

# Wichita Stamp Club Newsletter



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Editor



*"Go Fly A Stamp"*



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## [Ghost Towns](#)

A philatelic visit to a couple of Kansas ghost towns!

## [Travel Kansas](#)

A visit to Rush County and the town of Timkin

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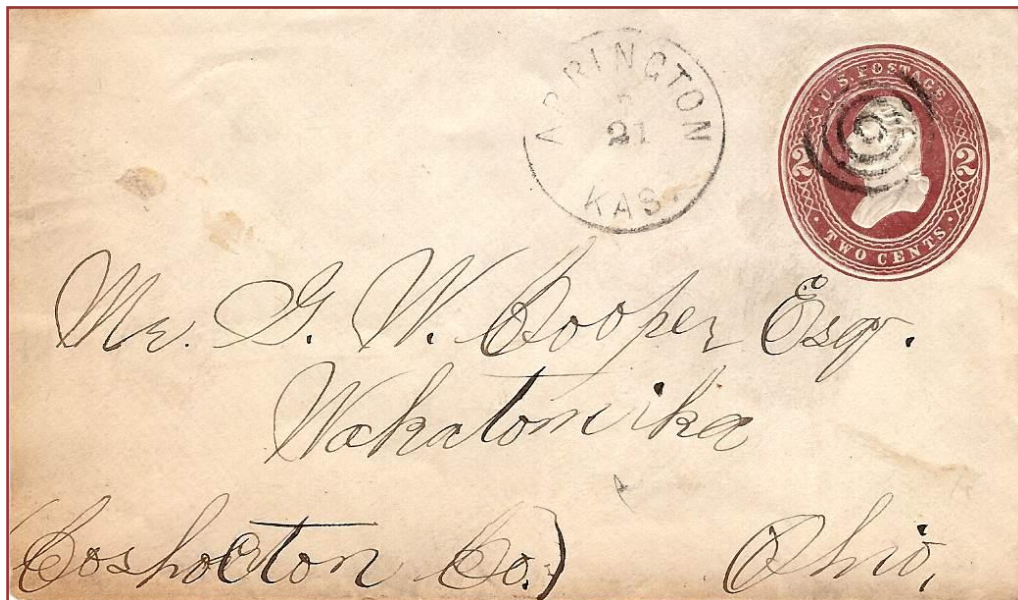
## WESTERN ATCHISON COUNTY GHOST TOWNS by Jeff Lough

All right, two ghost towns, and two living towns, one being just barely in Brown County. But they go together on a little tour on Route 159 through the western edge of Atchison County Kansas.

At the south is Arrington, KS. Arrington was a thriving 19<sup>th</sup> century flour mill and saw mill town then became the site of a popular mineral spring's spa and resort. Many of the famous of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century visited Arrington. These included Mark Twain and reputedly, Abraham Lincoln. Arrington (first called Arington after the founder's fiancé who died before she arrived to the area) was founded in 1855 by Ransom A. Van Winkle who also was the first postmaster. Only a few old stones held together by cement remains of the once thriving small town that had to usual complement of small businesses and local government buildings. Some of these remaining 19<sup>th</sup> century artifices are shown in Fig. 1. An 1885 Arrington cover accompanies as Fig. 2. (SN U26 postmarked with a simple circular cancel and a target killer on Feb. 21, 1885).



