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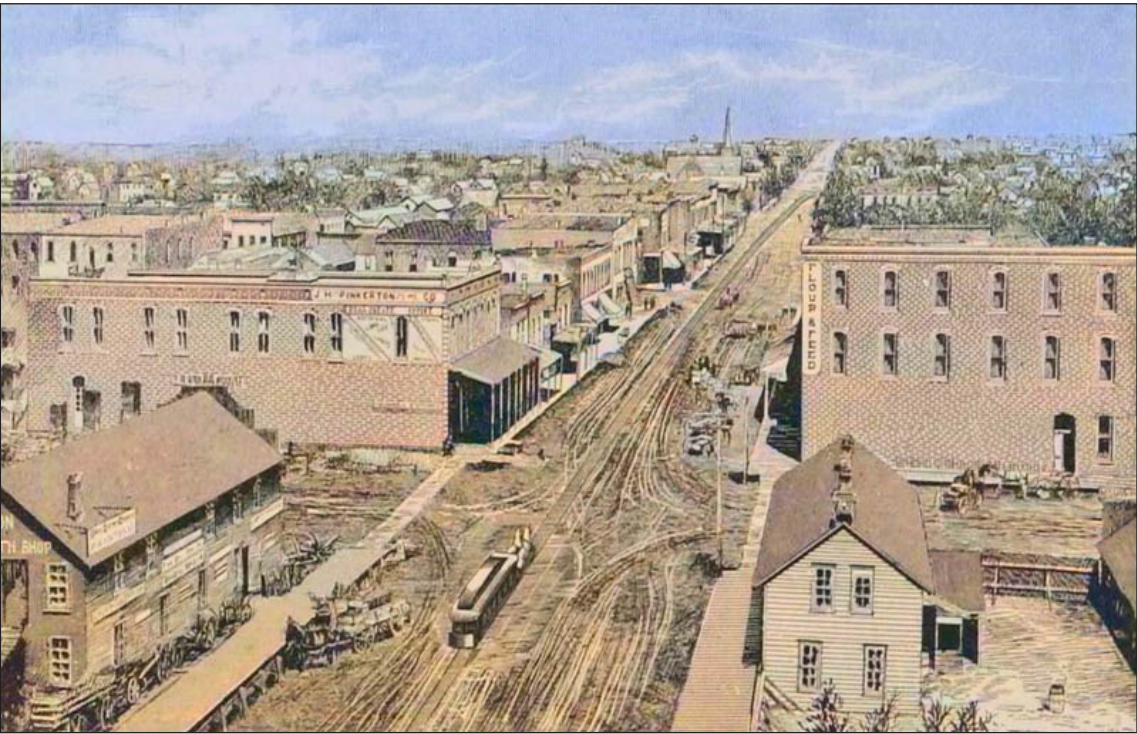
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An early view of Clay Center's Fifth Street, looking north, from the late 1800s.

Brothers backing brothers

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ELDON DANENHAUER
OFFENSIVE TACKLE
DENVER BRONCOS

FACULTY



WILLIAM DANENHAUER



2025 Piotique Edition

A special publication by *The Clay Center Dispatch*

Dexter Brothers built Clay Center

On Sunday, Feb. 11, 1912, the residents of Clay Center paid to the memory of the founder of their city a tribute which has seldom been equaled in the passing away of a citizen of Kansas. Practically the entire town met to say good-bye to all that remained of Alonzo F. Dexter.

It was a striking example that riches and power are but transitory, while a good name and kindly deeds are imperishable, immortal. Here was a man, practically without means, without immediate family, whose activities in the life of the town in recent years were slight, yet in whose death all felt a deep personal loss. From 1862, when he filed upon the lands on which the town was built, and which he named Clay Center, until the early 1880s, he was the most active force in her development. He was not only merchant, miller and town-site owner, but a benefactor to the settlers then struggling for a foothold, who, had it not been for the assistance which he so generously extended, would have suffered untold privation, while development in that section would have been greatly retarded.

Alonzo F. Dexter was a native of Vermont, born on his father's farm in Pomfret township, Windsor county, June 3, 1833. He was at his death on Feb. 9, 1912, the last survivor of a family of ten children, of whom he was the youngest. His parents both died the same year while he was a child. He was reared in the family of a relative in New Hampshire, and while yet in his teens became a factory hand in the textile mills at Lowell, Mass. In 1851, he came west as far as Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he remained one year. He next visited a sister in Illinois and while there determined to seek his fortune in the gold fields of California, an ambition which he had long nourished.

He was possessed of some means which he had inherited, but as he was still a minor and a ward of an elder brother, John, who had previously prospected throughout California with poor success, getting money for the trip was out of the question. He determined to earn his expenses in some manner and made his way by boat to New Orleans, where he secured a position as cabin boy on a packet sailing for the isthmus. In due time he arrived in the land of gold and remained there until 1862. He made his strike and cleaned up \$35,000, a

snug fortune for those days.

