

INGALLS

Gray County, Kansas

Written by Juanita Trebilcock

Consultants: D. W. "Doc" Barton and Joseph Byrne/Burns, Both of Ingalls, Kansas

*References: "When Kansas Was Young" by T. A. McNeal &
Records in the Register of Deeds office in Cimarron*

** Additional information added about certain people mentioned in this story*

Ingalls is an incorporated, rural town in Gray County, Kansas, on U.S. Highway 50, near the Arkansas River. The location was a place of historic significance long before the town itself was laid out. Asa T. Soule (*See the story "Soule Canal in Gray County"*) founded it in approximately 1884. As near as can be determined, the city was laid out that same year.

This early town in Gray County was named after John J. Ingalls. He was from Rochester, New York, and reputed to be worth \$10,000,000. Ingalls became the headquarters for the irrigation ditch builders, and A. T. Soule built the first buildings constructed on the town site. He owned seven-tenths of the city plat of Ingalls. Edward Artt* had earlier filed a claim on the land south of the railroad where part of the town of Ingalls was later platted. When the town was laid out, he owned two-tenths of the city plat. The city plat was divided into 788 lots and sold to those who desired to buy and build.

Asa T. Soule built a great irrigation ditch in Western Kansas in 1882. It began west of Ingalls and ran east along the Arkansas River to about three miles east of Spearville. It was called the Eureka Irrigation Ditch. The Ditch was used a little for irrigation but was not in use after 1921.

For a man who had succeeded in building up a great fortune in a business venture in the East, Asa T. Soule's projected enterprises in Kansas were singularly unsuccessful.

At first, the town of Ingalls showed signs of being a successful venture. A town company was formed, of which Alden Spears was the president. Asa T. Soule was quite interested in the town's development, and it was he who built the first building on the townsite. The building was a two-story hotel, constructed of lumber and situated a block north of the railroad on Main Street. The hotel's construction was quickly followed by a store, a bank building, and an office, all built by Asa T. Soule and all on the same block.

These buildings were later destroyed by fire, and when the business section was rebuilt, it was situated on the south side of the railroad.

Two flourmills and a cheese factory were in operation in Ingalls at one time. O. B. Douglas and Sam Felons operated the flour mills, but they were later torn down and moved away. Albert Studebaker operated the cheese factory. It was moved about ten miles northwest of Ingalls and is now the home of Bob Sturgeon. All that is left of most of the early business places are old basements and crumbling foundations.

Ingalls was a participant in one of the early-day county seat fights in Western Kansas. The fight was between the present county seat of Cimarron and the town of Ingalls. It was carried into courts, and the decision was finally given to Cimarron by the judge. There was no bloodshed until nearly a year later when Ingalls stole the courthouse's records at Cimarron. Three or four men were killed, and others were seriously wounded. However, Cimarron finally won and became the permanent county seat. Thus, Ingalls did not become the thriving little city it first promised to be.

Asa T. Soule built the first church in Ingalls. It was a one-room building constructed of lumber and located in the eastern part of town where the high school building now stands. The building was later moved to Main Street, where it was used as a Union Church for many years. The members of that Union Church have since divided and formed two churches, the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church. Both denominations have basement churches. The Methodist Church is a block north of the old Union Church, and the Baptist Church is a block west. The little building, which used to be the Union Church, is now used for a City Hall.

In 1907, on the east side of Ingalls, a Catholic Church was built on a hill overlooking the rest of the town. After it was torn down in 1931, a new Catholic Church was built in its place.

No predominating type of architecture has been apparent in Ingalls at any time. The majority of houses are constructed of lumber, a few are stucco, and some are stone blockhouses.

Possibly the oldest house near Ingalls is the Goddard home, which lies about four blocks east of Main Street, between the Santa Fe Railroad and the Arkansas River. Edward Artt built it when he filed his claim south of the railroad track before a part of his claim became a part of Ingalls' town site. The house has been reconstructed and enlarged and is now partially modern.

