

## Haworth: Flag Stop Town in Republic County

Republic County, Kansas

1884-1910



**Figure 1: Photograph of the Haworth town site present-day. Photo by author. The sign is one of the few reminders of the town.**

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The lost town of Haworth, located in Republic County, Kansas, was built and settled along an existing railway. Many of the inhabitants including the Haworth family were from the Midwest travelling west in search of better opportunities. This study provides a history of Haworth using maps, newspapers and photographs.

## **Haworth, Kansas: Flag Stop Town in Republic County**

A flag may convey many ideas. In the sense of country, a flag can build up feelings of powerful patriotism and pride. In other situations a flag could mean caution. However, in the long forgotten little town of Haworth, Kansas, hanging a bright red flag from the depot meant one was off on an adventure to the nearest larger town or a farmer had something to sell. The community of Haworth was surrounded by rough, rocky terrain and covered by soil called Harney Silt Loam, a dark grayish brown dirt that allowed for a variety of crops whether irrigated or dry land to be grown to which the 1880's Republican County, Kansas farmer tried to make the best of.<sup>1</sup> A wagon ride to and from the other towns, Belleville and Scandia, may have been too far to visit in one day. But, the railroad that came down from Nebraska and wandered through the northern Kansas counties of Washington and Republic then passed through Haworth and continued down to the towns of Cuba and Concordia, Kansas. This allowed the farming community to ship their livestock and other goods, such as milk and cream, to the larger areas. The town of Haworth was built around an existing railroad by a family that had a history of involvement with railroads, but it also was built to provide a sense of need, community and commerce for Republic County families in the late 1800s.

### **Early Railroad Experience**

Haworth's roots go back to the Midwest. The future founders of the little town of Haworth, Kansas, George Chalkley and Mahlon Thorburo Haworth, were born to proud parents Mahlon and Mary Haworth in the state of Indiana in 1832 and 1835 respectively. The senior Mahlon was a native of Ohio but according to Ancestry.com had moved the family to Iowa

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<sup>1</sup> "Harney Silt Loam-Kansas State Soil" United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, accessed February 8, 2013, <http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/soils/stsoi.html>

sometime before 1850.<sup>2</sup> It was in Iowa that the Haworths were exposed to a different type of railroad. The senior Haworth was a Quaker and opposed slavery; his religious beliefs endangered the family during the tumultuous time prior to the Civil War when he allowed his home to be used as a safe house for runaway slaves.<sup>3</sup> Although his participation as a safe house was morally correct, it was also legally wrong.

With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, assisting or helping hide fugitive slave became a federal offense, making all Underground Railroad activity subject to six months in prison and a \$1000 fine.<sup>4</sup>

It is unknown whether or not Mahlon was ever caught aiding slaves, but it is clear he thought the risk was worth the effort. The elder Haworth eventually sold the farmhouse and land and moved out to Kansas in the early 1880s to join his sons George and Mahlon T. In his move to the sunflower state, he brought along his tenacity, stubbornness, and grit that had guided him through the tough Civil War years.

### **Water...check...Railroad...check...Town...check**

Perhaps it was because railroads of some form ran in their blood that George and Mahlon T. Haworth founded the town of Haworth, Kansas right next to a pre-existing rail line, the Chicago, Iowa and Kansas railroad.<sup>5</sup> When looking at the 1884 Plat map of Republic County, the establishment of the little town in that specific area seemed to be perfect for the time. The track curved through the eastern portion of Republic County mostly parallel to Mill Creek; its meandering ways continued until running through Cuba, Kansas. The establishment of the town

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<sup>2</sup> Mahlon Haworth, accessed December 9, 2012, <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/1313898/person/-1498060456>

<sup>3</sup> Mahlon Haworth, accessed March 10, 2013, <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/1313898/person/-1498060456/media/6?pgnum=1&pg=0&pgpl=pid%7cpgNum>

<sup>4</sup> "What was the Underground Railroad?" National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, accessed December 12, 2012, <http://www.freedomcenter.org/underground-railroad/history/what/>

