

CHAPTER 2

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ROSEDALE AND THE ROSEDALE SCHOOLS 1872-1922

In order to understand the development of the music program in the schools of Rosedale, a summary of the early townsite and formation of the community and schools must be conducted. An understanding of the people that dwelled in the community and their backgrounds and beliefs is vital in the relationship to the formation of the schools and the music program.

The settlement originally known as Rosedale was located in a quiet valley surrounded by high bluffs. “In the early days the area was a forest of trees and hazelbrush amidst a profusion of wild roses.”¹ When the townsite was platted in Wyandotte County, Kansas on May 16, 1872, it was named Rosedale for the beauty of the wild roses that grew there.

The coming of the railroad after the Civil War brought settlers and industry to the new community. The Kansas and Neosha Valley Railroad was incorporated in the State of Kansas, March 1865. The railroad known as the “Border Tier Line” went through Rosedale to Olathe then South to Baxter Springs, Kansas along the border counties of Kansas.² The development of the railroad opened up the area for trade, business, and large population growth. Rosedale grew rapidly after the Civil War ended. The small townsite was a prime location for a major business center that would locate along the newly built railroad.

One of the largest manufacturing organizations in the history of Rosedale moved to the growing community from Decatur, Illinois. The Kansas Rolling Mill opened for business in 1875 becoming the railroad’s largest customer. Rosedale grew up around the rolling mill. The rolling mill produced iron railroad rails that were shaped by huge rollers in the mill. “The rolling mill employed five hundred men. The company built many new houses in Rosedale and offered them for lease to their employees.”³ Many workers and their families traveled the many miles from Decatur to Rosedale. The journey was long, but they brought with them the promise of prosperity and the hope of happiness in their new land.

When these laborers arrived from Illinois they carried with them the beginnings of instrumental music to Rosedale. Music was a vital part of the social and religious activities of these early residents and their families. The Rolling Mill Silver Cornet Band was formed by the workers who had played together in Decatur and who had all journeyed to Rosedale with the opening of the rolling mill. They played for patriotic, religious and social gatherings. “On Tuesday evening the Rolling Mill Band gave a serenade to William McGeorge at the residence of John E. Jones. Everybody that went was pleased, the band boys declaring that Mac was a tip top fellow, and Mack says that the band boys are of true metal.”⁴ The band became the musical center of the rolling mill community, providing social as well as musical rewards.

The residents of Rosedale, during the prominence of the rolling mill, used music to enhance their worship service as well as for social events. The Union Sunday School, one of the largest church organizations in northeast Kansas, was formed by the families of the rolling mill shortly after their arrival to the Rosedale community. “In 1880 the Union Sunday School had fine musical talent, it had an orchestra of eight pieces and a splendid choir. The chorus of 200 voices received a prize of a banner at the jubilee that was held at the State Fair at Bismark Grove near Lawrence.”⁵ Music was obviously an important element in all aspects of the community, providing a strong foundation for religious, social and patriotic functions.

¹ Landis, History of Rosedale, Kansas, 1.

² Harrington, Historic Spots of Wyandotte County, Kansas, 77.

³ Landis, presentation for Wyandotte County, history class, Kansas City, Kansas Community College, 27 February 1989, tape recording by author.

⁴ Iron City Press, 25 January 1883, 1.

⁵ Landis, “Rosedale, Kansas, 1967,” TMs 19, Wyandotte County Historical Society, Bonner Springs, Kansas.

While the early Rosedale residents were enjoying music as a vital part of their social and religious activities, music education was growing in the public schools of the Midwest. In 1877 the Indiana Music Teachers Association was formed. School orchestras had been established before the turn of the century in Winfield and Wichita, Kansas.

In a certain sense the real beginnings of music education came after the Civil War. The early introductions were relatively few and were confined mainly under the control of a single school board. Before the War and for a decade thereafter, the prevailing type of school control throughout the country was the district school system.⁶

Rosedale would soon establish a growing school system with a sound and extensive music education program.

