Bypaths of Kansas History

Steamboating Down the Kansas River

From The Kansas Herald of Freedom, Lawrence, June 2, 1855.

Having a day of leisure, and finding the Emma Harmon at our Levee last Monday morning advertised for Kansas City, Mo., we jumped on board as she was leaving her moorings at eight o'clock in the morning, and in a moment after found ourselves, with several friends, gliding at a rapid rate down the Kansas river. Immediately after leaving Lawrence we found both banks of the river densely wooded, presenting a lovely appearance, such as the mind naturally infers to be peculiar to rivers of the tropics.

The banks of the river we found to be high, and the bed of the same uniform width the entire distance. One peculiarity of the tributaries was, that at their confluence with the Kansas their mouths were very narrow, and said to be quite deep. Not a foot of low, marshy ground is seen along the river. The current sweeps on at the rate of five or six miles an hour, and presents a darkish mud color, contrasting quite forcibly with the clayey appearance of the Missouri. This difference in the shade of colors between the two rivers is so great that on passing out of the mouth of the Kansas into the Missouri it seems as if a bed of clay was spread out before us, and we observed that this distinguishing difference was preserved in the Missouri down to Kansas City; the waters of Kansas river retaining the southern shore, and preserving its darkish hue the entire distance, it being near two miles.

The steamer rounded to about eight miles below Lawrence, and tied up to the tree, while the crew loaded on from the shore some ten cords of wood, which the Delaware Indians had cut and piled up there for sale. We were happy to observe that the vices of the whites had not corrupted them in one respect, and that in relation to measure. They had marked off by stakes the number of cords they claimed, and in every instance had given more than full measure. Capt. Wing concluded that the Delawareans were strictly honest, and hence took the whole pile. Casting loose again after a detention of one and a half hours we passed the mouth of the Wakarusa on our right, and immediately below it a beautiful town site, with a high bluff, and a rocky shore, so straight and nicely formed it seemed as if art had been there with her implements and trimmed the whole to her taste. As soon as the lands at this point are in a position that titles can be acquired they will be selected for a town site by some enterprising capitalist.

A few miles farther on, probably fifteen below Lawrence, on the north side, there is another lovely prospect for a town; we believe the most enchanting we ever saw. The bank is about fifty feet high, gradually sloping back to an altitude of some seventy-five feet. The shore, like the point at Waka-rusa, is straight and resembles a well built wharf in many of the prosperous places on the Eastern canals, with the exception that the elevation above the rocky shore is more precipitous, and better adapted for a town site. The earth was decked with a luxuriant garb of wild grass, and a grove of native trees decorated the landscape, and made the whole truly enchanting. If the
river shall remain navigable until the fourth of July next, we propose a picnic party to this lovely place, now the property of the Delawares, and the future site of the most important point between Lawrence and the mouth of the Kansas river.

Some forty miles below here, on the south side of the river, is an Indian village, known as Delaware. It is also a commanding position, and when Yankee enterprise shall be able to gain a foothold, and commence improvements we may expect to see it more frequently alluded to in our public journals.

Wyandot is on the north side of the river, and located at its mouth. Since the title to the soil has been conveyed to the occupants in severalty by government we have no doubt but enterprise will get possession, and we apprehend Kansas City will find in her a powerful rival.

The Emma Harmon arrived at her landing in Kansas City at a few minutes past three o'clock P. M., making the trip, aside from the time consumed in going up, in less than six hours. The scenery, along the river, the smiling faces, kind expressions, and warm hearts of the officers and crew, and the entire freedom from coarse and vulgar language on board the boat made this, our first trip down the Kansas river, one never to be forgotten. It was the first trip down the river this season.

On Tuesday Captain Wing took on board about fifty passengers, and something over a hundred tons of freight and on Wednesday evening tied up at our wharf, having made rather slow progress on account of the rapid current, and the loss of her rudder from having run into a snag the night previous.