His mining success had made him optimistic and he now dreamed of greater success and wealth. His was a constructive mind and he purposed becoming a town builder and land owner. He came to Kansas, which was then attracting nationwide notice for its opportunities, and chose the Republican Valley as his field for operation. In imagination he saw the valley teeming with people and their activities and all of his dreams a reality. They have come true, though unfortunately others have reaped where he had sown.

He was not yet 30 years old when he came to Clay County. Soldiers' land warrants could be bought cheaply and with these he entered 4,000 acres of bottom land between what is now Morganville and Clay Center, at an average cost to him of 65 cents per acre. This land today is worth \$400,000. After considerable investigation he selected the site of the present city of Clay Center for his project, as being the most eligible for that purpose, and located as it is almost in the center of the county, he named the prospective town Clay Center.

In May of 1862, he filed on the land and in June it was surveyed and platted for him by Capt. A. C. Pierce of Junction City. During the summer he was joined by his brother, John Dexter, who was placed in charge of the enterprise, and who for many years thereafter was associated with Alonzo in his various undertakings.

Alonzo returned to California in September and there married Miss Emma Dunbar, a woman who possessed many graces of character, a true helpmeet, generous, kind hearted and ever ready to sympathize with the unfortunate and to minister to their needs. To them was born a son who died in infancy. Mrs. Dexter died in California in 1883. Her loss was the great sorrow of Mr. Dexter's life and she was sincerely mourned by those who had so often in their days of need and sorrow drawn upon her broad charity and sympathy. During the years from 1863 to 1866, Mr. Dexter and his wife spent the greater part of their time in California and New England.

In those years the settlers began to arrive and the need for a sawmill, flour mill and supply store became imperative. In 1886, an engine and boiler, purchased by Mr. Dexter the



Alonzo Dexter

previous year in Boston, arrived and a sawmill was erected on the site of the present Williamson mill, its equipment also including a burr for grinding corn. Lumber was sawed for a store building and the firm of A. F. Dexter & Brother established.

A stock of general merchandise totaling \$40,000 was purchased in Leavenworth and hauled by wagon to the new town. At this store many needy settlers got the necessities of life, literally without money and price. They had no means of subsistence nor opportunity to earn money except as Mr. Dexter could give them employment, which he always did when he had work to be done. He often hired men when they were in desperate straits to do odd jobs which were of no benefit whatever to him. Many of them, like Mr. Dexter, were hopeful, even optimistic as to the future, believing that eventually "their ship would come in," but hopes and promises to pay, when the shelves began to grow bare, were valueless to fill them again.

So Mr. Dexter mortgaged his lands—the most of his ready cash having been invested in his various enterprises—to get money for more goods. The settlers' credit still remained good at the store, however, and the mortgagee finally got the lands. More than \$18,000 was trusted out, not 20 percent of which was ever paid.

In 1867, Mr. Dexter built the first steam flour mill on the Republican river and in 1875 he constructed the first dam. July 4, 1876, saw the first flour manufactured by water power and the event was duly celebrated by the citizens. In 1878, the dam was carried away by the floods of

that year and the mill lay idle. Right here most men would have stopped. Most men would have advised and many did advise that the water power be abandoned. They had failed, however, to gauge correctly Mr. Dexter's "stick-to-it-iveness."

He remarked to a friend who observed his poking in the river with a stick, "I find that the bottom is still here" and "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Three times did he build a dam, only to have it swept away by the floods, and at last the mill was destroyed by fire, which ended the career of Alonzo F. Dexter as a miller. But his work was not lost, and today Clay Center is reaping the benefit of his indomitable pluck, courage and energy. He stuck to it until more than 15 years had elapsed, and the right to the flood lands, the use of the banks to maintain a dam across the river and to use the creek as a mill race was forever gained, and upon this franchise, gained by the perseverance of Alonzo F. Dexter, rests the right of the Williamsons to maintain their dam for furnishing power for their magnificent milling plant. Dexter lost, but in losing he had won for the town.

In 1886, he built the first electric light plant in this section of Kansas and operated it until the destruction of his mill, when it passed into the hands of Williamson, Wickstrum & Company. This loss swept away the last of Mr. Dexter's resources. Still he did not complain, but reached forward as it were into the future and began again the battle of life.

He had friends and relatives who would gladly have cared for him, but this he did not want. He wanted to be independent. He loved to work. He believed in the dignity of labor. Cheerfully, gladly, and of his own choosing he turned to such work as he could do to earn his living, rather than be dependent upon others. He taught the lesson of industry.

He was considerate of the feelings of the poor, and in early days he put men to work in his log and wood yard, piling slabs, bark and chips, and paid them wages for it, so that they might believe they were supporting themselves rather than living on the charity of others. He put men to work on his farms when all hope of a crop was gone in order to preserve the pride and dignity of men.

He was always thinking of oth-

ers. He was a good man and he loved Clay Center. The Garfield school grounds, courthouse square and Dexter Park, all gifts of his to city and county, are enduring monuments of the generous man who loved so well the town which he created. His last years were spent in comfort, free from financial worry and in contemplation of work well done, surrounded by friends who loved him for his humanity, his broad charity and cheerfulness.

