

## Kansas River ferries

### Section 3, Pages 61 - 90

Histories and descriptions of ferries and ferry companies that used the Kansas River. Some of the ferries listed are the Wyandot National, Silas Armstrong, Santa Fe Road, Eureka, Muncie, Grinter, Toulee, Keeler, Chouteau also known as the Campbell, and Tiblow also known as the Parrish. The oldest of these is reported to be the Grinter Ferry which was established in 1831.

Date: 1850-1900

Callnumber: History, Ferries Coll. #583

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[www.kansasmemory.org/item/225404](http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/225404)



Extracts from Decret Wyanzelle County  
Papers lost

Case 750

The Monicells Ferry Company

Isaac Parrish

Henry Ziblow

W H Short Smith

Samuel Parsons

Charles B Garrett

Apr 14 - 1865 - Petition filed  
with injunction signed by Judge Brewer

Summons to Wyanzelle Johnson  
and Leavenworth Co.

May 12 - Motion to dissolve injunction  
overruled

Oct 19 - 1866 - Trial by Jury

7 witnesses - Verdict for  
defendant



### THE FIRST PUBLIC UTILITY.

The first public utility in Kansas to be owned and operated by the people was undoubtedly the Wyandotte ferry across the Kansas River a short distance beyond its mouth. <sup>where the University's roadbed now runs</sup> Just when it was started could undoubtedly be found out by an examination of the Journal of the Wyandotte Council now lodged with the Government at Washington. That it was a going concern in 1845 is evident from the journal of Governor Walker. There are a number of references to this ferry in his journal.

"Jan 27, 1846 :- Attended Council to day but done very little important business. Agreed to employ Tall Charles another year to keep the ferry".

"February 10, 1846:- Paid Tall Charles Ferryman, \$45.00, leaving a balance due him for 1845 of \$55.00."

"December 28, 1847:- The Council met at James Washington's. Proceeded to the election of a ferryman, and resulted in the election of D. Young"

"December 12, 1848:- This being the day for the election of a ferryman. After several ballots all the candidates were dropped except D. Young and Tall Charles and the final ballot on these two stood thus: D.Young 16; Tall Charles 7."

"November 17, 1850:- The Legislative Committee and the Council met in joint session and proceeded to the election of a Ferryman, when Isaac Brown was declared duly elected"

So important did the Wyandott's regard the ferry that it was one of the exemptions made in the treaty whereby the Nation ceded its lands to the United States in 1855. The treaty reads:-

"Four acres at and adjoining the Wyandotte ferry, across, and near the mouth of the Kansas river shall also be reserved and together with the rights of the Wyandottes in said ferry, shall be sold to the highest bidder, among the Wyandotte people, and the proceeds of the sale paid over to the Wyandotts".

In the allotments made by the Commissioners on the part of the Government to carry out this treaty the ferry site is described as follows:-

"285 WYANDOTT FERRY TRACT. Commencing 2½ poles East of the S W



## Kansas River ferries

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cor. of the N E  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N E  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 10 Tp 11 S R 25 E. thence North 30 degrees E. 59 $\frac{1}{2}$  poles thence East 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  poles to the N W bank of the Kansas river thence up along said bank south 30 degrees W. 80 poles to a point on a rock marked "W.F.C. (Wyandott Ferry Company) thence West 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  poles, thence North 30 degrees E 20 $\frac{1}{2}$  poles to the beginning, Containing 4 acres."

beginning with the date of Oct. 27, 1855  
The Journal of the Wyandotte Council, did not go to Washington but eventually came into the hands of the Kansas Historical Society.

Page 42 of this Journal under date of Sept. 15, 1856 recites:-

"In accordance with an article of the Treaty between the U.S. Government and Wyandott indians in date of 31st January 1855 and according to the advertisements affixed at three public places in Wyandott was sold the four acres of land attached to the Wyandott Ferry this day and adjudged to Isaih Walker the highest bidder for the sum of Seven Thousand dollars payable one half say three thousand five hundred (\$3,500) dollars payable on the Thirty first of next October and the other half say three thousand five hundred (\$3,500) payable one year from said 31st October next without interest and Charles B. Garrett becomes security for the fulfillment of the conditions of sale - a plot of said lot of land has been made by Lot Coffman Esq, one of the Commissioners".

The ferry consisted of a flat boat, which was propelled by means of a rope stretched across the river. At first thought it would seem that Mr Walker paid a pretty stiff price for this ferry but we are told that the receipt of tolls for the single year 1857 amounted to \$7,000.00, the entire purchase price, and that the charges were not exorbitant but reasonable.

