

*Independence:
Our Historic
Homes*



by
Ken D. Brown

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the cultural context of the research. It highlights the need for researchers to be sensitive to the values and beliefs of the communities they are studying. This is particularly important in the field of education, where cultural differences can significantly impact learning outcomes. The author argues that a one-size-fits-all approach to education is not only ineffective but also potentially harmful. Instead, educators should strive to create a culturally responsive environment that respects and builds upon the knowledge and experiences of all students.

The second part of the paper explores the challenges of conducting research in diverse cultural settings. It discusses the difficulties of finding a common ground between the researcher's perspective and the participants' worldview. The author notes that language barriers, differing communication styles, and varying levels of literacy can all pose significant obstacles. To overcome these challenges, the author suggests a collaborative approach where researchers work closely with community members to design and implement the study. This approach not only helps to build trust but also ensures that the research is relevant and meaningful to the community.

The third part of the paper presents a case study of a research project conducted in a rural, low-income community. The study aimed to understand the factors that influence children's school attendance and academic performance. Through interviews, observations, and the analysis of school records, the researchers identified several key factors, including lack of access to transportation, limited parental involvement, and the influence of traditional gender roles. The findings of the study were used to develop a series of interventions designed to address these issues. These interventions included providing school buses, offering parent training workshops, and implementing a community-based program to challenge traditional gender roles.

The final part of the paper discusses the implications of the research for policy and practice. The author argues that the findings of the study have important implications for how we think about education in diverse communities. It suggests that policymakers and educators should move away from a deficit model of education, which focuses on the shortcomings of students and communities, and instead adopt a more holistic and strengths-based approach. This approach recognizes the resilience and resourcefulness of communities and seeks to build upon these strengths to improve educational outcomes.





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Chairman,

*Historic Preservation Committee
of the*

Independence Arts Council, Inc.

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PREFACE

Independence has a most interesting history and fortunately many of our older citizens are happy to share their memories of this history. This book, however, is by no means a summary of that history but only a sketch of some of our historic homes and their famous inhabitants. We do not intend to imply these selected 83 homes are alone the oldest or most significant, but it is hoped that this will at least be a start. We invite any of our readers to give us tips about other homes — or even these included — which contribute to our history. Descriptions of these homes have been arranged in a "touring" order starting at First and Main and can be easily located by using the following map. It is hoped that this book will contribute to an appreciation of older homes and their importance in preserving our heritage.

It would be impossible for me to individually list everyone who has contributed information and interesting stories to the book, but I want especially to thank: those on the Historic Preservation Committee of the Independence Arts Council and the students from Independence Community Junior College who helped collect data; the County Clerk's Office and the Register of Deeds Office for helping track down specific information on various properties; all the people who have phoned in information and the people we have phoned and interviewed; the people who have loaned old books, pictures, scrapbooks, etc.; the Tribune for old pictures and publications; and the photographers.

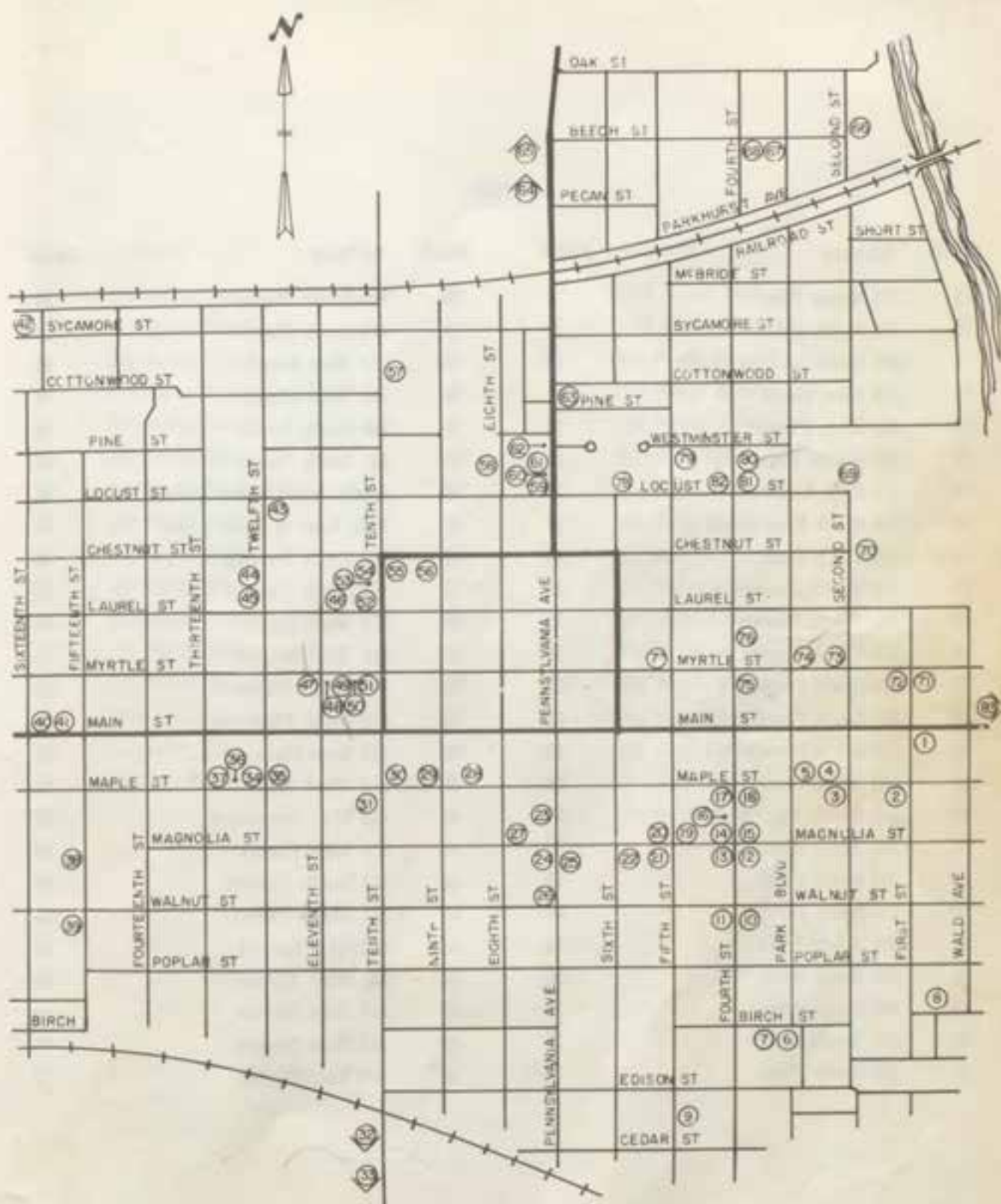
I have tried to write this as accurately as possible and have cross checked with different sources when available. Sometimes it is difficult to sort out the "truth" when there are contradictions. I have documented much of this information and have parenthetically noted the references. The main

sources I used were: 1) **South Kansas Tribune "Industrial Edition,"** December 30, 1903. This is an un-numbered Supplement which was extremely valuable and is merely noted (**Tribune**) throughout the text. Other **Tribune** sources have a more complete listing. 2) A 1901 **South Kansas Tribune** supplement similar but less detailed than the 1903 Edition. This is noted (**1901 Tribune**). There was a marked difference in the city of Independence between these two years and it is obvious in comparing these two publications. 3) **History of Montgomery County Kansas**, hereafter noted (**MG History**). This is an 850 page book written "by it's own people" in 1903 and contains information on nearly every resident before that time. 4) "Independence: The Heart of the Kansas Gas and Oil Field." This is a 130 page "Souvenir Edition" of the **Weekly Times** and is noted (**Times**) in the text. This book was compiled by Southwest Directory and Publicity Company in Amarillo, Texas, and was published in 1907. 5) "Oil and Gas Magazine" which was a supplement to the **Independence Daily Reporter** in December, 1906. This is noted (**Oil and Gas**). About half of this is devoted to the oil and gas business in this area and the other half concerns various other enterprises in Independence. 6) **Southwest Developer** published a short supplement about 1900 containing similar information. The specific date and other identification about the publication are not available because the cover page is missing. 7) Three scrapbooks kept by E. T. Patterson — the first treasurer of **Prairie Oil and Gas** (now **ARCO**) — between the years 1905 and 1930 that were very valuable. Many of the sources are unidentified but dates were frequently written in the margins.

We hope to continue several projects pertaining to Historic Preservation in Independence. We have some plans for further publications and we welcome any suggestions. We thank you for your interest.

April, 1978

KEN D. BROWN



INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS

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In 1923, Dana H. Kelsey was elevated to vice-president of Prairie Oil and Gas after having been "... connected with the company for years at Tulsa ... (and) ... who won a name for himself before going into the oil business as superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes and then as superintendent of the land department of the Prairie. He is a strong man, of proven ability and with a charm of manner and pleasing personality that will help wonderfully to surmount the tasks ahead of him. He has surrounded himself with capable assistants ... " (Unidentified clipping in Patterson scrapbook dated September 16, 1923) "Herbert A. Meyer, who has been Mr. Kelsey's assistant in the Tulsa Office, in connection with the marketing business, will go with him to Independence." (Oil and Gas Journal, approximate same date.)

In 1925, Mr. Kelsey had this beautiful home built at 102 South First. The house was designed by J. C. Nichols, the same architect who designed the Plaza in Kansas City and, in fact, with a similar arch building style. The home was built by W. E. "Wes" Smith. The house has 17 rooms including service quarters in the basement. The basement also has a "wine room", a large recreation room and a two car garage. There are three woodburning fireplaces in the home. A gazebo sets in the well landscaped back yard. The current owner is Mrs. Georgia Morris.



Henry Baden was one of the more significant settlers in Independence, having walked here from Kansas City. His influence in the business community was immense and is still partially obvious by the Baden Buildings remaining downtown. His relatives, especially his sons, helped run the business. And, Mr. Baden had houses built with very similar styles for his sons. His oldest son, who assumed some of the general management of the Baden business and also ran a tobacco store, was John W. Baden. His home was built in 1888 at 201 South First. The house was constructed from hand pressed brick made only one block from there on Wald Street. The house has had a rather large addition made on the back. The wood in the house is all oak — the floors and the woodwork. The leaded glass windows have been removed and replaced with conventional windows. Mrs. Thomas Lee is the current owner. Her father was Fred Baden, a son of John W. Baden.



