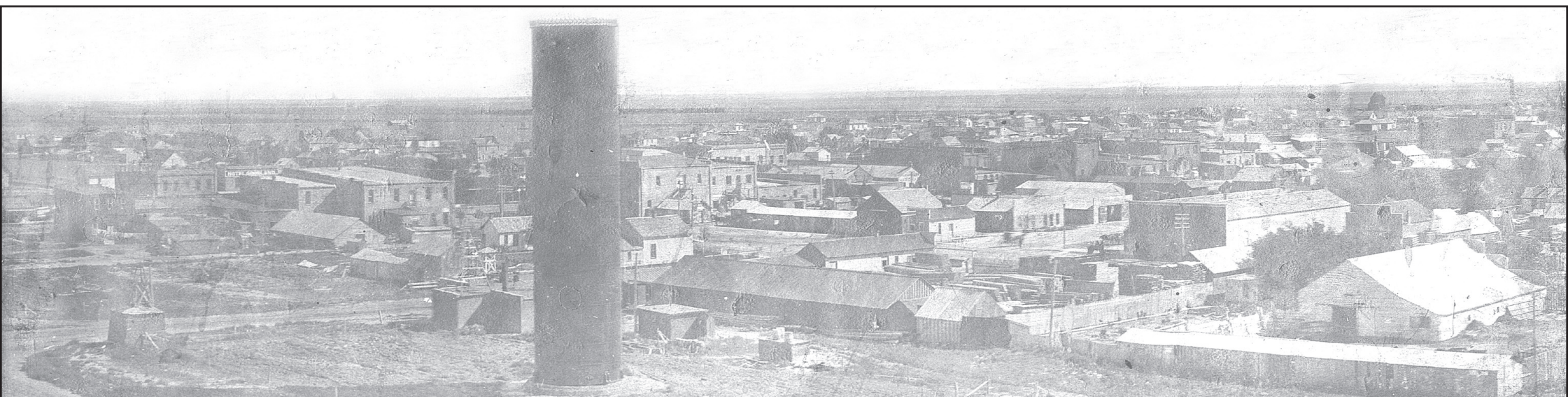


# The Goodland Star-News

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This panoramic shot of Goodland was taken in 1907 from the north part of town. In the foreground is the stand pipe which is still standing at Memory Park. In the background can be seen Main Street with its brick buildings. Copies of this picture can be seen in several places around town. This copy was discovered just last week in a back room at the Goodland Star-News office.

## Goodland born amidst county seat war

The year 1887 was a year of beginnings. In Paris, construction began on the Eiffel Tower; The Canadian government established its first national park; and the first stone was laid at what would become Stanford University in California.

It was also a year of conflict. In London, police killed three Irish protestors in what would be known as Bloody Sunday; the Hawaiian monarchy was stripped of most of its remaining authority; and German and France nearly came to war over a border skirmish.

It was those two qualities that defined 1887 in Sherman County, Kansas, as well.

The county had been settled by pioneers and homesteaders as far back as 1879 and perhaps earlier, and before long several small towns were founded. By the fall of 1886, four rival communities, Voltaire, Itasca, Eustis and Sherman Center were all vying to be the set of the county government.

Voltaire was located along the South Beaver Creek. Itasca was founded by Thomas Leonard in an area in what would later be southwest corner of Goodland. Eustis was the biggest of the four, with 24 residences. It was located in the northeastern corner of modern-day Goodland. Sherman Center was the last of the four towns to be founded, south of where Goodland Regional Medical Center is today.

With more than 400 households established, Kansas Gov. John Martin organized Sherman County on June 5, 1886. The four towns began fighting amongst themselves for the rights to the county seat. That wasn't the only controversy in the county. Cattlemen held huge tracts of land, dominating the homesteaders and allowing their large herds to roam freely throughout the county.

In July, 1886, a group of men got together and formed the Homesteaders Union Association to protect themselves from the cattlemen. They planned to support candidates in the fall election and choose a town to be the county seat. The organization grew to be the most powerful group in the county.

Then, in 1887, a man named Clark came to the county and proposed a new town between Sherman Center and Eustis. Clark believed he could secure the county seat for the new town. He named it Goodland because of Sherman County's fertile lands.

In the summer of 1887, the Association began taking proposals for a county seat. Goodland proposed an \$8,000 courthouse as well as a jail, 40 acres of fenced land, a floral hall, and a well. Sherman Center proposed \$5,000 for a courthouse as well as 40 acres of land and Eustis proposed \$3,000 and 40 acres. Voltaire had the smallest proposition. The Association voted 66 to 15 to favor Goodland's bid in the upcoming November election.

When the election results came back, Goodland was the winner with 872 of 1495 votes. Eustis received 611.



An early photo of Goodland's Main Street (above) shows the brick buildings put up after the many fires of the early 1900s, but predates the 1921 installation of the brick streets. The Short Order House (left) was one of the earliest buildings in town.

The Sherman County Historical Society



The results were contested by Eustis. A judge there claimed the election was run unfairly, and the county commissioners of Eustis tried to remain in office.

After a series of legal battles followed, going all the way to Kansas Supreme Court. Eustis refused to give up the title until January, 1888, after 85 armed members of the Homesteaders Union Association marched from Goodland to Eustis to forcibly take the county records. They were opposed by Eustis men with rifles, but no shots were fired. By May, 1888, Eustis had exhausted all its options and most residents and merchants made the move to Goodland.

## County named for general

Sherman County was authorized by the Kansas Legislature in 1873. Before that, it had been a township attached to Sheridan and later Thomas Counties. It was organized in 1886 by order of the governor after several towns and more than 400 families had taken up residence.

Like many counties in western Kansas, Sherman County was named for Union general, in this case, William Tecumseh Sherman. As a colonel in the 13th Infantry Regiment, he distinguished himself at the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861. He was

promoted to brigadier general after the battle.

He commanded the 5th Division in the Army of West Tennessee under his friend, Ulysses S. Grant, at the battles of Shiloh, Vicksburg and Chattanooga. After Grant was promoted to lead the whole Union Army, Sherman took command of the Western Theater of the war. With three armies at his disposal, Sherman invaded Georgia, eventually capturing Atlanta in 1864. He embarked on a final campaign in the Carolinas, and helped negotiate the Confederate surrender in 1865.

First settlers were looking for good ranch land

The first settlers in Sherman County were ranchers and gatherers.

In 1879, J.F. Collier moved here from Rawlins County. He and five men came to gather buffalo bones. They camped along Beaver Creek.

At the time, the county was untouched prairie, dominated by herds of wild horse, cattle, buffalo and antelope. The 1957 Sherman County Herald wrote that there were no ranches or settlements of any kind when Collier first came to the county. He settled near what would become Shermanville three years later.

In the spring of 1880, John Bray established a sheep ranch along Beaver Creek. At the same time, a Mr. Darling started a horse and cattle ranch along the Smoky Hill River, the first permanent homes in the county.

In 1882, Barney McCluskey started a ranch along Beaver Creek and in 1884, W.T. Clayton, Holmes and Cox, Jenks and more established more ranches in various parts of Sherman County.

## SHERMAN

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