The old ferry continued in use until 1863 when a pontoon bridge was placed across the river near its mouth.



## Kansas River ferries

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The records show that on April 28, 1858, Isaiah Walker sold tract a half interest in the ferry to Charles B. Garrett, Joel W. Garrett, Samuel E. Forsythe and the heirs of Joel Walker, deceased, for \$7,000. (6) When the pontoon bridge was put across the river the ferry tract lost its value. Taxes were unpaid and it went to a tax sale; executions were levied against it; and partition suits were had, making a complicated proposition as to who had title. The Missouri Pacific cut through it with its right of way and Third Street and Ferry Street each took a bite out of it. Finally the remnant was platted as the Ferry Tract Addition and became a part of Wyandotte city.



### NOTES.

1. Article
2. Kansas Historical Collections
3. Goodspeed page 359
4. Same
5. Goodspeed 361.
6. Book G. , page 92. Register Dees Wyandotte County.



WYANDOTT FERRY.

EXTRACT FROM JOURNAL OF THE WYANDOTT COUNCIL  
15th Sept. , 1856.  
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Page 42.

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fullfillment of the conditions of sale - a plat of said lot of land  
has been mad by Lot Coffman Esq, one of the Commissioners.

Geo. I. Clark  
Principal Chief.

R. Robitaille,  
Clerk.

## Kansas River ferries

November 10th, 1860 the petition of Theodore Garrett and forty eight others, for a ~~fe~~ county road "from Silas Armstrong's by the present traveled route, thence on the nearest and best route to a point at or near Delaware ferry; thence on the nearest and bst route to Tuleys ferry", was presented to the county board, approved and viewers appointed.

The viewers report, after laying out to route to the Delaware ferry, read:-

thence through the same lands, south  $53\frac{1}{2}$  degrees, west 60 poles, south  $61$  degrees, west 76 poles, north  $89$  degrees, west 70 poles, north  $63$  degrees, west 11 poles, south  $40$  degrees, west 40 poles, south  $30\frac{1}{2}$  degrees, west 40 poles, south  $11$  degrees, west 80 poles, south  $16$  degrees, west 78 poles, south  $28$  poles, west 18 poles, south  $34$  poles, west 64 poles, south  $45\frac{1}{2}$  degrees, west 52 poles, south  $55$  degrees, west 60 poles, south  $34\frac{1}{2}$  poles, east 49 poles, to the Kansas River at Tuleys ferry. Distance 10 miles  $51\frac{1}{2}$  poles from the west line of the plat of the city of Wyandotte."

Goodspeed page 191

~~The distance from Wyandotte cannot be right for these measurements make Tuleys ferry almost ten miles farther up the river than the Delaware ferry.~~

This brings the Tuley ferry in pretty close to the Delaware ferry



Goodspeed page 360.

Santa Fe Road

Eureka ferries

"Wyandott and Quindaro were for some time rival towns + both surveyed and opened roads to Southern Kansas through the Shawnee reservation, aiming thereby to secure the trade and travel from that region + Committees were appointed by the respective cities to confer and fix upon a point where a joint ferry could be established for the accommodation of both cities + a certain point was suggested by one committee, and rejected by the other, as being too far east + if located there, the travel would go to Wyandott. A point was then designated by the other committee + This was objected to as being too far west + if located there travel would surely go to



Quindaro + the points designated  
were about - one mile apart + no  
intermediate point ~~would do~~ for a  
ferry could be agreed upon + Com -  
promise was wrong in principle +  
Result: a free ferry maintained  
by each -

K C Journal Feb. 17, 1882  
from an address before 25<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of Wyandott +





Quindaro Ferry  
= = =

The spring and summer of '57  
the people of Quindaro built a  
road to Lawrence and laid out  
one to Ossawatimie, and established  
a free ferry at what is now  
John H. Matton's place, with a  
view to competing for the wholesale  
trade of the Territory  
Wyandott Herald July 6, 1876.



### Wyandot National Ferry

" In 1856-7 your correspondent was living in Wyandotte and was proprietor of the Gazette in that "City" as it was then called. \*\*\* The principal crossing of the ~~the~~ Kaw into Kansas territory from Missouri was at the Kaw mouth at Wyandotte & on the bottom opposite Wyandotte, lived a Kentuckian in his cabin on his claim. The same land was claimed as "a float" by Isarah Malver and others on account of service rendered the government in carrying <sup>the</sup> mails. The dispute between them was an angry one. The Kentuckian cut the ferry rope and then would fire on the men from his cabin when they came to repair it. The quarrel lasted for two years and the rope was cut many times & finally the "floaters" paid the Kentuckian \$1,000 to give





✓  
 preceable possession, which he a  
 going back to Kentucky, where he soon  
 died. The receipts from the ferry  
 at that time amounted to several  
 hundred dollars a day, the emigrants  
 coming from a great distance with  
 their jaded teams carrying their  
 families and "plunder". The bottom  
 land between Kansas City and Wyand-  
 otte was at that time a dense  
 forest with cow paths leading off  
 in various directions, and there was  
 a ferry at Turkey creek.