We take this occasion to express to the captain, clerk, and in fact the entire officers and crew, our thanks for the uniform courtesy exhibited by them to us, as well as all on board on both our downward and upward passage. By an advertisement in another place it will be seen that the Emma Harmon is advertised as a regular semiweekly packet between this point and Kansas City. We trust she will be liberally sustained, and that the proprietors will never have occasion to regret their acquaintance with the Kansas river.

KANSAS AND LAWRENCE SEMIWEEKLY

Packet Steamer Emma Harmon, J. W. Wing, Master, will leave Kansas City every Monday and Thursday; returning will leave Lawrence every Wednesday and Saturday.—The public may depend upon this steamer being prompt and regular, also that she will continue in the trade for the season. Every effort will be made to give satisfaction. In consideration we solicit the patronage of shippers and passengers. For freight or passage apply on board, or to

Hutchinson, Harlow & Co., Agt's.

June 2, 1855.—6m.

THE IOWA INDIANS PUT ON THE DOG

From the White Cloud Kansas Chief, March 25, 1858.

GREAT TIME AMONG THE INDIANS—HEAP DOG!—A grand Dog Feast came off among the Iowas, on last Sunday. Although the Indians do not fancy dog meat much, yet when they wish to have an extra occasion, they feast on a dog. The circumstances which brought about this “love feast” were about as follows:
On the first of the present month, the Iowas made a law among themselves, that if any member of the tribe drank whisky or got drunk before their crops were all in the ground, he should be whipped. [Mem. We would recommend this law to many of the whites. Perhaps provisions would be cheaper and times easier, in that event.] Now, Elisha Dorian, their interpreter, or 'Lish, as he is commonly called, has about as good a head for whisky as any of his neighbors, and he thought to come a sly touch over his brethren. He and another red-skin took a private snifter together; but somehow their gauge had been set in the wrong notch, and they got too much "whisk" into them, and became glorious "big Injins." The tribe decided that they must be whipped; but 'Lish thought to come old Buck over them, and bribe them off. He came to town, bought a big dog, a number of sacks of flour, some sugar, and lots of good things, and offered the tribe a grand feast. But they refused to partake of his feast, and, to escape the whipping, he crossed to the other side of the river. But alas! the Indians are becoming almost as corrupt as congressmen. Negotiations commenced, the Indians agreed to accept the feast, and 'Lish returned from his banishment. On Sunday the feast came off, and 'Lish's back remained sound.

Tuesday seemed to be a grand holiday among the Iowas. The whole tribe—men, women, children, horses and dogs, were in town, and they carried home a very large quantity of flour. We have heard that they also obtained this through the bounty of 'Lish, but cannot say as to whether it was or not. But the occasion was an extra one, for most of the Indians (even including the women) had on clean clothes! A majority of the women had papooses, which they carried at their backs, in their blankets, with their bare heads sticking out above, exposed to the hot rays of the sun. And we noticed that those women who had no papooses, carried young pups at their backs, with their heads sticking out, in the same manner that they carry their children! They had quite a large number of these pups along; but what they meant by it, is beyond our comprehension—as old Leather-Stocking would say, "the Indian's gifts are not our gifts." One effect of their temperance arrangement was plainly observable—they attended to their business in short order, and then went home, without hanging for a whole day about the whisky shops.

Wednesday was another flour day with the Indians, and they carried off "dead loads" of it. We have learned that they obtained it through the bounty of Mr. Roy, at the rate of four or five dollars per sack, when they get the money. We saw a wagon drawn by oxen, containing about half a load, and just behind the wagon was an old squaw, some fifty or sixty years of age, toddling along with a large sack of flour strapped to her back! We saw a number of squaws carrying sacks on their backs, while the braves rode home on horseback.

**Bear Hunting in Eastern Kansas**

From the Emporia News.

