

Section 4, Collins Township, was prairie when the Union Pacific Railroad was built through Buffalo County in the summer of 1866. Since it is not near a source of water, I doubt any part of it was ever used as an Indian village. We have no record of such use in our Buffalo County history. When the railroad received its land grant of alternate sections for 20 miles on either side of its route, this section was one of the alternates which the railroad did not get. It was homesteaded and used for farming.

During Kearney's "Boom Period", 1888-1892, this section was platted as West Kearney. It was unique in that it was platted catty-corner so the streets ran northeast to southwest and northwest to southeast. The Union Pacific Railroad ran through the middle of the section, as it does today, and a depot was erected in the center of the section. The homes built here were mainly large two story houses typical of that day. There were two industries on the west side of the section. The cotton mill was built in the northwest corner. Directly south of the cotton mill was the Kearney Brick Yard which manufactured brick for industrial construction.

When the boom period came to an end, most of the houses in West Kearney were moved into the city of Kearney. Several are still in use today. One house remains in the section, a two-story white house south of Bico's. It is easily identified because it was built catty-corner instead of square north, south. At the other end of the section a remnant of one corner of the cottonmill remains. The rest of the land was returned to agriculture with small pieces being acquired from time to time for residences.

As far as I know, the land directly west of Bico's has been in agricultural use continuously since West Kearney was abandoned.

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