

## Mulvane's Early Years: 1876-1918

1876 - Joab [joh&bull;ab] R. Mulvane moves to Kansas and resides in Topeka. Joab Mulvane's interests later shape modern Kansas, especially in shipping logistics and Kansas' strategic advantage as a single distribution point for North America. He is president of at least nine railroads, with other business interests in the Kansas Town Company, the Quivera Town and Land Company, the Edison Electric Light Company of Topeka, Shawnee Fire Insurance Company, and the Kansas Salt Company, among others.

August 1879 - Mulvane is first laid out in August 1879, and the Mulvane Town Company's Certificate of Incorporation is filed on September 20th. The original town is built on land owned by H.C. Helbert and J.D. Loper, who donate half of this land to the Santa Fe Railroad. Built at the junction of five Santa Fe rail lines, the city is named after Joab Mulvane, who was instrumental in the earliest stages of Mulvane's development.

September 29, 1879 - The very first train to ever pull into Mulvane arrives from Wichita. The Mulvane Station is "two box cars, set end to end" on the west side of the tracks. The following day a train from Wellington arrives, and both trains, pulling flat cars with railroad ties for seats and loaded with approximately 4000 people, then steam on to Winfield to celebrate the new addition to the railroad. The celebration includes a mile-long procession, which includes the Wichita National Guard and Wichita Fire Company, followed by a barbecue dinner at noon and a grand ball that evening.

October 1879 - Mulvane Post Office is established with J.S. Brown postmaster. The first money order from this office is dated August 2, 1880 and transfers \$2.75 from J. E. Shaw to the Novelty Plaster Works of Lowell, Massachusetts. Jarvis Shaw, incidentally, becomes the next postmaster.

March 18, 1880 - Tell W. Walton establishes The Mulvane Herald, which is soon sold to W. N. Bradbury on September 17, 1880. Bradbury soon trades the office and business to A. Pegram for a span of mules and a prairie schooner. On October 7, 1881 Pegram transfers the paper to Joe F. White, who publishes the last issue on a half sheet on July 28, 1882.

August 13, 1880 - The Mulvane Record reports that the first bridge across the Arkansas River is completed. Citizens on both sides of the "raging Arkansas" raise the funds to build this pontoon bridge to accommodate settlers on both sides of the river.

March 23, 1883 - J. Kelley and C. C. Nowlin come to Mulvane and start The Mulvane Record. G. O. Reed purchases the paper in 1884 and transfers it to his son, Jno. Reed, who operates the Record until 1903-1904. C. N. Higginson edits the paper for all but a few occasional issue edited by Jno. Reed. W. C. "Bill" Robinson becomes editor in 1904.

September 27, 1883 - Mulvane is incorporated as a City of the 3rd class. City officers are elected in Captain Kuhn's law office on November 6, 1883. Elected were A. D. Doyle, mayor; E. J. Kuhn, police judge; and David Badger, E. F. Emery, J. G. Booth, George A. Hall and Frank Wagner; councilmen. These same officers are re-elected at the first regular election on April 7, 1884.

1884 - Mulvane's Old Settlers celebration dates back to the fall of 1873, when Jessie Bowles invites neighbors and friends to enjoy a basket dinner in the walnut grove on his farm. Thereafter, these Harvest Home Picnics are held on different farms each year. The first organized picnic takes place in 1884 in Littleton, just southeast of Mulvane, and is hosted by Jim Brown, owner of a trading post there. On this day, the morning is reserved for socializing and getting acquainted with neighbors, followed by a lunch which includes watermelons and grapes, and live music by Logan&rsquo;s National Martial Band, who plays familiar patriotic tunes. After lunch, J. B. Drummond gives a speech about early settlement in Sumner County and P.S. Conroy is awarded the honor of being the first settler in Sumner County. In 1904, the annual picnic name is changed to Quad County Old Settlers' Picnic, and on the last Thursday in August, 5000 people from Sumner, Sedgwick, Cowley and Butler counties attend the Old Settlers' Picnic. The first Old Settlers Parade is organized by George Blair in 1915, and the first Quad County Old Settlers' Reunion Queen, Sarah Jane Jones, is crowned on August 26, 1937. Today, Mulvane's Old Settlers celebration creates as much excitement and anticipation in young and old alike as it did more than 100 years ago.