W. R. Pratt started in the stationery and book business in Independence in 1899 and was described as "... a young man of sterling integrity, whose connection with business and social life of the city has been of a character to make him many steadfast friends." (MG History, p. 803). And, "Mrs. Pratt is a true type of the southern born woman, hospitable and social to a degree, and possessing that instructive knowledge of society and social customs so necessary in the present day hostess." (MG History, p. 804). Mr. Pratt consolidated his business with the Pugh Drug and Stationery Company in 1904. Their home was constructed by Frank D. Brewster in 1903. The many windows in the home are highlighted with very ornate brickwork on the outside, and dark oak woodwork on the inside. With a floored attic and full basement, the two story house has over 5,000 square feet of space. The home is currently owned by Dr. Leonard Steinle and family.



In 1907 A. E. Todd built this spacious home for William E. Stich — a brother of A. C. Stich who was one of Independence's most prominent citizens. A. C. Stich, among many other things, was mayor of the city, president of Citizen's National Bank, inventor of paving brick, and a main character in the famous Guernsey-Stich business and social feud. Another interesting family connection was the marriage of W. E. Stich's daughter to Earl Sinclair, a brother of Harry F. Sinclair. The house has seven leaded glass windows and two fireplaces — one woodburning with marble and wood facing, and the other has a gas burner. The lights were originally gas before being converted to electricity. The house is currently owned by Richard and Connie Monfort.



500 EAST MAPLE

Photo reprinted from Times





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Photo reprinted from Times

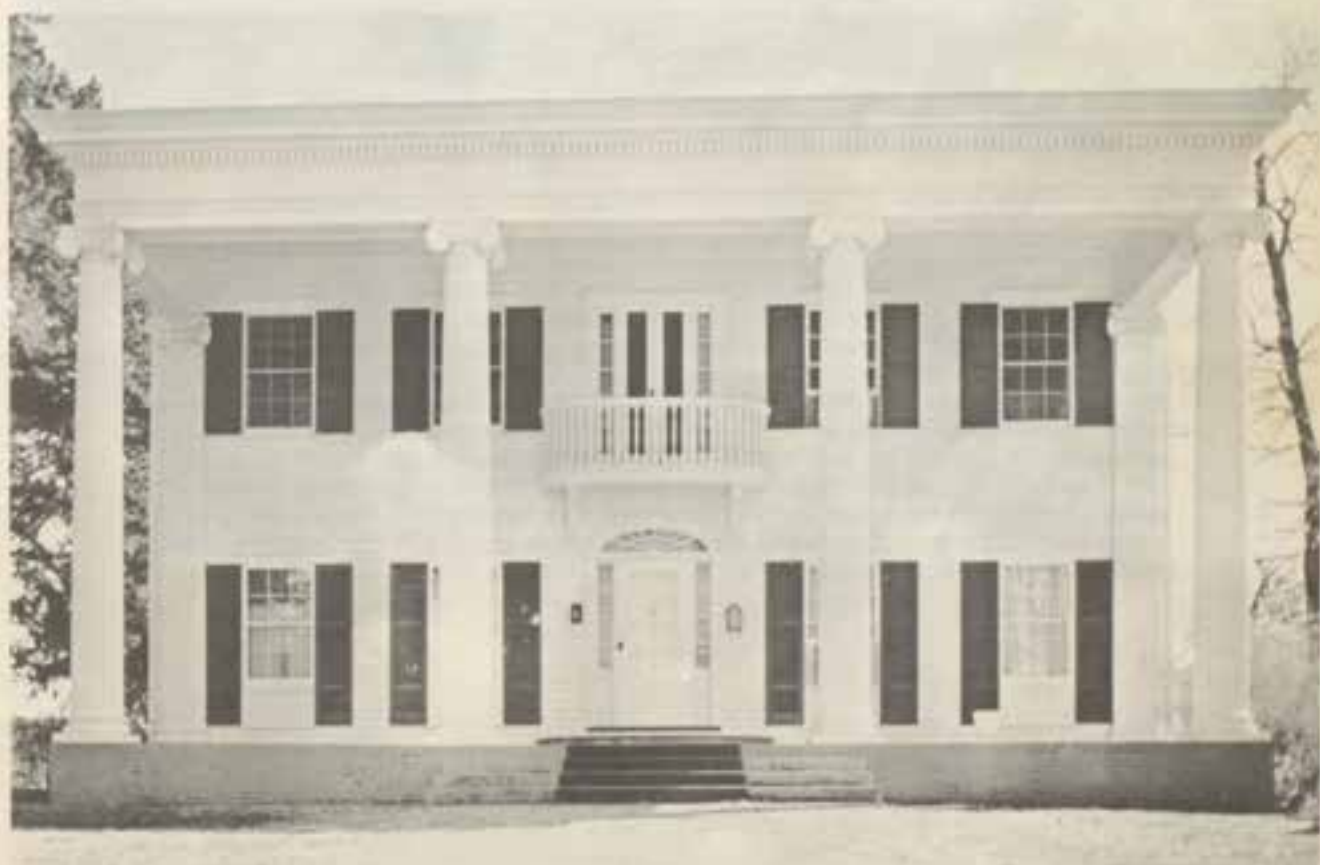


One of the most outstanding homes in Independence is this buff brick one at 500 East Maple. The house, with a very different look, (see top) was built in 1884 for George T. Guernsey, Sr., one of Independence's most prominent citizens. (See p. 80). Guernsey sold the house in 1889 to Cam L. Bloom who "... began at the age of 16 as a hand with a drilling rig. He became attached to the business of perforating holes in the crust of Mother Earth through the research it entailed, and continues yet the work of superintending drilling operations as carried on by the firm of McBride and Bloom, or by the Consolidated Gas, Oil, and Manufacturing Company, of which he is president and large owner of its valuable capital stock." (Tribune). Bloom had the home extensively remodeled to give it its present look (see bottom) during the years he lived in the house. Bloom sold the house to John Denman of Sedan in 1918. Mr. Denman was also in the oil business with the Denman Brothers Company. The Denman's daughter and her husband — Mr. and Mrs. George McVey — are the current owners. It has lots of leaded glass windows, oak woodwork, a gold-leaf chandelier, and fancy molded ceilings.

The large "farmhouse" (above) was built by A. E. Todd (the second house he built in Independence) in 1901 for Dr. J. S. and Tena Bodwell. Dr. Bodwell was a dentist and had his office over the State Bank. At the time of construction, this area was almost in the country (L. T. Street). Richard Bodwell, a grandson, says his father — Fay — used to run sheep there. The house was greatly altered in 1926 (below) by it's owner — Herman Ewers, an independent oil producer. Mr. Ewers — some say his wife — had an addition made to the front and then the giant columns added at a cost of \$1500 each giving the house it's desired "Kentucky look". The focal point of the house is now the large sandstone fireplace (painted ivory) in the living room which was part of that addition. Later the house was owned for 25 years by Harold Medill, a legislator, and an executive in Sinclair Oil Company. The house was recently sold by Gary Crumrine to E. Dale Youngberg.



Photo printed from Tribune





About 1907, Mrs. Eva E. Barnett had this home built and she resided here until 1909 when she sold it to Leonard King. Mr. King, a "man of means", died in 1912 and willed it to his beloved nephew, George W. King. George King died in 1934 and Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Funston bought the home and have lived there since. Mrs. Funston wrote the following description: "The well built spacious home in the style of the late 19th Century has seven large rooms . . . (a) floored attic and basement. . . There is a fireplace in the living room. A parlor, formal dining room, with a plate rail, oak bannister on the stairway in a two-story stair well. Oak woodwork compliments the lower floor which is as pretty as when it was built."



In 1903 A. E. Todd built these three houses for Fred Geckeler. Geckeler lived in the one on the right and it was located at Ninth and Laurel. The other two were his rental properties and were located on North Ninth Street. In 1915 when Prairie Oil and Gas was constructing their new building (now ARCO) these houses were moved to the 700 block on East Birch. Geckeler was in the shoe business in Independence for many years. In 1901, he made the following advertising promise: "To every New Century Baby, born in Montgomery county during the year 1901, we will give a Pair of Shoes Free. These are the only conditions: Write to us; or, better still, bring the baby. We want to see Every Baby make a right start in life by wearing a pair of Geckeler's Shoes." (1901 Tribune).



Photo reprinted from Times

"One of the public institutions of which Independence is justly proud is the handsome new hospital and sanitarium, located on the corner of Fifth and Stephenson Streets, in one of the most desirable residence sections of the city. The building is modern in architecture, two stories and basement, built of brick and cement blocks, and is equipped with every facility that modern science can suggest for the care of medical and surgical cases." (Times, p. 49). Dr. F. W. Shelton was president of the Hospital and was responsible for its construction in 1906 by A. E. Todd. The Hospital has been remodeled and converted into eight apartments. The current owner is Nathan Wolfe.



This elegant home was built about 1905 for William N. Banks, an attorney. Two of the outstanding features of the house are the oak woodwork in "ribbon and bows" pattern, and the large stained glass window on the landing. The attic of the house had been finished for the maid. Mr. Banks came with his parents from Hobart, Indiana as a small boy. After a short stint in teaching, Mr. Banks went to Purdue and then into law practice. In 1902 he and Arthur Billings formed a partnership. "For strict reliability and honorable methods it (the partnership) stands pre-eminent and has built an enviable reputation along with a lucrative practice in a very short time." (Tribune). The house is currently owned by Dan and Diana Hellen.



401 South Fourth is the sight of the Henry H. Dittmer house built in 1906 by A. M. Lind. Dittmer came here from Germany with his brother, John (see p. 37) to work for their uncle, Henry Baden. Henry Dittmer was in charge of the wholesale grocery store and was a traveling salesman for Baden. The house has two living rooms separated with an archway and French doors with beveled glass. Both rooms have parquet-patterned hardwood floors. There is also an archway with French doors between the dining room and the living room. The woodwork is oak and there are four leaded glass windows in the house. The only alteration has been a small addition to the back of the house. The current owner is L. E. Coldwell who has lived there since 1941.



Nelson K. Moody was another important oil official connected with Prairie and later Sinclair Oil Company. He came to Independence in 1910 as vice-president of Prairie. In 1915, "Mr. and Mrs. Moody planned and built the home at 300 South Fourth. . . There they held 'open house' for their friends. Sunday nights were always set aside for informal supper, parties for both old and young, who enjoyed the hospitality and good fellowship which always prevailed. Their friends knew a warm, sincere welcome always awaited them." (Unidentified news clipping December 30, 1944 from Patterson scrapbook). In 1923 Mr. Moody was elevated to president of Prairie and held that position until the company merged with Sinclair in 1932, after which time he became, and remained until his death, president of the Sinclair-Prairie Oil Marketing Company. The house has beautiful and massive oak woodwork with heavy sliding doors separating the entrance, the library and the living room. The library has built-in bookcases from floor to ceiling with leaded glass doors. And the built-in cupboards in the dining room also have leaded glass doors. The sun porch — where much of the entertaining was done — was added to the house after its initial construction. The current owner is Dale Carr.