<sup>5</sup> "Atlas of Republic County, Kansas," accessed December 5, 2012, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/224009>

was a huge accomplishment for the people of Haworth because it meant that residents would not have to spend all day or more travelling by wagon to Cuba which was five miles to the south or even to Belleville, thirteen miles to the west.<sup>6</sup> Also with the establishment of the town came the post office. The Haworth Post office operated from May of 1884 to November of 1910 with George C. Haworth serving as the first Postmaster.<sup>7</sup> However, the post office was more than just a place to collect mail; it covered a need that was similar for many people in rural Kansas in the late 1800's. Residents needed a way to communicate with the rest of the world, to keep in touch with families and friends beyond their little plot of land on the prairie. Haworth was never a large town and was mostly settled by related family members.<sup>8</sup> However by 1904, Haworth sported a general store, blacksmith shop, post office, grain elevator and a train depot.<sup>9</sup>

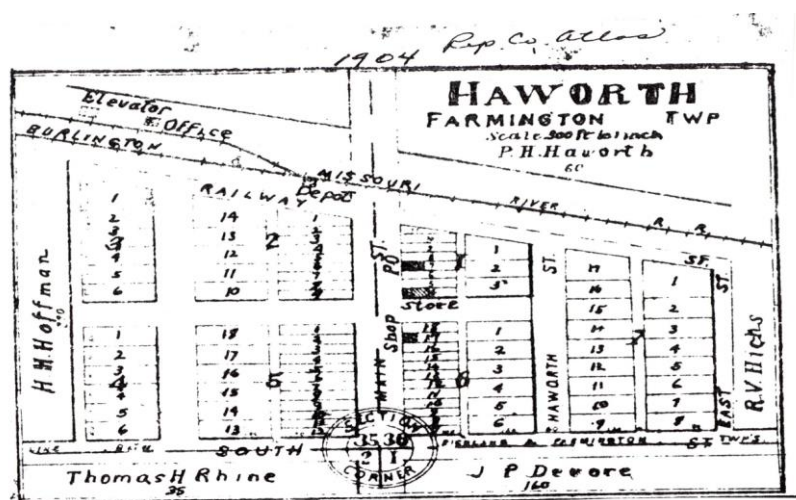


Figure 2: A copy of the 1904 Plat Map of Haworth in Republic County Kansas, circa 1904. Courtesy of the Republic County Historical Society in Belleville Kansas. The three stores blacked out on Main Street were the Post Office, General Store and Blacksmith Shop. The elevator and depot were located on Railway Street.

<sup>6</sup> Melvin D. Bruntzel, *Quick Reference to Kansas, Lost, Found, Missing Towns and Places with Selected Trivia and Truths* (Belleville, Kansas: The Print Shop, 2010)

<sup>7</sup> Melvin D. Bruntzel, *Quick Reference to Kansas, Lost, Found, Missing Towns and Places with Selected Trivia and Truths* (Belleville, Kansas: The Print Shop, 2010)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> "Standard Atlas of Republic County, Kansas," accessed December 5, 2012, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/209411>

## A Familiar Community

Maybe it was the ease of transportation or the proximity to the water source, Mill Creek, which attracted people to settle in the area. Perhaps it was the presence of the little country school named on the 1884 plat map as simply School Number Four that enticed families to settle. The idea that access to an education was located less than two miles to the northwest may have drawn many of the local children since it was the closest school. For whatever the reason that brought them, the little town of Haworth also provided the settlers with a sense of community. Although the Haworth brothers were from Iowa, both had been born in the state of Indiana.<sup>10</sup> The individuals who bought the land immediately around Haworth were mostly young Midwesterners as well. The "I" states, Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, had very little open land left for purchase so it could be the case that many moved out to the sunflower state for the simple idea of owning their own plot of land. To aid in the selling of land in one of the newest states, railroad speculators promoted the land in Kansas.<sup>11</sup> Another reason could have been the Homestead Act of 1862.<sup>12</sup> Veterans could purchase up to 160 acres of land and deduct their time in service off of the required five year residency time, at which the land would be theirs, free and clear. This could have been the motivating factor for two of the land owners, H.H. Hoffman and Lewis Jordan. Both men would have been old enough to serve during the Civil War; Hoffman was originally from Pennsylvania and Jordan was an Illinois native, states clearly involved in the

