friends University (Quaker) and Fairmount College (Congregational). It is entirely probable that the last-named institution will soon become a "municipal university," on the co-operative plan, giving young men and young women simultaneous education in industry and commerce, as is being done at the University of Cincinnati and other institutions of that type. Wichita's other educational institutions are Mt. Carmel Academy (Catholic), a rapidly growing school whose enrollment represents every section of the Southwest; St. John's Academy for Boys (Catholic), and two successful commercial schools. Here also is located the only institution of its kind in the United States—The American Indian Institute, which is preparing a large number of outstanding young men for the ministry and other professional pursuits.

Nothing in Wichita is a greater surprise to the average visitor than the magnitude and beauty of its park system. Riverside Park, once the meeting place of notable Indian councils, is located along the winding Little Arkansas River, not far from its confluence with the Big River, and several miles of splendid boating facilities have been provided through the erection of a small dam. Here also are located some of the finest tennis courts in the entire country, and the "piece de resistance" of the park system, the municipal swimming pool, shown in the accompanying illustration, offers an opportunity for recreation enjoyed not only by Wichita, but by town and country people alike from surprising distances. Close by is Sim Park, skirting the Big River, where an 18-hole municipal golf course is demonstrating the wisdom of the park commission in its establishment.

Few cities have a higher appreciation of the value and importance of its religious institutions than Wichita, where the newcomer can find a "home" in the church of his choice. Wichita takes much pride in the fact that, almost without exception, its church congregations have erected imposing and beautiful edi-

fices, several of these churches having a "budget" approximating \$50,000 a year.

Wichita also takes pride in the fact that it is considered as a conspicuous example of the success of the manager-commission plan of municipal government. Five leading citizens, men of wealth and influence, constitute the commission and draw a salary of \$100 each, annually. The entire machinery and personnel of the city government, with the exception of the Park Department, are directly under and answerable to the city manager, who has no civil service commission or other organization to use its influence to keep in a job a man who has been found incompetent or undesirable for the place.

No "story" of Wichita in a railroad magazine would be complete without mention of its \$2,500,000 Union Station, shared by the Frisco, Rock Island and Santa Fe, or its comprehensive system of elevated tracks, under which an enormous daily traffic moves without danger or interruption.

WICHITA AT A GLANCE

Wichita is in almost the geographical center of the United States.

It has an elevation of 1,183 feet above sea level, where the farmer can plow twelve months in the year.

It was the thirty-ninth city in bank clearings in 1923, and the sixty-third in post office receipts.

It is the rail center of the largest hard winter wheat producing area in the world, Kansas alone producing more wheat of this variety than any five other states, of which the Wichita Board of Trade handles about 22,000,000 bushels annually.

Wichita's tax rate in 1925 will be 8.5 mills.

Wichita's small bonded indebtedness was created for park development and bridge building.

Wichita rarely sees any snow, and zero weather is something seldom experienced. Flowers bloom in Wichita yards from March to November.

While the average rainfall is 30 inches annually, the climate has proved greatly beneficial to persons suffering from malarial or pulmonary troubles, as well as to those who were victims of rheumatism.

Wichita is one of the real financial centers of the Southwest, with one of the twelve federal land banks, an institution that has successfully loaned upwards of \$75,000,000 to the farmers of Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and New Mexico.

Wichita's railroad shops give employment to more than 1,000 contented men, largely home owners.

Wichita's retail establishments are among the finest in the Southwest, making this a retail as well as a jobbing and industrial center.

BIG TRAFFIC FROM A SMALL TOWN

By H. A. SIMONS

THE little town of Southard, Oklahoma, with but fifty dwellings, one industry and a history going back only seventeen years, originates some 4,500 carloads of freight over the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad every year. It is perhaps the best revenue-producing point on the Enid Division.

This is true solely because the plant of the United States Gypsum Company is located there.

But it is a safe assertion that not 10 per cent of the railway employes who help to handle this traffic know why Southard produces it. They may know that it is a gypsum-mining town, producing gypsum plasters and plaster-products. But the odds are long that they have no idea how varied these products are, or in what a number of ways they contribute to American life.

If you should break a leg, the chances are that your doctor would set it in a plaster cast made from gypsum which had been shipped from Southard over the Frisco Lines.

If you saw Douglas Fairbanks in "The Thief of Bagdad," or Mary Pickford in "Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall," or Lon Chaney in "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," you looked at castles and whole villages built of gypsum **produced** at Southard—or some other plant of the United States Gypsum Company.

Go to your dentist for a set of false teeth: the first thing he'll do will be to take a cast of your mouth, with gypsum produced at Southard.

That old watchman who rings the bell at the crossing smokes a corn cob pipe in the manufacture of which this material played an important part.

There is a riddle—not a very good one, to be sure—that goes this way: What surrounds most persons for four-fifths of every day? The answer is gypsum, for the walls and ceilings of most houses in the United States are covered with gypsum plaster. And this is only one of a large number of building materials produced in large quantities at this plant.

Matches, automobile windshields and tires, statues, paper, plate glass, skyscraper roofs, electric light sockets, artificial marble, building partitions, artificial limbs, fertilizer, paints, blackboards and chemical products—these are only a few of the hundreds of articles into which goes, at one stage or another, the gypsum produced at Southard and taken on its first step to the ultimate consumer by the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway Company.

Nature prepares two principal forms of gypsum. One is a white rock. The other is gypsite, or "gypsum clay." These minerals are found in twenty-two states, but Oklahoma has one of the most abundant supplies.

This was recognized back in the boom days of 1907. From then until 1910, no less than fourteen gypsum plants were built in this state. For one reason or another, all but two of them failed after a few years. Besides these two, at Southard and Eldorado, both now owned by the United States Gypsum Company, only two others now are operating in the state.

Southard was named after Messrs. Southard, father and son, who established this plaster mill. First they manufactured only "dark" plasters made from gypsite. But after three years the gypsite bed ran low. So they began to quarry gypsum rock.

Their plant attracted the attention of experts for the United States Gypsum Company who were prospecting for a property to supply the Southwest. These experts realized that Southard possessed three advantages: adequate railway transportation, pure water supply and rock of excellent quality. So in 1912, the plant was added to the list of those operated by this concern.

Since then continuous expansion and improvement has been carried on. The most modern type of equipment was shipped in for installation in the original plant. In 1914 a "block plant" for the manufacture of gypsum partition and roof tile was added. Two years later a plant for the manufacture of Keene's Cement, a special finisher for the walls of elaborate buildings, was built. Later a Gyplath mill was erected to produce "plaster board," the fireproof substitute for wood lath. The latest and one of the largest additions was completed in 1922: a mill for the manufacture of Sheetrock fireproof wallboard.

This growth and improvement has resulted in making the Southard plant unique in two respects. First, it has the most diversified line of products of any gypsum-working establishment in the United States. Second, it is the only one of the fifteen gypsum-producing plants of the company which ships from coast to coast and from the border to the Gulf.

Both of these things result from the essential fact about Southard: the gypsum rock mined there is the purest and the highest in quality of **any produced in**