One of the oldest and most beautiful homes in Independence belongs to Mrs. William Caston at 301 South Fourth. The house was built in 1888 by P. S. Edmundson and J. W. Graham for — and with lots of written instructions from — Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Allen (Mrs. Caston's grandparents). The price of the house upon completion was \$1,750. Mr. Allen used to contend that his home was built on "sanctified ground" because he bought the dirt for fill which had been dug for the basement of St. Andrews Catholic Church as it was being constructed at the same time. Mr. Allen was an important pillar in Independence with "... experience as a farmer, merchant, public official and financier, all of which stations he has honored and in all of which has he displayed a natural aptitude and adaptation, passion from one to another as a reward of industry and indicating the favor and confidence of his fellow citizens." (MG History, p. 312). His main position was president of the First National Bank. He was the first Democrat elected to a Montgomery county office (Register of Deeds in 1876) and Mrs. Allen jokingly suggested his being a Democrat was "excused" by his serving in the Union Army, while the 1901 *Tribune* contended that "... by his politeness, affability and personal magnetism (he) was able to win the honors and the office." In 1900 some major remodeling was done to the home — the original porch and upper deck were removed and the giant columns were added. (See above right). The eleven beveled-leaded glass windows and the stained glass window were also added at that time. The cedar tree in the back yard was brought in from Table Mound over 90 years ago for Christmas, and then planted. A tornado in the 30's took off the top of the tree.



Photo reprinted from Southwest Developer





A. E. Todd built this beautiful brick home for the Earl Sinclair family in 1909 or 1910. "Earl Sinclair is one of the younger set of oil men making Independence their headquarters, and while not classed among the heavy operators, has nevertheless been successful. . . For a time he was associated with his brother, Harry F. Sinclair, in the drug business in this city, and also spent four years in St. Louis, where he was connected with a large lumber firm." (Times, p. 49). One outstanding feature of this home is a 24 foot entrance hall outlined by majestic oak beams, woodwork, staircase and a built-in bench, and a fireplace at the far end. There are gas heaters in the many fireplaces because gas was available for \$1.00 per month at the time the house was built. Other owners of the house included the Thomas Stanfords and the Fred Wilkins before the current owners — the Richard Henrys — bought the house in 1974.



About 1904 this home was built for Mary and Frank Freeling. Mr. Freeling and his sister, Clara, worked for the Covall Dry Goods Store. The house has oak woodwork (some now has been painted) and an open staircase made from oak. The two fireplaces have an ornate oak casing with ceramic tile fronting to enclose the gas burners. Some of the lights have been converted from the original gas to electricity. There are hardwood floors throughout the house including the full attic. In the downstairs the butler's pantry has been converted into a bathroom (the original French doors leading into it from the dining room have been removed, of course). The bathroom in the basement is also rather unique — it has the old pull chain toilet. The upstairs has a very convenient room arrangement with a nursery off the master bedroom — an archway separates the two rooms. When the nursery was no longer needed the room could be used for a dressing room. The current owners are Butch and Mary Callison.



Photo courtesy of Tribes

One very interesting story surrounds this house at 209 South Fourth. The house was built in 1914-1915 by Arthur Hurd for Mr. and Mrs. R. Morrison. Mr. Morrison was an independent oil operator. Because of the crooked driveway as this early picture indicates, Mr. Morrison had a turn-table constructed in the garage so his Hupmobile could be turned around and driven forward out of the garage. In the house, the oak beams, mantles on the four fireplaces and woodwork were made by the Uhrich Mill (see next page) here in Independence. Mrs. Mary Morton is the current owner.



In 1916, Mr. Burns Uhrich had A. E. Todd construct this Spanish-style home at 201 South Fourth. Mr. Uhrich drew up all his own plans and cut all the wood for the woodwork at his saw mill. Mr. Uhrich's father was known in Independence as the owner of the revolving door company — the first such company in the United States. Mr. Uhrich got the patent on the door. He had started the company in Atchinson and moved it to Independence in 1909. This house was the first "fireproof" constructed home in Kansas and included concrete floors with hardwood over them. The only other owner of the house has been the current owner — Mrs. Ernest Boys.



A description of this home, which is featured on our cover, is taken from the *Tribune*, December 9, 1903, which was shortly after Mr. A. E. Todd constructed it for Mr. August Zutz. "It is a frame structure, has 11 rooms and a bath, is of two stories and large attic, and has an improved basement (the hot air furnace for heating the entire house, hot and cold water and the necessary tubs and equipment for household laundering). . . The wood finish of the interior is of red oak, the floors of the first floor being the same. The staircase in the main hall is a special feature of the interior beauty of this home. The house has three large porches and a balcony and artistic windows and doors. . . (It) was built at a cost of about \$6,000." Mr. Zutz pioneered in his well-known grocery and hardware firm in 1870. He ". . . came to this country when the new flourishing city of Independence was a vast wilderness . . . 35 years is a long time for a firm to be in business in one city, and to enjoy a reputation that Mr. Zutz has is something for a merchant to feel justly proud of, and is only attained by honest business methods." (*Oil and Gas*, p. 59). The current owners are Jack and Sidney Wilhelm.



U. S. Grant, President of the United States in 1879, signed the original abstract to James DeLong and William Duncan stipulating that this land was "for the use of the citizens of Independence." Sometime after 1885, Mr. Thomas H. Stanford — a reputable lawyer — had this 11 room house built for himself, wife, and four boys. It was said that "all Southeast Kansas and large parts of Oklahoma and Indian Territory know of his professional ability and the demand for his services make him a very busy man — but never too busy to give more or less of his time and talents to public matters looking to the upbuilding of the city which he adopted as his home in 1885, coming here from White County, Indiana, where he was admitted to the bar in 1879." (Tribune). Most of the beauty of this home has been preserved by Mrs. Olive Smith. The gas lites have been converted to electricity and a picket fence added. One of the most distinguishing characteristics is the ornate gingerbread around the 75 feet of wrap-around porches.



Contributing greatly to the development of Independence was Harry F. Sinclair who had this mansion built by A. M. Lind in 1906. The brick contractor was Harry B. Smith who built the old Longfellow and Frances Willard Schools. Sinclair had taken a pharmacy course at K.U. in order to run his father's drug store but soon gave that up "... for the more exciting business of prospecting (for oil). . . He always welcomed desperate chances, the long shots that yielded fabulous returns when they did pay off. . . His first job was as a 'lease broker' for the Cudahy Oil Company. He obtained drilling rights on the farms and ranches in Southeast Kansas. With earnings from this activity, he branched out as an independent producer . . . (and) rapidly extended his oil operations." His oil company merged with Prairie Oil and Gas and Prairie Pipe Line in 1932 and was at that time the largest pipeline company in the U.S. He became a millionaire before he was 35 and retired in 1949. "By that time the assets of the concern he founded in 1916 had grown from 51 million dollars to around \$1,200,000,000." (Quotes from his obituary by the Wire Services, November 10, 1956).

In Sinclair's home, the steps in the staircase are shorter than normal because he was lame. The carriage house and attic were used by the servants. The huge pillars and red tile roof characterize the outside of the house, while Birdseye Maple woodwork and wood carved pillars set off the interior. The Presbyterian Church now house their minister — Rev. Burt — in the home. The house is listed with the State Historical Society.



The home at 301 South Fifth had a delayed inception. The foundation was laid shortly after the construction of the houses at 300 South Sixth (see p. 32) but further construction was curtailed with the death of the owner, Mr. Camenga. The native stone foundation was empty for seven years before the house was finally built by A. E. Todd for Mr. Bloiser, the vice-president of the ill-fated Commercial National Bank which failed in 1930. His daughter — now Mrs. E. E. Wilson — was born in the house and still owns it. The two story house has five upstairs bedrooms along with a basement and attic. Current residents are Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Buckner.



The E. E. Wilson home at 300 South Sixth was built shortly after the turn of the century. It was constructed on a solid native stone foundation, with two floors, along with an attic and basement. The house was originally occupied by D. F. and Sarah Camenga, grandparents of Wilson's wife, Louise. Camenga operated for a time a department store on Main Street with John Anderson. (See p. 35). In 1897, Mr. Camenga's "New York Store" ran the following ad in "The Thanksgiving Souvenir": "There are many powerful reasons that draw the great crowds daily at the New York Store. Plain bargain facts that argue stronger than a volume of eloquence. We offer now great values . . . that no economical lady can well afford to overlook. Every department in the House is replete with NEW FALL GOODS, marked at prices that favor buyers, and that exemplify the New York Store's claim of always the cheapest." The Wilsons have owned the house since 1940. They have extended their living room past where the original porch was on the Sixth Street side and changed their staircase from the start of the front door to the opposite direction.



The first apartment house in Independence was built in 1907 for Dr. C. W. DeMott and was called the "DeMott Flats". In 1903 Dr. DeMott was described as "one of the young and highly successful physicians and surgeons of Montgomery County, having won a large practice in an almost incredibly short time for one of his age, and to which his entire time is devoted. He is a graduate of the Kansas State University, of Rush Medical College, and is also a pharmaceutical graduate. Thus equipped and ever studious he occupies a place in an honored profession far above many older practitioners." (*Tribune*). The structure has seven apartments, each with a sun porch. It is currently owned by Kenny Allison, and is located at 207 South Penn.



301 SOUTH PENN

Photo courtesy of Carl Guilkey



John M. Anderson, an 1871 settler, was not only the original owner of this beautiful 1879 home, but also did some of the construction work as well. Mr. Anderson had joined D. F. Camenga in 1871 to start a dry goods store. "Mr. Anderson was an excellent carpenter so they proceeded to build their building . . . (which) burned in 1883 and was rebuilt by them. Mr. Anderson then sold to Camenga and started a store . . . where again fire destroyed his stock." (*Tribune*). His store "The Bee Hive" in 1897 ran the following ad in "The Thanksgiving Souvenir:" "Dry Goods, Notions, Carpets, Matting, oil cloths, window shades and lace curtains. DRESS GOODS, in all the New Shades, Trimmings to match . . . Complete line of SILKS. . . A very large and attractive line of LADIES' and CHILDREN'S WRAPS. Styles up to date. Immense line of UNDERWEAR in all the new makes. . . Always carry complete line in all departments, and the LOWEST CASH PRICES."