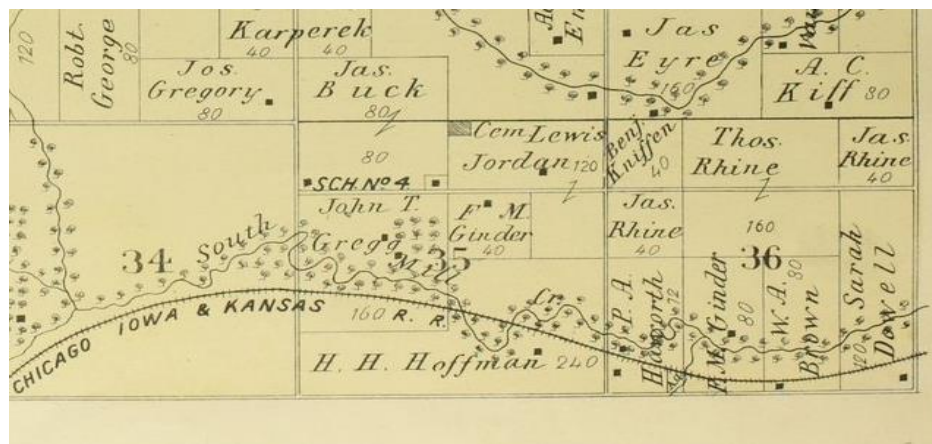
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<sup>10</sup> George Chalkley Haworth, accessed December 9,2012, <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/2814501/person/-1020342370>

<sup>11</sup> James R. Shortridge, *Peopling The Plains: Who Settled Where In Frontier Kansas* (University Press of Kansas, 1995), 128-131.

<sup>12</sup> James R. Shortridge, *Peopling The Plains: Who Settled Where In Frontier Kansas* (University Press of Kansas, 1995), 82

war.<sup>13</sup> They along with F.M. Ginder and Thomas H. Rhine and their respective families were a part of a North Midland migration; people were looking for land and opportunity.



**Figure 3: A cropped section of the Plat Map of Republican County, Kansas, circa 1884.** Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. Notice the area along the rail line; most of the settlers along this area were from the Midwest.

## Hang out the Flag

The railroad initially started out in 1884 as the Chicago, Iowa and Kansas line.<sup>14</sup> The 1904 plat map presents the railroad under the name of the Burlington and Missouri Railroad.<sup>15</sup> Finally the 1923 plat map displays the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.<sup>16</sup> Although the railroad line changed its name, the purpose of the rail did not. The rail line allowed the people of Haworth and surrounding areas a chance to travel whether it was for pleasure or to conduct business. In the business aspect the railroad allowed the farmers to ship cattle, pigs and other livestock to Kansas City or Chicago thru Cuba, Kansas. In a newspaper article provided by the Republican County Historical Society the journalist of the article, Joan Holmberg, details the importance of the train in Haworth.

<sup>13</sup> Kansas State Census Collection, 1855-1925, accessed December 9, 2012, <http://search.ancestry.com>

<sup>14</sup> "Atlas of Republican County, Kansas," accessed December 5, 2012, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/224009>

<sup>15</sup> "Standard Atlas of Republican County, Kansas," accessed December 5, 2012, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/209411>

<sup>16</sup> "Standard Atlas of Republican County, Kansas," accessed December 5, 2012, <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/224030>



The train ran twice a day and people took cream to the depot to be shipped to Concordia. There are a lot of stories about the train and depot; someone remembers riding the train to Wayne, Kansas, fare was a dime. If anyone wanted the train to stop in Haworth a red flag would be hung out, otherwise it chugged on its way...tramps and hobos used ride the train or walk the tracks and they would stop for a hand out or do odd jobs for food.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 4: A newspaper photo of Haworth stockyard, in Republic County, Kansas, circa 1933. Courtesy of Republic County Historical Society in Belleville, Kansas. Note the C, B & Q, (Chicago, Burlington and Quincy) boxcar in the background.**