**Figure 1**  
Arrington artifices

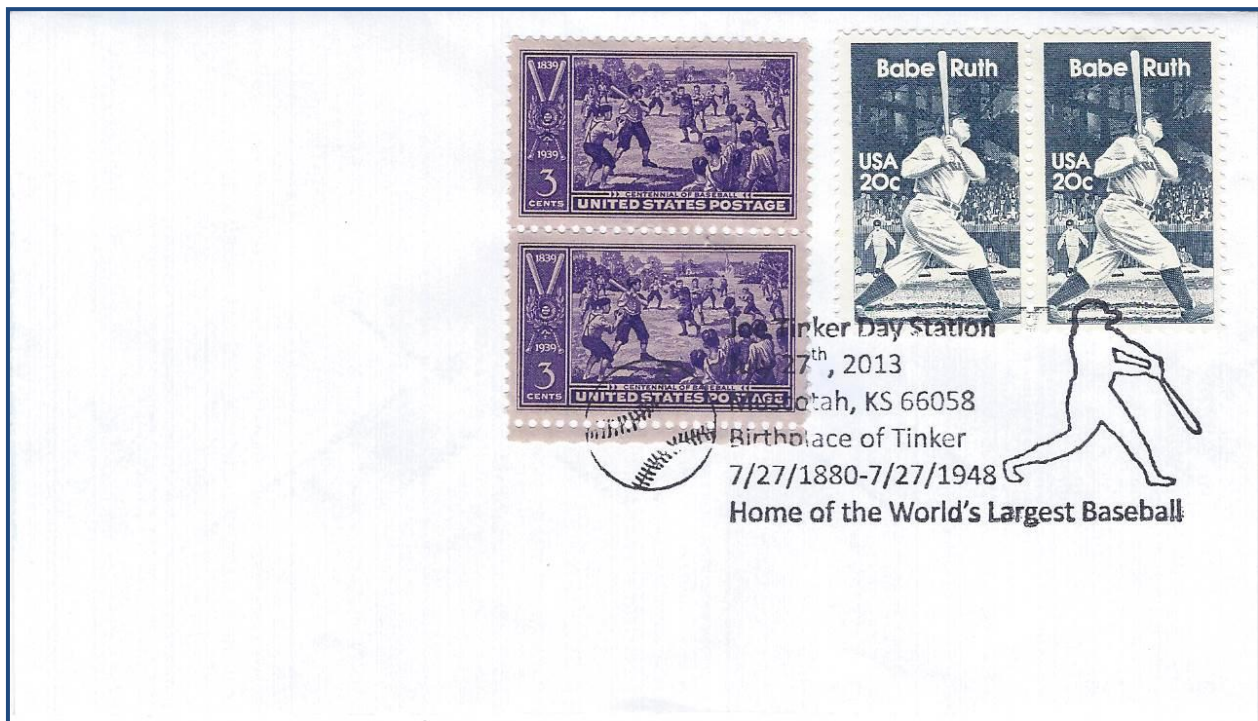


**Figure 2**  
Arrington Cover U26

Muscotah lies about 17 miles north of Arrington. It is an active little community currently with a post office, a nice community mercantile and a part of classic American baseball history. Hall of Famer Chicago Cubs shortstop Joe Tinker was born in Muscotah. Tinker was made famous by a poem written by a New York Newspaper writer, Franklin Pierce Adams. One day Adams was short of material for his paper, the *New York Evening Mail*, and was told to fill the space without fail by his editor. On the way to see his favorite team, the New York Giants, play the Chicago Cubs he wrote the following ditty that the *Evening Mail* published and that subsequently became quite famous:

***Baseball's Sad Lexicon***

*These are the saddest of possible words:  
 "Tinker to Evers to Chance."  
 Trio of bear cubs, and fleeter than birds,  
 Tinker and Evers and Chance.  
 Ruthlessly picking our gonfalon bubble,  
 Making a Giant hit into a double-  
 Words that are heavy with nothing but trouble:  
 "Tinker to Evers to Chance."*



**Figure 3**  
 Muscotah Event Cover for Tinker

Shortstop Joe Tinker. Second baseman Johnny Evers. First baseman Frank Chance. Certainly not the most prolific double-play combination in baseball history but the most famous. The power of the poem: Adams' immortalizing words turned a trio of relatively modest ballplayers into Hall of Famers, and into the enduring icons of the Cubs' last World Series championship. Tinker, Evers and Chance first took the field together on Sept. 13, 1902. They collaborated on their first double play on Sept. 15, 1902. They last played together on April 12, 1912. A special Postal Service postmark (See Fig. 3) commemorates the celebration Muscotah had last year when they dedicated the Largest Baseball in the World (the top of a retired water