The house is all masonry with six courses of brick making 16 inch thick exterior walls. Originally, the house was heated by fireplaces that burned coke in baskets (three fireplaces downstairs and one upstairs). One mantle is metal that is grained to look exactly like marble. The one in the parlor is carved wood with glazed tiles that depict two mythological figures. Much of the glass in the downstairs windows is original, being very wavy and thick. The ceilings are 14 foot. There is a beautiful native walnut staircase inside the beveled glass transomed front door. Fan-lights are original. There is a partial basement and a third floor. The downstairs parlor has the original wet plaster with moldings and burlap as a base. A major remodeling in 1915 (top left) altered the roofline, replaced the ginger bread front porch with columns, and added the sleeping porch on the back. The house has been occupied by descendants of the original owner for 98 years and the current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Guilkey, have kept the family tradition going since 1945. Mrs. Guilkey is the granddaughter of John Anderson and Governor Humphrey. (See p. 63).



William Dunkin was an "... eminent lawyer, citizen, capitalist and real estate owner." He came to Independence in March 1873 and became "...one of the most active attorneys the Montgomery county bar has ever had, his reputation as an able lawyer bring to him a large practice of the weightiest and most laborious kind. ... (In) addition to his talents as a lawyer Mr. Dunkin developed financial genius and is considered one of the wealthiest men in the county." (Tribune). The house was built in 1896 and was added on to and re-done by A. E. Todd sometime before 1909. The porches and column supports were considerably changed at that time also. Doris Davis is the current owner.



John and Henry (see p. 20) Dittmer were sent to this country from Germany without either of them being able to speak a word of English. Each had a tag fastened to their coat lapel which indicated that they were to come to Independence and delivered to their uncle, Henry Baden. Of course, both learned the language and were very productive workers for Baden. John was in charge of the wholesale dry goods department of Baden's business. (1901 Tribune). 315 South Penn is the sight of the John Dittmer house built about 1910. The present occupants are the Anthony LoScalzo family. The house was restored by Helen Webb prior to the purchase by LoScalzios. The house has fourteen rooms on the first and second stories, a full basement, and an attic. It is also equipped with a dumb waiter which was used to bring the food from the basement where it was prepared. It is located in the kitchen adjacent to the dining room. The dining room has a large built-in oak china cabinet. All the rooms have the original gas converted to electric lights which are brass with globes of frosted glass. The house has a most interesting oak staircase, finely carved with a divider between the stairway and foyer. On the upstairs landing it has a serpentine curve to the left that opens the stairway to a huge long hall.



A. Frank Johnson came to Independence in 1880 "... obtaining a clerkship in the dry goods store of Henry Baden (and) worked for him nine years. He then decided to go into business for himself and purchased the Postoffice news stand, book and stationery store. This he operated four or five years or until he bought the half interest of William Owens in the Union Meat Market. He has proven himself to be a successful business man." (Tribune). Before 1903 he had this beautiful home built and he also owned the homes on the north and east. He had bought these houses for two of his sons to live in and the story has it that he was contemplating building a third house close for his third son. Mrs. Bernice Bryant currently owns the house and has since 1945.



Some contend that this was the first "frame" house in Independence. Mr. Samuel H. Ulmer homesteaded part of this small house on 560 acres (some suggest not with that much land). In 1870 Mr. Ulmer started the first furniture store in Independence which prospered until his death in 1888 and then was operated successfully by his son-in-law, Arthur DeVore (see p. 85). The original house consisted of only two rooms (now the dining room and kitchen). The framework of this original house was constructed from native walnut. The front of the house was added on later, probably after the house was moved in 1902 so a larger house could be built on the corner. Mrs. Elmer (Ollie) Pierce, the house-keeper at the Booth Hotel, lived in the house from 1911 to 1943 when her daughter, the late Mrs. Thelma Jackson bought it. This is the only time that the house has been sold.



Photo courtesy of Tribune

Perhaps our most famous citizen — Alf Landon — lived at 300 West Maple. (Although the house actually belonged to his father, J. M. Landon.) Landon was elected Governor of Kansas in 1932 and was the only Republican Governor in the United States re-elected in 1934. In 1936, Landon was the Republican's landslide losing candidate against Franklin Roosevelt. This was the third house that A. E. Todd built after starting his contracting business. It was built for Dr. J. T. Davis in 1901. Dr. Davis came to Independence in 1892 and enjoyed "... a large and lucrative practice ... (He) served 8 years on the Board of Pension Executives under Presidents Garfield and Harrison, and was President of the Board during the last term." (*Tribune*, March 7, 1894). Cecil and Jo McKenzie are the current owners and are restoring the house. There was a "secret" room, which had been walled off, but an exterior window could not keep it concealed — the McKenzie children cut their way into the room finding old bottles and a President Taft political button. The third floor of the house was used for servants quarters. It is also contended that the first electric refrigerator in Independence was in this house.



William F. Gates came to Independence as the general manager of Prairie Oil and Gas in 1904 and rented from George Guernsey (see p. 60) until he had this home built about 1915. Also in 1915, he "... was made president of the newly formed Prairie Pipe Line Company, which was later to become the largest pipe line company in the world. Gates held his executive position until his retirement, a short time before the Prairie-Sinclair merger (1932)" (His obituary in *Reporter*, 1938). The home was designed and built by Harry Duckworth — the man who also designed and built "The Rocks" (see p. 44). The home was constructed "first class" with architectural notations on the blueprints to "SELECT CLEAR BIRCH" for the woodwork. One walk-in closet has built-in drawers made of cherry wood. One unique room is the "Curio Room" which has one entire wall with slanted shelves behind glass doors and drawers below (also all made from cherry wood). This room was made for Gates to display his various collections. There are many original hanging lights from the walls, and beveled mirrors and glass throughout the home. There are two nearly identical large bathrooms — white mosaic tile and six foot tubs. Off the formal dining room with built-in china closets, is a long and narrow "breakfast room" with a bay window at the far end. An addition of a sleeping room and a "radio room" was made to the house in 1926 by W. Smith of Coffeyville. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hadley bought the house in 1938 which is the only time that it has been sold.



While F. N. Bender was still in the contracting business, he built the residence at 201 South Tenth for Adam Braik in 1902. Duane Bechtle and family now live there. Braik was co-owner (with D. Gerster) of the Independence Milling Company where they made "... the famous 'Horseshoe' brand so generally used in Independence ... (and) the flour they send out has a brand on every sack which advertises Independence to good advantage." (*Oil and Gas*, p. 56). The focal point of the house is the large sandstone fireplace in the living room which was built by Leo Caflisch. The walls in the basement and a matching fireplace in the basement were also masoned by Caflisch. The beautiful oak staircase is highlighted with a stained glass window. The house still has in operation an old compressor ice box — one of only two remaining in Independence.



When John E. Wingard "... left Indiana (1880) and directed his steps westward, it was toward cheaper land and the ultimate possession of a home. He stopped two years in Crawford County, and when he settled in Montgomery county, he purchased a farm of one hundred and sixty acres He built the original part of this house at that time and the "new" part was added on in 1900. Mr. Wingard was the "... State Grain-Weighmaster at Coffeyville. ... (and) while he is occupied with his official duties, he also does all of the farming except the actual work, which responsibility devolves upon his young and manly sons ... Frank ... and Homer." Another interest of Mr. Wingard was politics. He was "... a Republican (and) has worked with the party leaders in the county in every campaign and was appointed to his present position and commissioned by Gov. Stanley, in 1902. He became interested in the establishment of rural delivery, early, and petitioned for one of the first rural routes established in the Third Congressional District." (All quotes from MG History, pp. 539-540). Carl and Mildred Alexander bought the farm from Homer Wingard in 1969. One unique feature of the house is the transoms from the downstairs to the upstairs for heating purposes. Through the years all but one of these has been removed.



One of the most unusual historic homes in the Independence area is "The Rocks" located east of the State Lake. William F. Gates — the president of Prairie Pipe Line (see p. 41) — had this built in 1922 primarily for an entertaining lodge. Harry Duckworth — the same man who designed and built Gates' home in town — is responsible for "The Rocks." Friends and business associates had many weekend parties and dances here. The house itself is only one part of the uniqueness. The main room is 30 feet by 40 feet with a huge (the opening is 40 inches by 60 inches) native stone fireplace. The room is outlined with massive oak ceiling border and baseboard. The French windows with copper hardware which slid into the walls to open have been replaced with conventional windows. A solid concrete room (walls, ceiling and floor) once was a "steam room" but has been removed and been incorporated into the kitchen. The grounds are just as unique as the house. There is a huge swimming pool — in fact, a small pond completely rock-walled in — which is spring fed. The retaining wall to produce the pool has an unusual "signing" — two hand prints, two dog paw prints, and three copper medallions (one of George Washington, one of Teddy Roosevelt and one has been removed). One stream has been captured with a little rock house (see above right) which then feeds two goldfish ponds before eventually filling a large pond. Finally, Don Burchett, the current owner, shows the most unique aspect on all 60 acres — four human footprints (all right feet) in solid rock which he claims has caused archeologists to shake their heads in puzzlement.



"THE ROCKS"





Photo courtesy of Mrs. Winifred Griffin

There are four "Scott" houses constructed in a row along West Maple (two, however, had Twelfth Street addresses). Mr. Peter Scott, the father of seven children, lived at 119 South Twelfth in a home constructed for him in the 1890's. Mr. Scott, originally from Canada, ran the "Caledonia Mill" which later burned. Directly across Twelfth Street is the huge home of R. L. "Bob" Scott. It was constructed by J. B. Kunze and Arthur Hurd in 1903. Mr. Scott was in the grocery business at the same location (where K. G. and E. is) for 40 years and then moved to West Laurel in 1939. The house is supported by 9 feet of foundation — six feet underground and three feet above. Matching stone posts by the sidewalks were added when the house was built. In 1913 two bedrooms and the sleeping porch were added. Current owners are Mr. and Mrs. Robert Coldwell. The third Scott house belonged to Miss Hannah Scott, the only daughter. It is at 616 West Maple but she never lived there although her brother Hugh — the youngest, did live in the house. Miss Scott was perhaps the most prominent photographer in early Independence and most of the pictures in the "promotional literature" about Independence used in this research were taken by her. After five years as an assistant, Miss Scott "... purchased the Stone Front Studio from Al. Brown. . . She has the best equipped studio in this section of the country, and does a large amount of work for the surrounding cities." (Southwest Developer). The fourth Scott house at 618 West Maple (see p. 48).