When the new courthouse was completed the county commissioners and the people generally were anxious to express their recognition of Mr. Dexter's worth and services to Clay County and he was appointed (nominally) superintendent of the courthouse building and grounds, with apartments in the building and a salary, that he might in his declining years be comfortable and independent.

He received this from the people in the spirit it was given—as a just recompense for a debt which the community felt it owed. His death occurred on Feb. 9, 1912, at the residence of his niece, Mrs. Eric H. Swenson, where he had been taken at the commencement of his fatal illness. Here, surrounded by the love of kinfolk and all that wealth could procure to ease his last hours, he passed to his final sleep. His work, his good deeds, his great example of patience, industry and charity will live forever. His death marks the passing of another of those men who were given opportunity to develop a wilderness; men who possessed energy, pluck, courage, a willingness to endure hardship, to risk their all that others might find homes and prosperity. His work is finished. It was well done.

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Brothers who started town's first hardware store had two locations

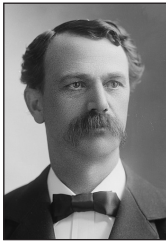
By Ryan D. Wilson
Dispatch Publisher

Not much is remembered about the brothers who ran Clay Center's first hardware store, Vincent Brothers Hardware, expect that one of them was elected to Congress and at one time, there were two stores with the same name, one on the north side of Lincoln Avenue and the other, on the south side.

Presumably, one of the Vincents had some kind of falling out with the rest of the family and started a second store in competition with the other.

We know a little more about the one who was elected to Congress than we do the other.

William Davis Vincent, who was elected as a Representative from Kansas to the U.S. House



of Representatives; was born near Dresden, Weakley County, Tenn., Oct. 11, 1852.

He moved with his parents to Riley County, Kan., in 1858 and to Manhattan., in 1864; attended the public schools and the State agricultural college in Manhattan; engaged in business in Manhattan 1872-1876; and then moved to Clay Center, Kan., in 1878.

Vincent engaged in mercantile pursuits; elected as a member of the city council in 1880; member of the State board of railroad commissioners in 1893 and 1894; elected as a Populist to the 55h Congress and served for one term in office from March 4, 1897 to March 3, 1899.

He engaged in the hardware business until his death in St. Louis, Mo., February 28, 1922.

One of the hardware store (pictured below) continued to thrive long after William Vincent passed.



An 1887 supplement of *The Clay Center Daily Times* featured images of Clay Center businesses places, includin the Vincent Bros. Hardware Store (far left) in what was called the "Opera House Block" on Lincoln Avenue. (Image Courtesy of the Kansas Historical Society)



Vincent Brothers Hardware store at 423 Lincoln Ave. in Clay Center. This photo was taken in 1935. Pictured left to right: Miss Larson (Bookkeeper), A. E. Vincent, Howard Boosey, Frank Parry, S. M. Vincent, and Will Vincent. (Photo courtesy of Clay County Historical Society)

THE VALENTINE TRADITION

Brothers launched town's two newspapers

Dispatch, Times newspapers tied together from the beginning

The Bunch

The Times, 1927 — The sale of the Clay Center Times property by D.A. Valentine to his brother Lou, who has had the management of the plant these later years, reminds one or two white haired old timers who are members of The Bunch of the sort of newspaper man D.A. Valentine was in the old days, and also of the printers he had to deal with when he was on earth that time. It must be said for him that he was one of the best news and business hustlers that ever hit Clay Center. Mighty little got away from him in either department. But his strong point was in his relationship to the force. Everything he owned, even to the rowboat in the mill race, belonged to the employees, or at least they considered it did whenever the occasion seemed to call for it. Whatever the "back room" wanted from the "front room." It got — sometimes when the "front room" was out, to be sure, but it was never supposed that anyone was fooled at all. The back room crowd even used at times of hilarity to have a little of the stuff that was deemed necessary to that hilarity charged up to the office under the head of coal oil, but it was always paid. Dell was the kind of boss who could sit up nights and give medicine when there was serious sickness in the families of the members of his force. When death came he was there with an advance of a couple of week's wages. When there were bad breaks in the news columns or the advertising he assumed full responsibility, therefore in the real old fashioned ethical way. When any of the boys got in bad — meaning, mostly, in the hands of the peace officers for some little dereliction common to those days — he helped 'em out. When he had his big birthday celebration, the twenty-eighth, the gang got most of the candy and such that was spread all over the place after the doings was over. When Uncle Max Sanders brought in a big jug of cider the outfit had it spotted in a hurry and blamed little of it did the front room crowd get, unless they moved swiftly.



D.A. "Del" Valentine

On the other hand, there was never a more loyal bunch in all the world. When some enraged individual came up to whip the editor, as happened now and then, there was an ominous gathering of the gang right close to the front room door. One young fellow would have in his hand a hardwood side stick ready for instant action. Another would be unostentatiously fingering a wicked looking kindling chopper. The mallet and planer would be in evidence. It would be a hardy bird who cared to start anything with that array of scrapping talent lined up so close by. There was Dennis McKillip, for instance, with one eye gone, his nose broken, a big scar across the top of his head, one arm a little out of true, because of having it broken in some grand ruction, but still able to jump clear over a folding table in an emergency. An old Captain Pugh, who fought through two wars and then against the Republican party the balance of his days. Who would want to go up against a gang headed like that? — not to mention that the boss himself had red hair. But **The Times** was the only paper in the world to that crowd. They swore by it. They stood for it under all circumstances. Some of the rocks they put in the foundation still bear up the structure. And any member of the old crowd, who might happen into Topeka today, would not hesitate a minute to apply to the clerk of the supreme court for money enough to get back home on. — B.F. Hemphill.

