Bypass of Kansas History

"GONE TO KANSAS TO HUNT BUFFALO AND ABOLITIONISTS"

From The Kansas Weekly Herald, Leavenworth, November 22, 1856.

On calling yesterday at the room of our friend, Dr. Reese, we observed the following most singular notice posted on the door: "Gone to Kansas to Hunt Buffalo and Abolitionists." We certainly wish our friend success in this most romantic tour, and may he capture many of the four as well as the two legged beasts; and may his hours pass pleasantly by while bounding o'er the widespread prairies—the hunting grounds of the Far West; and, in his encounter with the Abolitionists, may he prove a noble champion. As the knights of old, he found contending the field with dexterous skill. May success accompany him in all his undertakings.—Alabama Journal, Montgomery [?], 20th ult.

TOWN BOOMERS AND THEIR ADVERTISING

Glib-tongued promoters of new towns in Kansas territory employed all the arts of advertising to bring settlers to their townsites. Many settlers who were not primarily interested in town real estate development were disgusted with the obvious exaggerations of the "boomers." Sol. Miller of Ohio, when he came to Kansas in 1857, was so annoyed that he rapped the speculators in the first number of his White Cloud Kansas Chief, issued June 4, 1857.

Strangers have no idea how thickly settled Kansas already is. The towns are spread over her surface as thickly as fleas on a dog's back. We said towns—we meant to say cities; for we have nothing but cities out here—and the proprietors are bound to let people know it, too; for they stick city to the name of every town. We venture to say, there is scarcely a store or tavern in the union, in which there is not posted in a conspicuous place, town plats of some large city in Kansas or Nebraska, a majority of which do not contain a single house! Travelers out here are not aware, unless they are told, that they are passing through cities every few miles of their journey—such as Tadpole city, Prairie City, Opossum City, et cetera. Each one, of course, is bound to make the most important place in the West!

In another column, Miller continued:

A company of capitalists from Buncombe county, North Carolina, have recently arrived in the territory, and purchased a Gopher hole, in a high bluff on the river, where they have laid out a new town, which they have appropriately named Gopher City. The place already contains a first-class whiskey shop (kept by a church member in good standing), a gas mill, one dry goods store (dry enough, in all conscience), one ox-team, three speculators' offices,
and one private residence. A large hotel is just being finished, where persons
are obliged to obtain the best of accommodations, at ten dollars per week, and find
themselves! The town must necessarily become the most important point on
the Missouri river, above New Orleans!

A glance at the town plat, which can be seen in all country groceries
throughout the union; will convince anyone of this fact. It has a permanent
landing at all seasons, as the bluff, during high waters, is very near the river.
It will certainly be the terminus of the Wind Line and Gasport railroad, and
the entire country back to the Pacific ocean must necessarily be dependent
upon it for supplies of grog and tobacco. One great advantage possessed by
this city is, that from the bluff you can see the towns of Hardscapere and
Groundhog's Glory. A vast amount of building is talked of, this summer, and
desires from purchasing shares, would do well to invest soon, as there
is great excitement in regard to the place, and every time a stranger inquires
the price of shares, they advance fifty percent. A steamboat ran aground
opposite the place, a few days ago, and by there one day and night, during
which time the price of shares was doubled. Persons wishing to invest, will
call at the office of Messrs. Blow & Skinner, Bullfrog street, Gopher City.

We have received no lot nor town share for this puff; therefore, it may be
re-lied upon.

Similar propaganda tempted John J. Ingalls to leave a Boston law
office to try his luck in Kansas. Three miles south of Atchison John
P. Wheeler had projected the town of Sumner in 1856. He engaged
an Eastern artist to make a lithograph of his city—not as it existed,
but as it was visioned by the promoter. One of these prints fell into
the hands of Ingalls and enticed him to go West. He arrived in
Sumner on October 4, 1858, and the shock he received on landing at
the levee was recalled in a clever bit of satire which he wrote in a
letter, later quoted by Sheffield Ingalls in his History of Atchison
County, Kansas (1916), pp. 93, 94.