35

118 SOUTH TWELFTH



36





A house with a varied background is this majestic one at 618 West Maple. The house was constructed in 1904 for Will Scott, wife and daughter. It is adjacent to the other Scott properties (see p. 46, 47), but because it was too large for their family they sold it to H. E. West, an independent oil man in 1907. West, originally from Peru, became known in 1905 as one of the "Big Four" (along with J. M. Parker, and Senators Fitzpatrick and Smith) whose object "... was to agitate the movement for an independent refinery, to be owned and operated by the State." (Oil and Gas, p. 10). The next owner of the house was C. A. Smith, president of the National Sash and Door Company, "... the largest plant of its kind in Kansas. They make the glass, complete windows, doors and trim for the building trade." (Centennial, p. 62). During World War II the Sisters of Mercy Hospital bought the home to house their student nurses, calling it "McHaulie Hall." In 1950, Mr. Almy Johnson bought the house. The Johnsons converted the home into apartments but without destroying its beauty. The large pillars on the outside carry the theme for smaller oak pillars in the huge doorways in the downstairs. A large open stairway — with twisted carved rungs — is in the front entrance. There are four fireplaces in the home all in similar style but with different colored ceramic tile facings: blue and white, white, brown, and green and brown.



In 1910, Elmer Etter, as a young architectural assistant, drew blueprints for F. N. Bender, a contractor, at 25¢ per hour. His blueprints included this beautiful residence at 301 South Fifteenth. It was built for the Honorable J. B. Tomlinson, a successful lawyer. The Tribune said "Mr. Tomlinson has always taken a prominent part in district and state politics, is a gifted public speaker and has served the state one term as warden of the penitentiary, with credit to himself and the state." In 1935, Mr. Etter bought the house from Tomlinson for himself and family and has resided in it since then. Mr. Etter said that it wasn't until he looked at the blueprints — which he still has — that he realized he had made the drawings. Another interesting story about the house is the large bay windows on the north of the house were designed to face Magnolia Street, but that street was ended at Fourteenth Street.



Willard Debo's home at 401 South Fifteenth was described when it was built in 1903 as "one of the largest and most elegant residences in the city at a cost of over \$7,000. . . It has two full stories and basement, with a fine corner tower, broad verandas on three sides and finished in hard wood, with bath, hot and cold water and other modern conveniences." (*Tribune*). The house was constructed by and for J. D. Budd, "another of the quiet, unobtrusive gentlemen who has wrought his way from comparative poverty to success. . . . His start was from evolving from his brain what was afterward patented by him as the improved laundering machine, the first of its kind. This simple device proved such a great labor saver for the housewife that it became one of the best sellers on the market." (*Tribune*). The house purportedly had tunnels to the out buildings. The house was graced with tapestry walls, gas lights and curly walnut wood trim.



Jerry and Patty Hart live at 920 West Main. Their home was built in 1906 for Ashman Partridge, a florist and operator of a greenhouse, which was across the street. The house was built by A. E. Todd. It has beautiful oak woodwork throughout and a most interesting open stairway. The four rungs on each step are carved differently. There are oak pillars going from the entrance room into the sitting room and pillars between the sitting room and the music room. And there are pillars holding up the mantle over a green ceramic tile fireplace in the sitting room. There is a built-in china cabinet and beveled-leaded glass doors in the dining room.



Miss Georgia Brown and Mrs. Jesse Peach own the home at 912 West Main. The house was built in 1908 for their father, E. R. Brown who came to Independence from Lebanon, Kentucky, in 1903. He brought his family here in 1904 and they lived in a smaller house on this very location until this one was constructed. Mr. Brown was in the real estate and farm loan business. Miss Brown, the oldest child in the family, has lived in this home for nearly 70 years (except when she went to college at the University of Kentucky in the 20's). She claims to have been a "nosey little kid" and certainly has a wealth of information about homes, people and events in Independence over the years. She could have practically written this book from memory.



"As a contractor and builder (F. N. Bender) had the advantage of being an architect and designed most of the buildings he erected, . . . (T)he present year (1907) he decided to abandon the work of contracting and devote his full time to designing and superintending the erection of buildings." (Times, p. 117). Among others, Mr. Bender designed and built the Band Auditorium and was the architect for the Booth Hotel. As a contractor, he built the residences for Adam Braik (see p. 42), W. H. Whitford (see p. 84), T. B. Henry (see p. 69), and T. C. Truman (see p. 87). He built for himself a "neat" home with six rooms now located at 920 West Sycamore (the original location was listed at Fifteenth and Sycamore). The house has a basement with a fireplace in it. The current owners are Mr. and Mrs. Bill Etzold.



One of the leading building contractors in early Independence was Frank D. Brewster. He was "a gentleman whose usefulness as a citizen causes him to be most highly regarded. His handiwork is seen in many of the city's prominent buildings and is of a character which marks him a 'workman that needeth not to be ashamed'." (MG History, p. 734). Among the more important structures erected by Brewster are: Masonic Temple (now the Pawn Shop at Eighth and Main); the Carnegie Public Library; Missouri Pacific Depot; the Pratt house (see p. 10); and Hollingsworth's home (see p. 66). Brewster's father was also a leading contractor in the stone-cutting trade and resided east of town (see p. 97). Frank Brewster built for his family this beautiful home in the 1890's. The home is built in the typical fashion of its day with 18 inch thick walls with an air space between the courses of brick. The house is trimmed on the inside with ornate oak woodwork. Mr. and Mrs. Luther Fowler — residents of the home from 1926 to 1952 — installed the hardwood floors in the 1940's. Dave Dennis lived in the house from 1952 to 1974 — adding on the large family room in the back of the house. Now the home is known as the Achievement House for Boys.



E. "Doc" Goodell was in partnership with A. Frank Johnson (see p. 38) in the Union Meat Market. "Besides carrying a full line of Fresh and Salt Meats, Sausage, Lard, and Hams, they buy and ship stock, and are thus able to furnish the choicest fresh meats for home trade." (1901 Tribune). "For two decades Mr. Goodell has been part and parcel of the city's growth, his character for business integrity not being surpassed by any of the many good men now connected with the business interests. . . (I)n many respects his trade is the choicest in the city." And, "Mrs. Goodell is a lady of many excellent traits of character, a consistent member of the Christian Church, in whose social work she takes an active part." (MG History, pp. 776-777). The house was built for the Goodells in 1907, and according to a granddaughter, Loretta Watts, all the family reunions used to be held here. Sometime later the house was made into apartments but the current owner — L. M. Aldridge — has re-converted and modernized it back into a home since 1957. The old windows including the leaded-glass, have been replaced with modern ones; a fireplace has been removed; French doors replaced and a large built-in china cabinet in the dining room removed.



"With the most complete shop for the manufacture of drilling and fishing tools west of the river, we make a specialty of heavy equipment." This was the "bottom line" of a large ad for the Independence Iron Works Company in the *Oil and Gas Supplement*. This ad also promoted "Mack's Improved Wire Line Clamps . . . (which were) guaranteed to securely hold and will not injure the cable." And among their supplies for "Oil, Gas and Artesian Wells (was) the Bloom Patent Casing Packer Shoe. The most practical, durable and cheapest bottom hole packer." The superintendent of the company was Patrick H. Mack who lived at 311 North Twelfth. His home was built in 1905 with buff brick in courses 15 inches thick. W. M. Griffith, a noted architect of this city but known throughout southeast Kansas and Oklahoma, drew the plans for this home. There is beautiful oak woodwork throughout the house with sliding doors separating two of the rooms. There is a sitting room off the entrance which have matching fireplaces. The lower level has beveled-leaded-glass windows. The dining room has a plate rack board. The house is currently owned by Robert Hadley.



Leaded-glass windows around the front door and several others throughout the house are a special feature of Jim Clark's home at 418 West Laurel. The house also has oak woodwork and a beautiful stairway with intricate rungs. The home was built by A. E. Todd in 1902 for John A. Cramer who started in the harness and saddlery business in 1870 in Independence. "Mr. Cramer has always displayed ability and industry in managing his business and by his thrifty methods he has built up and enjoys a splendid trade. (Oil and Gas, p. 62).

One of the showcase houses in Independence is Dr. Robert Null's at 501 West Myrtle. The house was constructed by A. E. Todd in 1907 for Thomas J. Booth, one of the city's more successful businessmen. Booth was the organizer of the Union Implement Company which was housed in the basement and first two stories of the Masonic Temple (Eighth and Main). Booth also had interests in oil, and in 1911 had the Booth Hotel built. He resided on the top floor of the Hotel after that. In 1908, Booth was described as "... a genial 'good fellow' and the acquirement of riches . . . beyond the wildest dreams of avarice' could not transform him." (Tribune). When Booth moved into his Hotel he sold the house to oilman, C. E. Roth. Later, State Representative Charlie Kincaid lived in the house. The house had the first electric range in Independence (which now is in K. G. & E. Archives). There are beautiful stained glass windows, decorative lamps and cut-glass chandeliers, and fireplaces made from Independence paving brick throughout the house. The original dark colored shingles in the gables gave the house a different look than the modern asbestos siding. In the back of the house is an Oriental garden and fountain erected by the Roths, and a small house Mrs. Kincaid had constructed for birds. The Nulls bought the house in 1967 and that was another "first" — the first family with children to live in the house.



501 WEST MYRTLE

Photo courtesy of Tribune





In 1904 with "... no blare of trumpets, no receptions and no bonuses, but quietly and without stir of any kind the Prairie Pipe Line Company (actually Prairie Oil and Gas) moved bed and baggage from Neodesha to Independence. . . The move from Neodesha to Independence was in a box car drawn by a freight engine over the Missouri Pacific road. In that car was all the household furnishings, personal effects and the men themselves (22), and there was plenty of room in the car. . ." (Reporter, Aug. 6, 1929). At this time (1904), George T. Guernsey had A. E. Todd build two houses especially for their executives. This house Guernsey owned and rented to William Gates, the general manager of Prairie Oil and Gas. The other house was next door and was built for E. T. Patterson, the treasurer of Prairie Gas and Oil. (See next page). In 1914, Guernsey sold the home to R. W. Argue, who was also in the oil business and Gates built his own home on 118 South Tenth. (See page 41). Mr. and Mrs. Walter Argue moved into the house shortly after their marriage in 1940 and lived there until they sold to Robert and Regina Hille in 1973. The house has three fireplaces in three different rooms but in similar location to use the same chimney. The upstairs has an open sitting room at the top with the three bedrooms opening off it. The house has a finished attic and full basement. About the only alterations in the home has been the enclosing of a porch into a sun room. There is a two story carriage house in back.