Newspaper History

(From 1881 Clay Center Book and from E. E. Hemphill)

The Clay County Independent was the first newspaper published in Clay County. E. P. Huston and David Downer bought an old press from the Junction City Union. The first number printed was August 20, 1871.

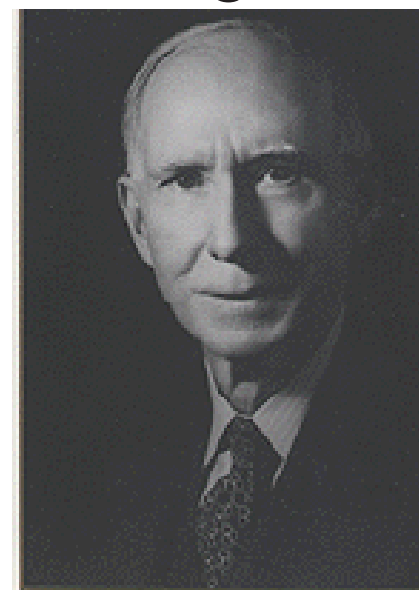
The second owner was Mr. Downer with a joint stock company, but was sold under foreclosure of mortgage in 1873. It was bought by J. W. Miller who changed the name to The Dispatch. First number, March 12, 1873.

In 1873, O. M. Pugh became owner and publisher, and while he was owner it was called The Democrat and was democratic in politics. In 1875, the paper was sold to J. H. Besack, who sold it to J. P. Campbell in October, 1876.

In January 1880, Wirt Walton & Company bought the paper. Some time between 1880 and 1883 Dell Valentine bought a half interest in the paper which he then sold to Wirt Wilton in 1883 when Dell Valentine bought "The Times."

In 1892, John B. Parks gained an interest in the Weekly Dispatch — two years later he bought the Weekly Sun which had been run for two years by Kellog & Son. In 1894, Charles Southwick bought the Weekly Dispatch and continued publishing it until the Dispatch Publishing Company was organized. Its members were C. Southwick; B. F. Hemphill, (editor); Jessie Johnson and E. E. Hemphill, managers. Two other members of the company were P. B. Miller and Mrs. C. M. Downs.

In 1914, the Dispatch Publishing Company sold both daily and weekly to the Republican. The owners were supposed to be Eric Swenson, P. N. Wickstrum, Ernest Pinkerton, L. P. Schrader, F. L. Williamson, and Fred Parrot. These men were the backers of Williamson in the Electric Light fight. The paper was bought to be used for propaganda purposes.



L.F. "Lou" Valentine

After the decision of the United States Supreme Court in favor of the city, the paper was left in the hands of Fred Parrot who ran it a number of years and later sold it to Ray Brightweiser. He (Brightweiser) sold it to the Clay Center Publishing Company in 1941.

(L.F. Valentine in the Dispatch)

The Localist was started at Clifton by Roger Cunningham, who was a mere boy of seventeen or eighteen. His father was Frank Cunningham, a minister. He moved the paper to Clay Center in January 1879, changing the name to **The Times**. His father became associated with him.

January 1, 1882, **The Times** states it was published by Miller, Linsley and Company. It later was changed to The Times Printing Company.

In December 1883, D.A. Valentine purchased **The Times**. The Times Printing Company was supposed to be Capt. O.M. Pugh, Mr. Runyan, and J.W. Miller. Mr. Runyan was the father of Damon Runyan who won fame as a writer of stories and plays. He bought an interest in 1882. Sold to Del Valentine in 1883.

When Del Valentine bought **The Times**, he sold his half share of **The Dispatch** to Wirt Walton, who owned the other half.

Clay Center brothers play for Denver Broncos in first year team existed

By **Ryan D. Wilson**,
Dispatch Publisher

Two brothers from Clay Center played for the Denver Broncos for the first year the team was in existence. You've probably heard of one of them, but maybe not the other.

It all began for the Broncos in 1960 when

Eldon Danenhauer of Pittsburg State and his brother Bill from Emporia State both made the team.

While Bill only lasted a year, Eldon played five years in Denver and was named All-AFL in both 1962 and 1965. He is little known today, but he is one of the best linemen in team history.

Both started their football career in Clay Center. Bill, who was a year older than Eldon, teamed up at CCCHS for three unbeaten seasons covering 27 games to rank as one of the top teams in the state in 1951. They both played college ball at Emporia.

Bill was an NAIA Football All-American in both the 1953 and 1955 seasons. He was KCAC All-Conference in 1954 and 1955 and co-captain of the 1954 and 1955 seasons. He played for Emporia in the 1954 Mineral Water Bowl.