That chromatic triumph of lithographed mendacity, supplemented by the
loquacious embellishments of a lively adventurer who has been laying out town
sites and staking off corner lots for some years past in Tophet, exhibited a
scene in which the attractions of art, nature, science, commerce and religion
were artistically blended. Innumerable drays were transporting from a fleet of
gorgeous steamboats vast cargoes of foreign and domestic merchandise over
Russ pavements to colossal warehouses of brick and stone. Dense, wide streets
of elegant residences rose with gentle ascent from the shores of the tranquil
stream. Numerous parks, decorated with rare trees, shrubbery and fountains
were surrounded with the mansions of the great and the temples of their devo-
tion. The adjacent eminences were crowned with costly piles which wealth,
directed by intelligence and controlled by taste, had erected for the education
of the rising generation of Sumnerites. The only shadow upon the enchanting
landscape fell from the clouds of smoke that poured from the towering shafts
of her acres of manufactory, while the whole circumference of the undulating
prairie was white with endless, sinuous trains of wagons, slowly moving toward the mysterious region of the Farther West.

Ingalls forgave the deception and lived in Kansas to become a renowned United States senator. Copies of the lithograph which brought him are preserved in the collections of the Kansas State Historical Society. The town prospered only a short time and died.

---

**THIS BUSINESS OF FINDING A WIFE**

From the *Freemen's Champion*, published by S. S. Prouty at Prairie City (Douglas county), July 2, 1857. The advertisements were repeated in several succeeding issues.

Our young lady readers will find something for their especial benefit in the cards headed “Matrimony.”

[Advertisement.]

“It is not good for man to be alone.” Thus said the apostle, and how emphatically and forcibly is that wise saying illustrated in Kansas.—Here, where man is deprived in a great measure of the elevated and refined influences of the better sex, man becomes careless, indifferent in regard to his demeanor and personal appearance, and degenerates into a state but a few degrees above the brute. The undersigned, having arrived at that age when single blessedness has lost all its charms, desires to venture into the order of beneficts. He wants a woman with a kind and affectionate disposition, accomplished in music and dancing, handsome, between the ages of 15 and 20. As it is a *wife* that he wants; and not money, he is not particular whether she is favored with the “dimes” or not, though if she fully meets with his requirements, and happens to be troubled with “filthy lucre,” he will not consider it a very serious objection. The advertiser is 24 years of age, is considered good looking, neither indulges in the use of ardent spirits, nor tobacco, has enough property and an income sufficient to comfortably maintain a family, and is possessed of a warm and confiding heart. He wants a tendrill to cherish. If this meets the eye of a lady answering his description, who wants a companion of this stripe, she will please address him through the postoffice at Prairie City, K. T.

Orseman Poe.

[Advertisement.]

DEAR COLONEL:—Will you please to announce me as a candidate for matrimony? You can state that my age is 21; used to be considered good looking by the girls when I lived in the states, though somewhat uncouth in my appearance now; am hale, hearty, strong, and full of fun and frolic; have been, and am sometimes now, a little wild, but think I should be steady as a deacon, if I had a congenial partner to love and protect.—I am not rich, nor indulge in no expectation of ever falling heir to a legacy, though my prospects for the future are as flattering as the generality of young men at my age, who have kicked their own way through the world alone. I am anxious to correspond with a handsome, witty, intelligent young lady, between the ages of 16
and my own age, with the view of forming a matrimonial alliance. I don't care whether she is worth a cent, pecuniarily, or not, if she has the accomplishments of a lady, and is pretty.

Your friend, Ned Bowers.

[Advertisement.]

The advertiser is anxious to obtain a partner to participate and share with him in his joys, and sympathize with and soothe him in his afflictions. His age is 28; is considered passably good looking, and has enough of this world's goods to enable himself and partner to live comfortably. The lady of his choice would be one between the ages of 18 and 25, of an amiable disposition and sympathizing heart, a healthy constitution, with at least an ordinary education, and a thorough knowledge of domestic duties. He is not particular in regard to looks, though he would, of course, prefer one as handsome as himself! Such a lady, wishing to link her destinies with one of the sternest sex of his description, will please address "Johnson," Prairie City, Kansas.

Freemen's Champion, August 13, 1857.

We learn that at the land sales at Osawkee unmarried men were obliged to pay 25 cents per acre more for land than married men. In behalf of this unfortunate class of individuals we strongly protest against this outrageous proceeding. In the states, where girls are plenty, we would shout "Amen!" to all such operations; but here, where "ribs" are so scarce that nearly all our bachelors are made so from necessity, owing to their inability to obtain the article, we do think this taxation levied upon them entirely unjust and tyrannical. Can it be that the incorrigible old woman-hater of the White House had a hand in this matter? It does look reasonable.

Freemen's Champion, August 20, 1857.

The last mail brought Ned Bowers two letters—responses to his matrimonial advertisement. Good luck for you, Ned!