George T. Guernsey had two houses built for the executives of Prairie Oil and Gas when they moved from Neodesha to Independence in 1904. The general manager, William Gates, lived at 417 West Myrtle (see p. 60), and the treasurer, E. T. Patterson, lived next door in this house at 415 West Myrtle. Patterson "... is reputed to have handled more money than any single individual in the oil business ... roughly 30,000 checks monthly, the total disbursement of which has been running in the neighborhood of \$15,000,000 monthly. ... In order to sign this number of checks he resorted to the use of the signograph, signing 10 checks at one time." (Unidentified journal clipping from Patterson scrapbook, December, 1927).

The home is currently owned by Bill Barnhill who suggests that the outstanding features of the house start with its entry. There is an open stairway with a half flight of stairs and a landing in light oak and paneled oak, and another — but enclosed — bottom half of stairs from the kitchen to the landing. The living room ceiling is solid oak with beams and a relief of solid planks, while the dining room has similar beams with a plastered ceiling. There are two brick fireplaces (both gas) and the original light fixtures which were at one time gas. There are a total of 64 windows in this 16 room house. And the carriage house is also quite interesting. It has a four foot wainscoting with a wood cap finished in stucco. It is believed that the stucco is imported from Louisiana as it has sea shell aggregate giving a glistening effect. One side of the carriage house has doors on both ends allowing a forward exit.



Photo courtesy of Tribune

Lyman L. Humphrey joined his father's firm in 1900 (see next page). Before that he was connected with the Citizen's National Bank, and "... recognized as one of the substantial young business men of the city. (Times, p. 104). Mr. Humphrey married Elsie Anderson and had this house built in 1902 and lived there until 1915 when the family moved into the John Anderson home (see p. 35). The current owner, Bob Plummer, commented that the house was one of very few built during this period which was not piped for gas. The house has rich soft pine woodwork and was converted into a duplex during World War II.



One of Independence's most prominent citizens and our city's first governor of Kansas was Lyman U. Humphrey. At the age of 17, Mr. Humphrey served under Grant and Sherman in the Civil War and came to Independence in 1871. He became the editor of the *Tribune*, later assisted in the organization of the Commercial National Bank, served the county as state representative and senator, then Lieutenant Governor and was elected governor in 1888 and re-elected in 1890. In 1895 he established the Humphrey Investment Company which his son, Lyman L., joined in 1909. About that time, the former Governor had this home built which he lived in until his death in 1915. The house is currently a duplex owned by Monte Heasty.



About 1902 Dr. Thrall — a long time resident — had this home constructed. On April, 1872, "... owing to the prevalence of small pox, wholesale vaccination was ordered" and Dr. Thrall was one of the four doctors appointed to do the work. (MG History, p. 94). In May, 1910, it was reported that "Dr. Thrall bought an electric auto, a Waverly Victoria. It can run one hundred twenty-five miles on one charge of batteries." (Centennial, p. 51). Mrs. John (Estelle) Bertenshaw, daughter of the Thralls, lived next door (see next page) but moved into this house after her husband and parents died. The house is currently owned by the Thurman Cooks. The house has a built-in china closet in the dining room with leaded-beveled glass doors, and typical of houses from this age, oak woodwork.



Photo courtesy of Tribune

One of Independence's most eminent lawyers was John Bertenshaw. He "... has made a specialty of the study of lease legislation and the questions arising in the oil business. . . It is safe to say that no attorney in the oil field has more thorough knowledge of the laws governing oil leases and oil operations than Mr. Bertenshaw, and he is considered an authority in this line." (Times, p. 37). Bertenshaw came to Independence in 1891 and studied law under William Dunkin. He lived at Eleventh and Laurel until he built this elegant home in 1913. It's appearance has changed considerably since the original red tile roof was replaced with composition shingles. According to the Jim Graysons (the current owners) everything about the house is interesting, especially the woodwork which is, typically, massive oak with high baseboards and fancy carving. The open staircase also has carved rungs. Most of the original lighting fixtures, which are unusual brass fixtures, are still in the home.

Perry S. Hollingsworth was "... one of the early settlers of Montgomery county and ... widely known as a banker (First National Bank) and man-of-affairs." (MG History, p. 490). The Tribune claimed "he has attained a success other than that measured by dollars alone, in that he has the unbounded confidence of the community in which he lives and is esteemed by every citizen as an honorable and upright gentleman." The house was built by Frank D. Brewster in 1901 with a little different look than today. Doyal Plute and family now live in the home. It has a partially finished attic and full basement which at one time was used as a wine cellar. Many of the original light fixtures are still in the home but there has been considerable change made to the house. There is a massive white native stone fireplace with a cement mantle in the living room, but two smaller fireplaces have been removed. A sleeping porch has been added to the second story and the porches altered considerably. Another remodeling job created a new large kitchen from three small rooms. The hardwood floors throughout are complimented by light-grained oak woodwork. In the back of the home is a carriage house still with evidence of stalls for horses.



317 NORTH TENTH

Photo reprinted from Times





Probably the oldest two story house in Independence was built in 1873 and belonged to J. H. Pugh who ran the "... oldest established drug store in Montgomery County, its successful business history in Independence covering a period of nearly 34 years." (*Tribune*). Mr. Pugh is also distinguished as having the first sidewalk built in Independence, and having the first business sign in Independence. (From a list of "City's Firsts" published in 1882 and reprinted in the *Reporter*, June 28, 1970, p. C-7). The house was handed down in the family for years and to date has had only four owners. The current owners are J. D. and Sharon Ohl. Originally the house was located where the Junior High now stands, but was moved by mules in 1921-22 to its present location. It is claimed that Mrs. Maude Pugh, who was the daughter-in-law living in the house at the time, refused to pack anything from the house while it was being moved — even the dishes from the cupboards — so the movers would be careful.



"One of the neatest, most attractive, and probably most expensive cottages in the city" (*Tribune*) is Bud Baden's home at 315 North Ninth. The house was constructed by F. N. Bender in 1902 for Professor Thomas B. Henry, a math and psychology instructor at the old Montgomery County High School, and his wife, Josephine, daughter of J. H. Pugh. (See p. 68). "According to Henry's only child, Mrs. William Spidell of Shawnee Mission, her father took great pride in its construction." (*Reporter*, December 14, 1974). The Henry's sold the house to Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Dietrich in the early 20's and moved to Lawrence where Mr. Henry taught at K.U. several years before retiring back in Independence. The Dietrich's and their adopted son, Virgil Knudson, possessed the house until 1963 when Wally Hutchison bought it and completely restored it. (See *Reporter*, December 15, 1974). Baden's bought the house in April 1972. Mr. Baden is the grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Henry Baden one of the city's pioneer families.



"Closely identified with the progress of Independence and responsible in a great measure for her fine residences and excellent business houses is one man. That man is Albert E. Todd, Architect and Contractor. . . Mr. Todd is energetic and a fine workman himself and has a class of men in his employ who are fast and finished workers. Mr. Todd personally oversees all work and it is no unfamiliar sight around a building being built under his direction to see him with a hammer in hand inspecting every joint of the work, and should any point not come up entirely to specifications it is unhesitatingly torn out and ordered rebuilt. . . As an architect Mr. Todd ranks high. . . With great foresight for convenience, for the saving of room, for proper lighting and ventilation and for grace and beauty in the home and in business blocks, Mr. Todd ranks as one of the best architects in Southern Kansas." (Albert E. Todd: Architect and Contractor). Mr. Todd's workers donated their work during a "slack time" to construct this fine home for Todd himself. It took them only six weeks to complete in 1907. There are 14 rooms in the house (excluding bathrooms) but including two living rooms and a fireplace-reception room. A dining room was added in 1943 by Mr. and Mrs. Ben Morris. The house has a finished attic — two rooms and a bath — and a one room basement. The house has solid oak woodwork. It is currently owned and being totally restored by Mr. and Mrs. Travis Bolding.



Clarence Stewart came from Ohio with his friend, Alf Landon, in the early 1900's to work for Landon's father (J. M. Landon) in the newly organized Kansas Natural Gas (formerly part of McBride and Bloom). (See pages 76 and 13). In 1909, Stewart married Beatrice Shulthis, daughter of Al Shulthis — one of Independence's most prominent citizens, and had this house built for their marriage. Stewart worked for Kansas Natural Gas until 1923 when his father-in-law died and he then took over all the Shulthis business ventures. A daughter, Mary Stewart (Mrs. Cy Green) recalls one outstanding feature of the house is the semicircle leaded-cut-glass window in the stairway. Another apparent unique characteristic of the house is the round brick columns. The house is currently owned by Jerry Shanks.



"Nearly every housewife in Southern Kansas and the two territories is familiar with 'Gold Leaf,' 'Silver Leaf' and 'Eagle Patent' brands of flour made by the Bowen Milling Company. . . This mill has been manufacturing and selling flour for so long their brands have become household words. . . The facilities of this mill are modern and scientific for getting the true hygienic value from the wheat." (Oil and Gas, pp. 54-55). The mill was established by G. W. Bowen in 1882 and was later managed by his son, William P., and then later his son, Louis. The mill remained in the family next under the management of son-in-law, Jim Sheldon. Now the mill is known as Janzen Grain and Feed Company.

In 1901, Louis Bowen had this home built but sold it a short time after that. At the first opportunity his father, William, bought the house because he had liked it so much. Louis lived in the house again after his father died. Later, the family ties again prevailed as the Jim Sheldon's bought the house in the 40's. The third floor is finished with three rooms making it a very large house. The fireplace is one of the focal points of the home.



H. G. Ellis was "... a careful, accurate and conscientious builder. He believes that a successful business relies upon strict integrity and faithful performance of duty. Hence his patrons have all been well pleased. . . He is preparing plans . . . for a modern 12-room residence for Mr. N. W. Brown (and wife, Mary A.) of the Fair store, and will soon have (it) . . . under construction." (Tribune). Apparently, then, the house was built in 1904 and has been altered considerably from its original look as shown in this early picture. There have been screened-in porches added to the front of the house and it has been divided into four apartments. The beautiful oak stairway is still intact and each apartment has one of the four original fireplaces. There are two leaded-glass windows in the front of the house. It is currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bill Leonard.



A. T. Cox was the owner and operator of the "Star and Kansan" newspaper, which about 1900 could "... show the largest bona fide circulation of any paper in the county. In addition to this, a daily paper under the name of the "Evening Star" has recently been launched from the office and is already firmly established." (Southwest Developer). Mr. Cox had this quaint-looking house built about 1905. The interior is high-lighted with dark oak woodwork, including pillars between the entrance and the parlor. The two front doors have very unusual frosted-etched glass — one has a floral design and the other a stag which was supposed to bring a house and its occupants good luck. There is also one stained glass window and one leaded glass window. The house is currently owned by Jean and Sam Ashley.