Mr. John J. Greenhalgh, of Madison Center, on the Verdigris river, about twenty miles south of this place, saw two young bears while on his way from that place to Emporia on Tuesday morning last with the mail. This is the first instance we have ever heard of bears anywhere in this region of country.
Mr. G. pursued the animals for some distance, but being entirely unarmed he was unable to capture either of them. Several times he came within five or six feet of the bears, when they would stop, turn on him, and throwing themselves upon their hind feet, evincing a desire to give him a "hug" which he would not soon forget. Mr. G. tried to give the people of Emporia a surprise by killing one of them and bringing it to town. He drove them half a mile or more in this direction, but they finally made their escape through the tall grass.—July 13, 1861.

We learn that Messrs. Fisher, Jonathan Wood and other citizens of Chase county killed a large black bear, a few days ago, on the Cottonwood, just this side of Cottonwood Falls. The bear was wandering through the country alone, and no one could tell where it came from. Some suppose it to have been an escaped pet from somewhere up the Cottonwood. It was first discovered near Mr. Fisher's residence. He got his gun and snapp'd the last cap at him he had about the premises, without getting his gun to "go off." Mr. Wood and other neighbors were informed, when "bruin" was soon brought down.—October 20, 1866.

FINIS FOR A HORSE THIEF

From The Big Blue Union, Marysville, August 1, 1863.

"Left Here.—A young man who has been stopping here for some days, left this place Thursday night, in the dark. A saddle and bridle, belonging to a soldier, left at the same time. Singular coincidence."

This "coincidence," as mentioned in last week's Union, was the first intimation the people had here that a horse thief was among them, and not until the Sunday following was it ascertained that a horse was stolen from this vicinity, at which time it was found that Judge Brumbaugh, of this place, was the sufferer. Knowing that the valley of the Big Blue had been the ground of past operations of the suspected thief, immediate preparation was made for pursuit, and hitching a span of horses to his buggy, the judge invited us to accompany him to Manhattan. The exigency demanded speed, and we (not editorially and singularly "we" alone, but the "we" constituting the judge and ourself) set sail on our Sunday mission immediately.

THE BLUE VALLEY

The first night was passed at John Wells', on the Vermillion, where we found comfortable fare and accommodations, and early Monday morning found us on our way down the Big Blue valley, forty-five miles of which still lay between us and Manhattan. The day was delightful.—The aroma from the red cedars and wild flowers was wafted to our senses by a gentle breeze. The defiles of "dumpling"-shaped hills, rearing themselves like sturdy sentinels each side of the Blue, ribbed and crowned at their tops by splendid specimens of limestone, as neatly arranged and divided into blocks as if done by the stone-cutter's hand; the ravines and abrupt canyons penetrating the bluffs, skirted by shrubbery and scattering forest trees; the tall cottonwood and majestic oak watching the shining waters; the bottom lands waving with luxuriant grass, improved and interspersed here and there by an opened farm—
the wheat field nicely shaven and the corn tassels waving in the wind;—the whole spread out before us like a panorama scene, enlarging as we descended the stream to its mouth. The few farms which we passed were promising a most abundant crop. The Indian lands or "floats" are a great hindrance to this one of the finest valleys in the West. Every acre is capable of cultivation, and on a trip through one frequently finds himself revolving the idea of what a vast population the valley is capable of sustaining when it shall have been improved and the "hum of busy industry" is heard its entire length.

THE THIEF NABBED—TRIAL, ETC.

At the house of Mr. Pierce, about twelve miles north of Manhattan, and where we obtained our dinner, we were informed of the arrest of a notorious horse thief and that his examination and trial was progressing at the latter place. We hurried on and found the person arraigned in a citizens' court and before a jury of twelve, the thief sought for. His eye dropped as we entered the court room, and after being sworn and giving our testimony in the case the fellow hardly raised his head again.—The case was a clear one and was soon decided by the jury bringing in a verdict of guilty on all of the charges. He was then remanded to jail to await further action, after which, at his request, a committee was appointed to hear his confession, which consisted in not only acknowledging the theft in the present case but of all his operations extending through more than two years' time and embracing various degrees of crime and theft. He also implicated other parties. After the confession the meeting was called together according to previous adjournment, a committee appointed to fix the sentence and when and where it should be executed. The committee reported hanging, and after a short time allowed the culprit he was taken the same night across the bridge of the Blue into Pottawatomie county, a short distance east from town, and there publicly executed.

