

# EARLY DAY BARBEQUES

Greeley County, Kansas

Written by Gweneth Linn

*Consultants: Mrs. John L. Pyles, Mr. and Mrs. Walter H. Linn, Mr. Thomas P. Tucker, and Mr. Joseph G. Ridlen, all of Tribune, Kansas*

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

There was a barbeque held in Tribune on the Fourth of July, 1921. It was the largest Fourth of July celebration ever held in Greeley County. This was in the day when airplanes were rare and there was to be a parachute jumping. This event never came about due to bad weather conditions.

During the afternoon it rained and then rained some more. At that time, there was a bridge that crossed White Woman Creek. The creek rose above the bridge and many people living on the North side of the creek were forced to stay in town until the next morning.

There was a large crowd in town, so everyone figured that someone was bound to be hurt, since these things always seemed to happen on big days such as this.

One of the men in town had just purchased a new car. The flywheel flew out and hit Mrs. Scott, from Wichita County on the leg. It was several years before she was able to walk around again.

The only other barbeque held here was on October 10, 1923. That day, known as "Fishman Day", was named that because of being financed mostly by Simon Fishman\* and held to boost wheat in the county.

The celebration was a great deal like a fair with booths, sideshows, speakers, parades, etc. There was a parade of Wheat Machinery down Main Street early in the morning.

It had rained all the night before and had put out their cooking fires. They finally got the fire started about mid-morning, but the meat did not finish cooking by 12 o'clock noon. This meant the people had to eat their sandwiches without meat. Many of the folks brought their dinners from home. Finally, at about five o'clock they decided to cut the meat but found it was still raw.

It had been rainy and drizzly all day. There was such a crowd, that people could hardly get anywhere. The mud was so thick cars could hardly get around.

Several speakers from the East presented their talks in the afternoon. One of them was T. A. McNeil\* (*Thomas Allen McNeil*), a well-known Kansas writer.

There were two boys born in Tribune that day and Fishman told the parents that if they would name them after him, he would give each of them fifty dollars. The parents of one of the boys took him up on this. The other parents did not. The boy named after Fishman died when he was about two years old.

Roasted for the event were cattle, sheep and hogs. Fishman furnished them all. They held the barbeque south of Greeley Avenue on what is now the old campground. Today there are several newly built houses there.

They held the Fourth of July barbeque, east of the Court House. They did not have the planned parade and baseball games, due to the rain.

### Additional Information SIMON FISHMAN

SIMON FISHMAN was born on 14 Aug 1878, in Russia. He died on 20 May 1956, in Denver, Adams County, Colorado. He was married to MARY FINE (1881-1972) and they had three children; MYRTLE S. FISHMAN (1901-1933), NAOMI C. FISHMAN (1907-1927), and IRVING LEONARD FISHMAN (1914-2005). All of the family, except for Irving, were buried at the Mount Nebo Memorial Park in Aurora, Arapahoe County, Colorado.

### Newspaper Obituary SIMON FISHMAN

*The Greeley Daily Tribune (Kansas) – Tuesday, 22 May 1956*  
*The Kansas City (Missouri) Times – Monday, 21 May 1956*  
*The Lincoln (Nebraska) Journal Star – Monday, 21 May 1956*

#### A WHEAT KING IS DEAD

Denver, May 20 – Simon Fishman, 77, a Russian immigrant who broke nearly one-half million acres of virgin soil in his long career as a Kansas wheat farmer, died today.

Fishman, who came to America when he was 13, obtained his start by selling clothing door-to-door through Oklahoma, Texas, and other parts of the West.

He had lived in Denver for the last 14 years. Death came after a long illness.

He moved to Tribune, Kansas in 1920 after operating a mercantile store in Sidney, Nebraska. He built the first grain elevator in Tribune and predicted Greeley County, Kansas would in one year ship out a million bushels of wheat, a forecast fulfilled in 1931.

In 1923, Fishman was elected as a Republican to the Kansas House of Representatives. He was elected to the Kansas Senate in 1932, but after supporting the Republican ticket that year, he

swung over to back the farm program of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

He leaves his wife, Mrs. Mary Fishman, and a son, Irving L. Fishman, both of Denver.

