

Dr. Edward N. Tihen (1924-1991) was an avid reader and researcher of Wichita newspapers. His notes from Wichita newspapers -- the "Tihen Notes," as we call them -- provide an excellent starting point for further research. They present brief synopses of newspaper articles, identify the newspaper -- Eagle, Beacon or Eagle-Beacon -- in which the stories first appeared, and give exact references to the pages on which the articles are found. Microfilmed copies of these newspapers are available at the Wichita State University Libraries, the Wichita Public Library, or by interlibrary loan from the Kansas State Historical Society.

Subject(s): Lewellen

Wichita Beacon

Sunday, March 13, 1927

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- B-1. J. E. Watts, now living at Parshall, Colorado, is a patient at St. Francis Hospital and tells his reminiscences of his first visit to Wichita in 1868. ¶There was then only a struggling group of shacks and stockades along the east bank of the Little River a few blocks above Central Avenue. The only hotel was the Vigus Hotel, a house built of shales standing on end and covered with dirt. There were three small stores, open on the Durfee ranch, another run by L. D. Lewellen, and the third by a squaw man named Greenway. This was all the town there was when I came to Wichita as a boy of 12 with my uncle, M. A. Sayles, and my grandmother, in 1868. My grandmother took up a claim on the east side of the little river and my uncle took another between the two rivers. ¶Says he saw a statement a few years ago to the effect that William Finn of Sedgwick taught the first school in Wichita. Says this is a mistake. The first person to teach school in Wichita was Nora Yale, who taught a school in Charles Gifford's house, just south of the Munger home on the east bank of the Little River. That was in the spring of 1869, and I went to school to her." William Finn taught school the next fall in a house farther north, that had been built by an army officer and abandoned when the soldiers left here. ¶Further details.

Wichita Eagle

Sunday, May 1, 1932

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2. Article discusses question as to who was the first white child born in Wichita -- thinks it was Virginia Lewellen, born May 8, 1869.

Thursday, November 11, 1948

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5. Report of death yesterday of Mrs. Henrietta S. Widdows, 76, one of the oldest native born Wichitans. She was born in Wichita October 18, 1872 and was the eldest daughter of the first couple married in Wichita and one of the first children born on the original townsite. Her mother, Hannah Lewellen, was the eldest daughter of the city's first storekeeper, Doc Lewellen. Her father, Sergeant John Ward, was a member of the

United States infantry and was sent to this community in 1868, with a detachment of soldiers to protect the group of settlers from Indian raids. The couple was married September 7, 1868. ¶ Mrs. Widdows husband, Robert, died March 4, 1934. At the time of her death, Mrs. Widdows was living with her daughter, Mrs. H. R. Mason, at 1410 North Lorraine. Surviving are two daughters, Mrs. Mason, and Mrs. J. E. Meefer, Jr., of 1520 North Grove, one son, LeRoy Widdows, of Sharon, Kansas, a sister in Omaha (named), 11 grand children and three great grand-children. Burial to be in Highland Cemetery. Photo.