

HIRAM WENTWORTH

Banker and Hardware Merchant

Born: Sept 6, 1830 in New York

Died: May 2, 1910 in Russell, Russell, KS

Hiram Wentworth was born in New York on September 6, 1830. Between 1850 and 1860, Hiram left New York and relocated to Wisconsin. Hiram and his wife Charlotte were the parents of two children, a son Everett Mills Wentworth, and daughter Frances E. Wentworth Hill both born in Wisconsin. While in Wisconsin the Wentworths joined the "Northwest Colony Association", a group of families headquartered in Ripon, Wisconsin who were interested in relocating to the expanding West. On



February 21, 1871, three delegates from the "Northwest Colony Association" left Ripon traveling west in search of a location for the colony to settle. A location in Kansas along the Kansas Pacific Railway known as Fossil Station was chosen and on April 19, 1871, about 70 members of the Northwest Colony Association arrived by train at Fossil Station. The Hiram Wentworth family followed by wagon and also arrived at Fossil Station in 1871. The colony received a quarter section of land as a gift from the Kansas

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Pacific Railway and purchased another quarter section directly south of this one and this property was held in community ownership by the "Northwest Colony Association." The land was surveyed and laid out into lots and in the summer of 1871 the town was given the name Russell, Kansas. Hiram Wentworth, his son-in-law John Hill, and their families established a hardware store and farm implement business at the NE corner of Main and 8th streets in Russell, KS. In 1880, a fire broke out in an adjacent building, destroying Wentworth's hardware building in Russell. After the fire, the buildings were replaced with more sturdy structures.

Sometime before 1884, Hiram and Charlotte Wentworth and their son Everett came to Dickinson County, KS to expand their hardware business while their daughter Frances Wentworth Hill remained in Russell with her husband John Hill to tend to the hardware store there. In Dickinson County, Hiram

Wentworth, George Ogden, and John Hill established a hardware business at the southeast corner of Broadway and Third Street in Abilene, KS where they specialized in heavy hardware, firearms, farming implements and stoves. The partnership with Ogden was terminated in July of 1884 and the business became known as "Wentworth and Hill." Around 1887, Wentworth came to Herington and built his hardware building at the southeast corner of Broadway and Main. The business changed names several times where it was known as "Wentworth and Son – Hardware merchants" in 1887, and later became known as "Herington Hardware".

Hiram also became the President of a private banking enterprise in Herington known as the "Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank", which was incorporated on April 23, 1887 and was also located in the Wentworth building. Within a few years, the "Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank" changed hands and became the "First National Bank" in Herington. The Wentworth building was torn down in 1930 and a new "First National Bank" (the current building) was built on the same site. In 1975, the First National Bank moved into a new building at the southwest corner of Broadway and Day and the old bank building was sold to the Olsen Gamble Store.

Hiram's son Everett Wentworth returned to Russell prior to 1900 to work in the family hardware store there. Hiram and Charlotte Wentworth remained in Herington until 1910. Hiram Wentworth died in 1910 and Charlotte returned to Russell to be near her children there. Charlotte Wentworth died in Russell in 1916, and their son Everett M. Wentworth died in Russell in 1944.

