

Echo Lake

Feb 5, 1890

Col. Wm. Patterson was proposing a second canal beginning 26 miles upriver from Kearney. It would go from the Platte to the foothills and follow the foothills east. When it reached Kearney it would be 60 feet above Echo Lake. A tail into the lake would allow for drainage of whatever amount of water was needed by the water power company. The canal would then continue on east to Wood River when it would provide water power for milling purposes and irrigation all along the way.

Dec. 21, 1890

Describing construction of the cotton mill in the northwest corner of West Kearney between Echo Lake and Highland Boulevard.

Cotton Mill Tenement Bids

A number of local builders have handed in bids for construction of the forty tenement cottages to be erected for the use of the Kearney Cotton mill. The tenements are built after designs of Ernest Brabrook and each tenement will have four rooms and a summer kitchen. They will be located just south of Echo Lake on the west side of the draw to be used as a tailrace for the water from the mill. The bids were received by Mr. Cumnock Saturday night and the award made the first of the week. Work will begin on them soon.

April 22, 1898

Due to foreclosure by the Union Trust Company of New York, the Kearney Canal and Water Supply Company was to be sold on May 24th. The site of the sale was in front of the Kearney Electric Company building near the end of the canal.

Property included:

“Also all reservoirs, dams and lakes connected with and forming a part of said Canal, including the three lakes known as ‘Lake Echo’ ‘Lake Greenwood’, and ‘Lake Kearney’.”

Cottonmill Lake

Jan. 8, 1900

First use of name Cotton Mill Lake in the Hub in story about Nelson murder.

Kearney Hub – May 29, 1905

--In the large basin of the fountain in the Kearney Grocery company's store is a curiosity in the shape of a silver bass weighing nineteen and one half pounds. This monster fish was caught by Mr. Travelpiece in the cotton mill lake and is the largest specimen of its kind ever caught in these waters.

Nov. 9, 1910

Repairs having been completed, the canal, owned by the Kearney Electric and Power Company, was being opened. Cotton Mill Lake would fill first and about a week later Kearney Lake would be full and electric power generation would begin. People in Kearney would be glad because the cost of electricity will be 25% lower.

July 29, 1911

Citizens were invited to go out Saturday to the rifle camp beyond cotton mill lake to watch the Norris Brown Guards rifle practice.

June 21, 1920

A man from Axtell, Ed Miller, drown in cotton mill lake. He and four friends had come to the lake for a Sunday afternoon of fishing. About 3 p.m. he decided to go swimming. People rarely swam there because of the uneven, muddy bottom and drop-offs and reed overgrowth. Miller had gone out quite a ways from the shore when he had a cramp. His brother tried to wade out to him but could not reach him. The others drove over to the amusement park for help but it was too late when they got back. It was 6 p.m. by the time his body was finally found in 8 feet of water in an arm of the lake some distance from where he went down. The lake was 20 feet deep where he went down.

June 4, 1921

Quite a number of Kearney people spent Memorial Day at cotton mill lake fishing and picnicking. Quite a number of fish were caught.

BCHS Archives file –

Like it Was –

1952 Annual Hub carriers picnic at stone lodge at Cottonmill State Park

Hub – 1973

The park has 107 acres

Cottonmill Lake Recreation Area owned by NE State Game Commission

Ceded to Buffalo County & City of Kearney

Approved by State Legislature 46-0 with emergency clause to take affect as soon as the governor signed the bill.

Bill was sponsored by Sen. Gerald Stromer, Kearney, Sen. Maurice Kramer, Aurora, and Sen. Dennis Rasmussen, Scotia.

Other State Recreation Areas transferred to local government ownership were Stolley Park to Grand Island, Arnold Recreation Area to Custer County, and Long Bridge Special Use Area to Merrick County.

Bill was first introduced two years earlier but was attached as a rider to another bill which was vetoed.

Dean Canon was chairman of the County Board of supervisors

Ray Lundy was Kearney City Manager

A separate Board was to be created.

They plan to apply for federal and state funds to help with reconstruction. Plan to hard surface roads and parking areas, put in domestic water system [irrigation type well for swimming area], restrooms, playground equipment, lighting, caretakers home, mechanical shop and equipment storage.

No plans to dredge the lake.

Hub – May 1, 1973 –

County Board approved the Cooperative Agreement with the city. Vote was 6-1 with Ray Johnson voting against because he thought we have enough parks in the Kearney area.

[Since then Kearney has added 4 parks – Baldwin, Harvey, West Lincoln Way, Yanney]
City Council had already voted on the agreement.

Advisory Cottonmill Lake City and County Recreation Park Board was established

2 Kearney residents appointed by the mayor

2 County residents appointed by the County Board

1 person chosen by the other 4

[At some point between then and now a change was made to put Cottonmill Park under the responsibility of the city parks advisory board.]

Hub – July 20, 1973 –

Kearney budgeted \$143,000 for Parks & Recreation. Most was to be used for development of Cottonmill Lake.

City and County to take over the 98.4 acre lake area from the State on Jan. 1

Kearney liked it for the camping and outdoor cooking opportunities not available in other city parks

Hub – undated –

Pictures of the stone lodge in 1940 when it was built and the present [1974?]

Originally had stone chimneys at each end. Big one at north end for fireplace. Smaller one at east end. [Was there a fireplace there also?]

Stone retaining wall across the front by the road was originally even with the top step and extended clear across the front of the lodge.

Second picture shows remnants left.

Hub – Dec. 23, 1974 –

Picture of work on shelter at north 4end of lake at the city-county park.

Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

Cottonmill Lake was purchased from U. S. Trust in 1960 for \$40,000.

<http://company.monster.com/ustrust/>

The U.S. Trust Corporation is one of America's oldest investment management and trust companies. Founded on Wall Street in 1853, U.S. Trust's earliest clients were entrepreneurs - railroad barons, merchants, shipbuilders, industrialists - and the corporations they created. Later, we helped their heirs preserve the wealth these pioneers built.

http://www.forbes.com/markets/2006/11/20/bank-of-america-markets-equity-cx_jl_1120markets12.html

Bank of America To Buy U.S. Trust
Josh Lipton 11.20.06, 5:02 PM ET

Bank of America announced Monday will that it will buy U.S. Trust, the wealth-management subsidiary of Charles Schwab in all cash deal for \$3.3 billion. The resulting entity will be the largest manager of private wealth in the U.S.

Based on assets under management by private banks, Bank of America is currently the second largest manager of private wealth in the U.S., while U.S. Trust is the fourth. The combined entity will be first, according to Bank of America, with a total of \$261 billion in assets under management.

Schwab first bought U.S. Trust for about \$2.8 billion in 2000...

Ownership of Cottonmill Lake Land

Based on Register of Deeds Office records & Kearney Hub

First owned by United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase

Kearney Canal and Water Supply Co. when the Kearney Canal was constructed.

The company became part of the George Frank property when he purchased 4/5 of the stock in 1885

The Canal Co went bankrupt in 1898. The lake was listed as part of its property in a public notice of bankruptcy proceedings in the Hub

Sold in Sheriff's sale to the mortgage holder

Union Trust Company of New York, holder of the mortgage, became the new owner

Zada Lancaster (wife of Charles Lancaster), **280 Acres** [Did not write down the date of purchase but it was sometime before 1919.]

Zada nee Stoddard lived with her family in the C. Hanson house on 9th Ave. across the street south of the Bartlett House. It had been purchased by Stoddard in 1891. He was a celery farmer south of Kearney. She married Charles Lancaster in 1896. They lived with her parents at least 14 years. Charles worked on the celery farm & raised sheep at Newark until 1910. In March of that year they moved to a farm near Empire Ranch, in Odessa Township. From about 1912-1915 or so Charles was a manager at Watson Ranch

According to the **1919 Buffalo County Atlas** Zada & Charles were now living on the "Lancaster Ranch" which included all of Cottonmill Lake except for two north fingers extending into the north half of the section which was owned by the Nebraska Land and Livestock Co.

Then came several years of financial difficulties and 2 mortgages. The first was with the United States Trust Company of Omaha, Nebraska. The land was the collateral for this mortgage. The second, taken out on Oct. 8, 1924, was held by the American State Bank of Kearney. Crops, farm equipment and livestock were collateral for this loan.

By March 29, 1929 both mortgages were in the process of foreclosure. The Lancasters agreed to continue to operate the farm until Sept. 1, 1929. On that date there would be a sale of farm equipment and livestock. The proceeds of this sale plus all crops raised that summer were to be applied toward their debt on the second mortgage.

On Dec. 30, 1929 the property was sold at a Sheriff's sale to satisfy the debt to the United States Trust Company.

United States Trust Company

Purchased for the amount of the Lancaster note, \$9,830.00

January 13, 1930 – A Sheriff's Deed of Record deeded the land to the United States Trust Company

State of Nebraska

May 19, 1930_– The United States Trust Company transferred ownership by Warranty Deed for \$4,000.00

Developed into a state recreation area with boating, picnicking, and camping – The stone lodge was built in 1940

It was placed under the jurisdiction of the State Game Commission

City of Kearney/Buffalo County Joint Ownership

1971 Legislative session – A bill to transfer some State properties to local governments was first introduced and attached as a rider to another bill which was vetoed.

1973 Legislative session – A new bill was submitted on its own, not as a rider. It was approved by 46-0 vote. This bill was sponsored by Sen. Gerald Stromer, Kearney, Sen. Maurice Kramer, Aurora, and Sen. Dennis Rasmussen, Scotia.

State Recreation Areas transferred from State Game Commission to local governments

Stolley Park to Grand Island

Arnold Recreation Area to Custer County

Long Bridge Special Use Area to Merrick County

Cottonmill Lake to Kearney and Buffalo County - **107 acres**

Locally

Dean Canon was chairman of the County Board of supervisors

Ray Lundy was Kearney City Manager

A separate Advisory Board was to be created.

Apply for federal and state funds to help with reconstruction.

Plan to hard surface roads and parking areas

put in domestic water system [irrigation type well for swimming area]

restrooms

playground equipment

lighting

caretakers home

mechanical shop and equipment storage.

No plans to dredge the lake.

May 1, 1973 – County Board approved the Cooperative Agreement with the city.

Vote was 6-1 – one member, Ray Johnson, thought we had enough parks in the Kearney area. [Since then Kearney has added 4 parks – Baldwin, Harvey, West Lincoln Way, Yanney]

Advisory Cottonmill Lake City and County Recreation Park Board was established

- 2 Kearney residents appointed by the mayor
- 2 County residents appointed by the County Board
- 1 person chosen by the other 4

[At some point between then and now (2008) a change was made to put Cottonmill Park under the responsibility of the city parks advisory board.]

Kearney City Parks & Recreation Department – Now (2008) responsible for the park & lake
Each year at budget time the county allocates an amount to the city for its share of the Cottonmill Lake expenses.