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### Sheridan Coliseum: Paper, How Sheridan Coliseum Got Its Name, by Nancy Ellen Miller

Nancy Ellen Miller

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Nancy Ellen Miller

HOW SHERIDAN COLISEUM GOT ITS NAME  
A Brief On Democracy In Action

Something to hold the interest of the homecoming alumni, likewise the student body as a whole is the unusual and inspiring story of how Sheridan Coliseum acquired its name. It is also the story of a true Westerner of sterling integrity standing his ground in the defense of truth and justice, against ruthless and overwhelming odds.

In the early pioneer days there came to Western Kansas from Peoria, Illinois a family by the name of Schlicher who settled near Hoxie, Kansas. A son, John W. was twelve years old at the time. This sturdy lad had little opportunity for schooling, receiving the total of seven months in his whole life time. But being eager for learning he read avidly any book or literature that came to his hand. These he would carry with him while herding cattle. They served the dual purpose of staving off loneliness and also providing a source of education; thus his mental development kept pace with his physical, as he grew to be a man of imposing strength and stature.

It was always Mr. Schlicher's habit to associate with persons interested in learning, and in this manner he acquired the acquaintance and admiration of Wm. Picken, then President of Fort Hays Normal School. In the years 1911 and 1913 Mr. Schlicher served as State Representative from Sheridan County, and where he was chosen as a member of the Appropriations Committee.

At this time Fort Hays and vicinity were pressing their claims for sorely needed funds with which to build the Coliseum. According to the records, this was in order for the colleges in the eastern part of the State had been taken care of generously.

However, when Mr. Schlicher who was sponsoring the bill brought it up in the Committee, he was showered with vituperations and ridicule; highly insulting references were heaped upon the youth of Western Kansas and their school by such remarks as "They wouldn't know what to do with an education if they had it." Nevertheless, although practically alone Mr. Schlicher stood his ground like a Spartan; the fight waxed fast and furious and profanity flowed freely from the opposition. Mr. Schlicher disdained to indulge in this, keeping his expressions within the bounds of respectability. However, when it seemed they were closing in on him he grasped a chair and brandished it, thus dispersing the opposition to their places. Later he was fined a barrel of apples for this gesture.

The ruckus was soon noised about the Statehouse, and from there throughout the country, thus exposing the working of selfish interests to the light of publicity, and by the same token, winning support and sympathy for Mr. Schlicher and his bill. It now passed readily when it came to the floor of the Legislature.

All honors, of course, went to John W. Schlicher and it was rightly proposed to name the structure in his honor. He requested instead, that it be named for his County, which is Sheridan.