

LINKS

FREE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

HOMETOWN OKLAHOMA
SPECIAL EDITION SERIES

April 10, 2004

Community Links

*Linking communities,
increasing knowledge,
expanding horizons,
offering opportunities.*

Custom Printing to Order:

Letterhead
Business Cards
Envelopes
Business Forms
Carbonless Forms
Note Pads
Office Supplies
We now offer color printing

**Printed and distributed
monthly by persons
with disabilities.**

Editors:

Jeanna Reed
Grace Peterson
Paula Dawes

Sales Representatives:

Bobby Callison
Nikki Hamilton
Mark Strope

Public Relations:

Debbie Mitchell
Ariane Stansell
Paula Dawes
Renetta Tottress
Jason Cooper
Julie Carswell

1100 Walnut St.
P.O. Box 85
Chelsea, OK. 74016
(918) 789-2862 or 789- 5900
Fax: 789-5916



When the Welch Lions Club decided to build a new civic auditorium, they weren't quite sure where they would get the money to see the project through. With a Lion's determination, a car built one piece at a time, and the help of country music star Johnny Cash, they built the auditorium and so much more; a lasting friendship with "the Man in Black!"

Because Welch is a considerable distance from a town of any great size, the Lions felt it important to provide a meeting place for the youth of the area. They decided to go one step further and concentrate their efforts on maintaining the unity of family and community. They would build a civic auditorium; a gathering place that would provide entertainment for all ages and help bond the fellowship of family, friends and neighbors.

With this in mind and faith in their hearts, the Lions arranged for a contractor to begin work on the building and took on the financial debt. Undaunted by economic barriers, they put their shoulder to the wheel and began their fund-raising campaign. They staged musical comedy and variety acts, held garage sales, raffles and bake sales. They collected favorite recipes and published "What's Cooking in Welch" and offered the book for sale. Financial donations rolled in, including a healthy one from long-time Lion, Bill Patch. Yet the size of the debt dwindled slowly.

(Continued on next page)

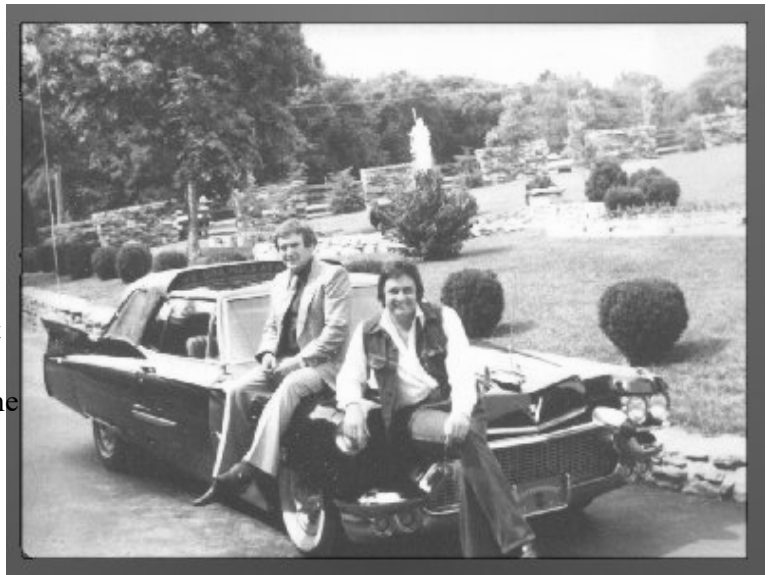


One day, Bill Patch sat in his office listening to Johnny Cash's recording of "One Piece At A Time." The song tells the story of a poor autoworker, who over the years pilfered Cadillac parts and built a car of his own, one piece at a time. The result was a composite of many models.

Patch, who owned and operated Bill's Coal Company, also liked to tinker with his collection of antique autos. He decided it would be fun to build a car like the one in the song. He and his mechanics scavenged the salvage yards inquiring about Cadillac body parts." What model?" was the inevitable question. "It doesn't matter!" was the answer that was sure to bring a strange look and shake of the head.

Harley Malone, Leland Mayfield, Eldon McCoy, Don Paul Chenoweth, and Curtis Jackson worked on the project. Freddy Allen got in on the finish work. Work on the car was scheduled around the needs of the coal company. The end result of their efforts was a magnificent 1949-73 Cadillac Coupe Sedan Deville, three-door automobile.

One day while Harley was taking the car for a test drive, he caught the attention of several truckers. The CB radios were abuzz with drivers telling others to check out the car. They all slowed down to get a better look, trying to guess the make and model of the car. One driver did speculate that it must be "the one piece at a time car!"



Bill Patch and Johnny Cash



Johnny and June watch Bill receive a plaque of appreciation, presented by the Welch Lions Club.

Most of the actual building of the car was done by February of 1977, but things still had to be perfected. After it was finished, Bill drove it to Oswego, Kansas. While parked in the VFW parking lot, someone backed into one of the taillights and broke it. On the way home, Bill was stopped because of the taillight. When the patrolman asked Bill for the registration, Bill explained he hadn't registered it yet and told the officer the story about building the car. The officer appeared somewhat skeptical and told Bill he better get it registered within the next few days.

Bill gathered up the proper paperwork and went to the Vinita Tag Agency. Anna June Hinkle was working alone that day. Bill walked in carrying a stack of papers over 8 inches high! The stack of papers contained letters, affidavits, part numbers, ownership certificates, release forms, and pictures. Anna looked at the paperwork and asked, "What are you trying to do, register Johnny Cash's Cadillac?" Bill replied, "Yes Ma'am, that's exactly what I'm doing!"

Anna wasn't sure how to proceed, so she called Oklahoma City. As the news spread of what she was doing, phone lines all over the building lit up. Everyone wanted to know about this unique car. After several hours and much typing, the task was finished. Anna asked Bill if he would send her a picture of the car, and he said he would. Bill was a man of his word, and sent a picture to the tag office, but Anna had quit her job before the picture arrived. It was on display at the Tag Office for several years.

Friends persuaded Bill to give his Cadillac creation to Johnny Cash. This, however, proved difficult, as Bill couldn't get past Cash's secretary when he called. Patch wouldn't give up. He took the car to Johnny's house and parked across the street, making sure Cash would see the car when he left his house. When Cash saw the car he fell in love with it, and after much conversation with Patch, decided to accept the gift.

When Johnny heard of the Welch Lions efforts to raise funds for civic auditorium, he obligingly planned a way to reciprocate Patch's kindness. Cash and his wife, June Carter Cash, came to Welch for a benefit performance.