THE GALLows

Consisted of a wagon drawn under a leaning willow tree from which was suspended the rope. The cord adjusted around the victim's neck, he was asked if he had anything he wished to say. His reply was simply "No"; and a little further time being occupied in the preparation, he continued, "Go ahead; G-d"—whether the last word was the commencement of an oath or the imploring for mercy we could not determine, tho we thought it an expression of impatience to be out of his misery, from which he was evidently suffering intensely. But the final drop came at last and the soul of Monroe Scranton passed from time to eternity.—The night was black with dark, heavy clouds, the elm and willows bowed beneath a strong wind and large drops of rain fell, as if Heaven was closing the scene by weeping over the crimes of man.

THE PROCEEDINGS

Throughout were of the most orderly nature. The people were calm, but determined, and when Mr. Brunbaugh made a request that the thief might be brought back to this county to be dealt with by the people here, they replied that his past operations in Riley and Pottawatomie counties were sufficient to condemn him, and that they must make him an example before their community.
The circumstances of the capture of the thief, the regaining of the stolen property and incidents connected therewith all seemed providentially ordered.

Coming Home

The horse recovered, the thief hung, and all accomplished within four days from the time of the perpetration of the crime, we started on our way home rejoicing.—We returned by the way of the settlements on Mill, Fancy, Fawn creeks and the Little Blue, passing some fine country, but no incident worthy of note, with the exception of a sudden rise of the Blue, occurred to hinder or give variety to our trip.

From the Wyandott Herald, October 15, 1874.

A Milwaukee paper says: "What is wanted in Kansas is more telegraph poles, or stronger ones. The average pole holds only about four horse thieves comfortably."

More Notes on the Early History of the Santa Fe Railroad

A. T. & S. F. R. R. Time Tables

Superintendent's Office.
A. T. & S. F. R. R.,
Topeka, June 23, 1869.

The above railroad will be opened for business on Monday, June 28th, 1869, between Topeka and Carbondale, at which point trains connect with stages for Burlingame and Emporia. Trains will run daily (except Sundays) as follows: Mixed train leaves Topeka at 6:15 a. m., arriving at Carbondale 7:45 a. m. Passenger leaves Carbondale 10:10 a. m. arrives at Topeka 11:30 a. m., and connects with east and west trains on Kansas Pacific. Returning leaves Topeka at 1:00 p. m. arriving at Carbondale 2:00 p. m. Mixed train leaves Carbondale 4:00 p. m. arriving at Topeka 5:45 p. m. T. J. Peres, Supt.

[Advertisement in the Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, June 25, 1869.]

Westward Ho!—The first regular train left the A. T. & S. F. depot 6:15 yesterday morning, with a half-dozen or more through passengers.

All the southwest stage lines have discontinued running to this point, and are now connecting with the trains on the Santa Fé road at the end of the track.

Passengers for Burlingame, Emporia, Neosho Valley, and other points southwest, should come to Topeka, take the Santa Fé railroad to the end of the line, and thence by stage, saving time, money and lumber-wagon rides—Daily Kansas State Record, Topeka, June 29, 1869.

The A. T. & S. F. railroad has been open for business since the 1st of July. Cars have been running to Carbondale, eighteen miles distant, since then. One engine, one passenger coach, one express and baggage car, and twelve flat cars comprise the rolling stock up to the present time. There are on the road hither, direct from the manufacturers, two engines, two passenger coaches, twelve flat cars and twenty coal cars. The earnings of the road during the month of July were as follows:

From passengers, $939.20; from freight, $745.94. Total earnings, $1,685.14.

The earnings for the month of August will be over three thousand dollars, and
the superintendent says they will continue to double for the next three months. There are seven employees on the road, as follows: conductor, Wm. Hagan; engineer, Geo. E. Beach; fireman, Britt Craft; brakemen, Wm. Bartling, Albert Dugan; stage agent, Geo. Draper; express messenger, J. Eager; newsboy, William Beach. We publish these details, minor as they may appear, for future reference. They will look curious a few years hence!—Commonwealth, August 21, 1869.