Eldon also played for Emporia and later at Pittsburg State, where he made quite a name for himself his senior year. He is generally regarded as one of the greatest players in the history of the PSU football program. He earned All-American honors at tackle in 1959 and was inducted into the university's Intercollegiate Athletic Hall of Fame.

The Baltimore Colts drafted Bill in 1956. He played later with the Denver Broncos and Boston Patriots in 1960 as a defensive lineman.

While his professional career was short, Bill helped his brother Eldon get started playing for the Broncos. After leaving foot-

ball for a few years, he moved back home and worked at a gas station in Glasco, where he heard about an opportunity to play for a new team being formed in Denver as part of new league, the AFL. So he moved there and signed up with the Broncos. They asked him if he knew anyone else who cplay football pretty well, and of course he thought of his brother, Eldon.

An Associated Press All-American lineman for Pittsburg State University in 1959, Eldon played six seasons for the Denver Broncos of the American Football League as an offensive tackle.

He was named to the AFL Pro Bowl team in 1962 and 1965. On September 9, 1960, Danenhauer played in the first-ever AFL game, which matched the Broncos and Boston Patriots at Boston University Field (Denver won the game, 13-10).

Eldon and his older brother, Bill, also became the first brother combination to play in the new professional league. At 6-foot-4, 242 pounds, Eldon was called one of the best offensive linemen in the AFL during his playing days.

He was named to Pittsburg State's 100th anniversary football team in 2003 and inducted into the NAIA Hall of Fame in 1973 and PSU Hall of Fame in 1995. Born October 4, 1935 - Clay Center, Kansas. Graduated Clay Center High School, 1953; Pittsburg State University, 1960.

He also a member of the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame and the CCCHS Hall of Fame

After football, Bill coached for Adams City High School in Commerce City, Colo. In 1970, he became the defensive coordinator and assistant wrestling coach at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

In 1975, he became the head football coach at UNO. After 1977 Bill finished out his career as a scout for the NFL.

8 Amazing 8 All-Star Athletes

Bill Danenhauer, AFL player



From Clay Center, Bill Danenhauer was drafted by the Baltimore Colts in 17th round in 1956 and played for two years. In 1960, because the AFL was starting a new league and the Denver Broncos, he signed with his brother Eldon. He played for one year as a defensive lineman for the Broncos and was then traded to the Boston Patriots at the end of the season.

8 Amazing 8 All-Star Athletes

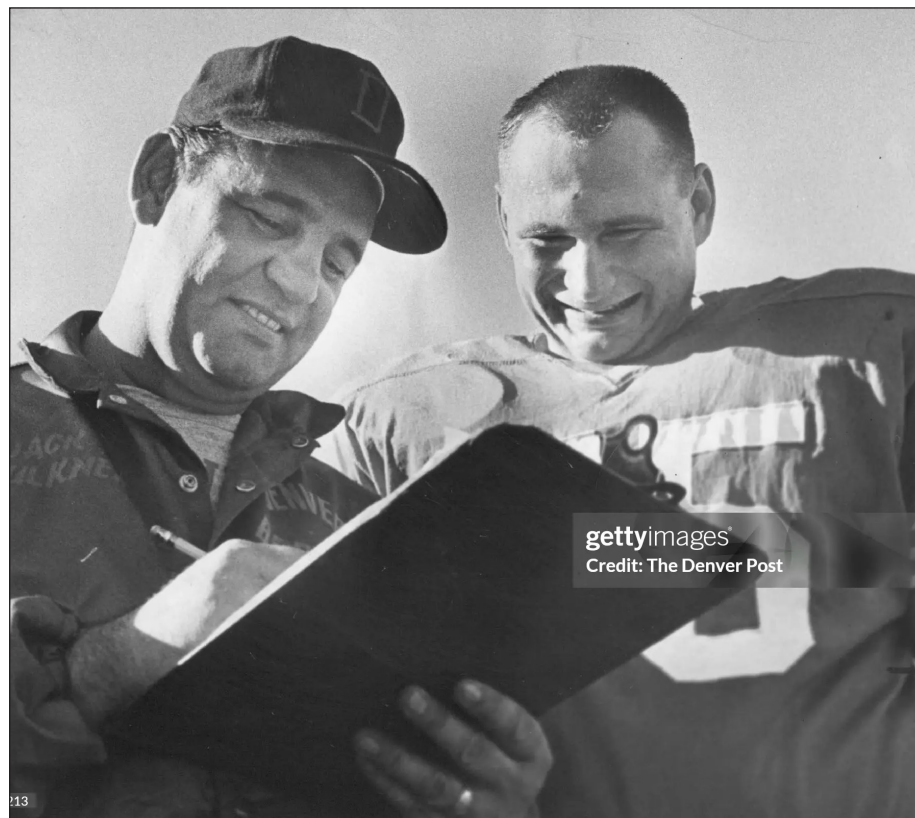
Eldon Danenhauer, AFL player



Danenhauer, born in Clay Center, played in the NFL as offensive tackle with the Denver Broncos from 1960 through 1965. He was an AFL All-Star in 1962 and 1965.