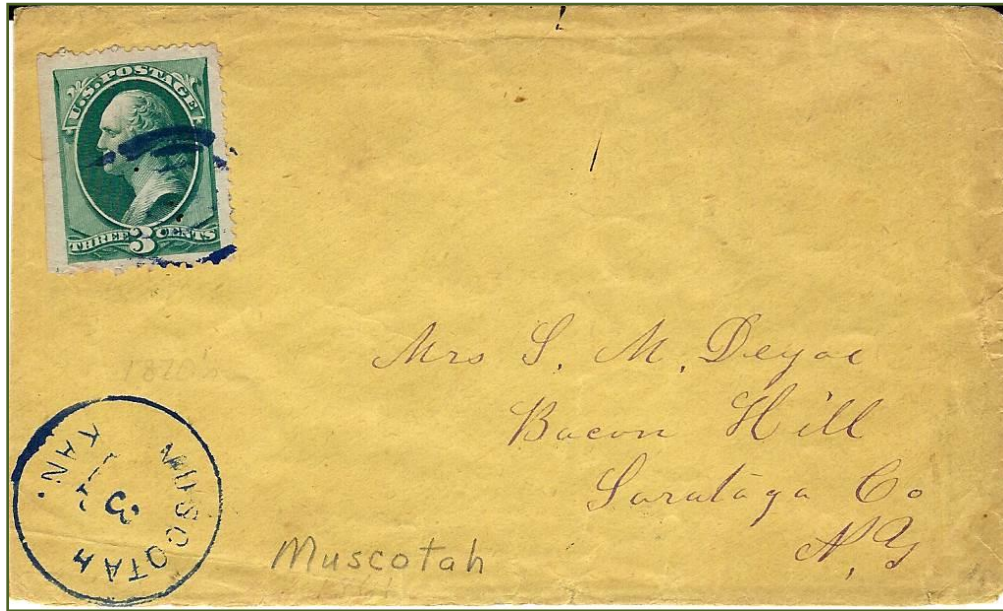
tower painted as a baseball lying on the ground in the city park), Fig. 4, and some nice murals painted around the sides of the nearby concession stand, see Fig. 5 for part of the display. Also please visit the accompanying historical cover postmarked Muscotah (Fig. 6) Sept. 3, 1875 with a simple circular cancel and target killer on the 3 cent Continental Bank Note green SN 158.



**Figure 4**  
Muscotah Baseball in the Park



**Figure 5**  
Mural on side of Concession Stand  
Joe Tinker, Johnny Evers and Frank Chance

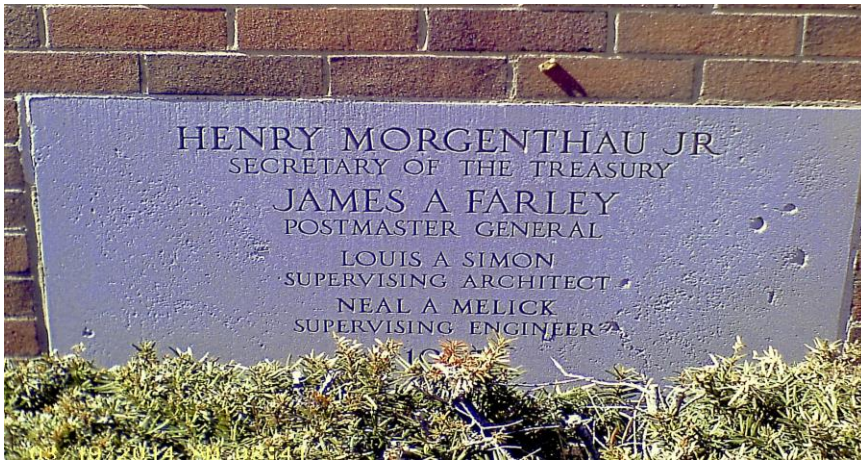


**Figure 6**  
Muscotah cover with US 158 Postmarked Sept. 3, 1875

Horton lies about 12 miles up the road, just across the county line into Brown County and about 5 miles east of the Kickapoo Indian Reservation on Highway 20. See the accompanying cover postmarked in Horton in an early post office (Fig. 7). The current post office was built as a James Farley/ depression era WPA project (see Fig. 8 for a photo of the cornerstone). The lobby of the post office contains three very nice unique murals. Two of the murals celebrate the Pony Express station that had been southeast of Horton about 3 miles in the ghost town of Kennekuk, KS in Atchison County. See Fig. 9 and Fig. 10 for pictures of two murals.



**Figure 7**  
Horton cover SN 279B Postmarked Apr 27, 1898



**Figure 8**  
Horton Post Office Cornerstone



**Figure 11**  
Kennekuk Indian Prophet



**Figure 9**  
Pony Express Station Mural in Post Office



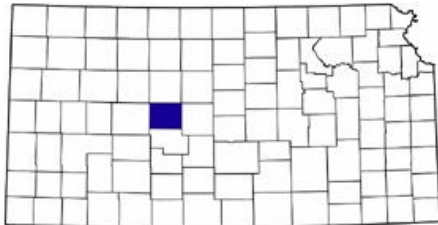
**Figure 10**  
Pony Express Mural in Post Office

The “Old Fort Laramie Road” was established through the Kennekuk area in 1844. Kennekuck, KS was founded in 1858 as a stage stop. It was the first Pony Express stop after leaving St. Joe, MO and it was the headquarters of the Kickapoo Indian agency. Kennekuk was named after an interesting Native American leader who fancied himself a god, had a small following, and who had claimed that he would arise from the dead after three days. There is no record that the latter occurred. Please see an illustration of this interesting leader as Fig. 11. The post office was established in 1857 and was discontinued in 1900. In 1860 the town of Kennekuck was described in a letter as a thriving town where whiskey was its entire business. Kennekuk is a town no more. Ten rural residences, a couple street signs, and an amateur celebratory sign written in chalk on a blackboard are all that remains, nothing photogenic. No cover either.