The rolling mills laborers, now settled in their new community, felt that education would play a vital role in the future of Rosedale. They were quick to plan and establish a school system for their children. A rolling mill worker, Mr. Lawrence C. Trickey and his wife, Minnie, were the founders and first teachers of the one room school.⁷ The school district grew with the community. In 1888 an article in the local newspaper boasts of the growth of the district schools. “Rosedale is proud of her public schools. Ample facilities are afforded for the accommodation of 650 pupils. Skillful and experienced teachers are employed.”⁸ The thriving community now seemed ready to face the future with confidence and poise.

The population growth due to the rolling mill gave Rosedale the necessary six hundred people to become a city of the third class. In 1877 that status was granted and Rosedale elected David S. Mathias as the first mayor. However, the changing from iron to steel rails closed the rolling mill in 1883. “The closing of the rolling mill was a big loss to Rosedale. Many families moved away leaving Rosedale a struggling little city.”⁹ Several of the private businesses failed or faced hard times during this period. The community that seemed to be thriving after the Civil War, while many others were struggling, was now facing the worst period in its history.

Activity did not cease for long. In the late 1880s a business boom started in Kansas City, Missouri. At that time, Rosedale had a great tie with that city due to the linkage of the streets and the railroad systems. Although Rosedale would later consolidate with Kansas City, Kansas, early connections with that city were few. There was no bridge crossing the Kansas river to link the two cities. Travelers wishing to go to Kansas City, Kansas had to first go into Kansas City, Missouri, and then cross into Kansas City, Kansas. The extra miles to enter Kansas City, Kansas made trade with that city impractical. The growth in business that started on the Missouri side quickly spread to Rosedale bringing new families, industry and better times.

Community musical activities continued to be a driving force in the social life of the residents of Rosedale. The Rosedale Band, a community band not associated with the rolling mill, was formed during the era of the mill. Rosedale, a community of only 600, boasted two local bands, two glee clubs, a male quartet, and a mandolin club. This apparent interest in community music spread into the public schools of the city. The high school was formed in 1884, graduated its first class of seven pupils in 1886. These graduates were qualified to enter any state college without an examination.¹⁰ An article found in the official Rosedale newspaper lists the commencement program for the graduating class of 1896. The program shows that just ten years after the first graduating class, music was a thriving entity in the school system.

⁶ Birge, History of Public School Music, 82.

⁷ Landis, History of Rosedale, Kansas, 21.

⁸ Rosedale Record, 22 April 1888, 2.

⁹ Landis, History of Rosedale, Kansas, 14

¹⁰ History of Rosedale High School.

Commence Program
May 30, 1896

Invocation	Rev. R. V. Waldraven
Song	“Vacation is Coming” – school chorus
Recitation	“Meeting at Wendleton”, Carrie Sims
Piano Solo	Maggie Jones
Address	Chancellor Snow
Song	“She May Have Seen Better Days”, Lime Kiln Club
Presentation of Diplomas	
Song	“Good Bye”, school chorus ¹¹

Before the turn of the century the high school occupied a few rooms of the Whitmore elementary school building. In 1906 a high school building was erected on one of the highest hills in Rosedale. Although music was not in the curriculum until 1911, a great interest was evident in the high school. A lecture and entertainment course was added in 1908. Qualified musicians made regular appearances in assemblies for students and parents.¹²

Community musical organizations, grade school music taught in the regular classroom, and an interest in music in the high school all led to the hiring of the first music teacher in 1910. Ethel Kingsley was hired as a part-time English teacher and a part-time music supervisor. In the following five years Mrs. Kingsley laid the foundations for a successful music program. A boys glee club, which held rehearsals before school, was formed immediately. The 1910 yearbook notes the activity of this newly formed group. “On Friday evening February 21, the pupils of the High School gave their second annual entertainment. The program consisted of spirited songs by the school and the Boys’ Glee Club, and two short plays, one given by the boys of the school and the other by the girls.”¹³

