

Cedar Point, Chase County, Kansas: Seasonal Boating Excursions Down Main Street, 1860s to 1920s

“Mom, hurry up, Pa said the boat was ready and that he wanted to get to town early,” a little boy yelled at his mother as he ran out of the door. He was not talking about a boating excursion on the community lake or river, but of Main Street in Cedar Point, Chase County, Kansas. The seasonal flooding from the Cottonwood River had become so common that the residents of Cedar Point began to use boats as a method of transportation to get to town for shopping, social gatherings, church, or school. They would row down the street, stopping to chat with neighbors, pulling up to the raised sidewalks so they could disembark to do their shopping in the buildings of Main Street. As was the usual custom, the citizens wore their Sunday best when coming into town. This made for a strange scene, seeing well-dressed people rowing down the flooded streets. To the left is a picture of one such scene.



Figure 1 found at http://www.galenfrysinger.com/kansas_cedar_point.htm.

Several people from the eastern states settled the city of Cedar Point. One was O. H. Drinkwater who arrived in the area in 1857. He was active in local and state politics until receiving a commission of Captain when he left to serve in the Civil War. Another settler was Peter P. Shriver who came to the area following the Civil War. Together, he and Drinkwater, after returning from the Civil War, built a flour mill of wood on the Cottonwood River. After eight years, they replaced it with a three-story flour mill, which was in operation for about 100 years. This mill had the finest milled flour west of the Mississippi, and the flour it produced was shipped all over the country. Today this mill is crumbling and in need of preservation.



Figure 2 Drinkwater-Shriver Mill. Found at <http://www.kansastravel.org/drinkwatermill.htm>

Cedar Point was at one point a station on the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railroad, but when the company moved the station a mile north of the city, a decline in population followed. Today this once thriving town has only a population of 28, according to the 2010 census records.

Sources: William G. Cutler's "History of the State of Kansas." Chase County, Part 7.
<http://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/chase/chase-co-p7.html>

Stephen Perry, "Just Wandering Through Cedar Point." *Backroads Journal*, 2009.
http://www.backroadstravler.com/blog/Backroads_Journal/post/Just_Wandering_through_Cedar_point