Two car loads of cattle were shipped for the East today from Burlingame, the first shipment of the kind over the A. T. & S. F. R. R. This is but the small beginning of what is to be a source of great income to the railroad when it shall have been completed.—Commonwealth, October 1, 1869.

At the opening of the year 1870 the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad Company had no buildings in Topeka except the depot, an engine house with two stalls, and a small blacksmith shop. The close of the year finds considerable change. The machine shop now about completed is built substantially of wood, and is sixty-two feet wide by one hundred feet long. The two story, or front building, is thirty by sixty-two feet. This building contains a blacksmith shop and a carpenter and machine shop proper. There are also a pattern maker’s shop, and the office of the master mechanic. The shop is provided with an engine of twenty-five horse power, and is fitted up with a fine drill press, built in Philadelphia, lathes, planers, and everything necessary for any work in wood or iron that may be called for.—State Record, January 4, 1871.

The A. T. & S. F. R. R. Co. have received two new engines lately, but yet have not enough to do business without borrowing of the K. P.—North Topeka Times, October 12, 1871.

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé railroad is assessed on seventy-one locomotives, thirty-six passenger cars, five sleeping cars, nine express and mail cars, four hundred and thirty-four box cars, four hundred and seventeen cattle cars, five hundred and seventy-five platform and coal cars, one hundred and fifty-eight hand cars, two wrecking cars, two pay cars, thirty cabooses and nine baggage cars. Total valuation of its rolling stock, $715,700. —Osage County Chronicle, Burlingame, copied in The Kansas Methodist, Topeka, July, 1879.

COUNTY BOUNDARY TROUBLES

During the session of the 1877 legislature, learned people tried to induce the legislature to slice off a segment of Pawnee Rock township from Barton county and add it to Pawnee county. Upon a final vote, however, the plan failed. The Great Bend Inland Tribune, of February 24, 1877, had the following to say regarding the proposed legislation:

If our Pawnee county friends will occupy and improve the thousands of acres of land now lying vacant in their county, and not seek to grow rich and prosperous “all of a sudden, like,” by lopping off the rich and populous
portions of Barton, it would look better. It will have a very bad effect, gentlemen, on Pawnee county, when it is discovered that you need a portion of Barton to aid you in building your county buildings. If the worst comes to the worst, our relations with your county are such, that Barton will loan you a few county bonds for a court house, if you don’t get too naughty. . . .

The following petition, signed by about 100 persons (regardless of political bias), was sent to the legislature Tuesday night:

To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of Kansas.

Whereas, Pawnee county is desirous to obtain a portion of the territory now included within the county of Barton; and

Whereas, when a man asks our coat we become immediately anxious to give him our cloak also; and, whereas, Pawnee county has no court house for the safe keeping of her records, and the court house of Barton county is of ample dimensions for both us and them, and

Whereas, the county officers of this county are fully competent to transact the business of both counties, thereby curtailing expenditures.

Therefore, the undersigned residents of Barton county, in the generosity of their noble hearts, respectfully petition your honorable body to pass an act attaching the whole of Barton county to that of Pawnee, and making Great Bend the county seat, and the officers of Barton the officers of said new Pawnee county.

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TOWNS ON ROLLERS

From the Wallace County Register, Wallace, October 9, 1886.

They are preparing for a combination of towns in Sherman county. The parties chiefly interested are Itasca and Sherman Center. They would like to drag Voltaire into the net also, but as yet that has not been accomplished. The other two will probably tie up on a new site near the present site of Sherman Center and then there will be a grand roller skate parade across the prairie of the two towns. This town business is a fine thing for the fellow that wins, but it’s death to hold the losing card.

There is also some skirmishing down in Greeley, and Tribune and Greeley Center are each trying to gobble the four or five little shanties that have been mustering under the proud title of “Hector.” It’s the name they are after we presume.