Photo courtesy of Tribune

In 1903 Mr. Ernest Sewell had this spacious home built for his new bride, Mary Francis Inge. Also in 1903, Mr. Sewell was described by the *Tribune* as "a young man who has been with the bank (Citizens National Bank) since 1899, and who has proven himself possessed with rare abilities, both in a clerical way and as a financier." Mr. Sewell later became president of the bank — now his son, Albert, is chairman of the board. Mrs. Ernestine Oakes, a daughter, currently lives in the house. She recalls that as a child, the boys used to play basketball in the full attic — especially over her room. There has been some interior remodeling and an addition made to the house.

According to one of Independence's oldest citizens — 99 year old Fanny (Armstrong) McAdams — this mansion originated as a "plain" brick house constructed by her grandfather, Norris B. Bristol, in 1874. Mr. Bristol was "... one of the best known characters in the county, and by reason of his rectitude and his industry, merits the large measure of esteem meted out to him ... Mr. Bristol's four score and four years set lightly upon him, his abstemious and correct life making him hale and hearty at an age when generally dims the mind and totters the step." (MG History, p. 403). Bristol's daughter, Melittla, had married Benjamin Armstrong in 1870 and came to Kansas with them. "... in a spring wagon and carriage." The Armstrongs had two daughters: Carrie (Mrs. Dr. Arthur W. Evans) and Fanny B. who married Charles McAdams (see p. 90) in this house in January, 1898. In March 1902, A. P. McBride "... purchased the Col. Bristol home on North Penn. He is going to make a beautiful place of it." (Centennial, p. 37). In 1903, the *Tribune* stated: "Identified with the history of the gas and oil development of this county the name of A. P. McBride ... stand pre-eminent ... (T)he results of his efforts in connection with C. L. Bloom and the Independence Gas Company have been glorious in the bringing of wealth, position and power. ... Everything tending toward the upbuilding of Independence has received his liberal support and there is not a more public spirited citizen among us. ... (His residence) is considered by many the handsomest and most luxuriously appointed in the city, being situated on North Pennsylvania Avenue and surrounded by extensive and beautiful grounds." Money was not spared in the "reconstruction" of this mansion. Hand carved woodwork is throughout the house; eight fireplaces grace the large rooms; stained glass windows are common in nearly every room; the basement was even walled with marble; and mosaic tile floors the entry porches. The house was made into eight apartments during World War II and is currently owned by Bernice Blair. The house is registered by the Kansas State Historical Society.



610 NORTH PENN

Photo courtesy of Tribune





In 1870, the Solomon Duncans came from Illinois "... driving three teams overland, and carrying their furniture and provisions with them. ... Here they purchased a claim, located one and a half miles north of the village, and for it they paid \$1,400." After a four year contest over the claim and six years living in another house, Harvey Duncan (a son) erected this brick house in 1881 for his family. "The Duncans had close acquaintance with many of the Indians, seeing a great deal of them (including) Chiefs Big Hill Joe, Toby, WildCat White Hair and Chetopa." (MG History, p. 474). The Duncans were primarily farmers. The house has two courses of brick, an air space, and two more courses of brick. All the brick used is from local brick companies. The brick was painted white in the 1940's by it's then present occupant, Al Cranor. The current resident is J. H. Ulm.



Probably the most gracious home in all the Independence area is "Glencliff Farm" located north of the city. The home was built for Paul R. Johnson, whose father — William H. — was the founder of Union Gas System. The home was built in 1923 copying the design of a typical old English Tudor home. In fact, there is an old article and a picture of such a house hanging in the kitchen of Glencliff Farm. The light fixtures were imported from Europe — mostly from England and a couple from Italy. Some of the furniture was also imported from Europe. The house was built on the cliff over the river on the site of the original homestead. All the walnut beams (interior and exterior between bricks) were cut on the Farm. The clay-slate roof was manufactured by Vitrified Brick Company of Coffeyville. All the windows throughout the house are leaded glass. One other interesting feature is the fact that the second floor of the house is connected to the second floor of the garage and service quarters. The Farm is currently owned by Harrison Johnson, a nephew of the original owner.



The last home for George T. Guernsey and his wife, Sarah, was this Spanish-style cement house built about 1927 on land originally owned by Treva McKimley, an Indian princess. Guernseys moved from their mansion ("Ridgewood") to this home shortly after the bank closed in 1930 and lived there until 1939 when Mrs. Guernsey died. Observing Guernsey's 50 years in Independence as a banker, the *Reporter* paid tribute by asserting: "Today he can look back with considerable satisfaction, and without any semblance of egotism or self-glory, and feel that in all this marvel of wonderful advancement and the development of vast enterprises as reflected in the city's growth, no man contributed a greater share, a more potential influence or more direct benefits. What ever may have been his commissions or omissions, his contribution to his community as a banker, businessman and citizen has been large." (December 2, 1924). His bank was the 6th largest bank in Kansas in 1930 with over \$6,000,000 in assets. Mrs. Guernsey also had a notable career as "... one of Independence's most prominent citizens, who was nationally known and who brought distinguished honor to the state of Kansas." She was the first president of the Daughters of American Revolution to come from west of the Mississippi River, and was later made honorary president general of the national organization. (Obituary in *Reporter*, 1939). Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Barnett — the current owners — were married in the living room.



This very stately looking home was constructed in 1924 for the newly wedded couple of Ruth Jane and Charles Callahan and they have been the only residents (except for 37 different families that they kept at various times during World War II). The house was constructed by A. E. Todd and the stone work was done by three Swiss masons who hand cut all the stone which was quarried north of town. The architect was Arthur Beck, a New Yorker. There were 150 loads of dirt hauled in to build the high terrace and then extensive landscaping was done by Sutton. Some of the lumber for the woodwork was imported from South America and sawed in the Uhrich Mill (see p. 27). The living room has mahogany wood while the dining room is walnut. The living room has a fireplace which is cast concrete copied from one in a Southern plantation home. The finished attic is "Dream Haven" while the guest house out back is called "Stone Castle."



Shortly after Flo and Leo Callahan were married in 1920 they saw a house in Tulsa with a thatched roof which sufficiently impressed them to use as a pattern for their own home. Ira Shive was the contractor of this 1921 home. And, after several homes were built on this land bought from Dr. Ivy Hancock, the area was called "Osage Hill" because there were five families ("two Todds, one Dodd and two Callahans" — Leo and Charles (see p. 81) were brothers) who had some Osage Indian ancestry. The exterior is stucco with an original wood shingle thatched roof later replaced with composition shingles. All 54 windows in the house are French windows and there are two French doors with beveled glass between the living room and the dining room. All the light oak used in the interior of the home — and there is a lot of it — was cut at the Uhrich saw mill (see p. 27). All the walls in the living room are solid oak paneled with an oak beamed ceiling. The dining room has an oak wainscot panel with an oak beamed ceiling. There is a Carthage stone fireplace in the living room and a brick fireplace in the library. As some of the five Callahan children were born, an addition of three bedrooms was made to the back of the house by A. E. Todd some eight years after it's construction. Mrs. Callahan and daughter, Chris, still reside in the home which as they stated has had "lots of good living."



One of the most "pointed to" historical homes in Independence is the "Flanagan house" at 515 North Second. W. R. Flanagan, the Superintendent of the Right of Way Department for Sinclair Oil Company, lived in the house for about 40 years. However, the home was constructed in 1902 for Allen Brown, a brother of W. P. Brown — the owner of Coffeyville's Brown Mansion. Allen Brown's son, Dr. Malcolm Brown, built the first house south at 504 North Second, now owned by Don and Linda Schnurbush. Allen Brown was in the photography business until he retired at about this time. His home sits on nine acres of land and also has a large carriage house that has both an attic and a basement. The house too has a full basement and a floored attic. The house has large oak columns separating the foyer from the living room. There are six gas fireplaces throughout the house and four leaded glass windows. Most of the original light fixtures were "salvaged" by previous owners. A stained glass window in the dining room was removed by Mrs. W. R. Flanagan because she didn't like the colored reflection it had on the food being served. The house is currently owned by Joe McCarthy and family.



Another example of F. N. Bender's work — "12 rooms and basement and all modern conveniences" — was completed in 1903 for W. H. Whitford at 320 North Second. Mr. Whitford was partners with Goodell (his father-in-law) and Edwin Foster in the "Foster Brothers Company" which was advertised in the 1903 *Tribune* as the "Oldest Real Estate Agency in Montgomery County . . . established 1870." They also served as "Immigration Agents." The house was once owned by Studebaker Riley, whose relatives were the creator of the famed Studebaker automobile. Now the house is owned and is being extensively restored by Bill and Sharon DeMoss.



Arthur DeVore took over the management of his father-in-law, Samuel H. Ulmer's Furniture Store in 1889 "... without having any knowledge whatever of the furniture business or the kindred interests of the company." But, by 1903, DeVore had turned the store into "the handsomest and largest retail store in Independence, if not in the entire state of Kansas." (Tribune). He had A. E. Todd build his beautiful home at 120 North First. This three story house has a limestone basement with full exposure in the back. The barn in the back of the house was built by Dunkin in 1905. The current owner is Al Cranor.



Some of the most unique characteristics of any house in Independence are contained in this one at 617 East Myrtle. "Gentlemen guests" used to retire after dinner to a "smoking room" which has a false louvered ceiling in it allowing the smoke to escape. This room also has another unusual feature — leather wallpaper. The walls in the house are bounded by 15 inch marble baseboards and wood ceiling borders. Some rooms have a hand painted ceiling border. Most of the woodwork in the house is pine or oak except the parlor which is mahogany. There was a dual water system throughout the house — one connected to the city water supply and the other to a cistern which had nearly a perpetual motion pressurized pump. The house was built in 1907 for William W. and Welthy A. Curtin. No information could be found about them. They sold the house to Martin J. Loftus in 1918 and they lived there until his death in April 1954. Loftus "... entered the oil pipe line business in 1889 and served continuously in various capacities with the Sinclair-Prairie and affiliated companies until his retirement in 1942." (Reporter, April 23, 1954). The house is currently owned by Dale Faler.



"Prominently identified with the business life of the city of Independence for three decades and connected with the governing body of the municipality over half of that period, Mr. T. C. Truman, proprietor of the city's leading ice manufactory and cold storage plant, well represents a type of citizens whose hustling qualities have not only brought success to the individual, but prominence to the city as well. . . (In 1871) in partnership with John Hebrank, he began the manufacture of beer and carbonated drinks, later adding the ice factory. . ." (MG History, p. 723). Mr. Truman also had quite a record in the Civil War. He had enlisted in a West Virginia Infantry and participated in many of the battles about the famous Shenandoah Valley until November, 1864 when ". . . he suffered capture, together with five hundred others. . . (After four months of "horrors" he was "exchanged.") (In thirty days (he) was again with his company . . . detailed for service in the capture of Booth (Lincoln's assassin) and his co-conspirators. . . (MG History, p. 724). F. N. Bender built his home in 1903 which was described in the 1903 Tribune as ". . . a fine home of 10 rooms."



