

# Tourist Parks in Kearney and Buffalo County

## Growth of Auto traffic and tourism

### Lincoln Highway

### Need for camp grounds

**1919** – Dec. 1 – 3<sup>rd</sup> ward park suggested because it has been neglected and could be restored for use as a tourist park but if the city provided supervision and restoration there a tourist camp would have to be elsewhere. The Kearney Amusement park would be the ideal location.

Manager Denison has already let contracts for building of 40 cabins north of the pavilion and planting 1000 trees.

**1920** – June 28 – No suitable camp ground in Kearney. Tourist park at Kearney Amusement Park did not materialize. Some farmers along the roads near town are giving permission for people to camp on their property but they need camp grounds with a water supply.

July 20 – Third Ward Park was being used as a camp ground. A drinking fountain but no running water. No lights, car lights used to set up camp.

Aug 3 – Citizen protest at City Council meeting the use of Third Ward Park as a camping ground. Lawyer Sinclair point: Park was deeded to city in 1876 by Perkins estate. If not used as a park for citizens of Kearney it could revert back to the Perkins estate.

End of column: “All of the speakers, pro and con, seemed to understand and appreciate the fact that some parking or camping facilities should be provided for tourists but the general opinion prevailed that such ground should not be in ‘my back yard.’”

Dec. 18 – Rev. Keve addressed C of C baseball teams and brought up the need for a tourist camp either in or on the edge of Kearney. Because the concept has always been resented by some, no agreement has been reached.

**1921** – Jan. 5 – Kiwanis Club addressed the matter of a tourist camp. There was a committee working on ideas.

Apr. 19 & 20 – C of C, Kiwanis, and Rotary were working together to develop a plan. Recommended 2 acres on Watson Blvd east of Theo Bolte home. [1922 city directory - r “west Kearney”] There would be electricity and running water available. They recommended the city purchase the property and the three organizations would get it into shape. The only objections are fro persons who do not believe such a camp should be established at all.

May 16 – Vacant lots north of the post office have been used in recent weeks [MONA parking lot] & on Saturday night, more on Sunday. City cleared the grounds to be used temporarily. Convenient to down town so tourists can shop for their needs.

May 26 – Kearney City Beautiful Committee suggested acquiring land on west side of Kearney for a tourist park and use this temporary space as a rest park with trees, grass, fountain, and benches for visitors and Kearney citizens.

July 11 – Nearly 20 cars at the temporary tourist camp Sunday night.

Aug 30 – A pleasure resort 3 miles west of town offers free camping –  
Kearney Amusement Park

1922 – May 15 – Vacant lots at 21<sup>st</sup> & A [Chicken Coop parking lot or Copy Cat or Tex's Café lots] were cleared for use as a temporary tourist camp

July 3 – Manhattan Oil Co. at Lincoln Way & Ave A [23 E 25<sup>th</sup> St – East end MONA] was putting in improvements to make a tourist camp on their property. Mrs. Nye, across the street, obtained an injunction to stop them. Trial date set for July 8; Manhattan manager said he thought Mrs. Nye's lawyer intended to get a postponement until Sept. to prevent him from doing business all summer. Injunctions were served on all the employees as well as the manager. When the business closed that day and everyone went home 8 campers came in and spent the night.

July 6 – Tourist park controversy continued. Since the opening of the Manhattan Oil company's park in the spring, many tourists had used it but neighbors objected.

White Eagle Oil Co [at 22 E 21<sup>st</sup> - Copy Cat corner] opened as free camp. No objections so far.

First Ward Park suggested [Collins Park]

July 11 – Vocal opposition to First Ward Park being used as a Tourist Park. Ruled out by City Council

1923 – June 12 – Bad weather, scores of tourist couldn't travel the impassible roads. Camped here on private grounds and on vacant lots around the city. City was considering a proposal but probably would not happen due to lack of funds.

Courtright place considered ideal had a tourist camp [2532 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. – west of tailrace, near Canon Motel???

June 19 – Courtright grounds still considered favorably by C of C. Would operate as a private business. A nominal fee would be charged. Shady. Part of large home there could be used as shelter in case of storms. All he asked for was signs directing tourists to his place.

June 30 – Courtright's tourist camp would be available for picnics on July 4<sup>th</sup> at no charge.

July 16 – Guy Parker took over Management. Two year lease, improvements planned including large restroom where tourists could gather and visit or write letters or come for shelter in case of a storm, ovens, car washing racks, shower baths. Later set up a filling station

Aug. 15 – Courtwrights was proving to be quite popular, 20 to 35 cars per night in last two weeks. Parker making gradual improvements. [Tourist camp problem appeared to be solved.]

1924 – May 24 – Courtwright had sold the tourist Park and was having an auction of equipment

1924-1925 – [Nothing in paper about tourist parks. Some private ones must have been in operation but are not listed in subject section of the City Directory]

1926 – April 17 – A number of private tourist parks. 1733 Amusement Park and Kearney Tourist Park, which was a year old, were the largest and most popular. City has also cleared a plot at 21<sup>st</sup> and A.

June & July – advertisements for Kearney Tourist Camp/Park

1927 – March 30 – Plans for Midway City Tourist Park – 1 mile east of Midway Hotel.

University Stor-It storage units.] 4 acres, entrance, circle drive, exit, general store and filling station with mechanic between entrance and exit. Parking spaces (72) on both sides of the drive. A pavilion in the center with a fireplace, a place to gather, eat meals, shelter in storms. Radiating out from the pavilion four groups of cabins, five in each group (20). Each with electric stove – put nickel in the slot – hot & cold water, tub & shower, beds but pay extra for linens. Landscaping planned. To get jump start, several full grown trees were brought in, evergreens, shrubs & flowers planted that spring..

April 27 – Plans announced for construction of tourist houses at 1733 Amusement Park

May 12 – Work progressing on the new tourist park. Ditch filled in to make entrance driveway closed drainage. Culvert to be put in but level, little drainage. Council reserved right to order it later.

July 1 – New tourist park, City Tourist Camp [west of tailrace along Lincoln Highway] Five cabins to start with. Several large elm trees provide shade.

July 9 – Midway City Tourist Park in use 2 weeks. 14 cabins done. Camping spot 50 cents, cabin \$1, cabin & garage \$1.50. Also kitchen with 8 electric stoves and adjoining community room where people can eat, baths & swimming pool to right of entrance and general store. Park manager lives in back of the store. Transplanted linden trees have all survived.

July 13 – Work began on new filling station at the City Tourist Park west of the tailrace.

Nov. 7 – Property for sale at 1412 W Lincoln Way included filling station, grocery store, tourist camp.

1928 – January 4 – Foresee year round travelers staying at tourist parks

Aug 31 – Midway City tourist park designated official AAA camp in Kearney  
New cottages added

1929 – Apr 30 – Leased for 3 years of A. R. Christianson of N Platte, planned new cottages

May 16 – two tourist camps on each side of town.

May 18 – J. S. Elliott started construction of new tourist camp

July 23 – open for business

Sept. 12 – No noticeable reduction in number of tourists at the Midway City Tourist Park with colder weather.

1931 – Midway Tourist Park

1937-38 – Midway Tourist Park

1940-41 – Shambaugh Motor Lodge

1947 & 1950 – Midway Auto Court

1955 – Midway Siesta Motel

1958 & 1960 – Siesta Motel

1972 – Siesta Motel

Gone by about 1974