In action against the Chargers at the LA Memorial Coliseum on Dec. 10, 1960, Broncos defensive tackle Bud McFadin (No. 64) forces a fumble while LB Hardy Brown (No. 46) targets the recovery. Bill Danenhauer is in the background (left, No. 76). The team was known for their vertically striped socks, which the team reportedly hated, but many fans believe contributed to their winning season.



Coach Jack Faulkner and offensive tackle Eldon Danenhauer go over plans for the Denver Post-Denver Bronco kids football clinic Oct. 3, 1964. (Denver Post via Getty Images)

Brothers create one-of-a-kind 'Krazy Kar' with two front ends for Piotique

By Randy Rundle

It was the Thanksgiving dinner of 1959. While most of the dinner table conversation revolved around how the children and grandchildren were doing, two brothers Henry and Wilfred Abels had their own private conversation going on. The Kansas State Centennial celebration was coming up in 1961 and they decided they should build something for the occasion.

Henry remembered he had an old 1939 Chevrolet car parked out behind his barn. The brothers decide to use that car, find another one like it and build a car with two front ends welded together that would steer from both ends. It would take a little more than the usual "farm" engineering they were used to, but the brothers were always up for a challenge.

So in their spare time they got to work. They started by taking the body off of the 1939 Chevrolet car chassis. The next job was to locate a front end that was the same width as the stock Chevrolet car front end that also steered. In 1959, the choices were limited.

After a few Saturdays spent visiting all of the local salvage yards in a 100-mile radius, they determined that a Dodge Power Wagon front end was within a couple inches of being the exact same width. That would be close enough.

Because this was a low budget "fun" project the rest of the car was built using what they already had on the farm. That included replacing the bad sections of the original wiring harness with the wiring they had saved from tearing down old houses and barns.

With the Dodge Power Wagon front end installed onto the 1939 Chevrolet car chassis it was time to build the body. Turns out that 1939 Chevy cars were not an easy find locally in 1960. They found lots of 1937 models and lots of 1935 models but no 1939s. After three months of intense searching, they finally lo-

cated what they needed in a salvage yard in Manhattan.

They had to shorten the bodies of both cars quite a bit more than they originally planned, in order to get both front ends to fit onto the stock length frame. With the bodies mounted and welded together it was time to build the doors. They ruined two complete sets of doors trying to figure out how to cut and section them to fit the openings. No matter what they tried nothing worked.

Most people would have scrapped the whole project about then. Not these two! Finally after three weeks of working with door number five... they figured it out, then, all they had left to do was build a second door for the other side.

They used the stock outside door hinges and pins on one end of the doors and a large bent gutter nail for the door pin on the opposite end of the doors using the original outside hinges. They used old movie theatre seat cushions mounted on wooden box frames for the seats. They went to great pains to be sure the interior was the same inside for both ends.

Matching the steering columns, meant matching steering wheels, and same 3-speed shifters and making sure all of the linkages and pedals on the floorboards, were present and working on both ends. Matching the Dodge Power Wagon front-end to the 1939 Chevrolet Steering box turned out to be one of their biggest challenges.

When it was completed in 1960 there were 11 horns on the car. Today the car still has seven horns including the original mechanical Bull Horn.

The brothers took the "Krazy Kar" to the 1961 Kansas State Fair where it was a big hit. The car then appeared weekly at dozens of county fairs and parades throughout the state for the next dozen years. In 1973, the brothers decided the Krazy Kar had "made the rounds" so into the barn it went where it remained for

the next 39 years.

I grew up and went to high school with Benny Gibbs the grandson of Henry Abels. One January day in 2007, I got to thinking about the Krazy Kar and wondered what happened to it. I called Benny who explained after the grandparents died the car was gifted to Wilfred's oldest son Barry who lived in Denver. After Barry died it was gifted to Benny who by now was living in Austin, Texas. Benny went to Denver and got the car and hauled it to Austin where he put it into storage.

I tried to convince Benny to fix it up or I would buy it if it was for sale. He did not have much time to fix it up, he was plenty busy at work. Benny said he could not sell the car as it was a family heirloom. Not willing to give up so easy, I called on Benny's younger brother Kenton who lived in Arkansas City, Kan., and convinced him to ask Benny if he could come get the Krazy Kar so we could get it running. Benny happily agreed.

Kenton was too young to ever drive the Krazy Kar it but had fond memories of it. Benny and I did get to drive it a few times around the farm when we were in high school with strict orders not to wreck it. That was in the early 1970s after the newness had worn off.

Kenton went and got the Krazy Kar and it took most of the winter to get it running. New tires a little work on the brakes and a paint job later it looked better than it ever did. Ironically, Kenton was about the same age when he started working on the Krazy Kar as his granddad and his uncle were, when they started building it.

Its first trip out after its long hibernation was in the annual Piotique Parade in Clay Center. The car had not seen the light of day in 40 years. It was the Clay Center Piotique Parade in the fall of 1960 where the car was first driven...." to test it to be sure everything worked..." Kenton and I did the exact same thing 40 years later. Who would have thought?

