

KANSAS

"Cattletown" National Banks

By S. K. WHITFIELD



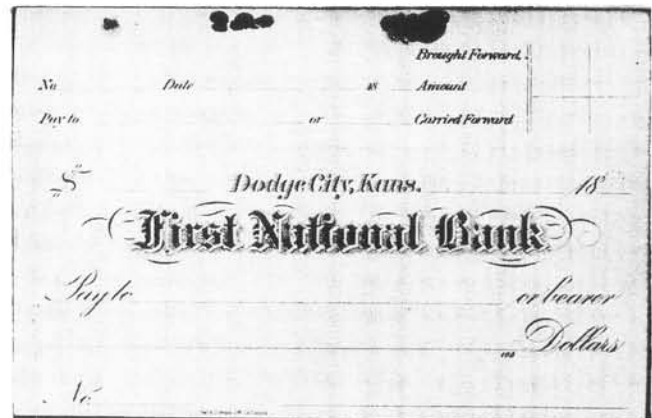
George M. Hoover, president of Dodge City's first bank.
Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

IN THE revised listing of Kansas obsolete notes that appeared in PAPER MONEY, Whole No. 36, it was noted that no obsolete currency was known for Abilene, the earliest Kansas "cattletown," and therefore a check was illustrated on an early Abilene bank. There were seven famous Kansas cowtowns that owed their reputation and occasionally their origin to the Texas cattle trade following the Civil War. Since these towns were for the most part not established until after the government had taxed the state bank notes out of existence, it is not likely that any such issues were made. However, there may have been issues of merchant scrip for these towns that could someday surface.

The cattletowns, in order of their period in history as trails' end, were Abilene 1867-1871, Hays 1867-1871, Wichita 1870-1877, Newton 1871, Ellsworth 1871-1875,



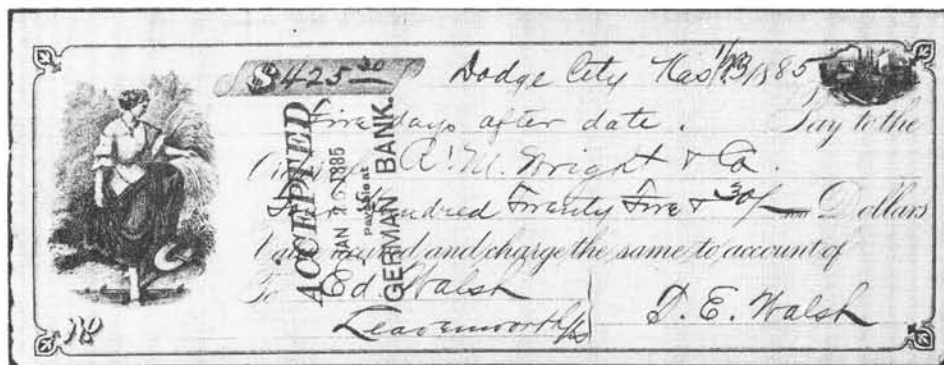
Draft of The First National Bank of Wichita, dated April 30, 1873. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.



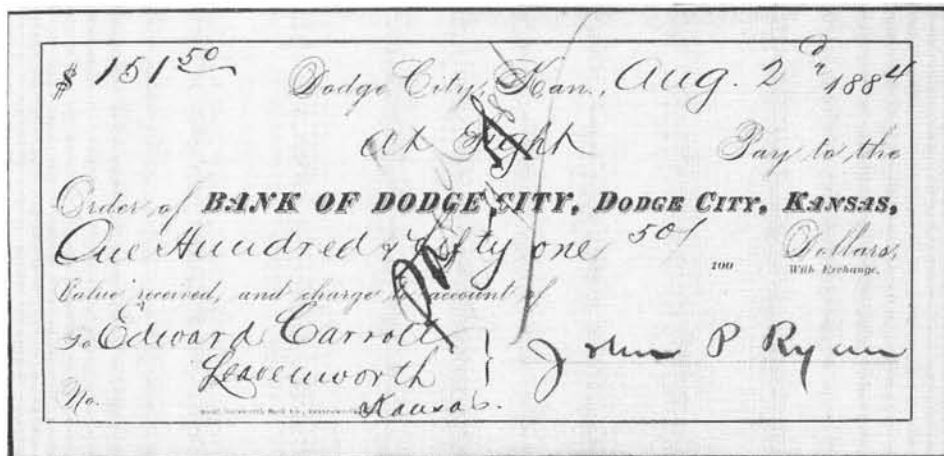
Blank check on the First National Bank of Dodge City, Charter #3596 (Whitfield Collection)

Dodge City 1872-1886 and Caldwell 1879-1885. Dodge City and Wichita were the only two of these towns to have national banks in operation while cattle drives from Texas were still important to their economy. The First National Bank of Wichita, Charter #1913, operated from 1872 until September, 1876, when it went into receivership. The First National Bank of Dodge City, Charter #3596, operated from 1886, the last year that Dodge was considered a cowtown, until July 1894, when the bank was liquidated. It is not known whether any National Bank Notes issued by these two banks have survived, but if so they are certainly treasures of western history.