Freemen's Champion, September 10, 1857.

Pleasant Retreat, Peoria City, K. T.,

August 26th, 1857.

Editor of the Champion—Dear Sir: In looking over your paper of the 6th inst., I discovered an advertisement which interested me, as I am a candidate for the same office of which it speaks. It reads somewhat thus:—"Dear Colonel, will you please to announce me as a candidate for matrimony," and it was signed at the bottom, "Ned Bowers." As I think myself fully able and competent to perform all the duties of a house-keeper, I would just say that I am of the required age with which the subscriber wishes to join his destiny; therefore, should this meet his eye, and also his approbation, let him communicate through the Champion, or personally, to me (as his address is not known). Now there are some things that I wish to be made known, so that a right understanding may be had on the subject, and that is this: Should I be so fortunate as to get a companion, he shall be sole proprietor and manager of all affairs with which the pantaloons community has to do under similar circumstances; that is, those which appertain to the family circle. Now, in regard to my personal beauty, I leave that for other people to say, which
BYPATHS OF KANSAS HISTORY

has been acknowledged by a host of admirers, to be the very ideal of beauty and witicism: therefore, I feel myself qualified to fill the bill that is required. Now I would state a few facts in respect to a married life, although I cannot speak from personal experience in the matter; yet from ocular demonstrations, I can say that there are a great number of family circles that are everything else but concord and harmony to my knowledge of them, and the reason is, because a faithful portraiture of themselves was not given in the premises. As for me, I would say that I never will unite myself to a man that indulges in gambling, in any or all its forms, either directly or indirectly; nor to a man that indulges in intoxicating liquors, either directly or indirectly; for should I or any woman be joined to a man, that partakes of the "liquid poison," how soon would all the means of happiness be destroyed; though she rise at early dawn and pursue her daily avocation until the going down of the sun, and even until her midnight lamp goes out for want of replenishing, to earn what he so quickly spends; not as she had hoped, for the comforts of life, but the contrary—its worst miseries. From such a one let me be forever separated; there are enough of trials and difficulties to contend with in this troublesome world, which are unavoidable by nature.

Should the editor of the Champion think this worthy a place in his paper, he can use it any way he sees proper. As I am unacquainted with the manners and customs of corresponding with the press, I wish to be excused if I appear in an awkward position before the public. LOVINA LITTLETON.

Hurray, Ned! There’s a capital chance for you, now. If you are not already in “heels over head” with some of your fair correspondents of late, we’d advise you to devote a little attention to Lovina. Her letter certainly exhibits indications of good sense on the part of its fair author, and there can be no doubt but what she is worth looking after. Oh! “pitch in,” Ned!—[Ed. Champion.]

Freemen’s Champion, April 8, 1858.

Marriageable young women are in great demand in Kansas. A Yankee writing from this section to his father, says: “Suppose you get our girls some new teeth and send them out.”

From the Kirwin Chief, January 29, 1876.

The girls in the East should all come to Kansas. We hear of one recently arrived who received a proposal of marriage before she had been here a week. The chap who wanted to marry her, had been introduced about two hours previously.

TERRITORIAL GOVERNOR WALKER IN THE NEWS

From the Emporia News, July 20, 1861.

The New York correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial writes as follows concerning one of the Ex-Governors of Kansas:

There was an unusual hubbub about the Astor house today. Several members of congress from New England and New York are on their way to Washington; and the “Sons of Maine” dined and wined the officers of the fifth regiment, which passed through today. One of the fussiest and noisiest individuals hereabouts is Ex-Governor R. J. Walker, of Mississippi and Kansas.
and the Pacific R. R. Co. He lives at Hoboken, and nearly every day comes over here to abuse and denounce secession and traitors. When he gets about three sheets in the wind, he launches out promiscuously, and does the most miscellaneous swearing you ever heard. He mixes up his oaths, his devils, his damnations, his traitors, and so on, all in confusion, without regard to mood or tense. If Jeff. Davis ever gets permanently settled in the place to which Walker has consigned him with prayer, at least forty times within ten days, he will have less confidence in fast days hereafter than he has now.

A DESCRIPTION OF JAMES BUTLER (WILD BILL) HICKOK

From the Manhattan Independent, October 26, 1867.

On Monday we took the cars of the U. P. R. W. E. D. for Leavenworth. We make no mention of this because there is any peculiar significance in our visiting the metropolis of Kansas. Like almost everybody in Kansas we do so occasionally. But upon this occasion it was our fortune to fall in with quite a number of persons of whom it might interest our readers to learn something.

