

Dr. J. S. Hidden, one of the builders of Centralia, was the first surgeon in New England to use chloroform as an anesthetic. Surgery was little resorted to in those pioneer days. When it was, a patient was just supposed to grin and bear it. Dr. Hidden was the first regular practitioner in Nemaha county, and served in the Kansas legislature in 1863 and 1864. Prior to his removal to Kansas he had served in the New Hampshire legislature.

F. P. Baker, who was the old Centralia lawyer, and later became proprietor of the Centralia "Commonwealth" is also one of Centralia's original men of brains. The Topeka "Commonwealth" nourished many brilliant newspaper men of Kansas, men who have been and are the real fathers of Kansas. Associated with Mr. Baker on the "Commonwealth" was the late Noble L. Prentiss as local editor. Later Mr. Prentiss was editor of the Atchison "Champion," and when he died he was writing the Starbeams on the Kansas City "Star." It was Mr. Prentiss who gave the name "Herd Book" to Andreas' old History of Kansas, which has clung to the volume up to date, and always will. Mr. Prentiss was in Chicago when the proofs of the old history were brought into the office where he was a visitor. He looked over the proofs. "Well" said the Kansas wit, "you seem to have the whole herd here." The story was printed and when the book came out it was heralded as the "Herd Book," and so it remains to day. Few know that the book was compiled by one Andreas. Henry King preceded the Centralia Mr. Baker as editor of the "Commonwealth." Mr. King died within the past year, having been editor of the St. Louis "Globe-Democrat" for many years before his death. At a meeting of the National Editorial Association in Lawrence in 1914, Mr. King was one of the speakers, when he protested his love for Kansas above all other lands. His will left a portion of his wonderful library to Kansas. It is now in the Memorial Building in Topeka. Thomas Benton Murdock, late editor of the El Dorado "Republican," and called the "Beau Brummel" of the Kansas press, and an uncle of Victor Murdock, Congressman for many years from Kansas, was manager of the "Commonwealth" when it was owned by the Centralia lawyer. There hasn't been a lawyer located on the Centralia townsite for eight years, and the Centralia jail has no prisoners, in spite of the fact that it is steam heated.

Centralia would naturally erect a school building in which to properly house her school children, and in 1872 a building was erected at a cost of \$2,500. J. S. Stamm as the first teacher. The cyclone which swept the county in 1882 destroyed the building, and a building costing \$6,000 was put up in its place, which opened with 175 pupils, with O. M. Bowman as principal.

In 1906 the school building was burned and nothing was saved. The city of Centralia, progressive, literary, then erected a real school building. Grades and high school were included in one handsome structure, which cost \$18,000. This building included furnaces, dry closets, modern ventilation system, and the school board visited Kansas City.