

Barber County Attractions

Featuring the communities of: **Hardtner, Isabel, Kiowa, Medicine Lodge, Sharon and Sun City**

Read more about this county using the *Kansas Guidebook 2 for Explorers*. **Order** at kansassampler.org or **buy at the Stockade Museum** in Medicine Loge.

• AROUND THE COUNTY

Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway / Points of Interest (8 Wonders of Kansas Geography) - The byway begins at the western city limits of Medicine Lodge and continues west to the intersection of U.S. 160 and U.S. 183 at Coldwater. The route is a straight 42 miles but on either side of the road you'll see beautiful red buttes, mesas, canyons, and vistas. Many of the rocks and much of the soil are stained red by iron oxide, giving the region its physiographic name, the Red Hills. Gypsum, a white rock, is found in layers within those red beds.

Gyp Hills Scenic Back Road - From U.S. 281, 3 1/4 miles west on U.S. 160, 6 miles south on Gyp Hill, 7 miles west on Scenic, then 7 miles north on Lake City. Signs will help guide the way. This approximately 20-mile round trip drive takes unpaved roads through rolling hills and red mesas past Flower Pot Mound and other landmarks. You will cross cattle guards, so watch for cattle on the road.

Z Bar Ranch Bison Viewing. Please stay in your vehicles to view bison. 850 cows, 50 bulls and calves. Your drive begins at Hardtner which is 24 miles south and east of Medicine Lodge. Driving directions from Medicine Lodge to Hardtner. From Hardtner, go 19 miles west on Hackberry, then 4 3/4 miles north on Aetna. From here go on Cottage Creek Road until you see the bison along a four mile stretch.

• HARDTNER, pop. 173

The Gyp Hills Nature Museum, 301 E. Central, (Hwy 281), in the former school building. In this specially designed museum you will observe nature from rain forests to dry deserts. From present day to fossils over 300 million years old. Examples of small animal bones from an extinct mammal from Kansas. Native artifacts to present day award winning handmade knives. Birds, fish, carved butterflies, crystals, minerals, and a large active model train display compliment our distinctive and diverse displays. **Public restrooms available. Open 9am-5pm.** 620.840.1037.

Old Hospital: N. Main and Caddo. - Constructed in 1941, Achenbach Memorial Hospital has been renovated and is across the street from Achenbach Park. Drive by only.

Historic Round Barn, 10866 SW Hackberry, From Main, 6 1/4 miles west on Hackberry. Location will be marked by a sign. Barn owner, Lee Sternberger, welcomes visitors and will be around to answer questions.

• ISABEL, pop. 92

Golden Rule Oil Company Building, Main and Ethel. This small tin-clad building with matching parapets on all four sides, was one of 23 stations in Kansas owned by the Golden Rule Refining Company. You can still see the faded name and logo on the front facade. The company was started in 1914 by Elbert Rule.

Thornton Adobe Barn (NRHP)* - Although it is in Pratt County, the barn is close to Isabel. From main, 3/4 mile east on K-42, then 1 1/4 miles north on 110. Signage explains the architecture and history of the barn, which is located in the Isabel Wetland Wildlife Area.

Explorer extras -

- **The abundant gypsum** in the area accounts for Isabel's large number of stucco houses.
- **Isabel was once known as the Windmill City** because of the many windmills in town. One still stands across from the Community Store on Main Street.

• KIOWA, pop. 1,040

Land Rush Statue, 4th and Main. Kiowa was one of five official Kansas starting points for the Cherokee Strip land Rush of 1893. To honor that heritage and his grandfather, James W. Polson, Cecil Tucker and his wife, Verna, have donated to the town this bronze sculpture of a horse and rider and a woman handing claim stakes to the rider.

Kiowa Historical Museum, 107 N. 7th. Inside the former city hall and fire station, the museum captures the area's colorful history. Exhibits focus on the Land rush and cattle shipping and note that Carrie Nation unleashed her hatchet-wielding campaign in Kiowa. Her hatchet is on display. 620.825.4127. (hours not known at this time, call ahead)

Historic Native Rock Water Fountain, 6th and Main. This temperance firebrand's saloon-smashing crusade began in Kiowa on June 1, 1900-and so says the plaque on the fountain.

Hometown Market, 140 S. 6th. Even buying a few things will support this co-op grocery store, owned and operated by the people of Kiowa and surrounding area. Hot deli open 9am-1pm. Store open: Mon-Sat 8am-7pm, Sun 12:30-5pm. 620.825.4777.

Explorer extras -

- **The piece of petrified wood** standing at 6th and Main was brought to Kiowa from Fort Supply, Oklahoma, by George Haskin around 1913.
- **Note the terra cotta roof** on the 1915 Mission style Santa Fe depot, 203 S. Railroad, built of locally mined gypsum.
- **The former Elmore Hotel**, known locally as the Kiowa Social Club, was built circa 1916. Because it was constructed next to the railroad, the architect added earthquake shocks to the foundation to absorb vibrations from the rail cars. Located on S. Railroad, the building is vacant.
- **Look for the red-brick art deco** former grade school, built in 1935, in the 900 block of Main.

