

Redel District (1905, five buildings)

163rd & Mission Rd. - Overland Park

National Register of Historic Places

The beginning of the 20th century was a period of change and industrialization for rural areas of Johnson County. The railroads, which first came to the area in 1869, affected future settlement in the county. This industry afforded many opportunities to the towns located along railroad tracks. Many towns not located on a railroad line were abandoned. In some cases, communities were created specifically to accommodate the booming railroad industry. In January 1905, the Olathe Mirror reported of such a community:



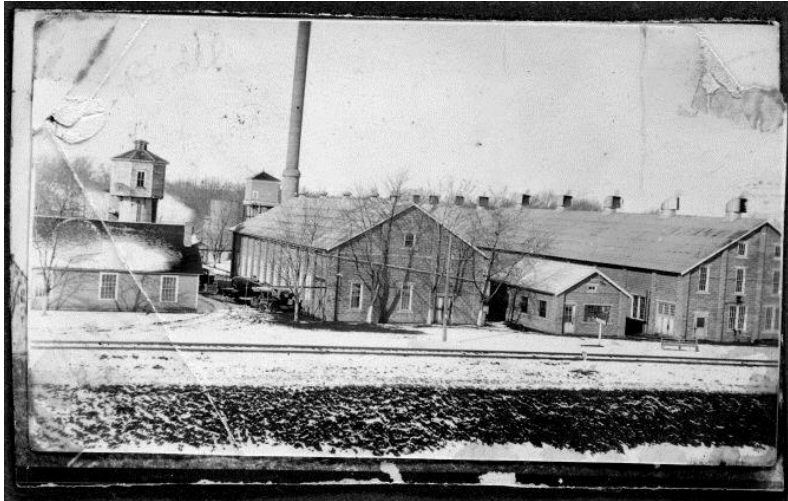
Three similar styles of homes were built in Redel, still located at 163rd and Mission Road. *Johnson County Museum Collection.*

The Standard Oil Company is building a large pumping station on its pipeline just south of Mastin in this county...All together the plant will represent a large investment and will employ several men permanently.

This new settlement was named Redel; it is still located at 163rd and Mission Road in southeastern Johnson County. Redel was constructed in 1905 for The Prairie Oil and Gas Company; a subsidiary of The Standard Oil Company. The name "Redel" is an anagram. The community was named for Jesse T. Elder, who sold part of his farm property to Standard Oil for the construction of a pipeline and pumping station.

Housing at Redel was constructed in 1906 for the railroad pumping station workers. In its early years, Redel was a small self-contained community. In addition to single family homes, Redel

boasted duplexes, a grocery store, gardens and tennis and croquet courts. Only five houses remain in the community to date.



Redel was a small self-contained community constructed in 1905 for the Prairie Oil & Gas Company railroad pumping station workers. Only five houses remain in the community. *Johnson County Museum Collection.*

Three similar styles of homes were built in Redel. The homes were originally built of wood frame with weatherboard siding, brick foundations and chimneys. The original weatherboard was recovered with asbestos siding in the early 1960s. The smoke produced by the nearby pumping station contained so much oil residue that it saturated the wood

clapboards of the nearby homes. Eventually, the oil buildup in the wood siding kept the paint from adhering to the wood. As a result, the homes were recovered in asbestos shingles to resist the oil saturated smoke. The house located at 16310 Mission Road has been restored its original appearance. In order to restore the home, oil saturated weatherboard underneath the asbestos shingles had to be completely replaced.

The pumping station responsible for producing the oily smoke is located along the railroad tracks. It still stands but is now vacant. The housing has not been owned by Standard Oil since 1937, when it was sold to private residents.

Technological advances in the late 1940s and early 1950s rendered the station obsolete. The Redel station was closed and



The Prairie Oil & Gas Company, a subsidiary of The Standard Oil Company, pumping station was a state-of-the-art facility for transporting and distributing petroleum products. *Johnson County Museum Collection.*

abandoned in 1954.

The Redel neighborhood remains as an important reminder of the thriving early-twentieth century industrial community. It is representative of not only railroad history but industrial technology. At its construction, the pumping station was a state-of-the-art facility for the transportation and distribution of petroleum products. It is now a quiet residential community in a rapidly expanding part of the county.



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