

# History of Gashland

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Joseph Dennis Gash and family came to Clay County and entered land. The deeds for this early acquisition are dated 1822, and are signed by President James Monroe. Their first home was a log cabin at what is now 401 W. Barry Road. Across the road is what is known as the Gash Cemetery. Joseph Gash was the father of five girls and three boys. Three of the girls married and settled in the community; Mary Lucinda Gash (George), Martha Pauline Gash (Carpenter), and Louisiana Paralee Gash (Sparks). Theodore (Thee) and Leander (Lee) resided for a while in the community.

The George's, Carpenter's, and Spark's all had their influence upon this community.

At the time Pauline Gash married Dan Carpenter, Mr. Carpenter was a merchant at Barry. They lived for some time in Barry where he continued in business. They later acquired part of the Gash property. Mr. Carpenter quit his mercantile business and went to farming. This farm was the western part of what people have called Gashland. James Williams entered land on the eastern part about 1823.

A railroad was opened from Quincy, Illinois to Kansas City, Missouri. The iron horse was taking the place of the live horse. For many years there had been a post office at Barry on the Santa Fe Trail. After the railroad was set up, the mail was delivered to Barry Station and carried by horse to the Barry Post Office. Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter gave ground for a station on which a depot was built. This ground was given with the understanding that the station be called Gashland in memory of the Gash family. The post office at Barry was then moved to Gashland. June 1, 1901, Mrs. Pearl Sprague became the first combination Postmaster and Station Agent. This was the official status of Gashland; once a depot but never a town. The succeeding post masters were: Tobe Asbury, H.B. Milligan, Basha Spicer, Frank Williams, Carson Clardy and Jack Bradfield.

As a post office it was moved several times and patronage grew until the area was annexed by Kansas City, Missouri. The last day the Gashland Post Office was in operation was February 28, 1959, with Jack Bradfield as Postmaster and Jack Roberts and A.D. Lawrence as rural mail carriers serving some 3,500 patrons. The general delivery service was given as 500.

The first Rural Route was established in 1904 with Oren Moore as carrier. He was followed by John Moore, Jesse Marshall, Frank Williams, George Clardy, Frank Williams, Jack Roberts and A.D. Lawrence.

On the corner of the Williams section a log building was raised, presently Mike's Service Station. For a short time it was the Gashland Community School House. It was later a blacksmith shop and still later a public ice house, when ice that was cut from nearby creeks was stored and sold.

About 1825 another building was erected on the Williams property one-half mile east. This was the new schoolhouse. Here it remained until 1927, the Fairview School.

In the summer of 1927 a new schoolhouse was built not far from the sight of the original log school. Later an addition was made, and still later this older part was torn down and replaced with a new addition which today houses the first three grades with twelve teachers.

In 1959 property was purchased by the Gashland school board from Mrs. G.T. Clardy and a new school, Clardy Elementary, was built to house upper grades. Today this is all part of the North Kansas City school system.

Near the Gashland depot several homes were built and Gashland began to grow.

Mr. Carpenter's interest had always been merchandising. Around 1900 he had a two-story building erected some short distance from the depot.

The lower floor was occupied by Mr. Claude Knighton as a merchant of general goods and groceries. His first stock of goods was valued at \$65.00. This business grew until at the peak of his business he did some \$47,000 gross. He never kept books of his business, just looked at his bank balance. He was in this merchandising business thirty-six years until 1939 when he retired. Mr. Knighton was well thought of in the community as an honest merchant. He in turn thought well of Gashland. He once said, "Gashland was established on a Christian basis and has continued so until now."

Mr. Carpenter designated the upper half of this building to be used as a community building. It was in this building where the Gashland Berry Association was organized and met. This association was the big business of the community. At the peak of the berry enterprise two rail cars of crated strawberries were shipped out daily.

Many other community affairs took place here. A regular Sunday School met here for a few years. During World War I the women met here to do their Red Cross sewing. Many public dances filled the hall.

In this early period of 1900 a stockyard was built and many farmers drove their cattle to the yards to be shipped to Kansas City. This was a big thing for the farmers who had previously driven their cattle to Kansas City.

In 1910 a lumberyard was built. Hugh Preston was the manager. This business lasted just a few years.

Around 1920 G.W. Clardy (Guy) purchased a lot adjacent to the railroad and opened the Clardy Feed Store. This continued to be a thriving business for some thirty years.

Through the years many enterprising organizations sprang up in this community. Some of these were Red Cross sewing clubs, churches, Men's Club, Lion's Club, and a Voluntary Fire Department with a Women's Fire Auxiliary.

The Voluntary Fire Department was organized in 1949 and served the community well until Gashland was annexed by Kansas City, Missouri. Alden was the Chief.

The first telephone service connected Gashland to Smithville in 1903. Mr. Garland Clardy and Mr. Dave Bronaugh petitioned Smithville for a special line. Mr. W.T. Williams was one of the early subscribers.

Of the original Gash family there are two families of descendants living in the community, Mr. and Mrs. W.P. Cox and Mr. and Mrs. George Robbins.

Although the name Gashland has been dropped as a town, people will long remember the active little community.