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(Laurie J. Hamilton, Editor)

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# Doc Bushong

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## DOC BUSHONG

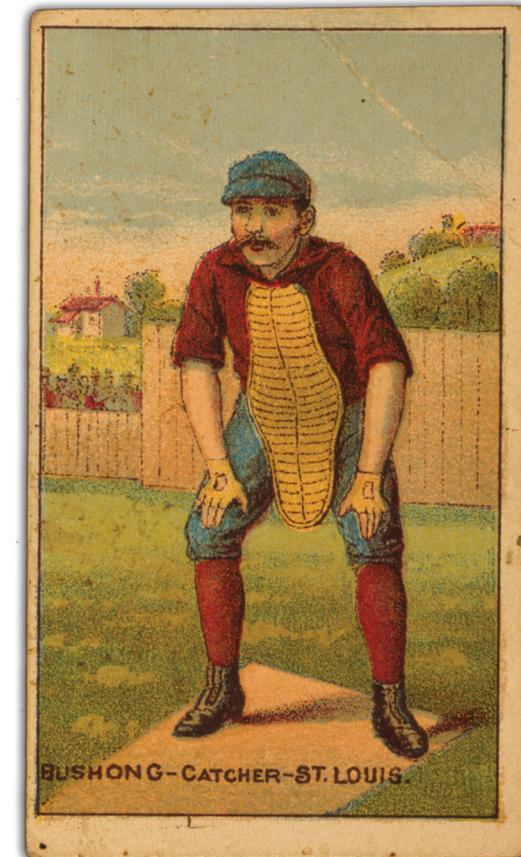
The Council Grove, Osage City & Ottawa Railroad was built through northern Lyon County in 1886 and was incorporated into the Missouri Pacific Railroad that would eventually run from St. Louis to Pueblo, Colorado. Local rancher Joseph Weeks donated land for a station and cattle pens, and the railroad named it “Weeks Station.”

But the railroad crews had their own ideas for naming the stations along the line. They were fans of that year’s baseball world champions, the St. Louis Browns, and they renamed Weeks Station “Bushong” in honor of Al “Doc” Bushong, the team’s catcher. The name stuck and Weeks was forgotten. Comiskey Station, just to the west, was named after the team’s manager, captain and first baseman, Charlie Comiskey.

At one time Bushong had four general stores, a hardware store, a blacksmith shop, an elementary school, a doctor, a grain elevator, a garage, and a bank. It was home to 166 residents at its peak in 1927.

Writing about Kansas ghost towns for the *Wichita Eagle* in 1981, noted journalist (and former Missouri Pacific train dispatcher) Forrest Hintz wrote, “One of the most memorable events occurred in 1930 when Carl Cornwell, the blacksmith, decided to see what was wrong with the water in the town well. When he removed the cover and struck a match, the well blew up a roar, scorching his face and hurling him across the street. It also blew out the pump and destroyed the curb.”

Today, according to the U.S. census, there are 34 people living in Bushong. The now vacant United Methodist Church is the last non-residential structure in town. The once impressive 1924 school building is a barely-standing shell used for hay storage. The railroad line was abandoned in the early 1990s and it has now become the Flint Hills Nature Trail, administered by the Kanza Rail-Trails Conservancy.



*Courtesy Library of Congress*