

APPENDIX III

Community Organizations

Argentine is largely dependent on the metropolitan Kansas City area for many of its cultural resources. This is not to say that Argentine has no culture. The community has many civic and service groups as well as fraternal organizations. There are many churches, two city parks and a branch library.

The Argentine Parish House is a community center that was built in 1922. In that year, citizens of the community decided to build a recreation center. Labor and building materials were donated. The site was an old cornfield near what is now 27th and Metropolitan. The Parish House has been a center of community activities for over fifty years. Basketball games, boxing matches, dances, club meetings and social affairs have been conducted there.

The community also can boast of two parks: Clopper Field and Emerson Park. Clopper Field is named in honor of Dr. D. E. Clopper, a doctor of the community who devoted his entire life to the betterment of the community. A plaque dedicated in his honor is located in Emerson Park.

The Argentine Activities Association is one of the most prominent organizations of the community. Made up of businessmen and concerned citizens, this group has worked many years for the betterment of the community. One of its biggest undertakings was the Argentine Parade which was an annual affair for thirty years.

Another distinguished organization is the Hawthorne Club. This organization started on January 5, 1905. On that day, a group of young ladies of the Argentine community met in the home of Mrs. Hugh Smith. At this meeting, a literary club was formed. The club originally had no name. However, they first decided to study the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Shortly thereafter, they became known as the Hawthorne Club. This club has done much for the betterment of the community. One of its most important accomplishments was the founding of the Argentine Library in 1907.¹

There are many fraternal organizations in Argentine. Most of them use the Ben Hur Masonic Temple at 1500 South 30th Street, Kansas City, Kansas. These organizations include: The Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, the International Supreme Order of Demolay, the Order of the Eastern Star, the True Kindred, the International Order of Jobs Daughters and the Odd Fellows.

Many churches are located in the community. They are: the Emerson Park Christian Church, the Ruby Avenue Baptist Church, the First Christian Church, the Ruby Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ, Second Metropolitan Baptist Church, the Immanuel Lutheran Church and the St. John Evangelist Church.

Argentine has a branch library of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Library. The Argentine branch was founded in 1907. Mrs. Bertha McMann, a member of the Hawthorne Club, was a librarian there for many years. She started the vacation reading program for children of elementary school age. She also started the concept of a bookmobile.² In the 1951 flood, the library was flooded. The entire stock of books was lost. A layer of mud was deposited on most of the books. However, after the flood, the interior of the library was rebuilt and modernized.

An annual affair of the community for many years was the Argentine Parade. This occurred in the fall. Floats, bands and horsemen came from all over the surrounding area to participate in this event. Next to the American Royal Parade, this was the largest parade in Kansas City. In the earlier parades in the 1930's, only about 5,000 people showed up to view it. However, by 1960 there were

¹ The information on the Hawthorne Club was compiled from articles in the Argentine file of the Kansas City Kansas newspaper at 901 North 8th, Kansas City, Kansas.

² Argentine file, Kansas City Kansas newspaper.

as many as 50,000 people in attendance. An estimated 55,000 people attended the Argentine Parade of 1962. This parade featured 125 units. There were eight high school bands, two drum and bugle corps, horse units, and antique cars. Miss Carolyn Joyner, the holder of two national beauty titles and a student at Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia was in attendance, as was Miss Beverly Wood, a sophomore at Kansas State College at Manhattan. The last year of the parade was 1963.³

³ Argentine file, Kansas City Kansan newspaper.