Kenton and I have driven the Krazy Kar in about a dozen parades and it is a lot of fun to drive. Communication is of the essence or you will end up on the curb before you know it. We practice for about 20 minutes before every parade so we can check the width of the streets and intersections...normally if the streets are wide enough we do complete circles at intersections and crab walk down the streets. It is a handful making sure you do the opposite of what the other driver says he is going to do and watch out for kids at the same time.

In the updated version the Krazy Kar got an actual spray paint job instead of the brush paint job it had originally. Everything else is true to the original design with no other changes made. The only addition was a 1961 Kansas Centennial License tag installed on the front the car. The goal was to capture the nostalgia and experience what it was like to drive the car when it was first built. Today we can do that. Henry and Wilfred would be proud.

UPDATE — The Krazy Kar appeared in the 2017 Clay Center Piotique Parade for only the third time since it was revived in 2008. The original 1939 generator breathed its last during its last parade appearance two years ago. Time for an upgrade to a Fifth Avenue 6-Volt Alternator. Boy did that make a difference. Better starting especially when the engine was warm and while we sat for 20 minutes getting lined up in the parade the battery stayed up for the first time ever.

It also got a gear driven electric fuel pump to help out the tired mechanical pump. That combined with one-gauge replacement battery cables made a huge difference in the cranking power of the car. it was an obvious upgrade to me but the family had to weigh the decision of changing the car from the way it was originally built. In the end, they decided that if the two brothers had known of these upgrades, they would have used them.

None of the changes are permanent, everything is bolted on and can be put back at any time. We have had to push start the Krazy Kar in the past and we always knew better than to shut it off at the end of a parade, unless we could park on a hill. I had been campaigning for these upgrades for a while. Finally it was time.

Now the car is much more fun to drive. We had a film crew from Wichita come to Clay Center for the Friday Night Cruise Night and yes we drove the Krazy Kar in Cruise Night. It was a first drive in the dark. Doing the circles in the street and watching the headlights shine off the buildings is kind of an erie sight. We had no idea we were being filmed until the next day at the car show, they tracked us down for an interview and a demonstration. We even put the camera man on the running board and he filmed us doing circles... figure 8s... and crab walking. He said that was a first in all his years filming car shows. Guess he has never hung around us Krazy Kar drivers before.



Henry and Will Abels completed the Krazy Kar in 1960. it was in many parades, including Piotique.

9 Innovative 9 Inventors

Randy Rundle, 6-volt alternator



Rundle invented a 6-volt alternator and 40 other products for antique cars. In 1985, he started Fifth Avenue Antique Auto Parts in his garage, eventually opening a store in downtown Clay Center in 1993. His products were used in antique cars in several movies, including "Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull."

Family inspired this year's parade grand marshal to go into teaching

Chance brought Brad Conner to Clay Center

Brad Conner's story is rooted in hard work, family, teaching, and a true love for the Clay Center community.

Brad grew up in the Sandhills of Nebraska. His dad was a John Deere dealer, and his mom was a home economics teacher. For his 5th-grade birthday, he was given a lawnmower — and 10 jobs to go with it! From there, he worked in his dad's store, helped put up center pivots, and even built houses alongside his industrial arts teacher before heading to college.

It was by chance that Brad found his way to Clay Center. After interviewing for a teaching job in Houston, he bumped into Dean Oberhelman, the assistant superintendent of USD 379. That quick coffee conversation led him to interview in Clay Center — and eventually build his life here.

Brad and his wife, Marabeth, married in 1990 and raised two daughters. Brenna, a K-State graduate in fashion design, worked for Abercrombie & Fitch and Hollister before moving back to Wichita with her husband, Christian, an architect. They are expecting their first child this November! Payton, their youngest, also graduated from K-State and now works at Citizens State Bank in Marysville, where she lives with her husband, Drew, who is a draftsman.

Marabeth has been deeply in-

involved in the community as well — working at the Chamber of Commerce, helping with parades, and now serving as church coordinator at the Methodist Church.

Outside of teaching, Brad has always loved woodworking ("my therapy," as he calls it), family and military history, and volunteering. He's traced his family roots back to England — with surprising connections to Helen Keller, Jane Austen, and even Princess Diana! These days, he enjoys helping at the museum, church, and taking part in community projects.

When asked what inspired him to teach, Brad shared that education runs in his family — both parents and his sister were teachers. But it was his industrial arts teacher and basketball coach who truly mentored him, showing him what it means to teach and serve others.

And when it comes to Piotique, Brad said, "Piotique is a way of celebrating where we were and where we are now — and how progressive this town has become. The growth is incredible, and the generosity of this community is unlike anywhere else. Nebraska may be my hometown, but Clay Center is my home."

We are proud to celebrate Brad and his story as part of this year's Piotique traditions!