Henry S. Beck, a wealthy man, had this huge home built for his daughter as a wedding present when she wed William A. Spencer. Mr. Beck then lived with the Spencers after the house was constructed. Mr. Spencer came to Independence in 1904 "... realizing the opportunities offered in the oil and gas field." (Times, p. 53). Previously, he had been in the business of buying and selling land in the Northwest. Mr. Spencer had remarkable success in the gas and oil business, becoming president of the Wellington Gas Company and later a high executive in Prairie Oil and Gas and Prairie Pipe Line. Mr. Spencer was also president of the State Bank of Commerce (now the Citizen's Drive-in Bank). The architect for the home was B. F. Matthews from Lima, Ohio. The current owners — Sandy and Walter Nelson — have a 26 page book of very specific instruction detailing every job to be done — the type of wood and how it is to be cut, the type and number of coats of finish, the style and location of the door bell button, etc. The wood is different in nearly every room; birch with mahogany finish in the dining room; white oak in the living room and hall; clear poplar in the reception room; all pine upstairs to be painted; white oak doors on the first floor; and red oak doors in the second floor. These original specifications called for dark gray brick which has been crossed out and "buff" penciled in. There are coordinating wall light fixtures with chandeliers in nearly every room. There are two stained glass windows — one of them is five by six feet. After the construction work was completed a New York decorator put the finishing touches on the home with silk damask wall paper, gilt mirrors and Tiffany chandeliers in the entry and dining rooms. Some of the furniture was also provided by the New Yorker. There is an unfinished "ballroom" in the attic. After the Spencers, Mr. and Mrs. Guy Berry owned the home. Both were "always very correct in manner and dress."



"Aside from the labor of his hands as a brick-layer, plasterer and building contractor S. A. Smith has been a prominent figure in the up-building of Independence in many other ways. He has maintained a continuous residence here since 1874 . . . giving freely of his time and practical knowledge to the public's business. . . (He) has demonstrated his genuine citizenship and his record as a municipal servant is absolutely clean." (Tribune). His own home was constructed sometime before 1903 and had a slightly different look than today because of a large porch on the front of the home. Mrs. Bess Argue now owns the home which is currently a duplex.



An elegant residence was built by A. E. Todd in 1902 or 1903 on the corner of Ninth and Myrtle for Charles L. McAdams. Harry Sinclair had employed the 24 year old McAdams from Wichita in June, 1896, to help run his drug store, "Sinclair and Company," later known as the "Crystal Palace." In 1898, McAdams married Fanny Armstrong, daughter of one of the early settlers. (See p. 76). McAdams was described as "a distinguished citizen. . . He earned and held a proud position in the public thought. He stood for independence; for courage, and above all, for absolute sincerity. . . He not only acted without fear, but he had that fortitude of soul that bears the consequences of the course pursued without complaint. . . (He) was true to his friends. He wore no mask. . . He did his daily work and bravely spoke his thoughts" ("In Memoriam" ribbon from St. Benard Commandery No. 10 in Patterson scrapbook). In 1900, McAdams started his own drug store which became one of the best known stores in Independence. In 1915 Prairie Oil and Gas constructed their new building (ARCO) and the McAdams house was moved to 219 North Fourth where it became, as a donation from Sinclair, the rectory for Saint Andrews Catholic Church.



About 1900 this huge home was built for a Callahan family. John Callahan was probably the first to live in the house with his family of four children. John had moved to Independence in 1890 after studying law for five years in Grenola. He served as deputy sheriff for two years under his brother, Thomas F., and then went into law practice. He was elected county attorney in 1896 and 1898 but because of impaired health moved to Kansas City in 1901. (MG History, p. 200). Then, Thomas, a bachelor, moved into the house and lived there for a good number of years. There is beautiful oak woodwork throughout the house — ceiling borders and ornamental wide baseboards. There are several leaded glass windows in the house and some fancy light fixtures and chandeliers. There are three gas fireplaces and a full basement and floored attic. Two unusual features in the home are curved walls in the upstairs and a two-room bathroom — a large tub and wash basin in one room and the stool by itself in a smaller room. The house was recently sold to Bob and Cindy Claus.



One of the largest frame houses in Independence was built in 1909 for George T. Guernsey, Jr. Guernsey's father was the founder of the Commercial National Bank (see p. 80) and the junior Guernsey eventually worked his way up to vice-president of the bank. The elder Guernsey lived in a "mansion" (where the Merritt-Keeley apartments now are at 524 North Penn), and when this house was built for a wedding present, a walk was constructed to connect the two homes. The third floor housed the butler, and there was an intercom system throughout the house. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Daniel bought the house in 1956. They completely stripped the paint from the woodwork back to its original and have done minor remodeling.



Photo courtesy of Tribune

"The law profession in Montgomery county knows no better student of the law, no abler advocate and no more conscientious counsellor than F. J. Fritch. Mr. Fritch is ripe in law by virtue of his years, experience and knowledge. He has long practiced before the local bar, and his ability to 'dissect' a case is admitted by all. He possesses a keen, analytical mind, and many young men have learned the value of his friendship and aid. Mr. Fritch started life as a school teacher. At present he is chief counsel for the Kansas Natural Gas Co." (Oil and Gas, p. 53).

In 1907, he had this home built which looks somewhat different today with the "remodeling" done in the 40's by the Frank Houcks. The cupola was removed, the front door changed from Westminster Street to Fifth Street, and a wall separating two rooms was eliminated to make a large living room. There is a formal sitting room with a fireplace at the front of the house. The Houcks have always used it as a study and Mrs. Houck contends that the grandchildren used it as "the crying room."



A special feature of this beautiful home is a hand carved stairway which is "dark at the top" and, of course, belonged to William Inge. He became one of America's most famous playwrights with plays that many consider to be good descriptions of Independence in the 20's and 30's. They include: "Come Back, Little Sheba," "Bus Stop," Pulitzer Prize winning "Picnic," and "Dark at the Top of the Stairs." "A Splendor in the Grass" won an Academy Award for a movie. The house was built in 1895 for Clark Milligan, who had all the land fenced in south to Locust and east to Park, in which he raised and furnished mules for the Army during World War I. The third story has not been completed. There are five fireplaces and a stained glass window. The current owner is Mrs. W. C. Cooper.



In 1915, "Rol" Murrow, the manager of K. G. & E., and his wife, who was the daughter of a famous Kansas City beer company owner, had this house built on solid rock with the foundation 20 feet deep. Several people owned the house between 1915 and 1925 when the Steinbergers bought it "for keeps." In that year Mr. Steinberger put a "Tommy Mansville Asbestos" roof on the house and not much alteration has taken place since then because it was, according to daughter, Nora, "just like mother wanted it." Beautiful hardwood floors are throughout with lots of woodwork — including an open staircase in the front and a "maid staircase" in the back part of the house. Besides a kitchen, there is a "breakfast room" and a pantry. The living room has large beams and a fireplace. The most amazing feature of the house is that it has 65 windows.



Harry W. Jones was one of the partners in the Jones Brothers' Confection Company. They made both candy and ice cream. In 1905, it was reported: "A year ago ice cream was shipped into the city by the wagon load, but now it is not uncommon to see two large express wagons loaded with ice cream to be shipped out of town on one train." (Oil and Gas, p. 61). About 1920 in an unidentified news clipping, Jones was described as "... a Harvard graduate and, as a young man, began activities in the oil business in partnership with his brother, Albert. They sold half their interests some time ago for about \$2,000,000. ... He was prominent in church and civic interests and devoted much attention to art matters." His home was built in 1907 by the American Concrete Company, with Frank E. Jones the general manager. W. M. Griffith was the architect. In 1909 the home was a featured ad with the following description: "A fine example of the modern type of Cement block Residence, Steps, Porch, Columns, Shingles, and Trimmings, all of Cement. Cool in summer, warm in winter. Absolutely dry and vermin proof." (A. E. Todd: Architect and Contractor). Thomas Wagstaff lived in the home from 1920 to 1973 when Al Sewell, Jr., bought it.

J. H. Brewster, a Civil War veteran from Pennsylvania, was one of the best stone masons in early Independence and was inspired to build his own beautiful residence in 1887 after seeing a similar house in Europe. It was on this "Brewster place" where the first successful gas well was drilled in February, 1893. The well also had oil and the Independence Gas Company was formed with C. L. Bloom, president; J. D. Nickerson, vice-president; and A. P. McBride, secretary-treasurer. (*Centennial*, p. 29). Brewster, as an interesting sidelight, was in front of the counter of the First National Bank in Coffeyville when the Daltons robbed it in October, 1902. (*MG History*, p. 35).

The house was constructed with 10 inch, solid brick walls. These red bricks, with the exception of those on the front of the house, were "... made from soil brought up from Drum Creek, and fired on the grounds. The beautiful fluted pillars supporting the veranda like front porch were carved in the quarries at Carthage, Mo., and hauled here on hay racks."* The exterior of the house also exhibits decoratively carved native sandstone window lintels and a mansard roof of colored slates with a patterned iron cresting. The grounds contain two cement eight-sided gazebos — "... one of which was formerly an aquarium and the other a conservatory for flowers", — a brick barn with hand hewn beams, a carriage house, and a sandstone water tower. The interior has unusual woodwork and transoms (now mostly painted) and a walnut stairway. "The intricately carved bannister post supporting the stair rail is a masterpiece of workmanship. On the top of the post is a small acorn, carved in by Brewster himself." The 12 foot ceilings have some decorative plastering.

"One of the interesting adjuncts to the property, no longer in existence, was Brewster's 'Petroleum Park.' The 50-acre park was a favorite spot for picnickers several decades ago. A large exhibition hall stood on the grounds and fairs were held there. Adjacent to the park was a race track on the T. O. Mitchell (now owner of Brewster home) property. Chugging up and down Drum Creek, south of the park, was the paddle wheel steamboat, the 'Nellie Hockett' which used to haul passengers into Independence. The Mid-Continent Band, organized in 1892, used to play at the park." The steamboat turned around at McTaggerts Dam (one mile east). The round trip price starting at East Myrtle was about 50¢ which included dancing to violin music on the boat.

*While working for the Reporter in 1952, Ralph Sellmeyer (now a professor of journalism in Texas) wrote an article on the Brewster home. All the quotes are taken from that article dated November 4, 1952.