Further interest in music led to its introduction into the high school curriculum in 1911. Boys’ and girls’ glee clubs were scheduled into the regular school day. The first large production presented by members of the glee clubs in 1913, was the operetta, “Pauline.” This effort was an elaborate two act production complete with costumes and properties made by the school’s sewing and art classes.¹⁴ A second production of a major operetta was presented during the following school year. “Sylvia” was presented by the glee clubs of Rosedale High School. This production boasted a chorus of forty students.¹⁵ By 1912, the school board added music as one of the four elective courses required for graduation. “The full number of studies required of each student is four regular, and one half credit as music, art, sewing or woodworking.”¹⁶

Miss Kingsley and the subsequent teachers that followed spent part of their time supervising the music teaching in the elementary schools. In a letter received from Luther Leavengood, a former Rosedale student, he describes the musical activity in the grade schools.

¹¹ Rosedale Commercial, 16 May 1896, 1.

¹² Mt. Marty Annual, 1908, 1.

¹³ Mt. Marty Annual, 1910, 10.

¹⁴ Mt. Marty Annual, 1913, 60.

¹⁵ Mt. Marty Annual, 1914, 32.

¹⁶ Annual Report of the Board of Education of Rosedale, Kansas, 1912-1913, 21, Library Building, Kansas City, Kansas.

My future wife, Ruth Mann, and I entered Whitmore elementary school at the age of 7 in 1912. The only music was singing, no instrumental. A music teacher would visit the grades and conduct the singing. We were taught by rote in the first and second grades. Beginning in the third grade we had song books. It was up to the classroom teacher to provide a music period everyday. We were taught the rudiments of music by the visiting music supervisor. I had already started piano at age six and violin at age nine, so I already knew how to read music.¹⁷

The Rosedale community had few private music teachers during this time. Parents wishing to provide private study for their children usually made the trip to Kansas City, Missouri. On the topic of private study, Leavengood noted: “There was no opportunity for private study at the elementary or high school levels so I studied privately with Forrest Schulz, the violin teacher at the old Horner Institute which later became the Kansas City Conservatory.”¹⁸

By 1907, the Rosedale community had a thriving hospital that would eventually become one of the most influential businesses in Rosedale’s history. In 1905, a Rosedale physician by the name of Dr. Simeon Bell gave the land and money to build and equip a medical hospital in the memory of his late wife. The story building, which was occupied in 1907, was named the Eleanor Taylor Bell Memorial Hospital. The building of the hospital brought many new laborers, builders, medical students and personnel to the community. The University of Kansas Medical Center did not yet exist, but the new hospital on a bluff overlooking Southwest Boulevard at Seventh Street, was used by the University of Kansas for the two year clinical work of a new four year medical course offered by the University.¹⁹ The growth of the medical center paralleled the growth of the community and the schools. The school system had expanded rapidly since its first one room school in the rolling mill days. By 1920 the district included one high school and six elementaries.²⁰

The first attempt at instrumental music happened in 1916 under the leadership of the new music teacher, Florence Duncan, who started the first school orchestra. Duncan replaced Ethel Kingsley in the fall of 1915. The success of the orchestra seemed rather limited with a few sporadic engagements at school functions. The orchestra consisted of four violins, two mandolins, three cornets, one cello and pianist.²¹ Orchestral music was not added to the regular curriculum until a later date. Rehearsals for these instrumentalists were all held prior to the regular school day. Birge noted: “The apparently spontaneous impulse in various communities in the Middle West to organize orchestras began about the year 1900. These early organizations were all extraneous activities, with no settled place in the school program, and were forced to hold their rehearsals after school hours.”²²

Instrumental music was evident in the schools of Kansas City, Kansas during this time. An instrumental music class was added to the curriculum at Sumner High School in 1916.²³ An orchestra was established at Argentine High School in 1918.²⁴

The year 1922 was one of great historical significance for the Rosedale community. In that year, after great debate and much controversy, the city of Rosedale was annexed into the first class city of Kansas City, Kansas. Annexation made possible the building of a connecting route between Rosedale and Kansas City, Kansas. The Seventh Street Trafficway, connecting the two cities opened up Rosedale as an active trade center with Kansas City, Kansas.