Vinita Tag Office
320 S. Wilson
Vinita, Ok. 74301
Phone: 256-3110
Fax: 256-3143
Open
Mon-Fri
9:00 to 4:30
PikePass & Notary

Advertising the benefit was limited, to enable townspeople and nearby residents first chance at the two shows of 1,000 seats each. Rodney Lay and The Wild West provided warm-up music.

Though security was heavy, Cash and his wife were a bit apprehensive as they were used to larger, big-city crowds. By the end of the first show, however, they felt right at home, thanks to the genuine warmth and courtesy extended to them by a most gracious country audience.

The shows raised enough money; the building fund passed its goal. The Welch Civic Auditorium was in the clear.

A lasting friendship grew between Bill Patch and Johnny Cash. They frequently visited with one another. One such reunion prompted Cash to inquire about the functions and goals of the Lions Club. Patch proudly explained, "We Lions help the needy, build ball parks and light them, build community buildings and Boy Scout shelters. We also support the Oklahoma Eye Bank, which offers the blind a chance to see again through eye transplants." Cash replied, "I'd like to help your Lions Club. May we perform again?"

The second show was like old home week for Cash and his wife, June. They opened the show by driving the Patch-work Cadillac right through the wide, overhead doors and into the auditorium. Making their way to the stage, they stopped to greet members of the audience.

At one point during the show, Cash observed a mother trying to snap a picture of her son with Cash on stage. Without missing a note, Cash leaned forward and took the boy's hand for the picture.

During an especially warm moment of welcome on stage June Carter Cash said, "We feel like we had a little something to do with this building and it is nice to be back. If you will allow us, we'll drag back in here every year or so."

The Welch Lions presented fellow member Patch with a plaque of appreciation, and purchased an antique popcorn-peanut vending machine for Johnny and June.

The folks in the tiny farming and coal-mining town felt the genuine bond of friendship had been formed between themselves and Johnny and June, by having reached a common goal. They learned that from small beginnings come great results and that the good things in life come through common effort. But, more importantly, they learned that when Lions work together and have faith in a project, goals are reached little by little, bit-by-bit... **ONE PIECE AT A TIME!**

Bill Patch died March 29, 1984. He was 55 years old. He is buried at the Welch Cemetery. We lost both June and Johnny last year.

The legacy of the car and its many memories remain. The legacy and memories of Bill, Johnny, and June remain with the town of Welch also.

A couple of years before his death, Cash returned the car to Bill's widow. She offered to sell the car to Harley Malone. Some residents of Welch tried to come up with the funds to buy the car, but were unsuccessful. The car sold to a private collector.



Johnny and June in later years

Charlie (Frog) Williams came in from Nebraska in 1894. He opened a blacksmith shop and livery stable and built a place to live. George Dixon built the first substantial store building, an old stone building of two stories and all the lodges held meetings on the second floor. W.S. Dowell was the first occupant of this building with a general store. He later sold to Huffacre, who was the renter when the building burned. The building had been sold by Dixon to A.H. McKelvey.

Dr. James N. Illiff was the town's first doctor, according to Durall. He had come from Melrose, Kansas, in 1895. He erected a small native lumber building and stocked a small amount of drugs. There was also a Dr. Clark. Soon afterward, J. Ed Brookshire came from North Carolina, looking for a place where he could work on watches. Dr. Illiff provided space for him in the drug department.

Lon Dowell and his son, Will came from Vinita and took charge of the store that W.S. Dowell had been operating for him. He bought Illiff's drugs and installed the stock in a shed room at the back. Later Brookshire put in a stock of drugs of his own in another building, so by 1907 he was a druggist. Later he went to medical school and became a doctor.

Jim Dudley was the first barber. Others followed including Caesar Wilson, a black, who came down from Chetopa in 1896, then Charlie Bullard who constructed a barber's chair.

The first restaurant was started in a small lean-to built by Will Rowland on the south side of his store. A man named Alvord built a rawhide building of one and a half stories and operated what he called a hotel. Jim Simms later acquired the building and ran a good hotel. Then came the Duvall Hotel and in 1901 the Wasson House owned by Mrs. F.A. Wasson. There followed many restaurants, the best of which was operated by Pearl Dixon.

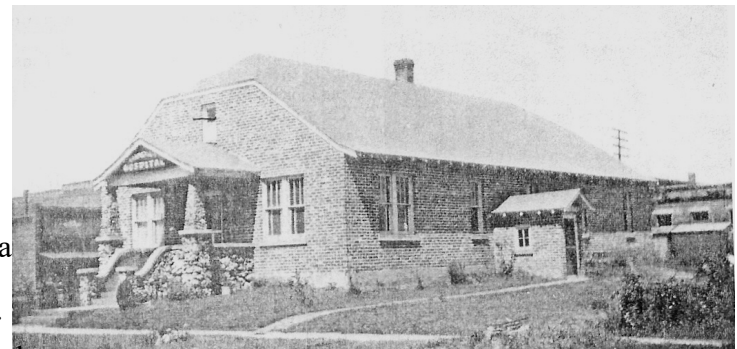
Financed by C.P. Jones, a Mr. Elliott installed the first harness shop in 1897. William Weitz acquired the business a year later and continued to work at the trade until his death. Scott Rice came down from the Anthracite district and built a livery barn about 1900 or 1901.

MK&T DEPOT WELCH, OKLA. 1965



Two pictures of the Welch Depot in 1965

MK&T DEPOT WELCH, OKLA. 1965



Bradshaw Hospital, 1935


Ole Town Health Shoppe

132 West Third Street
Welch, OK 74369

918-788-3443 oletownhealth@yahoo.com

Juanita King

Herbs, specialty food items, minerals, vitamins,
Sports nutrition, books, magazines



Welch History

Welch, second largest town in Craig County, was settled about 1888 by D.B. Nigh who leased the town site from Frank Craig. A switch was built on the Missouri-Kansas & Texas Railroad in 1891. The town became a hay and grain center for the north end of the county. The town was named for A.L. Welch, a railroad official for the MK & T.

The Katy Railroad had actually designated a town site farther north, about halfway between the Welch location and the Russell Creek switch, but it was the Welch site that grew into a town. Its population reached 300 people in 1901. By 1940 the U.S. Census listed 598 inhabitants, and the 1980 Census showed 697.

Edward H. Brady was an early resident of the area. He leased and farmed 800 acres, which had belonged to E.C. Boudinot from 1894 to 1896. Brady studied law and returned to Welch as owner and editor of the Welch Watchman newspaper from 1902 to 1907. He became the first county attorney in 1907. Scott Thompson became editor of the paper and remained for many years.

