

Benoist Troost

Early Settler and Doctor
1786-1859

by Janice Lee

Benoist Troost, physician, city father, and early entrepreneur, was born November 17, 1786, in Holland.

His medical training is uncertain, but he was reputed to have served as a medical steward in Napoleon's army. Before coming to the Kansas City, he and his brother operated a successful lead works in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. From Pittsburgh, Troost moved to St. Louis in 1845. According to legend, while staying at a hotel there, he met two prominent area citizens who successfully urged him to settle in Jackson County. Troost moved to Independence, Missouri, and practiced medicine there for a few years before moving to Westport Landing, which was then a separate town from Kansas City. He was the first resident physician in Kansas City.

When lots were sold for the Town Company of Kansas in 1846, Troost bought five. In 1849, as the California gold rush peaked, Troost and his wife's uncle, William Gilliss, built the town's first brick hotel at the corner of Delaware and Wyandotte Streets. It was originally called Troost House but later renamed the Gilliss House.

After the Town of Kansas—now the city of Kansas City, Missouri—was incorporated in 1850, Troost became one of the trustees who governed it. He was involved in the effort to publish the first newspaper in Kansas City, the *Kansas City Enterprise*, in the 1850s. Troost was also one of the incorporators of the first Chamber of Commerce in 1857.

In February 1859, he died at age 72. Troost Avenue and Troost Park bear his name.

Sources

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