¹⁷ Luther Leavengood, Tucson, Arizona, letter to author, Roeland Park, Kansas, 15 December 1888.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “An Introduction to the University of Kansas Medical Center,” TMs Wyandotte County Historical Society, Bonner Springs, Kansas.

²⁰ History of Rosedale High School.

²¹ Mt. Marty Annual, 1916, 14.

²² Birge, History of Public School Music, 174.

²³ Buckner, Music Education in the Black Community, 154.

²⁴ Hattie E. Poppino, “History of Argentine High School, 1965.” TMs Kansas Room, Kansas City, Kansas Public Library.

The year 1922 also brought changes in the schools. The high school was reorganized into a junior-senior high school. The grade schools were changed from a one-eight to one-six grade plan. The organization would stay the same until the middle school change in 1973.

Nineteen twenty-two also saw the hiring of one of Rosedale's most influential teachers, Sarah Howard. Howard's 33-year teaching tenure at Rosedale made many lasting effects on music education in that school. Consolidation, reorganization, and the hiring of Howard brought a solid philosophy to music education in the Rosedale schools.

A course of study, arranged in six week periods, had already been approved by the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education. An aesthetic approach to music education had been established by Bessie Miller, supervisor of music, in the Kansas City, Kansas schools. In the annual report to the Board of Education, Miller stated.

The value of music is priceless. It promises to bring world moods, broad states of feeling that are aspiring, pure, and unselfish. It promises to bring into education that neglected third dimension, height, in addition to the prevailing thickness and breadth, and to develop the powers of the individual so that he will react rightly to the call of far off voices that are beyond and above the little world of man. The best method of music teaching is one placing emphasis on the real content, the real spirit of music, with technical training used only to reinforce this emphasis. We much teach music appreciation above all other things.²⁵

Also stated in this document were the general aims of the Course of Study for the 1919-1920 school year. They were listed as follows:

1. To give children a rich repertoire of songs.
2. To inculcate a love and appreciation for good music.
3. To cultivate a good clear, true, musical voice with correct interpretation and enunciation.
4. To present and develop technical problems in music through the medium of song.
5. To teach sight reading in order to give facility into the signing of beautiful songs.²⁶

The rolling mill, railroads, and Bell Memorial Hospital all had a great impact on the growth and development of the community. The Rosedale area boasts a rich background in musical activities in the period from 1873 until 1922. Musical activity was evident in the Rosedale schools before the turn of the century. A regular music teacher who also supervised elementary school music was hired in 1910. Glee clubs, operettas and an orchestra were all added to the growing program. Annexation into Kansas City, Kansas and reorganization helped to develop an aesthetic focus to the goals of music education. The Rosedale schools developed a strong musical foundation and were ready to face the following years with clear, well defined goals.

Border Tier Line: <http://www.nps.gov/fosc/posofsek.htm>

Troubles in Kansas: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/kansas/genweb/archives/troubles.html>

The Border War and 1854 Kansas/Nebraska Act:

http://www.millersparanormalresearch.com/Pages/Border_War.htm

Rosedale Mill: <http://www.kckpl.lib.ks.us/kscoll/lochist/thenow/TN53.htm>

Lawrence C. Trickey: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/archives/wyandott/history/1911/volume1/271.html>

Mt. Marty in Rosedale: <http://www.kckpl.lib.ks.us/kscoll/lochist/thenow/TN50.htm>

²⁵ Thirty-fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of Kansas City, Kansas, 1919-20, 87-88.

²⁶ Ibid, 88.

The History of the Music Program in the Public Schools of the Rosedale District of Kansas City, Kansas, 1872-1973 - by Suzanne H. Elliott, B.M.E., Kent State University, 1978 – Chapter 2 – Pg. 6

1922 Rosedale Annexation: <http://wyandottecountyks.com/history.htm>

A Brief History by the KCKs Planning Commission:

<http://www.kckplanning.org/MunicipalGovernmentHistory.htm>