Topeka Capital June 2, 1888





The old ferry across  
the Kansas River, near  
the present cable line  
bridge, continued to be used  
until 1863, when a pontoon  
bridge was placed across  
the river near its mouth.  
Goodspeed 361

### Frederick's Ferry.

"The only route of travel from Independence Mo. to Ft Leavenworth was by way of Westport and Shawnee, crossing the Kaw at what was afterwards called Delaware Crossing + a military road constructed a few years afterwards from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Gibson, crossed the river at that point now known as Secondine, on the K.P. railroad + a government blacksmith shop for the Delawares and a store or two made it a place of considerable note for many years -

KE Journal Feb. 1882 from  
address of J.C. McCoy at 25<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary founding of Waudette  
City +



### Santa Fe Road ferry

The first work of the new city  
was to build a road tapping the  
Santa Fe trail, to do which it  
was necessary to establish a ~~ferry~~  
free ferry across the Kansas river,  
and shortly after a bridge was  
built, known as then and since  
as the Southern bridge  
J. C. Dun Jan. 9 1873





The first Steam Power Ferry  
at Quindaro

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See Wyandotte County Clipping

vol 5 - pg - 21

## Kansas River ferries

My Dear Root:

You win, but you only had part of the story. Brewer's findings show clearly that Armstrong never ran a ferry. The big bluff however netted \$4,000.00 worth of the alleged worthless stock in the bridge company.

GWH.



### THE SILAS ARMSTRONG FERRY.

The Territorial Legislature of 1855 granted to Silas Armstrong the right to maintain a ferry at the mouth of the Kansas river with the exclusive privilege of landing on both sides of the river for a distance of two miles from the mouth. (1) . So far as the evidence goes Armstrong never made use of this grant. The only act of his that has been pre-served was an assignment of an interest in this franchise to <sup>David</sup> ~~James~~ <sup>William Weer and George R. Wood</sup> with whom he was connected in the promotion of a town site on the strip of land lying between the Kansas river and the Missouri state line. Silas Armstrong died in ~~1865~~. December 1865.

On February 12th 1866 the Wyandotte and Kansas City Bridge Company was incorporated to build a bridge across the Kansas river at Wyandotte. The company made a contract with R.S.Twombly and R.W.Hilleker to construct a permanent first class Howetruss bridge across the Kansas river at the foot of Third street in Wyandott City and the contractors at once commenced work. (2).

On April 10th, 1866 , the heirs and assigns of Silas Armstrong came musccling in. They filed their petition in the District Court (3) setting out the grant to Armstrong in 1855, alleging that that he had done all things required and they , his heirs and successors, were entitled to the exclusive right to run a ferry. That the defendants, who had no interest in the ferry , were building a bridge within the ferry limits, and were obstructing the approaches to the ferry by piling material on the road way and that if the defendants are not restrained and such bridge be built as contemplated then their ferry franchise will become absolutely valueless to them.

Judge David Brewer heard some testimony, took the matter under advisement, and a few days later issued an injunction forbidding the ~~fe~~ bridge





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company from obstructing the approaches to the ferry but refusing the injunction to stop the building of the bridge. The plaintiffs ~~then had Hilleker, the bridge builder, cited before the Judge for contempt alleging~~ took an appeal from this ruling to the Supreme Court where in due time the decision of the lower court was affirmed. (4)

The plaintiff's next ~~had~~ Hilleker, the bridge builder, cited before the court for contempt, alleging that ~~in~~ he was building the abutments for the bridge in the line of the ferrys track across the river. Judge Brewer refused to hold Hilleker for contempt and handed down a written opinion in which he said: (5).

"The right to run the ferry boat must be protected. Wherever in good faith the owners of that franchise had placed the ~~the~~ line of their boat they must be protected in that line and if it is not possible to build a bridge without blocking that line then in my judgment no bridge could be built till the franchise ends or was condemned. It appears from the testimony:

1st that the owners of the franchise had not in the past so located their ferry line at one point as to indicate that as their chosen landing.

2nd that at the time of the location of the bridge line they had no ferry boat running and had not possession of any landing.

3rd doubtful whether even at the time of commencing the work they had a ferry boat running or had occupied any landing.

