

Part VI – Boom Businesses

Businesses & Factories during the Boom

Boom Period Businesses – Started and Closed during the Boom Period

Name of Company	Opened	Closed
Metcalf Cracker Factory	1888	1891
City Marble Works	1889, 3-1	1893
Kearney Broom Factory	1889	1893, Apr
Grain Meter Manufacturer	1889	1892?
Kearney Planing Mill	1889, July	1890, 2-17
Soap Factory	1889, Nov	1891, July
Paper Mill, Kearney	1889, Dec	1890, 4-8
Harding's Planing Mill	1890, Apr	1890, 8-7
Nebraska Fence Company	1890, 4-20	1893
Great Western Hinge Factory	1890, 5-10	1891
Kearney Manufacturing (Foundry)	1891	1893
Oat Meal Company, Kearney	1892, 1-23	1893, 2-3
Kearney Shirt Factory	1892, May	1893, Feb
Western Bottling Co.	1892	1893
Plow Manufacturing Co., Kearney	1892, Sept	1893
Kearney Steel Bridge Co.	1892	1893
Paper Mill, Kearney (again)	1893	1893
Tool Company	Never open	
Kearney Woolen Mill	Never open	

Not e opening years

1888 – 1

1889 – 6

1890 – 3

1891 – 1

1892 – 5

1893 – 1

17 openings (16 businesses)

Two Never Opened

Tool Factory

Location: east near coal chutes 3-4 blocks east of Q

Comments: City subscribed \$1,400.

Ready to do business at end of Aug 1889

Financing fell through; never opened,

Left a new, empty building

West Kearney Woolen Mill Company

Location: North side of railroad at 30th St in West Kearney

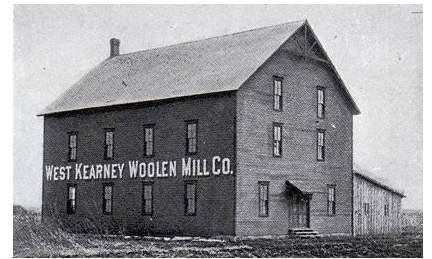
Comments: Started building in summer of 1889

Kept promising to open all fall

Planned to open a flannel shirt factory

Nothing happened – sat empty

Proposal in 1893 to make it a mattress factory - nothing



The Rest Opened

Metcalf Cracker Factory

Location: 2009 1st Ave. (by Tollefsen-Elliot)

2-story building with maple floors.

Built by W. T. Scott

Cost \$5000. Scott was paid \$500

Years of operation: Opened after Aug 1888

1890 – Metcalf tried to stay in business without joining the cracker trust

He was \$10,000 in debt.

A group of 25 cracker companies merged as Am. Biscuit & Manufacturing Co.

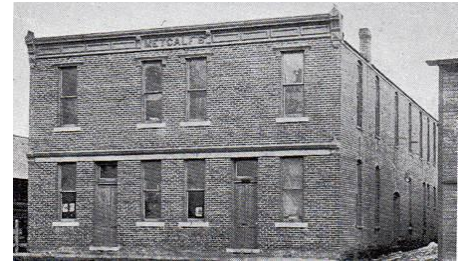
Metcalf sold to them and stayed on as manager. Metcalf Bakery

1891 – This organization became a second trust.

Factory operated a few months, then closed and dismantled.

For the next year Metcalf tried to reopen

Oct 1892 – Scott foreclosed on a mechanics lien and became owner of building.



City Marble Works – marble & granite tombstones

Kearney Broom Factory

Location: First location unknown

Years of operation: Open before June 1, 1889 then closed

1893 - New start – New broom factory

In old laundry building on 19th St.

just vacated by the fence factory

March 1, 1893 – first broom made, not all machinery here yet.

Broom corn wired onto a stick,

April - shipped 100 dozen brooms to Grand Island, also selling to Omaha.

Planning to put in machinery for making whisk brooms and brushes

Then nothing



Grain Meter Manufacturer

P Barker (age 75) granted a patent for the World Grain Weigher and Loader

Location: Corner of 19th & Central - Manufacture and sold

Also manufactured sash locks

Two Planing Mills

1. Kearney Planing Mill

Location: south of railroad on tailrace

Products: sash, doors, blinds, storm windows, turning and ornamental work, stairs

Years of operation: Fall 1889 - Feb 17, 1890 – burned
Exterior rebuilt, tried to reopen, didn't

2. Harding's Planing Mill

Location: 15th between Central & A (Near the courthouse)

Harding started building 2 months after the other one burned

Years of operation: End of May - Aug. 7. 1890 - Burned –
Someone seen running from the bldg just before fire

Products: scroll work, odd size sash, door, windows.

Soap Factory

Location: On Platte ½ mile east of bridge

Years of operation: Nov 1889 – mid-1891

Nov. - built a brick rendering house.

Next spring built soap factory

Kearney Paper Mill

Location: East of the Woolen Mill in West Kearney, north of tracks

Product: Kraft paper

Years of operation: 1889 – 1892

June 1889 – Building being constructed.

Brick, 190 feet long.

Main machinery room 125 feet wide, one story high.

Remainder holds boiler & digester and is 3 stories high with corrugated iron roof

Electric motor

Side track from UP runs on north side of building and on to woolen mill.

Aug 23, 1889 – Storm caused \$4,000 damage to the building.

City had promised a \$7,000 subsidy.

