

A Town Called Dogtrot the First Community of
Galatia in Barton County, KS

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History of Kansas 558

In the west-central part of the state of Kansas lies a little town called Galatia. The town is now a very small piece of land around .4 square miles. Galatia is located in Barton County around 24 miles northwest of Great Bend, the county seat. This settlement is similar to many towns in western Kansas that are considered lost or dying. These communities were very influential and helped develop Kansas as we know it today. There are many towns like Galatia that have been looked over in the past and need some help in recovering the history behind them.

Barton County itself has a very interesting history. Europeans first came to the area, at that time occupied by the Plains Indians, in 1541. When the Santa Fe Trail was developed, it went right through what is now Great Bend, and as a result, is what brought people to the surrounding areas in Barton County. When the settlers first arrived in the area in 1870, they tried to farm the land and, needless to say, their attempts were discouraging in the first few seasons. The area was also still in use by the Plains Indians and buffalo were very numerous in the area; therefore, the land the settlers were trying to farm was frequently trampled by the buffalo. Galatia and the surrounding area are now most known for and have always been known for agriculture and the great farms. In 2000 the Census Bureau reported sixty-one people in the town of Galatia, most of whom were of German and Native American descent. The population today is around fifty people and the majority of them are older people who have grown up there and have a family farm or establishment. In 1910 the Census Bureau reported a population of sixty-five people in Galatia; this tells us that for the most part it has always been quite a small town.¹ Galatia was once called Dogtrot but was renamed Galatia in 1889, likely after Galatia, Illinois.



Photo: Galatia Co-op

Source: en.db-city.com

The town has a farmer's co-op, a cemetery, and an old Lutheran church, the last two dating from its first years of existence. Galatia was an end point for the Topeka, Atchison and Santa Fe Trail Railroads, as the line was being built. Galatia used to be a busy town because of the country post office; it was a central location in which all the surrounding farms and smaller settlements could receive mail. This

was only possible because of the Santa Fe Trail and later the railroad. The post office in town opened up in June of 1889 and was closed in May of 1966.² While it originally had a two-room school, there is not currently a school in the town; so local children attend schools in nearby towns, usually Hoisington, KS. Galatia has no known newspapers; however it is often mentioned

in the [Great Bend Tribune](#) along with other surrounding city papers.

There are many reasons

Photo: Fairview Cemetery Galatia, KS

source: en.db-city.com



why we should research and explore the histories of these lost towns of Kansas. Galatia—originally Dogtrot—provided a center-place town for many dispensed people in Barton County. Some former residents still recall the bustling streets of this prairie community. In preserving its history, we also preserve the history of Kansas and other similar communities.

1. "Legends of Kansas - History, Tales and Destinations in the Land of Ahs." Legends of Kansas - History, Tales and Destinations in the Land of Ahs. <http://www.legendsofkansas.com> (accessed 17 September, 2011).
2. Frank W Blackmar. *Kansas; a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, counties, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc. ... with a supplementary volume devoted to selected personal history and reminiscence..* Chicago: Standard Pub. Co., 1912
3. Interview with Kent Nettleingham, 5 September 2011, Hoisington, Kansas.
4. " Home - Kansas Historical Society ." Home - Kansas Historical Society, <http://www.kshs.org> (accessed 16 September 2011).

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