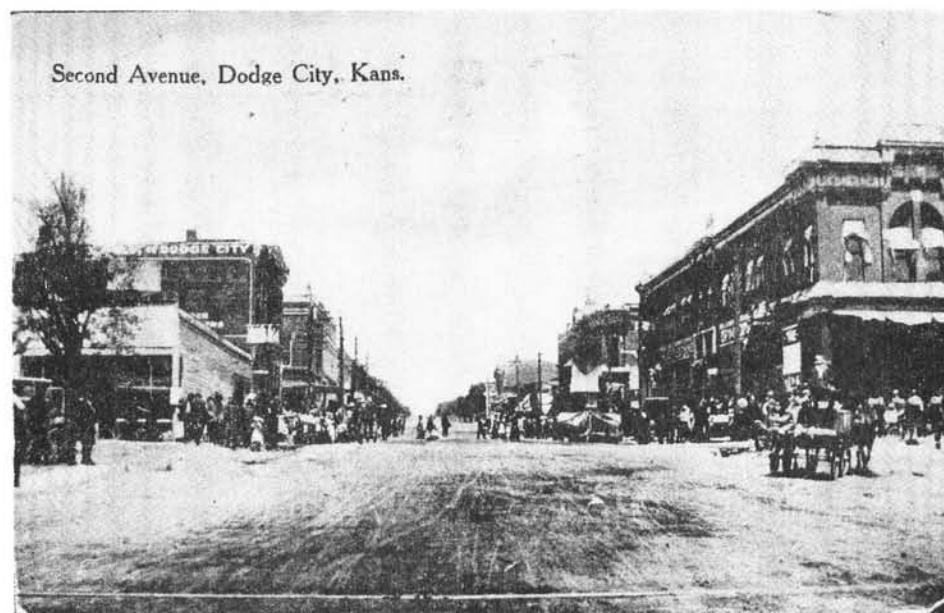
In Wichita, W. C. Woodman established the first banking institution around 1870. This was the First Arkansas Valley Bank. The First National Bank of Wichita, Charter #1913, was organized by James C. Fraker and a company of four men. Fraker, who became president of the bank, had previously organized the Walnut Valley Bank of El Dorado in 1870. This bank also became a national bank in 1872. Initially the major business of the First National Bank of Wichita was in financing the Texas cattle trade. In 1875, the bank began to finance the wheat crop of the surrounding area. This operation overextended its resources after a bumper crop in 1876 lowered wheat prices, and the bank closed on August 30th, to go into receivership. James C. Fraker was afterwards charged and convicted of fraudulent bank management.



Draft payable to R. M. Wright & Co, pioneer merchant and one of the founders of Dodge City. (Whitfield Collection)



Sight draft, dated Aug. 2, 1884, payable to the Bank of Dodge City. This draft is endorsed on the back by R. W. Evans, cashier. (Whitfield Collection)



1915 postcard view looking north on Second Avenue, Dodge City. At the left, the State Bank of Dodge City, organized in 1898, can be seen behind the last original wooden building on Front Street. At the right R. M. Wright's building and two doors farther to the right, unfortunately not visible, was the location of the Long Branch Saloon. (Whitfield Collection)

Dodge City had no true bank until 1882 when the Bank of Dodge City was organized. George M. Hoover, a prominent wholesale liquor dealer, was president and R. W. Evans was cashier. One of the organizers and an early vice-president was William H. Harris. Harris had been an operator of the Long Branch Saloon from 1870 to 1873.

Prior to the establishment of this bank, local merchants such as Robert M. Wright, one of the town founders, and York, Hadder & Draper offered banking services to cattle merchants and others. In fact, York and Draper were listed in the 1880 International Bankers Directory for the first mention of a bank at Dodge City. They had a correspondent relationship with the First National Bank of Leavenworth. These merchants accepted deposits on account for their customers and transferred large sums of money back and forth, as required, from the Leavenworth banks.

In 1886, the First National Bank of Dodge City was organized. Asa T. Soule, president of the new bank, had originally come west from Rochester, New York in

1883 to make investments. The Bank of Dodge City closed in 1889, and R. W. Evans, former cashier of the closed bank, became cashier of the First National Bank. Thus a thread of association was woven between the two banks. The First National Bank did not weather the crisis of 1893 and was liquidated on July 27, 1894.

George Hoover was not finished with banking in Dodge; in 1898 the State Bank of Dodge City was organized with Mr. Hoover as president.

REFERENCES:

1. *International Bankers Directory*; Rand McNally, Chicago 1876-1900
2. *History of Kansas*; Wm. G. Cutler and A. T. Andreas, Chicago 1883
3. *Kansas the First Century*; Lewis Historical Publ' Co, New York, 1956. Chapter 39, "A Century of Banking in Kansas". Geo. L. Anderson
4. *Dodge City, Up Through a Century in Story and Pictures*; Fredric R. Young, Boot Hill Museum Inc. 1972 Dodge City, Ks.
5. *The Cattle Towns*; Robert R. Dykstra, Atheneum, New York 1973

THE UNKNOWN FACTOR

(From time to time under this title will be printed photographs or identification of notes which have some puzzling aspect and about which information is sought from the membership. Please address comments to the Editor.)

Elaborating a bit on George Wait's comments on the Bank of Lapeer, Michigan note submitted by Leonard H. Finn (PM no. 55, p. 32 and no. 56, p. 84), Paul E. Garland writes that Lapeer is a small city on Lake Erie close to Monroe. The original capitalization of the bank was \$100,000. Signers of the specimen listed in Bowen's book were A. M. Hart cashier, and N. Davison, president.



Don C. Kelly submitted the three items shown here. He believes that the 5c note is a printer's sample but it carries no printer's name and no indication of the town or city in which William Winter operated. There are other denominations in different colors, all uniface. These are very probably from the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana area because other similar pieces from the same "find" were from that area.

The California "War Bond" coupons are even more puzzling. What war was California paying for in 1852, the presumed year when the bonds were issued? The



signature is that of Richard Roman, the first treasurer of California. The coupons are handstamped in blue, the top one "CALA. WAR BOND COUPON," the other "DUE OF INTEREST \$46.66 to SEPT 1st, 1856." Interestingly, it was bond #1.

NEEDED—

For SPMC Annual Dinner Meeting
Los Angeles, August 1975
Photographer(s) willing to cover.
Write to the Editor for details.