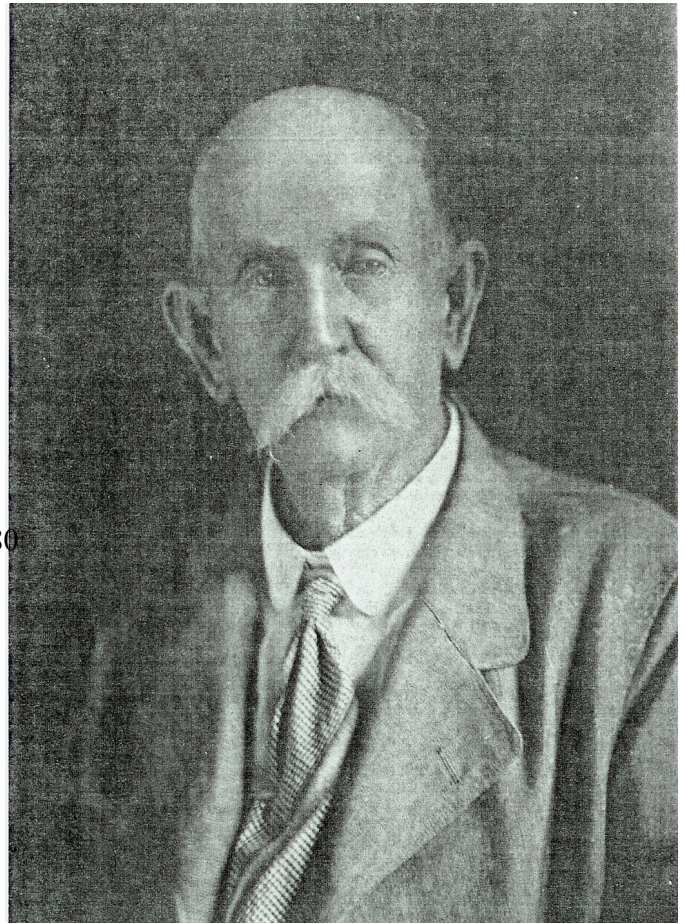
Ben Durall arrived in Welch on August 6, 1894. He found two stores, a post office and blacksmith shop. There were good crops of wheat, oats, flax and hay the year Durall arrived in the area, but the season turned out very dry after June and the corn crop was light.

The following information came from excerpts of a letter Mr. Durall wrote to Cassie Newman in 1949.

There were about nine or ten grain and hay buyers who came from Chetopa and Oswego, Kansas, and Vinita, I.T. They would arrive in the mornings and stayed all day. By winter, only two buyers were left.

Offices and warehouses were constructed that year. Will Hazen and Will Glass, brothers-in-law, occupied one representing C.E. Benedict of Erie and Chanute, Kansas. The other office and warehouse was owned by Busby and Smith of Parsons, Kansas, with Durall the buyer.

The Dowell store, owned by Frank and W.S. Dowell, had the only wagon scale in town until one was installed at the Busby & Smith warehouse. Durall helped Clarence Alden make up lists of carloads shipped from Welch during the years from 1894 through 1898. Durall's shipments ranged from 200 cars of wheat, oats, corn, hay and coal in 1894, to about 500 cars in 1897, and not so many in 1898. Other shippers probably had a like amount, making a sizeable business for the little town in those years.



Craig County was named for Granville Craig, well known Welch farmer and stockman. Craig was a close friend of W.H. Kornegay, who was a member of the Constitutional Convention. Craig was born in 1849 and died in 1926.

The grass is greener
on OUR side!

Craig County
Farm Supply
918-788-3251

- Asgrow & DeKalb Seed
- Fertilizers
- Chemical • Lime

Custom Spreading & Spraying
Farm ~ Pasture ~ Musk Thistle

241 N. Washington • Welch, OK
Owner Frank Gray
Mgr. Darrel Goins

In 1915 the Welch Watchman published an industrial edition, which included brief articles about some of the businessmen. They included the following: T.S. Ellis, jeweler. Mr. Ellis' establishment gives his patrons the best there is in his line. He also handles all kinds of schoolbooks and school supplies. He is an expert workman. Mr. Ellis came to Welch a number of years ago. He is here to stay.

William Pee's Racket Store is complete in the notion line. Mr. Pee began business in Welch only a few years ago, putting in a small stock, but constantly adding to it

J.A. Pierce & Son conduct an up-to-date livery business and also maintain some stock for breeding purposes. Their livery business includes teams and rigs that are good. The elder Mr. Pierce has served Welch as trustee.

The Talley Brothers, this firm, composed of Ed and Jim, is doing a fine cash business with their stock of groceries, shoes, flour and feed, furnishing goods, onions, etc. They have been in Welch since town first started

C.H. Jennings conducts a poultry and egg-buying establishment. He also handles flour and feed. For a number of years he was postmaster of this city.

J.A. Stroud & Son occupies a modern brick structure of its own, and these gentlemen have erected two other brick buildings. They handle a large stock of groceries, shelf and heavy hardware, farm implements, notions, etc.

Dr. Benj Dobkins, a graduate of Ontario Veterinary College of Toronto, Canada, as well as three dentistry colleges, has been practicing his profession in Welch the past eight years. During this time he served as state veterinarian.

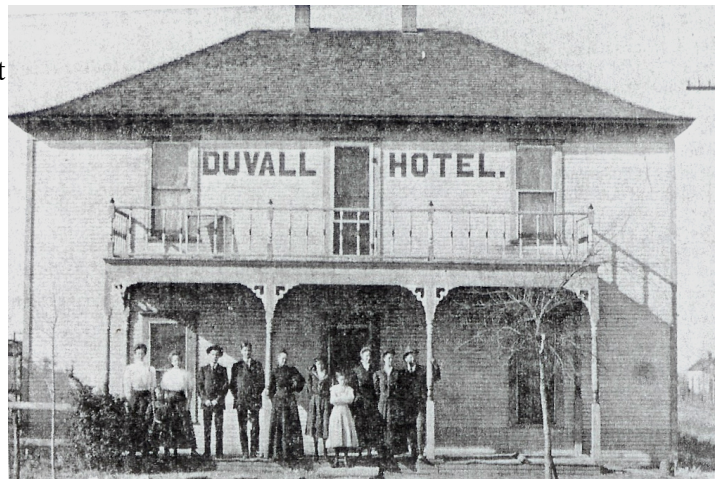
Star Drug Store owned and operated by L. Matthews handles a complete line of drugs and sundries, and prescriptions are compounded.

W.P. Eddy, Justice of Peace, familiar with law questions and a fair and impartial judge.