WILD BILL

the celebrated scout, with Jack Harvey and some dozen of their companions were upon the train, having just come in from a scouting expedition under General Sherman. All the party were more or less affected by frequent potations from their bottles, and Wild Bill himself was tipsy enough to be quite belligerent.

He is naturally a fine looking fellow, not much over 30 years of age, over six feet in height, muscular and athletic, possessing a fine figure, as lithe and agile as the Borneo Boys. His complexion is very clear, cheek bones high, and his fine auburn hair which he parts in the middle hangs in ringlets down upon his shoulders, giving him a girlish look in spite of his great stature. He wore a richly embroidered sash with a pair of ivory hilted and silver mounted pistols stuck in it. Doubtless this man and his companions have killed more men than any other persons who took part in the late war. What a pity that young men so brave and daring should lack the discretion to sheath their daggers forever when the war terminated! But such is the demoralizing effect of war upon those who engage in it and certainly upon all who love the vocation.

We learn from a gentleman who has frequently met these wild and reckless young men, that they live in a constant state of excitement, one continual round of gambling, drinking and swearing, interspersed at brief intervals with pistol practice upon each other.

At a word any of the gang draws his pistol and blazes away as freely as if all mankind were Arkansas Rebels, and had a bounty offered for their scalps.

How long these athletes will be able to stand such a mode of life; eating, drinking, sleeping (if they can be said to sleep) and playing cards with their pistols at half cock, remains to be seen. For ourself, we are willing to risk them in an Indian campaign for which their cruelty and utter recklessness of life particularly fit them.
BYPATHS OF KANSAS HISTORY

HAYS CITY BY MOONLIGHT

From the Manhattan Standard, May 8, 1869.

EDIT. STANDARD.—Hays City is progressing. It is quite "go aheadish." In fact, it is decidedly so. The railroad passes through the town. Most of the business is done on the north side of the railroad. Almost every other building is a liquor saloon or a house of ill fame. Hotels and eating houses are also numerous.

The Seventh cavalry has just been paid off, and the whole regiment is on a regular spree.

We made a visit to said town last night, by "moonlight." Almost the first house, as we enter the town from the south, on the right, is the large wholesale liquor and clothing house of Ryan & Co. They appropriate to themselves almost all the wholesale business of the town.

On the left, near by, is the Santa Fé saloon, all ablaze with light, and soldiers staggering around in front are a good indication of what is going on within.

A little further up we cross the railroad. Over the street from the depot is a large gambling "hell." Here billiard and faro tables, chuck luck and monte banks, "horsehead," etc., are in full blast.

As we sauntered slowly up the street we noticed on a dilapidated looking building a large sign informing all beholders that "General Outfitting" could be obtained by enquiring within. Seeing no show window, and no display of goods, and being of an inquiring turn of mind, we entered. Instead of seeing a smiling, polite salesman, anxious to show us his goods, as we expected, we were welcomed by two or three very pretty smiling young ladies. We saw no goods, except feminine. Seeing that we had got into the "wrong pew," and being rather bashful, in spite of the fascinating appearance of the aforesaid young ladies, we disappeared.

A little northwest of this is the notorious "shebang," kept by a Frenchman, name unknown, where was a dance under full headway. Here we noticed, among other "distinguished guests," the smiling, contented phiz. of our friends, Col. ——, Col. ——, Major ——, Major ——, and several other officers of the Nineteenth and Seventh, taking a prominent part in the first set. Round and round they go, "tripping the light fantastic toe," until out of breath and very thirsty, they adjourn with their fair but frail partners to the bar for "refreshments." Officers, soldiers, citizens, blacklegs, gamblers, pimps, nymphs du peace, and all mingle here on a common platform. What is going on in this place is but a repetition of what is going on in a dozen different houses in town.

As we return homeward we see various forms lying in the road, in the gutters, and puddles. Staggering forms are seen, supporting still more staggering specimens of humanity toward camp. Fights are frequent—some little shooting, some cutting, and frequent "fist mauling." Robberies are frequent. Men dead drunk are in no condition to defend themselves, and the temptation is too strong for a "dead beat," or a "strapped" blackleg to resist making a "raise."

All along the road to both camps, stragglers may be seen wending their way campwards. Some drunk, supported along by comrades scarcely less intoxicated; some with bruised and blackened faces stagger along, venting their
wrath against the world in general and some fancied antagonist in particular. Such, Mr. Editor, is a brief, but truthful sketch of “Hays City by moonlight.”