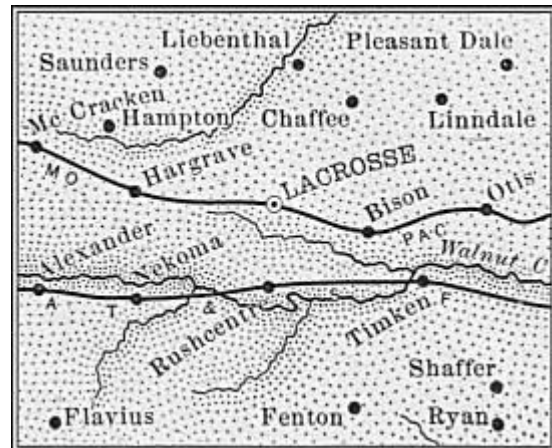
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**TRAVEL KANSAS—NORTH TO SOUTH—EAST TO WEST** by Neal E. Danielson

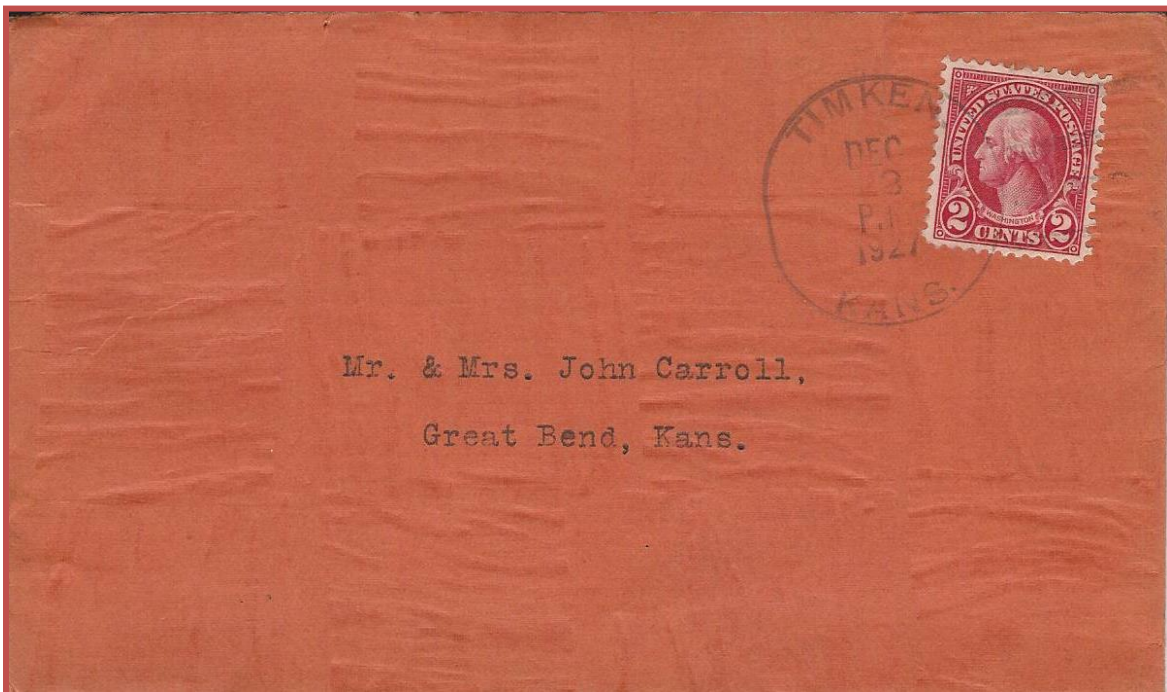


**Figure 1**  
Rush County



**Figure 2**  
Rush Co. Railroad Map ca1899

**Travel Kansas—Timken** located in Rush County Kansas (Figures 1 & 2). A land speculator, Henry Timken acquired several thousand acres in the area as he anticipated the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad would eventually build a railroad through the area. When the Railroad purchased the land from Henry Timken it was sold on the condition that the town bears his name. The next few years brought life to the area with a lumber mill; grocery store; Railroad Depot built in 1884; and even a bowling alley. The settlers that migrated to Timken were mainly from Bohemia, Czechoslovakia, and Moravia. The population in and around the town site was adequate to establish a Post Office that opened 23 July 1888. In 1927 an individual in Timken sent a cover to the Carroll family in Great Bend, Kansas (Figure 3), possibly relating to Christmas based on the cancellation date.. The cover is franked with a 2¢ George Washington stamp (Scott #554) and tied to the cover with a balloon cancel postmarked from Timken Dec. 23, 1927. The Timken Post Office closed on 1 January 1996.