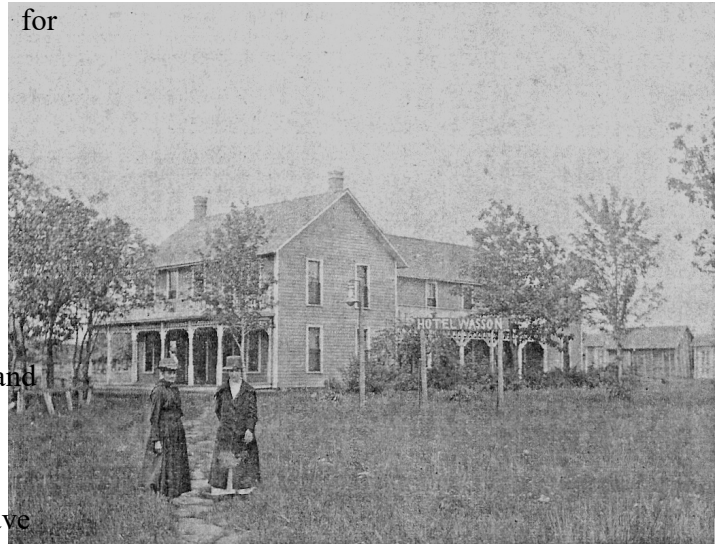
Jas H. Van Ausdal, Druggist: He is an expert pharmacist, compounds prescriptions, carries a complete line of drugs and sundries.

Smith & Cooper: W.W. Smith and John Cooper, Proprietors, handle groceries, dry goods, shoes, furnishing goods, etc.

Woods Lumber Yard: W. J. Woods, manager. Lumber in wagonloads is daily being hauled to the rural sections. The yard handles a complete stock of building material, paints, etc.



Duvall Hotel built in 1903



Wasson Hotel built in the early 1900s

Attention Readers!!!

In honor of Memorial Day, the May issue of Hometown Oklahoma is going to be devoted entirely to northeast Oklahoma veterans, and those currently serving in the military. We will need YOUR help to do justice to these outstanding people. If you have information and pictures of someone who served in the Armed Forces, PLEASE contact us! We will cover all branches of service, and all wars, conflicts, police actions, and military operations.



**RANDOLPH & SON
GUITAR WORKS**

P.O. Box 575
336 Commercial St.
Welch, OK 74369

Phone
(918) 788-3726

Organization of the Cherokee Nation towns, to form town governments and map out the sites, came with the passage of the Curtis Act soon after 1895. Welch planned an 80-acre town site, all on the west side of the Katy railroad tracks. Part of the plan, proposed by Durall, was for the two main streets, east and west, north and south, to be 100 feet wide.

"The town site was fully approved about 1901 or 1902," reported Durall. "Town lots were sold at public sale and any person in peaceable possession of any town lot, as evidenced by his ownership of a building thereon, or materials for building, had the right to purchase the lot at the appraised value. Cherokee citizens were required to pay only half of the appraised value."

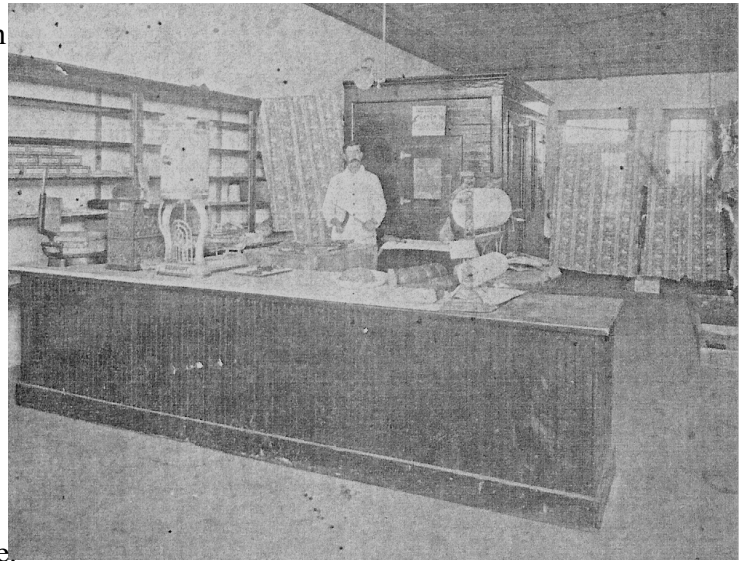
Persons connected with the early days of Welch included J.A. Campbell, farmer and grain buyer; J.N. Headlee, farmer; Jim Dudley, farmer and later Katy station master; Will Rowland and Bill Law, cafe owners; J.A. Mills, farmer and stockman; A.M. Wier, William Coats, J.S. Dobkins, W.D. Highsmith, A.J. Gwinn, Lee Shouse, Eli Walker, Parker Phillips, Bart Nigh, R.L. Jackson, Jim and Charlie Pool, C.P. and Frank Dale, J.H. Warner, F.M. Roselle, George Ogden, W. Getty, Frank Mills, Z.C. Payton, Omer Stroud, and others.

T.A. Jadon is believed to have had the first meat market in Welch, which people called "butcher shops". Silas Payne was a later meat market operator, and also Bill Warwark.

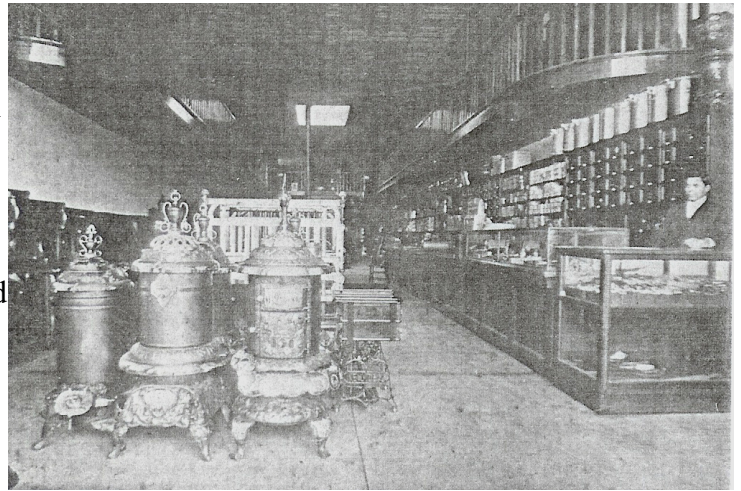
Tom Hancock built the first mill and the icehouse. Later George W. Thornton bought the mill.

Stock feeders started their firms in 1900 or 1901. C.P. Jones and Lee Jackson, M.D. Proctor and H.B. Campbell were feeders at this time. Then the Welch Cattle Company organized by J.A. Dobkins, C.M. Newman, C.L. Coppers, J.H. Witcham and possibly others, who began feeding, buying and shipping all kinds of livestock.

Dobkins had the first sale barn, located across from where the old Maxson barn was; Darr and Vanover were blacksmiths; there was Wilkerson Ford Motor Company, Pete Flat had a locker plant and chicken hatchery.