April 11, 1869.

---

DOINGS ON KANSAS AVENUE, TOPEKA, IN 1869

From the Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, June 29, 1869.

Late the other evening, we saw one of our druggists wading the mud in Kansas avenue, attempting to overhaul one of the juvenile bovine. Said animal had a rope attached to its neck, and as the Dr. would make a grab for the rope, the calf would make himself scarce—he wasn’t thar. The last we saw of them they were in front of Sexton’s, the calf about ten feet in advance and bleating for its lost protector, and the Dr. crying aloud, “stop yer bawlin’, I’m a comin’.”

---

TOPEKA’S “FORT SIMPLE”

From the Daily Kansas State Record, Topeka, July 3, 1869.

REMINISCENCES.—We are asked by many as to the meaning of the term “Ft. Simple.” We will explain. In 1864 when “Pap” Price was on the border, it was thought not improbable but that he would overrun the state. There is but little doubt that he would have done so had it not been for the Kansas militia, who were ordered out en masse and met him at the Big Blue. Price’s army there met a check, but at the sacrifice of many of our people, and among them twenty-two citizens of Shawnee county. During the time that Price was on the border, it was considered proper to take some measures to protect the city should any stragglers from Price’s command come this way. For that purpose, logs about sixteen feet in length were set in the ground four feet deep at the corner of Kansas and Sixth avenues. They were set in the form of a circle, enclosing a space of about fifty feet in diameter. Holes were cut in the logs in different places, so that those inside could shoot out, should the ragamuffins come in on either of the streets. A cannon was also inside, and an opening left so it could be used if necessary. Happily there was no necessity for using the fortification, so it remained a mooted question whether it would have done any good or not if there had been any necessity for it. After about a year the logs were sawed off, leaving them about seven feet high, and some trees set out inside. About this time some one gave it the nickname of “Ft. Simple,” which stuck to it till it was entirely removed. The trees inside did not thrive, and after a year or two the city authorities ordered the logs removed. At the same time the stockade was made, all of the citizens who were not at the front were detailed a certain number of hours each day to throw up rifle pits or trenches in which sharpshooters could lay and fire at an approaching enemy without being exposed. One of these trenches was east of Monroe street, between Eighth and Ninth, and the outlines of it can yet be traced; another was east of Washburn College (now site of Memorial building). New comers here can hardly realize in these peaceful times that for months our citizens took turns and did picket duty on all the
roads leading into the city. The Quantrill and other raids into other portions of our state made it a part of wisdom to do so. Many amusing things transpired during these months. Several times it was reported that the guerrillas were coming, and we recollect one night in particular when many buried their treasures and some laid out in the ravines around town all night. Did space permit we could fill a page of the Record in telling of these things. At another time we may do so.

---

**INDIAN DRESS**

From the Netawaka Chief, July 2, 1872.

We noticed a squaw in town the other day dressed in a new style of Dolly Vardens. Her attire was composed of a red calico dress, with a few clean spots and a good many greasy ones; an old black hat, ornamented with red, blue and yellow ribbons; a striped shawl thrown over her shoulders; a large red blanket fastened around her waist, and a pair of No. 15 Brogans on her understandings. She was dressed in her summer clothes.

---

**A Type Shortage**

From the Manhattan Enterprise, August 9, 1876.

O, wouldn’t we like to catch him. We mean the thief that stole all our capital K’s. There must be a Ku Klux Klan organization about, and they want to “print” their signatures.

---

**Bull-Dozing in the Legislature**

From the Inland Tribune, Great Bend, February 3, 1877.

They have a man in the legislature at Topeka named Bull. The other day he fell asleep during the roll call on the senatorial question, and as his snoring troubled the speaker, he called on the sergeant-at-arms to stop that Bull-dozing.

---

**Down to a Hair!**

From the Kirwin Chief, January 1, 1879.

Who is she?—The last butter we purchased in this city was made by a black-haired woman. Describing the character, height, &c., by the color and quality of the hair is our fort, and after a careful examination we give our opinion as follows: She is about 5½ feet high—weighs about 160 lbs., and she had the blues at the time the butter was made (this we learn from the streaks in the butter), is a mother—has a great deal to do (this we learn from the hair being very crooked and not having been combed for a week). In temper she is rather mild, and is dearly loved by her husband and children. We will wager six bits and a brick watch that the above is correct—now trot in your woman.