R. M. Johnston, manager, was trying to get that promised money

Dec. 1889 – Repairs complete. started production

April 8, 1890 – Windstorm blew down the paper mill [again]

Part of north wall of one-story section down.

Roof on 3-story section fell into basement taking down north & south walls.

No tornado insurance, just fire insurance

Machinery not damaged much. Roof fell on it and protected it.

Apr 23 - June 1890 – Rebuilding



Electric motor replaced with 112 hp motor steam powered.
Cheaper than electricity.

[Nothing happened]

Feb 1892 –Mortgage foreclosure- “sheriff’s sale”

Sept. 1892 – Someone from Beatrice leased the mill.

Feb. 24, 1893 –Opened - Ran 4 months day & night

Used up to 12 tons straw per day.

Took 8 hrs start to finish 8,000 lbs paper daily

25 employees

June 21, 1893 – Half their straw burned

June 22, 1893 – Closed - financial trouble

Property was cleaned up, caretaker left in charge, farmed next to mill

Nebraska Fence Company

Location: New 2-story building at unknown location

Years of operation: spring 1890 for a few months – closed

Opened in fall 1891

May have reopened in an old laundry building on corner of 19th & 1st Ave.

Feb 1893 – Moved one building west.

Product: Wire & slat fence.

Hardwood pickets dipped in oil and galvanized wire.

EVOLUTION OF A BUSINESS

Great Western Hinge Works –

B. F. Levering patented a hinge in 1890

Built a 24x50 two-story building, a 24x50 one-story building & ¼ acre of sheds

Purchased the tool factory building to use for light work and finishing.

Built a large addition built on tool factory

Location: East of Oatmeal Mill east side of Kearney by coal chutes

Product: Door hinges, brass castings and heavy cast iron work.

Opened in May 1890 – sort of

Expected to begin work in earnest in March 1891

May – Sold to a foundry in Fairfield, NE



Kearney Manufacturing Co. (foundry)

Oct. 1891 - Incorporated under new ownership including Starkey

Set up to manufacture Starkey steel buggy wheel

Aug. 1892 – Gillette, skilled mechanic. working on invention of steam engine small enough to fit in a water bucket.

Year later – refined to the size of a stove

Apparently in the depression of 1893 when other business were closing, they did also

March 1894 – Foundry reopen after being closed for some time

July 1894 – Gillett & Phillips

Made a new wagon for Ed Gilmore propelled with a crank
Mounted on cushioned bicycle wheels with ball bearings

May 1896 – Gillette’s Foundry & Machine Shop

Dec. 1896 – **Gillette & Jakeway** – formed a partnership,
bought machinery and tools for making bicycles.
Rented Cracker factory building. Built bicycles on 2nd floor
Heavier work downstairs

Kearney Oat Meal Mill

Location: East side of Kearney by coal chutes about 25th & R
Years of operation: Began building in Dec. 1890 –
Jan. 1891 – wind blew engine room walls 20 ft. away,
brick walls blown in leaving only corners standing
Oct 1891 – shell of building complete but not clapboarded,
1-story boiler house has to be built yet.
Jan. 23, 1892 – The oatmeal mill commenced operations today.
Feb. 3, 1893 – Closed. Operated one year



Kearney Shirt Factory

Location: 15 W 23rd St
Years of operation: 1892-3
May 13, 1892 – Opened quietly, 10 foot powered machines.

Products include dress shirts, negligee shirts, jumpers, jeans pants and overalls, night gowns and linen dusters.

Aug. switched to electricity
Feb. 3, 1893 – ads suddenly stopped, factory must have closed.

Western Bottling Co.

Listed in City Directory in 1891-2
Not in Hub advertisements or articles

Kearney Plow Manufacturing Co

Myth – one plow

Location: 14th St., on tailrace. Mile west of courthouse
Years of operation: 1892-3
Dec 1891 – Implement company in Winona, MN, represented by **Walter W. Kuhn**.
Had a patent on a plow to be manufactured here.

Brother Richard W Kuhn

Planned to establish branch factories.

Manufacture parts here and send there to be assembled.

- Meeting of 50 Kearney business men.
- Plow factory to have \$100,000 capital.
- Kearney subsidy to be \$12,500 and a building site.
- \$6,330 promised by men attending.
- Additional promised next day to total \$8,500
- Subsidy money raised by Christmas
Cash or bank notes payable 30 days after production begins.

Apr 1892 –Construction had begun

June – Building completed

Aug – Machinery put in place. “The works are to be run by electricity.”

Opened about September

Oct. 15, 1892 – shipped parts for 32 plows to Stanton. 1000 plows in process.

Feb 1893 – two more branch factories established making total of 17.

Closed after May, 1893

Kearney Steel Bridge Company

Location: Plow Factory

Years of operation: 1892

Oct 1892 – Month after Plow factory opened –

W. Kuhn was in Omaha

Interested some capitalists in incorporating the Kearney Steel Bridge Company.

Parts will be made at the plow factory.

Mar 14, 1893 – Working with city council about steel bridge across the tailrace.

Street & alley committee recommended:

Bridge at 25th St. over tailrace

Steel provided by Kearney Steel Bridge Company

Kearney Canal and Improvement Co. furnish piles and wood work of oak & build the bridge

If the two companies were lowest bidders

But sometime after May the Plow factory closed and the Bridge Co. probably dissolved with it.

When did they Close?

1890 – 3

1891 – 3

1892 – 1

1893 – 10

17

(Counting the paper mill twice)

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