July 12, 1886 - W. G. Egan, L. D. Hill, C. D. Beebee, Thomas Fawcet, J. N. Trickey and S. M. Wilson organize the Mulvane State Bank. W. H. Egan is elected president of the bank; T. W. Fawcet, vice president; L. D. Hill, cashier; and C. D. Beebee, assistant cashier. The Mulvane State Bank opens July 15, 1886 with \$30,000 capital stock. The Mulvane State Bank is the third bank to open in Mulvane. (The private banking house of Warren and Herman opened in July 1882 and slipped into receivership a few years later. Amos Skinner opened The Mulvane Bank in 1883, but today no one knows what happened to this bank.)

June 13, 1891 - A fire destroys Pryor & Brown's Livery Stable, Singmaster's barn and Hufbauer's Feed Store. All of the horses, buggies and harnesses in the livery are saved from the fire, but "two fine stallions and a valuable jack" owned by H.C. Helbert are burned in the barn. Hufbauer's Feed Store is a complete loss, including the entire stock of flour and feed. These three buildings were so close together they were nearly one building. The fire is determined to be arson.

April 12, 1893 - A fire starts in Daniel Lane's icehouse before 11:00 AM and destroys 16 buildings in downtown Mulvane. The fire is small when first discovered, but winds fan the flames toward other buildings, which soon catch fire, too. Wind continues to carry flames and heat diagonally across Main Street, and buildings on the south side of the street also ignite. It is soon clear that all efforts to stop the fire are useless, and most of the goods and valuables are removed as quickly as possible. Businesses destroyed include The Mulvane State Bank (only the walls and vault were left standing). It is believed that "The Great Fire of 1893" is a result of either spontaneous combustion or a spark from a passing locomotive.

Circa 1900 - Electricity is brought to Mulvane, though no one is certain exactly the year or date. At this time, the Mulvane Mill, along with its sister mill the Udall Roller Mill, boast the latest and best machinery and feature a capacity of 400 barrels of flour per day, with first class shipping facilities and trade extending as far as Galveston, Texas. The first steam-powered electric generator is installed at the Mulvane Mill in a room built exclusively for this purpose. The generator is driven by a belt connected to the same steam engine that powers the mill and elevator. Whenever the electricity goes out, everyone knows a mouse has gotten onto the belt and thrown it off, and it is only a short time before electricity is restored. Churches and businesses are the first to receive electricity, and light is provided by 25- or 40-watt carbon filament bulbs. Electricity, however, is not a profitable business venture for the Mulvane Mill at this early date, and the system is first sold to the Mulvane Ice and Cold Storage Company, and then to the City of Mulvane to be developed into the Mulvane Light & Power Department. Today, the City of Mulvane provides all the electricity, along with water and sewer, within the city limits.

July 30, 1903 - The first issue of the Mulvane News is published by C. E. and W. A. Farney. Charlie Farney, a preacher, and his son came to Mulvane from South Haven, where they had been publishing a church bulletin. On October 25, 1906 they purchase The Mulvane Record and consolidate both papers into The Mulvane News. They continue to operate The Mulvane News until February 6, 1908, when it is purchased by J. L. Papes. The Mulvane News continues to be published today by Mike and Linda Robinson of Mulvane.

September 4, 1905 - E. B. Black notices smoke rising from the center of town and two engines in the railroad yard sound the alarm. The fire starts in front of the Parrett & Wright Meat market and Kuhl Harness Shop, but since neither light nor fire have been used in the building for two days, it is concluded that firebugs started the blaze. Destroyed are the Minnich Grocery, Kuhl Harness Shop, the new Parrett & Wright Meat Market, I.E. Thompson's Barber Shop, the Millinery Store and the Post Office are destroyed, along with nearly all contents.

December 1, 1905 - As early as May 19, 1905, it is clear that Mulvane citizens are genuinely interested in better fire protection. In July 1905, 12 patrol fire extinguishers are ordered. On October 20th, after the recent fire in September, more fire fighting equipment is ordered, including an American LaFrance Fire Engine. On December 1st, the Mayor appoints George Howard Fire Marshall and J. L. Nessly Assistant Fire Marshall, and both are given responsibility to procure necessary ladders and other equipment for a Fire Company. This is the first mention of the Mulvane Fire Company. In early 1906, the Dickerson Building is purchased for \$1500 to house the Fire Company and equipment.

July 22, 1918 - The Mulvane Volunteer Fire Department charts with the State of Kansas and becomes a "not for profit" corporation, which enables the department to receive Firefighter Relief Funds from the State Insurance Office. On December 30, 1926 the Mulvane Fire Department purchases a 1927 IH Boyer Fire Engine, the department's first motorized engine, Engine #1. (Learn more about the Mulvane Fire Department and Mulvane Emergency Services at [www.MulvaneEmergencyServices.org](http://www.MulvaneEmergencyServices.org) .)