• MEDICINE LODGE, pop. 2,041

Memorial Peace Park, from Main, 1 3/4 miles east on U.S. 160 to Airport. Look for the overhead entrance sign welcoming you to the park. Here a marker relates the story of the 1867 Medicine Lodge peace treaty council. The Peace Treaty Pageant is held every five years in this park's natural amphitheater to celebrate the treaty signing. The pageant will be held September 28, 29 and 30, 2018. 620.886.9815. **NOTE:** Please stay on the road. Driving on the grass could lead to fire.

Peace Treaty Monument, 1st and Main. Stone statues of a soldier and a Plains Indian commemorate the signing of the 1867 peace treaty between the U.S. government and five tribes of Plains Indians.

Stockade Museum, 209 W. Fowler. The original 1874 stockade once stood in present downtown and purportedly covered about two blocks. In this replica stockade, the showcase exhibit features a copy of the 1867 Medicine Lodge peace treaty along with photos of the first reenactment (1927) of the treaty's signing. A log cabin and old courthouse jail complete the museum complex. For the BKRT hours are Thur 10am-4pm; Fri-Sun 9am-5pm. 620.886.3553.

Carry Nation Home (NRHP)*, 211 W. Fowler. The home, on its original site, includes interpretive signs providing excellent background of the temperance fighter Carry Nation (8 Wonders of Kansas People). Personal items on display include Carry's hatchet, Bible, hat, valise, WCTU pin, and a few pieces of furniture. Open same hours as the Stockade Museum.

Sagebrush Gallery of Western Art, 115 E. Kansas. Ranch country, cowboys, and livestock are artist Earl Kuhn's favorite watercolor subjects. Inside this gallery you'll find his stunning limited edition prints so lifelike you could step right into these western scenes. Open during the BKRT on Fri and Sun 9am-5pm. 620.886.5163.

Stucco Homes - Barber County probably has more stucco homes than any other county in the state, and Medicine Lodge likely has the most. Gypsum, a natural and abundant material in this county, was readily used in making stucco. Many of the houses are constructed in the bungalow style. Look for them as you drive around town.

Lustron Home, 203 S. Spring. This enamel-coated, all-steel, prefabricated home was built here in 1949. These unique homes, never needing paint, were popular answer to the post-WWII housing shortage.

Explorer Extras -

- **The four corners of the 1874 stockade**, long since gone, are marked by historical signs at the Barber County Courthouse (118 E. Washington), People's Bank (121 S. Main; behind the bank on Washington), the Police Department (114 W. 1st), and the school district office (100 E. 1st; between the office and the Presbyterian Church). The stockade, complete with watchtowers and built entirely of native logs, was constructed to protect the area from Indian raids.
- **Several downtown businesses display plaques** telling the history of the buildings. Examples include the Grand Hotel, 124 S. Main, built in 1885 as a first-class hotel, and the 1884 First National Bank (now SCTelcom), 101 S. Main.
- **David Nation, Carry Nation's second husband**, is buried in Highland Cemetery on U.S. 281. A small white stone near the northeast side of the stucco cemetery building marks his grave.
- At 2nd and Walnut, the **original school bell** rests prominently on a tall architectural remnant of the 1889 former school.
- **A replica Statue of Liberty** stands at 320 N. Walnut in front of Medicine Lodge Grade School.
- **A black iron water fountain and trough** unit is part of the 1912 Wisner Memorial Foundation at 1st and Main.
- **An equatorial sundial** stands southwest of Barber County High School, 400 W. Eldorado. From U.S. 281, east on W. Eldorado, then north on the first drive to the school.
- **Enjoy a half-mile hike** on the Red Cedar Natural Trail or the longer hiking loop at Barber State Fishing Lake. From U.S. 160, 1 1/2 miles north on U.S. 281.

- **SHARON, pop. 162**

Martina McBride - Sharon is the hometown of singer Martina McBride. This famous country-western star grew up as Martina Schiff and attended grade and high school in the blond-brick school at the end of N. Broadway.

Martina McBride Park, N. Broadway. Walk under the entrance arch into an area of playground equipment, picnic shelters, and the most dominant feature, the water tower! Two plaques explain that the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, one of the "alphabet" agencies of the NewDeal, built this tower in 1938.

Wisner Library, 102 S. Broadway. Inside this beautiful 1910 pillars and brick building you'll find most books kept in old glass-front wood bookcases. Hours irregular.

Bull Pen, 103 E. Benton. Inside this eatery you'll find a display case featuring memorabilia of hometown girl Martina McBride. Open Fri-Sat 5-9:30pm.

- **SUN CITY, pop. 54**

River Road Scenic Back Road, from Main, 1/4 mile north on Sun City, 9 1/2 miles northwest on River (becomes Sun City), then 1 1/2 miles west on Wilmore into unincorporated Belvidere (Kiowa County). This sandy winding road parallels the Medicine Lodge River. As you near Belvidere, physiographic changes from the Red Hills to the High Plains are revealed in the topography and vegetation. In season, wildflowers line your route in stunning fashion.

Buster's Saloon, 104 W. Main. Whether you stop here to eat or quench your thirst with an frosty fish bowl mug of ice cold beer, you'll want to enter the double screen door under a tin awning and imagine all the cowboy boots that have crossed this wood floor and rested on the bar's brass foot rail. You might even find horses tied up at the hitching rail! Open Thur-Sun 11am-9pm. 620.248.3215.

* NRHP - National Register of Historic Places