**Figure 3**  
Cover Postmarked Timken, Kans. 1927  
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Not a lot happened during the next few years when a merchant purchased almost all the left over town sites and opened the general store. This led to establishing a real estate office and he worked with the railroad in offering discount fares to anyone traveling west to inspect the land. His idea worked somewhat but not as successful as he anticipated. Then in 1904 a Catholic Church was established and a Community Hall erected followed by the lumber company.

By the year 1910 the population had not had much growth, but a grain elevator established. The Bank was soon established in 1913 and by June 1930 the town had grown in order to be incorporated as a city (Figure 4).



**Figure 4**  
Timken

Rush County is located in the center of the state and settlers arriving in the area settled along Walnut Creek near a trading post stockade along the Fort Hays-Fort Dodge Trail. The area is now known as Alexander. The prairie gave life to wildlife including buffalo, coyotes, deer, pheasant and prairie chickens providing food and living for the settlers.

The first Post Office that opened in what would be Rush County was established 3 October 1871 in Economy, but it closed within a few months on 18 January 1872. The first church services were held in 1873 by Reverend Hartman a Methodist minister. As the younger generation began to migrate to the area by 1874 and received protection of the cavalry units from Fort Learned, Fort Hays, Fort Dodge and Fort Scott. When the County organized on 5 December 1874 it was named in honor of Captain Alexander Rush, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry who lost his life at Jenkins' Ferry, Arkansas.

Walnut City became a temporary County Seat and would change to Rush Center. In 1876 the town of La Crosse was founded, named in honor of the local newspaper editor's home town of La Crosse, Wisconsin or the sport of La Crosse. In that same year southern tiers of townships in Rush County were transferred to Pawnee County thus Rush Center was no longer in the center of the County. This brought about a change in the County Seat from Rush Center to La Crosse then an election was held to permanently designate La Crosse the County Seat in 1877. This did not set well with the residents of Rush Center creating a conflict between the two towns. Another election was held with results in favor of Rush Center so the records were move back from La Crosse the follow year. La Crosse took the issue up with the District Court on fraud charges and Rush Center ignored the issue and the Court rendered in favor of La Crosse. All of these moving records back and forth in wagons between Rush Center and La Crosse resulting in gunfire, but no injuries were reported. Rush Center was not done with the issue and took it all the way to the Supreme Court in 1886 and once again Rush Center was rendered the winner. This resulted in a petition being circulated and received two-thirds of the legal voters and therefore another election was held resulting in favor of La Crosse on 23 August 1887.

This was not the end of the war between the two cities, there were paperwork technicalities and finally in March 1888 La Crosse was awarded the records by the Courts. When Rush Center refused to surrender the records voluntarily a large number of La Crosse citizens with the help of about 50 local farmers went to Rush Center and forced the hands of Rush Center and took possession of the County property. A Courthouse was erected in 1888 and continues to stand today (Figure 5) and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



**Figure 5**  
Rush County Courthouse



**Figure 6**  
Tornado funnel cloud

The Railroads helped the development of the County with the Missouri Pacific entering the County from the east out of Barton County and goes through La Crosse. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad also enters from the east and goes through Timken and Rush Center. Both railroads exit the County at its western border into Ness County.

As with most towns in Kansas, at one time or another has experienced a tornado. La Crosse is no exception, as a storm chaser crew spotted a tornado a few miles from La Crosse traveling directly towards the town, it was classified as an EF-1 tornado that damaged a four block area of the town on 25 May, 2012 (Figure 6). Two businesses were destroyed and a third received major damage. Thanks to the alert by the storm chasers there were no reported injuries.

La Crosse is the home of the Kansas Barbed Wire Collectors Association and is connected to The Antique Barbed Wire Society. A website was created providing information on the Kansas Barbed Wire Museum in La Crosse: How to start a collection; How to identify your collection; where to buy, sell or trade wire; and how to become a part of Wire Collectors Organization. One of the highlights of their annual event is “World Champion Barbed Wire Splicing Contest” using just leather gloves.

References:

- Kansas Barbed Wire Museum: <http://www.rushcounty.org/BarbedWireMuseum/BWmodern.htm>
- Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia: Timpen and La Crosse Kansas
- Blue Skyways for Rush County: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/counties/RU>

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