-- Courtesy of Grow Clay County



Brad Conner, left, stands with his wife, Marabeth, and son-in-law Drew Kuckelman, daughter Payton, daughter Brenna and son-in-law Christian Kaufman at Drew and Payton's wedding in 2021. (Courtesy Photo)

2025 PIOTIQUE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, September 26th

10:00AM.....Multi-Generational Life Center Groundbreaking Ceremony

6:00PM..... 14th Annual Cruise Night

Saturday, September 27th

Foods, Crafts, Train Rides, FREE Bounce Houses, & MORE

- 6:15AM.....10K & 2M Race Check In - Main Stage
- 7:00AM.....10K & 2M Shot Gun Race Start
- 8:00AM.....Vendors Open - Courthouse Square
- 8:00AM.....BPW Car Show - Dexter Park (Registration 7:30-10:30AM)
- 8:00AM.....Clay County Antique Power Association Display - Lincoln Ave between 5th and 6th
- 8:00AM.....Sidewalk Art Contest - 440 Lincoln Ave, Clarity EyeCare
- 8:00AM.....Full Circle Kiting & Events - North of CCCHS Softball Fields
- 8:00AM.....FREE Screenings by Clay Center Lodge #134 - Clay County Museum until 11:00am
- 8:30AM.....Bike Decorating Station - The Rex Theatre
- 8:30AM.....Petting Zoo Opens - Little Learners Childhood Connections
- 9:00AM.....New Exhibits - Clay County Museum from 9:00AM-5:00PM
- 9:15AM.....LIFT T-Rex Race - 5th St between Lincoln & Court
- 9:30AM.....Tribute Video - The Rex Theatre
- 9:45AM.....Kiddie Parade - Line Up at The Rex Theatre at 9:30
- 10:00AM.....Grand Parade Line-Up - West Court Street
- 10:00AM.....Topeka Drumline Performance - In front of Main Stage
- 10:00AM.....Bounce Houses Open - North Side of Courthouse
- 11:00AM.....Beer Garden Opens - Lincoln Ave between 5th and 4th
- 11:00AM.....Grand Parade - Apollo Towers to Courthouse to Fire Station
- 12:00PM.....FREE Horse Drawn Carriage Rides - Court Street
- 12:30PM.....The Grace Notes - Inside Common Ground
- 12:30PM.....Rock Wall Opens - South Side of Courthouse Square
- 1:00PM.....Pie Baking Contest - NE Corner of Courthouse Square
- 1:00PM.....The Dance Company Performance - Main Stage
- 1:45PM.....Stark Dance & Baton Studio Performance - Main Stage
- 2:00PM.....Pie Eating Contest - NE Corner of Courthouse Square
- 2:15PM.....Tribute Video - The Rex Theatre
- 2:30PM.....Announce Contest Winners - Main Stage
- 4:00PM.....Vendors Close - Courthouse Square
- 6:30PM.....Jayhuskers Race - Clay County Fairgrounds Race Track
- 8:00PM.....Time Rebellion Concert - Beer Garden
- 9:30PM.....Beer Garden Closes

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About the cards in this edition ...

The Dispatch's next big project will be an 'Old Maid' deck j cards featuring famous Clay Centerites we intend to release for Piotique of 2026, which will be the 90th Anniversary of the event.

The cards you see in this edition

(including the one below) are draft versions of those cards.

If you'd like to sponsor this or another card, contact Melanie Musselman at dispatchadrep@gmail.com.

You can also pre-order a deck on our website, www.union-dispatch.com.

com/shop and view more draft versions of cards under the Facebook group, "Clay Center Dispatch Archives."

Please let us know what you think by leaving a comment under one of the cards or send a recommendation to newseditordispatch@gmail.com.

The Old Maid

Cathy Haney, Museum Founder



As its first president, Haney started the Clay County Historical Society with 20 members on the second floor of the Clay Center Public Library in 1972, which became the museum when it moved into the old city hospital in 1975 and later moved to its current location on Lincoln Avenue in 2017. She served as curator until her death in 2016.

JAYHUSKER RACING

Saturday, September 27

Clay County Dirt Track

Clay County Fairgrounds at 12th & Bridge

6:30 p.m. Hot laps

7 p.m. RACES BEGIN

\$5 for K-8
\$10 for Adults
\$35 Pit Pass

Concessions by TCB Street Eats and Chilly Hillbilly Beer Garden provided by Blake's Bar and Grill

Sponsored by Glavan Ford

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ENJOY PIOTIQUE!

We are proud to continue serving Clay County as we have for more than a half century.

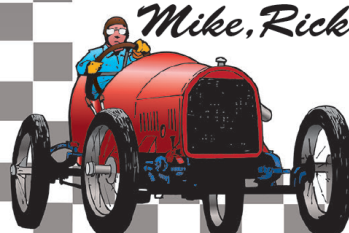
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See our NEW Coats of the Prairie, an interactive animal fur exhibit and Stars, Rainbows and Swords, Oh My!, a rotating display showcasing the Masonic organizations of Eastern Star, Rainbow for Girls, Masons, and others.

OPEN PIOTIQUE
Saturday, Sept. 27
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Clay County Museum
518 Lincoln Ave.
Clay Center
785-632-3786
Tues-Sun 1 to 5 p.m.
FREE ADMISSION