4th Questionable whether their ferry line was not selected with the design of conflicting with the ~~ferret~~<sup>bridge</sup> line."



3

On June 12th, 1866 the Armstrong claimants made a fresh attack, filing a new suit in the name of the Wyandott Bridge and Ferry Company. (6) . In this petition they not only claimed under the Armstrong grant but alleged that under an Act of Feb. 25th, 1864 that Armstrong had been given the right to build a bridge across the Kansas river any where that he had ~~the~~ the right of operating a ferry ; that such a bridge had been built at the identical spot where the defendants were now building by the Wyandott Ferry and Bridge Company to whom the Armstrong (7) rights had been assigned. That such bridge had been destroyed by an Act of God and that a ferry had been placed in its stead to accommodate the public until the bridge could be rebuilt . That the present corporation had been made on the 9th day of March 1866 ~~for the purpose~~ and that the rights of all claimants had been merged in it. That it owned all the land on the south side of the river for a long distance both above and below the point of crossing of defendants bridge. That defendants were wholly irresponsible for damages and that their incorporation and pretended stock was worthless, etc. Wherefore they asked for an injunction to stop the building of the bridge.

Judge Brewer made short work of this application saying that another action between the same parties was pending. An appeal was taken and a Case Made for the Supreme Court was printed.

The Wyandott and Kansas City Bridge Company then bought out the Armstrong claimants giving them \$4,000.00 worth of paid up stock for all their claims. (8) The Gazette ~~says~~ in its issue of Oct. 3, 1866 carried this news item:

"Settled -- The difficulties between the old Wyandotte Ferry Company and the Wyandotte and Kansas City Bridge Company has been amicably settled, the Ferry Company coming in as members of the Bridge Company and all formerly conflicting interests being now united. So we go. The bridge will soon be in passable order. "





4

The Armstrong ferry grant figures in still another Wyandotte county lawsuit. William Weer was the surviving ~~partner~~ member in the old partnership between Silas Armstrong, John Calhoun and William Weer and acting under a law passed to facilitate the settlement of the estates of deceased partners he had taken over full control of the partnership properties. The heirs of the deceased partners came into court and secured the appointment of a receiver on the ground that by reason of his intemperate habits that Weer was incapable of managing the properties. The parties plaintiff were practically the same as in the two former lawsuits against the bridge company notwithstanding their former allegations that the Armstrong interests had been merged into the corporation last suing, they again as individual claim the Armstrong ferry. The allegation runs - "That there is a valuable ferry franchise belonging to the parties of which the defendant has a one eighth interest and no more. That said ferry is for the transit of passengers &c across the Kansas river by the means of boats and that the landing for such on the south side of said river is through some portions of said land and that said ferry is now in actual operatio<sup>n</sup> and large amounts of toll being secured therefrom" (1)

This suit like its predecessors evidently had the effect of making the other fellow come across as it was subsequently dismissed by consent.



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### NOTES.

1. General Statutes 1855, pages 795-796.
2. Answer in Bartless vs Cooper, case No. 846 Wyandott District Court.
3. Bartlett vs Cooper. Case No. 846.
4. *Bartlett vs Cooper 4 1/2 119* Affirmed Oct. 1, 1866.
5. Files of case 846.
6. Wyandott Bridge and Ferry Co. vs Wyandott and Kansas City Bridge Co. Case No. 850 Wyandotte County.
7. The Wyandott Ferry and Bridge Co. was incorporated Aug. 16, 1865 by Wm. P. Overton and others.
8. Agreement dated Oct 2, 1866 in files of case No. 846.
9. David E. James, et al. vs Wm Weer. Case No. 883, Wyandott County. Filed Sept. 14, 1866.

④ decision below affirmed  
because of an equally  
divided court &





### THE ARMSTRONG FERRY ? - 2.

Chapter XCI., Private laws of 1859, approved Feb. 11, 1859 is An Act to amend an Act to establish and charter a ferry across the Missouri river at Wyandotte.

This Act authorizes the Wyandott City Ferry Company ( The Armstrong company) to establish a ferry across the Kansas river subject to the same conditions as which company was authorized to establish across the Missouri river and giving privilege of landing on both sides of the Kansas river for one half mile above its mouth.

It is evident from this that Armstrong had no ferry across the Kansas river on Feb. 11, 1859.

This grant it will be noted was on the same terms and subject to the same conditions as the original grant evidently meaning that of Feb. 2, 1858. The two important provisions in that grant were that :

Nothing herein contained shall be construed as to infringe upon the rights of the Wyandott ferry across the Kansas river"

And that the ferry shall be in operation before the first day of July.