Inside Welch butcher shop, 1913



Keener's Hardware



Campbell's Hay & Grain

W.S. Dowell, a pioneer merchant who came here when the town was almost too small to support a name. A few years ago Mr. Dowell concluded he would get out of the mercantile business so he traded his large stock for eight hundred acres of land lying just west of town, which is managed by his son, Harry. Mr. Dowell could not remain out of business long. He carries a large stock consisting of dry goods, groceries, shoes, ladies and gents' furnishing goods, hardware.

H.B. Campbell, the man known as the heaviest shipper of hay and grain on the Katy railroad. He does not confine his business to Welch alone, but has buyers all along the line. He is president of the Oklahoma State Bank of Welch.

Mrs. Josuha Oatts is now enlarging her quarters and has a large stock of millinery and millinery supplies as well as a general stock of ladies furnishing goods.

Frank L. Keener is in the hardware and furniture business.

W.C. Eddy, our utility man. Whenever we want anything fixed we call for "Curt". He has one of the most complete workshops and has it fitted out with all modern machinery. He is prepared to handle any case of repair work as well as plumbing.

W.H. Leake has been here since the town started, is now engaged in the meat market and grocery business.

Also featured was The Wasson Hotel. This popular hotel, conducted by Mrs. F.H. Wasson, is one of the best in this section. The hospitality rendered as well as the service would be hard to excel. Mrs. Wasson has conducted this business for a number of years in Welch. The meals and the beds are good and worth more money than is asked.

Hotel Duvall, under the management of Mrs. J.N. Duvall, is giving absolute satisfaction to its patrons. This hotel has been in Welch for a number of years, maintains an excellent reputation, and is a fine place to stop. The meals, served family style, are of the best and the beds clean and comfortable.

Welch churches were established early. The Methodists built a church in 1901; a Holiness Church was there in 1907, preaching being done at the lumberyard. Christian Church in 1911; Baptist in 1901; Catholic in 1909; and the Assembly of God Church was built in 1942.

Welch progressed from a hay and grain region to a center for livestock production and strip coal mining. The residents got their water from a 5,868 foot well drilled in 1911 by Luke Harris and Johnny Handon.

The records show Mike Linnihan as one of the first City Marshals. Then came Powell (Pat) Smith, Miley Summerville and Ed Bray, who served 18 1/2 years using his 4-door Model A Ford car as the official police car.

The first fire equipment of Welch was a wagon with a tongue, 2 iron wheels shoulder high, and a fire hose that the volunteers pulled by hand. Firemen were summoned by a whistle that the telephone operator would blow. That whistle was blown at 7 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. everyday. It also blew when a tornado was sighted. For a fire it blew one long continuous sound.

In the 1940s a 4-wheel wagon with a hitch that could be hooked onto a car was used. The hose would have to be fastened to fireplugs to get water. Members of the city council went to Catoosa, Okla. to buy a used hose from the Tulsa Fire Dept. where they learned about organizing a volunteer fire department.

The first chartered Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1949 with John Patch as chief. Volunteer firefighters were Homer Headlee, Pete Flatt, Elmer Roy McAffrey, Senior Horner, and Charles Horner.

The Welch merchants, and citizens made donations, and John Patch made up the difference to buy a 1950 Ford truck. Patch put a water tank onto a Model T chassis. A new siren was bought; Booge Mills made a tower for it placing it behind the old Welch City Hall and jail.

In June 1977, fund raising began to raise money to build a new fire station and city hall. Bill Patch, son of John Patch, matched the donations and a new Welch Fire Station (in memory of John Patch) and City Hall were built.

John O. Bradshaw, M.D. established a hospital in Welch, from 1913 until his retirement in 1951. The Bradshaw hospital served a wide area of the county. Dr. Bradshaw's son, Jack had a practice in Welch for a while.

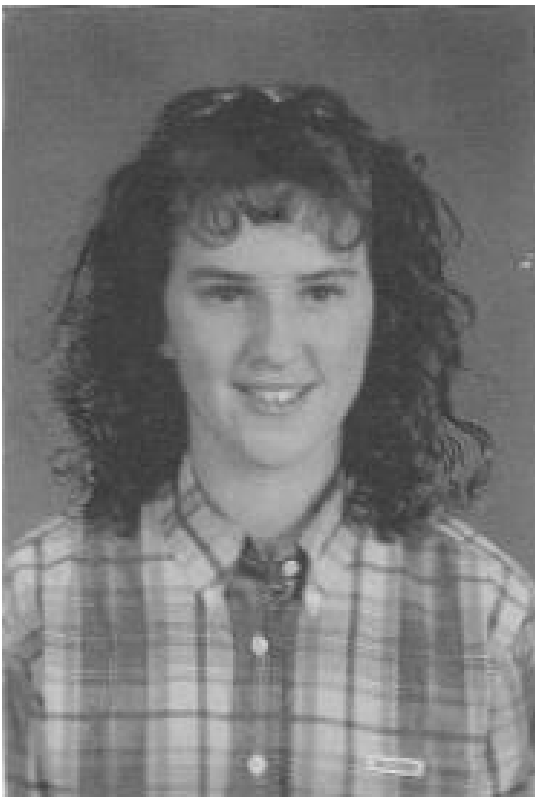
Remember Lauria and Ashley!

Our visit to Welch would not be complete, without reminding our readers about Lauria Bible and Ashley Freeman.

Late in the evening of December 29, 1999, or early in the morning of December 30, 1999, a crime occurred in Craig County, Oklahoma. Danny Freeman, and his wife Kathy (Tracy) Freeman were shot to death in their rural home, northwest of Welch, probably before midnight, on the 29th. It is surmised that the Freeman's daughter, and only surviving child, Ashley Renae Freeman and her best friend, Lauria Jaylene Bible were kidnapped after the shootings, and taken from the area. Later in the morning, the perpetrator(s) or their accomplices returned and set the Freeman's mobile home afire.

Due to the fire, and several lapses in the investigation process, much of the evidence at the crime scene was either destroyed or tampered with. By the time the OSBI and FBI came to the scene, they had little to work with. At any rate, the girls had seemingly disappeared without a trace, with no money, and no identification on them.

The surrounding communities have rallied around the grieving families, seeking answers. The reward fund currently stands at \$50,000.00.



Lauria Bible



Ashley Freeman

Endangered Missing

LAURIA BIBLE



DOB: Apr 18, 1983
Missing: Dec 30, 1999
Sex: Female
Race: White
Hair: Brown
Eyes: Hazel
Height: 5'5" (165 cm)
Weight: 130 lbs (59 kg)

Age Progressed



ASHLEY FREEMAN



DOB: Dec 29, 1983
Missing: Dec 30, 1999
Sex: Female
Race: White
Hair: Lt. Brown
Eyes: Blue
Height: 5'7" (170 cm)
Weight: 145 lbs (66 kg)

Lauria's photo is shown age-progressed to 19 years and Ashley's photo is also shown aged to 19 years. Lauria and Ashley were discovered missing after a fire destroyed the trailer Ashley and her family lived in. The bodies of Ashley's parents were discovered in the trailer but Ashley and Lauria have not been seen since. Lauria has a mole under her nose. Ashley has a scar on her forehead.



**ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)**

Federal Bureau of Investigation (Oklahoma) - 1-405-290-7770

***\$99.00 Spring
Move In Special***

CHELSEA TERRACE

Call today

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT OUR
Rental Office at (918) 789-5200
302 Charlotte Street, Chelsea, OK.**

1 Bedroom Apartments
724 SQ.FT.
\$400.00 MONTHLY

2 Bedroom Apartments
924 SQ. FT.
\$450.00 MONTHLY

\$200.00 DEPOSIT

ground floor/ handicap accessible
washer/dryer hookup

Paid: water, sewer, garbage, & lawn care

Provided: refrigerator, stove, garbage disposal, & dish washer

3 Bedroom House

One car garage
1101 sq.ft.

\$537.00 monthly \$350.00 deposit

washer/dryer hookups

Provided: refrigerator, stove, garbage disposal, & dish washer



SECTION 8 HOUSING VOUCHERS ACCEPTED



Welch Now

The population of Welch is approximately 597. Many Welch families have lived in the area for generations.

Ira Highley is Mayor of Welch, and other council members are Wathena Winfrey and Ronnie Armstrong. Ronnie is also Fire Chief of the volunteer fire department. Deputy Chief is Mike Fitzpatrick. Eva Triece is the City Clerk.

The people of Welch are always coming up with new ideas to help raise funds for the needs of the town and the school system. The Fire Department hosts an annual dinner fundraiser. The Welch School Enrichment Foundation was established to help raise funds for the school system and they have a scholarship program. The Lions Club hosts fundraising events for the school.

Last year some resourceful people of the town came up with the idea to hold a Pumpkin Fest. They had raffles, street games, food and merchandise vendors, contest, parades, and lots of fun! The event was such a success; they were able to bank \$3,000, after expenses. They decided to make it an annual event.

This year's Pumpkin Fest will be October 16, on Welch's Main Street. Some of the events already scheduled for the all day event are: Dog Show, Car Show, Costume Parade, Lawn Mower Race, Chili Cook off, Spaghetti Eat off, and several street games and contests. They have several categories of pumpkin judging. A big success last year was the Scarecrow contest. Groups and organizations "buy" a light pole and then create their scarecrow for judging. They will also have Pumpkin Fest T-shirts for sale, designed by a Miami company. We got to see the design and decided it would be worth the trip to Welch, just to buy the shirt!

Special Thanks to Eva Triece for all her help with this issue of Hometown Oklahoma!

THE STICK HORSE RANCH
CHILD CARE CENTER



OWNER: VICKI TUCKER
DIRECTOR: CHANDA JARVIS

WELCH, OKLAHOMA

918-788-3493
shr@junct.com

DHS and Tribal Licensed

122 N. St. Louis
Welch, OK 74369

Welch School History

Welch's first free school system was started in 1898, when a joint stock company was organized. Some donated cash and received certificates of stock. A frame building was constructed, with some people contributing labor, building materials, and furnishings. Miss Dickerson from Oswego, Kansas was the first teacher.

A school building located south of Welch was purchased by the stock company, and moved to the Welch location. When school opened in 1901, Jay Hively of Bartlett, Kansas was in charge. Mrs. Walter Copeland assisted him.

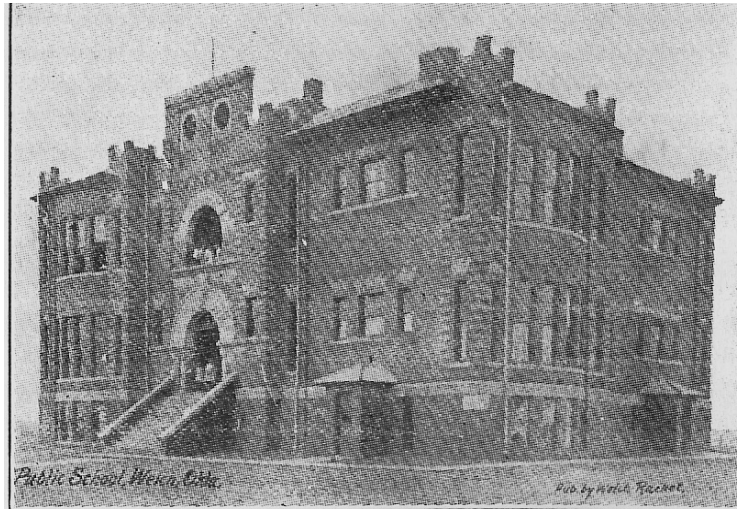
With statehood in 1907, public school systems were established. The school district purchased the site, with payment going to the stockholders. A two-room frame building was added to the other structures, and for several years there were four classrooms and teachers.

In 1908 a two-story brick building was constructed, housing both high school and elementary grades. The building and furnishings cost \$22,500. The building was destroyed by fire in 1932. A new building was constructed that same year.

In 1921 a \$20,000 bond issue was passed for construction of an elementary school and a gymnasium. This was completed in December of 1921. The average enrollment of the Welch School District was 400 students during the years 1918 to 1923.

The 1911 graduating class had three students. They were Bessie Tollinger, Mattie Brown, and Clifford Brown. Vinita High School had its first graduating class that same year. Superintendent J.B. Roberts moved the Welch commencement date up by two weeks so Welch would have the distinction of having the first graduating class in Craig County.

The Junior High and a new gym were built in 1950.



Welch School as it looked in 1915



Graduating class of 1915



Principal Chas Victory, 1915

Business in Welch

Several Welch businesses have been in operation over 50 years. Some are family owned, and some are still operated by the people who started them.

The Welch State Bank was founded in 1923 as a locally owned, community bank. The bank is a result of the merger of The Bank of Welch and The Oklahoma State Bank. Their goal is to provide quality service to families and businesses in the four-state area, which they have been doing for over eighty years. Service and personal relationships set them apart from their competition.