## End of the Road

The closing of the Post Office in 1910 forced many of the residents into the position of travelling to the larger towns such as Cuba more often, even it were to just buy stamps or pick up a mail order product. Perhaps it was this small act that provided the beginning of the end for the small town. Maybe it was the introduction of the automobile in the early 1900's that led to the demise of Haworth; with the automobile people looking to go shopping no longer had to wait for the train. Perhaps it was both. For whatever the reason, Haworth began to decline and is only

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<sup>17</sup> Joan Holmberg, "Do You Remember When...", *The Scandia Journal*, October 30, 1997

remembered today in a few people's memories, newspaper articles and maps. The author was given a tour of the Haworth area in late October 2012 with Mr. Jim Zenger. Jim, a proud Kansas State University graduate, grew up in the area and remembers as a young child a few rundown buildings still standing in the late fifties. But as to be expected, Mother Nature and agriculture have reclaimed the land where the town once stood; the ever present and persistent eastern red cedar trees dot the landscape along the old rail road. But as evidenced by the following photos, when standing in the middle of the road and looking south, the land still shows evidence of a railroad cut. The guide and the author walked the former train line and came to an old bridge abutment that one time perhaps brought the train into Haworth. For a relatively short time period the placement of a bright red flag in Haworth, Kansas, fulfilled need, community and commerce for families in Republic County. But as time progressed, the flag faded and left Haworth behind and today all that is left today are memories and artifacts.

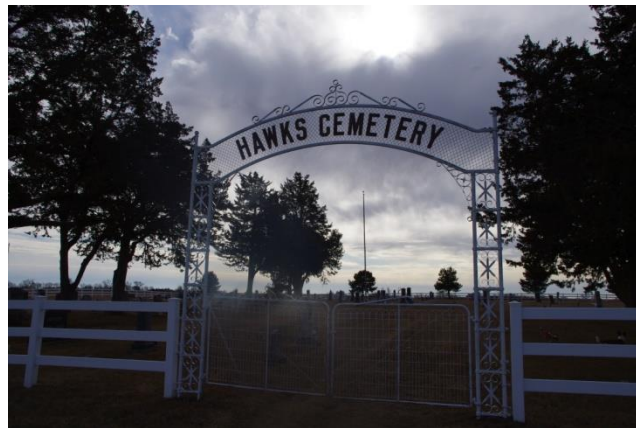


**Figure 5: Photograph of the bridge abutment. Photo by author. The bridge once carried the train into Haworth.**

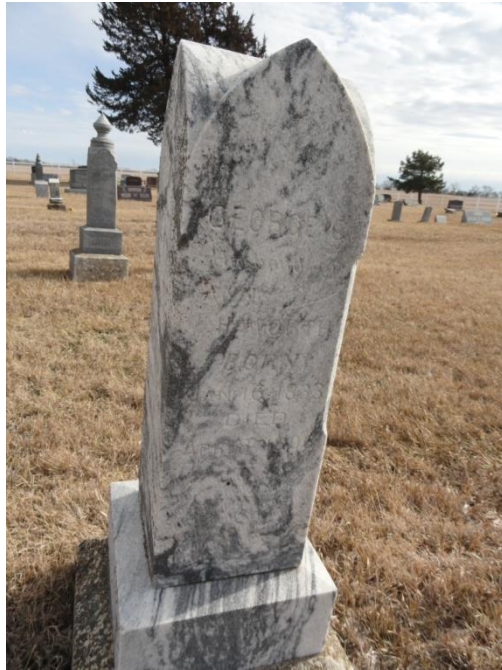




**Figure 6: Photograph of where the train tracks in Haworth used to be. Photo by author. The train would stop in Haworth if a red flag was displayed.**



**Figure 7: Hawks Cemetery in Republic County Kansas. Photo by author. Several of the Haworth family members were buried here.**



**Figure 8: Gravestone of George C. Haworth. Photo by author. George was one of the founders of Haworth and presided as its first Postmaster.**



**Figure 9: Gravestone for the elder Mahlon Haworth.**  
Photo by author. The senior Haworth previously  
resided in Iowa before coming to Kansas.

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