The general law concerning ferries provided that the County should fix the rate of charges for ferriage. Unless a record can be found where Leavenworth county fixed a rate of ferriage for the Armstrong ferry I shall still think that there was no such animal.



### THE ARMSTRONG FERRY ?.

\*\*\*

I can find no evidence that Silas Armstrong ever had a ferry across the Kansas river at old Wyandotte.

Chapter XLIV. Private laws of 1858, passed Feb. 2, 1858, provides for a Ferry at Wyandott. It is an Act to Establish and Charter a Ferry across the Missouri River at Wyandott.

Sec. 1, provides that Silas Armstrong, etal shall be incorporated as the Wyandott City Ferry Co.

Sec 2. gives them the exclusive right for 21 years to maintain a ferry across the Missouri river at Wyandotte.

Another section gives them the right to land on either bank of the Kansas river one eighth of a mile above the mouth of the same.

Another section provides that the ferry shall be in operation on or before the first day of July next

Another section has this proviso:-

Nothing herein contained shall be construed as to infringe upon the rights of the Wyandott ferry across the Kansas river.

Another section repeals the Act of Feb 17, 1857 and all other acts, etc.

I do not have access to the laws of 1857 and so do not know what was repealed. It is plain enough that Armstrong did not have a ferry at the time of the passage of Chapter XLIV. on Feb. 2, 1858. I doubt if he ever did.

*Silas Armstrong  
W. Y. Roberts  
S. W. Edwards  
James McPherson  
J. W. Edwards*



✓  
just a suggestion  
= = =

Chapter 71 - Laws 1855, pg 362

An Act regulating ferries -

No person shall keep a ferry  
without a license

The County Clerk shall issue  
licenses, etc.

Perhaps this law was repealed but  
of note the heads of the County Clerk  
at Leavenworth ought to show who  
have out licenses to run ferries  
across the Kansas River - up to  
1859.

Chapter 25, pg 795 gives Silas Armstrong  
the right to run a ferry - I can find  
no one who ever heard of any ferry at the  
mouth of the Kansas River except the Wyandotte  
Indian ferry -

LMN

## Kansas River ferries

### TOULEE THE ~~TULEY~~ FERRY:-

In K.H.C. IX, 559 there is a reference to Toulee's (or Moses Grinters ) ferry. They were not the same . There is a record of a county road laid out from Wyandotte by way of the Delaware ferry or the Grinter ferry to Toulee's ferry. It places the Toulee ferry about a half mile up the river from Grinters.





✓  
WYANDOTTE NATIONAL FERRY.

In 1857 the ferry across the Kansas river was at a point near the present cable line bridge. It consisted of a flat boat, which was propelled by means of a rope stretched across the river. In proof of the great amount of travel and transportation across the river to the newly laid out city, is the fact that the receipt of tolls for the single year of 1857 amounted to \$7,000.00, and the charges for crossing at the ferry were not exorbitant but reasonable.

Goodspeed 359

The old ferry across the Kansas river, near the present cable line bridge, continued in use until 1863 when a pontoon bridge was placed across the river near the mouth.

Goodspeed, 361.

already H-5

## Kansas River ferries

### THE CHOUTEAU FERRY:-

Road Record A., page 216, County Clerks Office, Wyandotte County, dated Oct 4, 1869, gives a plat of the Kouns Road . It runs into Edwardsville from the north and extends south a half mile to the Kansas River at a point marked "Ferry". This is in the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 35-11-23. Later the G.W.Galloway Road was laid out, see Record B, page 62. It starts from this same point which it designates as the Chouteau Ferry.

### ↓ THE TIBLOW FERRY:-

Morgan in his history of Wyandotte County, page 320, in speaking of Tiblow, now Bonner Springs, said:- "For many years a ferry was operated by Henry Tiblow, a club footed Indian and official interpreter for the United States. He lived in a log cabin which still stands on the west side of the city". I am told this ferry was at the present crossing of the River by Kansas Highway No. 7.



### THE TOOLEY FERRY.

The Legislature of 1859, Chapter 75, authorized Charles Tooley to keep a ferry across the Kansas river at or near the east line of Section number 32-11-24 and the exclusive right and privilege of keeping a ferry within the distance of one mile on each side of the east line of said section 32 for the term of twenty five years.

While Tooleys ferry was near the east line of Section 32 it was likewise some distance north of the north line in Section 29 and within about three quarters of a mile of the Grinter Ferry as shown by a subsequent road survey. Had the one mile each side of section 32 been enforced it would have put Grinter Ferry off the map. Settlers in this vicinity all know about the Grinter Ferry. No one seems to know that there was a Toulee Ferry.