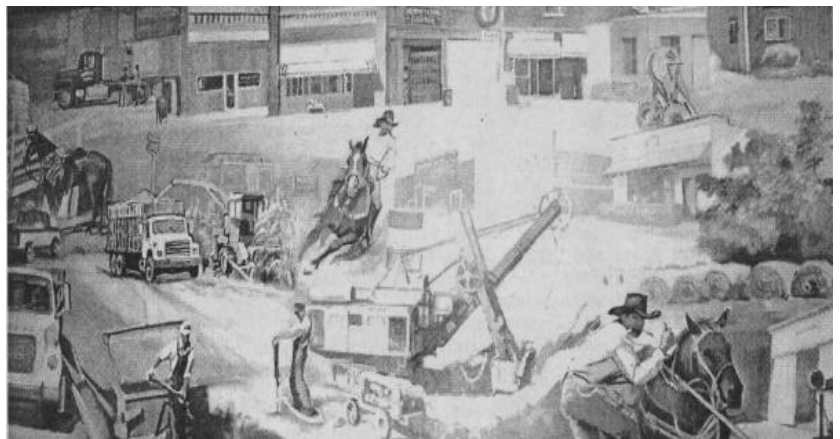
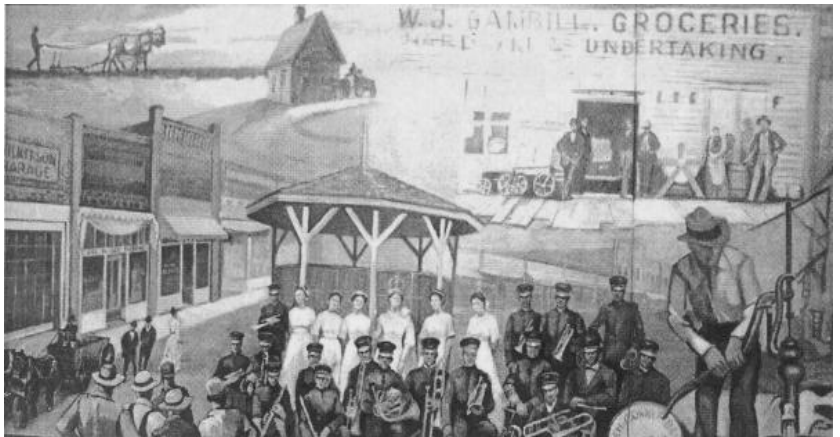
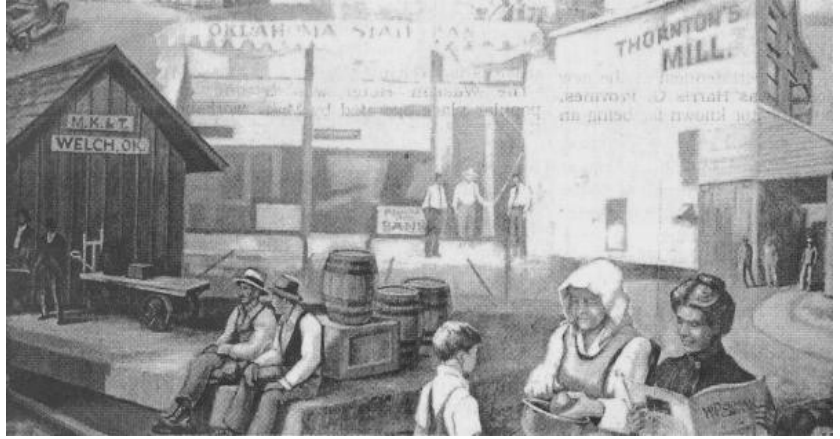
Charles Stoner is the Bank President and holds a degree from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College and is a graduate of the Madison, Wisconsin Graduate School of Banking. Mr. Stoner has been in banking since 1959 and at the Welch State Bank since 1962.

Dallas Horner and his son, Senior opened Horner's Garage in 1937. Senior still owns the business.

Maxine Newman opened Newman's Café in 1945. They are open Monday through Friday, from 6:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Ervin Raus purchased the Northeastern Telephone Company in 1957. He changed the name of the business to Atlas Telephone Company. The original service included Welch and Bluejacket. In the early 1960s he purchased the Big Cabin exchange. Donna Swango Raus and her first husband, Buddy Swango went to work for the company in 1957. Donna still works there.

Murals at Welch State Bank



In grades seven through twelve, students are provided the opportunity for coursework in math, science (including the annual Welch Science Fair), language arts, social studies, band and vocal music, graphic arts, speech and drama, Spanish, yearbook, agriculture, technology education, business education, family and consumer science, and special education. Advanced Placement courses are also offered within the math, science, language arts, and graphic arts programs.

Extra-curricular activities include National Honor Society, Student Council, 4-H, FFA, FCCLA, FBLA, TSA, and many others. Competitive sports at Welch include fast pitch softball, 8-man football, basketball, baseball, and track.

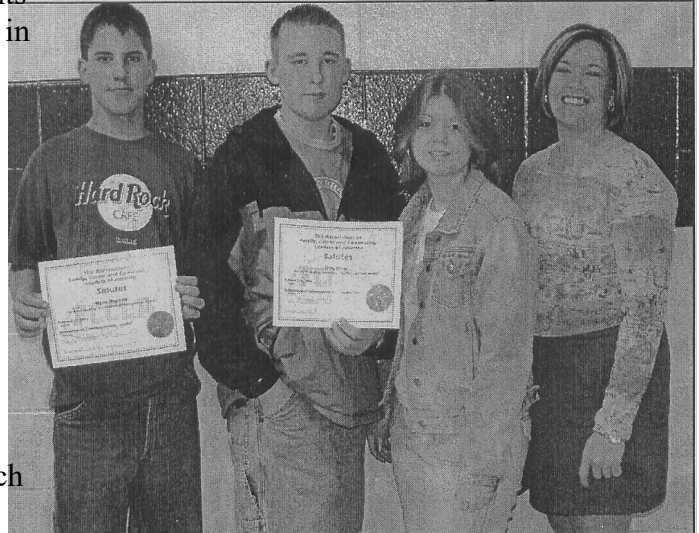
Dr. R.C. McKeon is Superintendent. He has held the position 6 years, and has been in education 12 years. McKeon is the grandson of James and Ola Dobkins, who both served as President of the Welch State Bank.

Noah Francis has served as K-12 Principal for 3 years. He says, " Our school is very fortunate to have an outstanding set of students, a very dedicated staff, and a strong community support base. This fantastic combination makes our school an outstanding place to be. Our students excel in the classroom as well as in numerous extracurricular activities. The continued success of our programs and our students are the direct result of outstanding support from parents and community patrons. Informed and involved parents are vital components to our students' successes.

You can check out the school's web site at www.welchwildcats.net

Newman's Café
On Main Street
Welch, Oklahoma
Monday – Friday
6 am – 2 pm
 Fried Chicken, Roast Beef,
 Meatloaf
 Homemade Pies

FCCLA Members Place in Regional Events



Wade Mayfield, Cory Witte, Lauren Perkins, and FCCLA advisor, Jeanine Thompson.