Ingalls has a consolidated Grade School, which consists of two buildings, both stucco. The small one was built in Charleston, Kansas, in 1919 by the Barton boys of Ingalls and was later moved to Ingalls. The larger building was first constructed in Ingalls. It is a low one-story rectangular building located on Main Street, two blocks north of the railroad track. A playground for the school children joins the schoolhouse.

In 1917 the first High School in Ingalls was constructed on the same hill where the first church had been built. The church had been moved by the time the site was chosen for the High School building.

The Ingalls High School is a large brick building located on the east edge of town. It is a modern building, with a nice gymnasium and auditorium. The school also has a school library with a nice collection of books. School Bus garages are located at the back of the High School. The school grounds have been improved, and trees and shrubs have been set out.

There is no bonded indebtedness in either the High School or the Grade School. This fact is an inducement to people thinking of settling in the community, as they do not have to pay taxes on old-school debts.

A Santa Fe Trail marker is located just west of Main Street, south of the railroad track. It is in memory of the Santa Fe Trail from 1822-1872. The marker was erected by the Daughter of the American Revolution and the State of Kansas in 1906. It was shipped into Ingalls over the Santa Fe railroad and set up by Terrence Burns of Ingalls.

Today the central business district of Ingalls is relatively small. Perhaps the most interesting exhibit would be the taxidermy collection and various relics of Indian days to be found at the Farmers State Bank, located on Main Street.

An Ingalls' historical feature, which is quite interesting to some people, is the old Santa Fe Trail that runs through the western part of town. The ruts made by the wagon wheels can be seen both north and south of the city. The historic site of the old Cimarron Crossing lies just south of Ingalls on the Arkansas River. It was the favored crossing in southwestern Kansas of Indians, hunters, cattlemen, and pioneers. Several battles between the Indians and the white men were staged there. At the south end of the old crossing is the scene of an Indian massacre. A few early settlers are left who remember seeing the remains of the covered wagons and other camp articles, but no one knows who the party of travelers were or if any escaped. Arrows and other pieces of evidence of the massacre have been found, but it is doubtful if any could be found at this time as the recent dust storms have pretty well covered the place. To those who might be interested, the sand drifts south of town, and the black dirt drifts north of town will tell their own story of the so-called black blizzards which have visited this region in the last two or three years. Machinery and small bushes have been completely covered over, and in some instances, roads have been drifting shut.

A city park is now (1936) open where the Indian massacre occurred that was mentioned earlier. It is located just south of the river bridge at Ingalls, on the road's east side. Named Achorn Park*, it is a delightful place for picnics in the summer months. Tables and benches are placed in the park, and a pump furnishes water for the picnickers.

The Ingalls of today seems to be a town of hills and steps. The streets are merely a succession of going uphill and then down again. The sidewalks are not level like they are in most towns. Some people account for the steps by saying that business places

were built at different times, each with a short sidewalk and a few steps. As the town grew, the sidewalks were connected by the steps.

**More details about ACHORN PARK are in a story also written by Juanita Trebilcock titled DESCRIPTION OF THE SANTA FE TRAIL AND CIMARRON CROSSING NEAR INGALLS, Gray County, Kansas.*

**Additional Information
EDWARD ARTT**

EDWARD WILLIAM ARTT (1848-1916), son of Thomas Artt (1817-1891) and Laura Potter (1811-1881), was born in Falmouth, Pendleton County, Kentucky. He was one of the first settlers in Ingalls, Kansas.

In 1886, Edward married ETHEL ADELAIDE GREENE (1849-1922), daughter of Adam Greene and Thankful Ayres Cook. Ethel Greene was first married to Andrew H. Brown, who died in 1885, and they had three children.

Edward and Ethel had one son, GLENN M. ARTT, born on 12 Sep 1887 and died 1 Sep 1912.

The family left Gray County in April of 1896. Edward and his wife were planning to end up living in Arkansas eventually. They wanted to make the move a little at a time due to Mrs. Artt's health. They settled in Canadian County, Oklahoma, and never left. Edward suffered the last few years of his life with Bright's disease. Both Edward and Ethel (*and their son, Glenn*) passed away in Calumet, Canadian County, Oklahoma, and were buried at the Calumet Cemetery.