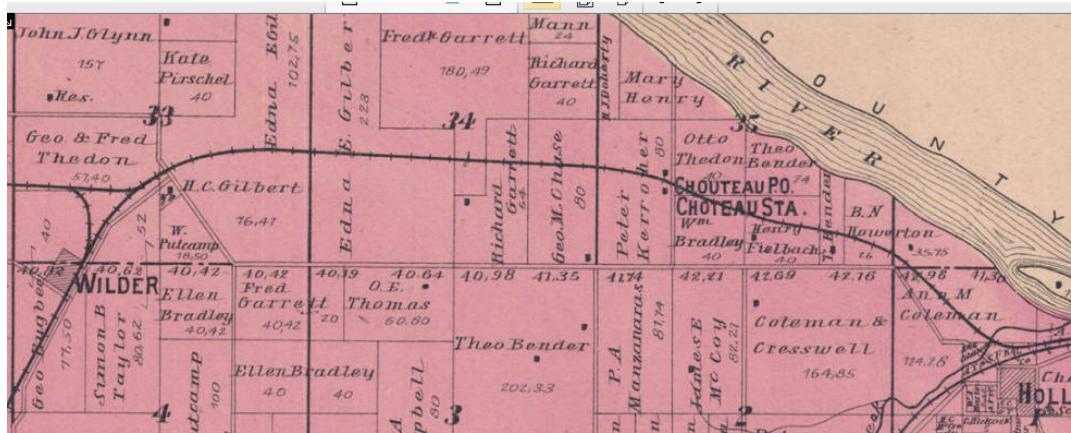




The Historic Chouteau Site

Location: Located on Lakecrest Dr. between W. 45 Terrace and the railroad tracks. The ferry was on the south bank of the Kaw River across from Edwardsville and the trading post was on land just south of the ferry. (Now on private property.)



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Frederick Chouteau

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Trading Post and Ferry

This site was named for Frederick Chouteau, the youngest of three brothers who established trading posts along the Kansas River for the famous Chouteau family fur trading company headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Frederick came to the Shawnee Indian Reservation on the Kansas River with a group of Shawnee from Missouri in 1828. For the next few years Francois, Cyprian and Frederick worked together to establish trading posts from the mouth of the Kaw west.

This site, which was along a military road from Ft. Leavenworth to Ft. Scott and located on the south bank of the river approximately one mile west of the mouth of Mill Creek, was one of the trading posts. It was established to trade with the Shawnee and Delaware Tribes. Furs would be traded for goods and supplies needed by the Indians.

Frederick returned to this site to operate the trading post and ferry. He married a Shawnee woman, Nancy Logan, and was adopted into the Shawnee Tribe. Their first son, William M., was born at the trading post in 1833.

The 1844 flood washed away all of his improvements and most of his livestock which were located near the river. In later writings, he would remember how he saved his horses by swimming them to high ground where he built a double log house in three days while it was still raining. The new house was located about one fourth mile south of the river above the flood plain on the same site that would later become the Chouteau Station.

Frederick continued to operate the business until he moved to the town of Shawnee about 1854. Three of his sons continued to reside on farms near their birthplace and operate the ferry until 1870 when the Shawnee were removed from Kansas to the Cherokee Nation in present day Oklahoma.

Chouteau Station

The Chouteau Station, a stop on the Kansas City, Topeka and Western Railroad (later the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad), was established in 1877 by Peter Keroher. The two story frame structure, built in 1887 known as Chouteau Station, was located on the south side of the railroad tracks above the flood plain of the Kansas River. Nothing remains of the structure. The Chouteau post office, which was located on the north side of the tracks, was established March 15, 1881 and was closed in 1903. The first post master was Arthur V. Brown.

There was no town at Chouteau, it was a stop for mail and passengers. After the post office closed, Chouteau became a flag stop for passengers. A spur was added where cars were left for loading of potatoes and wheat. Cattle pens were built next to the spur for loading cattle for shipment to the Kansas City market. The farmers drove their cattle down the country roads to the holding pens where they waited to be loaded onto railroad cars.

On January 23, 1865 Frank (Francis) Chouteau, son of Frederick, sold to William Bradley and Peter Keroher eighty acres of land. Peter married Phoebe Angeline Howardin September 30, 1866 in Johnson County. In 1875, Bradley and Keroher divided the 80 acres, with Peter Keroher taking the west half which included the site of the former home of Frederick Chouteau.

The home of the Peter Keroher family, located at the place known as Chouteau Station was described by Mary (Keroher) Kueker who grew up in the house, as a two story frame house on high ground south of the railroad tracks. The original part of the house was aligned east and west with two rooms on the ground floor and two rooms on the second floor. A later addition of two stories was built on the west end making the house in the shape of a "T". There was a store and post office on the first floor with living quarters on the second floor. The house was built in 1887, Peter Keroher was postmaster several years before it closed in 1903. Peter died in 1905 and Phoebe in 1925. the property remained in the Keroher name until 1943.

The house burned in 1978 and was not rebuilt. Although ownership of the property changed hands through the years, continued to be referred to as Chouteau.

The Chouteau historic site was important throughout the years as an integral part of commerce, agriculture, transportation and progress of the surrounding area.



Monticello Community Historical Society is an all volunteer organization. Donations are greatly appreciated. PO Box 860283, Shawnee, Kansas 66286