**Additional Information**  
**THOMAS ALLEN MCNEIL**



Thomas McNeil

**THOMAS “TOM” ALLEN MCNEIL**, son of Allen McNeil (1809-1883) and Rachel Brownlee (1810-1862), was born on 15 Oct 1853 in Marion County, Ohio.

In 1884, Thomas married **ANNA BELLE MCPHERSON**, daughter of Peter McPherson (1819-1880) and Lucinda Butterfield (1821-1880) in Medicine Lodge, Barber County, Kansas. Anna Belle was born on 23 Sep 1862 in Wheatland, Monroe County, New York. At the age of 18 years, she moved to Kansas with her parents, settling in Medicine Lodge. When Thomas and Anna Belle met, he was working as a practicing lawyer. In 1894, they moved to Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. Thomas was editor of the Kansas Farmers Mail and Breeze, the Topeka Daily Capital, and a trustee of Capper Publications. Thomas McNeil was well respected by all who knew him.

Anna Belle died on 11 Jun 1920 in Topeka, Kansas. After she passed away, Tom began writing about the earlier days of Kansas and put together a book titled “When Kansas Was Young”, published in 1922.

Tom McNeil passed away in Topeka on 7 Aug 1942. The burial for Tom and Anna Belle was at the Mount Hope Cemetery in Topeka.

Tom and Anna Belle had two children:

**LOUISE MCNEAL** was born on 8 Aug 1885 in Medicine Lodge, Kansas. Louise lived most of

her life in Topeka, Kansas. She never married. She attended Washburn University in Topeka and graduated from the Pratt Library Institute of Brooklyn, New York. Louise was a Kansas State Librarian for 35 years and a member of the Kansas Traveling Library Commission, promoting libraries. Louise passed away on 6 Aug 1965 in Topeka and buried there at the Mount Hope Cemetery.

ALLEN JAMES MCNEAL was born on 8 Mar 1890 In Medicine Lodge, Kansas. Allen graduated from the Topeka, Kansas High School and The United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Allen married Anne B. Daugherty (1891-1950) on 12 Jul 1921 in Norfolk, Virginia. Allen passed away on 28 Jul 1960 in New Rochelle, Westchester County, New York.

### Newspaper Obituary THOMAS "TOM" ALLEN MCNEIL

*The Wichita (Kansas) Eagle, 08 Aug 1942*

TOM MCNEAL, 88, DIES AT TOPEKA  
LONG-TIME CAPPER PUBLISHING ASSOCIATE ACTIVE UNTIL LAST ILLNESS

Topeka, August 7... Thomas Allen McNeal, 88, who helped Senator Arthur Capper (R-Kan) build his huge publishing enterprise, died tonight (*last night, the 7th*). He had been ill for almost a year and in a coma for several weeks. McNeal was editor of the Kansas Farmer Mail & Breeze and a trustee of Capper Publications.

"I never had a better friend than Tom McNeal", Senator Capper said in Washington, after learning of his associate's death. For almost half a century, McNeal and Capper worked together. They joined forces when McNeal was publishing the Kansas Breeze here and Capper was running the North Topeka Mail. Later Capper purchased McNeal's interest and he remained as an editorial writer and reporter – work he never relinquished.

McNeal came to Kansas from his native Ohio in 1879, at the age of 26, arriving in the frontier town of Medicine Lodge after a three-day trip from Wichita by freighter wagon. He edited the Medicine Lodge Cresset before moving to Topeka and liked to tell of his first sight of the Cresset office – with one of the owners writing an editorial, his pistol on the desk beside him.

He was elected mayor in 1890 and while serving he started "Sockless Jerry" Simpson on his way to fame by appointing him city marshal – his first public office. (*Jeremiah "Sockless Jerry" Simpson {1842-1905} started as a cattle rancher and then on to being a Kansas politician.*)

McNeal also served three terms in the Kansas legislature, and in 1887, he was admitted to the bar. He had attended college for several years in Ohio.

Despite his age, McNeal rarely missed a day at the office until his last illness.