The events were held at Vinita in February of 2004. Wade placed third in Interpersonal Communication, Junior Division. Cory and Lauren placed second as a team in Interpersonal Communication, Senior Division.

Students Compete in County Spelling Bee



Elizabeth Windle, Gabe Moore, Aaron Roberson, and Courtney Baker

Grades four through eight competed in Vinita on February 18, 2004. All schools in Craig County had four participants.

Courtney placed third, and Elizabeth was fourth place winner.

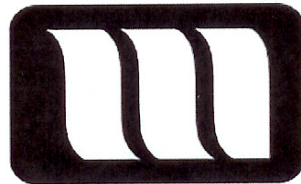


Roy Clark's Horse Ranch

Country music entertainer, Roy Clark owns a 314-acre horse ranch just outside of Welch. It was said that over the years, Roy and his wife had been seen riding their motorcycle in the area.

Roy hosted the popular TV show, HEE HAW, for 25 years. He has been seen on many other shows too: In the mid-60's he was a regular guest on "The Beverly Hillbillies" and went on to become the first country music artist to guest host "The Tonight Show" for Johnny Carson. He has appeared on many TV shows too numerous to mention and hosted many TV specials, including "Country Music, USA", "Flying Down To Provo", "Country Goes To Switzerland", "The Disney Anniversary Special", "The Academy Of Country Music Awards", three specials for the BBC in England, and many others.

Roy Clark's Grammy-winning virtuosity is showcased in his concerts but his generosity goes unheralded. It is impossible to measure all that he gives. The annual ROY CLARK CELEBRITY GOLF TOURNAMENT alone has raised millions of dollars for the Children's Medical Center in Tulsa and St. Jude's Children's Hospital in Memphis.



WELCH STATE BANK

396 S. Commercial
P.O. Box 129
Welch, OK 74369
Phone: 918-788-3373
Fax: 918-788-3364

2525 N. Main
P.O. Box 1620
Miami, OK 74355
Phone: 918-542-2000
Fax: 918-542-2032

"Where You Come First!"



Ma Barker and The Boys

The infamous Ma Barker and her four sons are buried in Williams Cemetery outside of Welch.

J. Edgar Hoover called Ma Barker "one of the most vicious, dangerous and resourceful criminal brains" of his era. The FBI chief claimed that Ma was instrumental in teaching her four sons a life of crime: from stealing - to kidnapping - to murder. Though her boys went on to be violent criminals, making the FBI's most wanted list - there was never any evidence that Ma committed any crimes herself, or planned the crimes that her sons went to prison for. Many historians believe it was Hoover, who launched the legend of Ma Barker, after, they say, FBI agents in a bloody gun battle mistakenly killed the elderly woman.

What is known about Ma Barker is that her whole world revolved around her four sons - and that she would have done anything to protect them. She condoned their criminal lifestyle - traveled with them around the Midwest as they robbed and killed - all the while, she made sure they ate well and were taken care of. Ma was so controlling of her sons that she didn't want them to date other women because she wanted to be the most important person in their lives.

Ma and her sons, Herman, Lloyd, Arthur, and Fred, teamed up with Alvin Karpis and became known as one of the most notorious gangs of the 1930s - the Barker-Karpis gang.

In 1921 Arthur served time for killing a night watchman, James Sharrill, in Tulsa.

Fred and Alvin met while both were doing time in Kansas Penitentiary. Fred was serving time for burglary, and Alvin had been convicted of auto larceny and safe cracking.

During their 20 years of crime, the gang racked up numerous crimes, ranging from murder to kidnapping to robbery and burglary.

On August 29, 1927, in Wichita, Kansas, police cornered Herman after he had killed an officer during a bank robbery. He died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, rather than being taken alive.

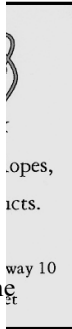
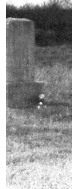
FBI agents in Florida killed Ma and Fred, on January 16, 1935. Their bodies were abandoned until October 1, 1935, when they were buried in Welch.

Arthur died in 1939 after attempting an escape from Alcatraz Prison.

Lloyd was released from prison in 1947. His wife killed him in 1949, in Colorado, where he had been working as an assistant manager of a snack shop.

Alvin Karpis spent most of the rest of his life being sent from one prison to another for his part in the crimes the gang had committed.

He was paroled from the last prison in 1969 and deported to his native Canada. In 1973 he moved to Spain, where in 1979 he died from an overdose of sleeping pills.



Ma Barker and The Boys

The infamous Ma Barker and her four sons are buried in Williams Cemetery outside of Welch.

J. Edgar Hoover called Ma Barker "one of the most vicious, dangerous and resourceful criminal brains" of his era. The FBI chief claimed that Ma was instrumental in teaching her four sons a life of crime: from stealing - to kidnapping - to murder. Though her boys went on to be violent criminals, making the FBI's most wanted list - there was never any evidence that Ma committed any crimes herself, or planned the crimes that her sons went to prison for. Many historians believe it was Hoover, who launched the legend of Ma Barker, after, they say, FBI agents in a bloody gun battle mistakenly killed the elderly woman.

What is known about Ma Barker is that her whole world revolved around her four sons - and that she would have done anything to protect them. She condoned their criminal lifestyle - traveled with them around the Midwest as they robbed and killed - all the while, she made sure they ate well and were taken care of. Ma was so controlling of her sons that she didn't want them to date other women because she wanted to be the most important person in their lives.

Ma and her sons, Herman, Lloyd, Arthur, and Fred, teamed up with Alvin Karpis and became known as one of the most notorious gangs of the 1930s - the Barker-Karpis gang.

In 1921 Arthur served time for killing a night watchman, James Sharrill, in Tulsa.

Fred and Alvin met while both were doing time in Kansas Penitentiary. Fred was serving time for burglary, and Alvin had been convicted of auto larceny and safe cracking.

During their 20 years of crime, the gang racked up numerous crimes, ranging from murder to kidnapping to robbery and burglary.

On August 29, 1927, in Wichita, Kansas, police cornered Herman after he had killed an officer during a bank robbery. He died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, rather than being taken alive.

FBI agents in Florida killed Ma and Fred, on January 16, 1935. Their bodies were abandoned until October 1, 1935, when they were buried in Welch.

Arthur died in 1939 after attempting an escape from Alcatraz Prison.

Lloyd was released from prison in 1947. His wife killed him in 1949, in Colorado, where he had been working as an assistant manager of a snack shop.

Alvin Karpis spent most of the rest of his life being sent from one prison to another for his part in the crimes the gang had committed.

He was paroled from the last prison in 1969 and deported to his native Canada. In 1973 he moved to Spain, where in 1979 he died from an overdose of sleeping pills.

