Bypaths of Kansas History

INDIAN WARFARE IN 1840

The following article from the Arkansas State Gazette, Little Rock, April 7, 1841, describes a Kansas Indian attack on a Pawnee encampment somewhere in the Republican river area, either in present northern Kansas or southern Nebraska:

FROM THE WESTERN FRONTIER OF MISSOURI.—From the St. Louis Gazette of the 20th ult. we learn that a company (F) of the 1st regiment of dragoons, stationed at Fort Leavenworth, with Capt. [E.] Tremor commanding, and Dr. Kennedy, U. S. A., returned on the 1st ult. from a visit to the Kanzas Indians, residing on the Kansas river.

This detachment was sent out on the 17th ultimo, on the requisition of Maj. [R. W.] Cummins, to assist him in making payment of the annuity due to the Kanzas Indians, and to take from them certain prisoners captured from the Pawnees (Rumpus) on a recent war excursion into the Pawnee country. They recovered all the prisoners to the number of eleven, women and children, whom they brought to Fort Leavenworth, to be restored in due time to their own tribe. The history of the capture of the prisoners by the Kanzas is interesting as showing the excessive cruelty and dastardly character of Indian warfare.

It seems that sometime in December last, the Kanzas, or Caw Indians, hearing that an encampment of the Pawnees were on a buffalo hunt at some distance from the remainder of their tribe, gave up their own anticipated hunt and organized themselves into a war party, with their principal chief at their head. They entered the Pawnee country and laid in ambush near the ill-fated encampment until they saw the Pawnee warriors, numbering but 17, depart for their hunting ground. The Kanzas warriors, 65 in all, then commenced a murderous fire upon the defenceless women and children, which they continued until they supposed all within the encampment had been killed.—On entering the scene of carnage they tomahawked and scalped more than seventy of their victims—they found twelve (six women and as many children) unhurt, whom they decided to retain as prisoners. One of the women, however, determined not to be taken alive, and suddenly springing at the nearest warrior, she seized him with a grasp of a tigress by the throat, and bore him to the earth. It was only when her arms were severed from her body that she relinquished her grasp—she was then dispatched, and her scalp added another bloody trophy to those yet reeking at their belts.

An act of more atrocious cruelty and shameless cowardice has seldom come to our notice; the murder of an entire village of defenceless women and children by a band of savages—and we are gratified to learn that the Kanzas are living in constant dread of being attacked by the Pawnees. It is highly probable that before summer we shall hear of dire punishment having been inflicted upon these wretches by that fierce and warlike tribe.

On the 8th inst. Lt. [Chas. F.] Ruff, of the 1st regiment of dragoons, with a small detachment of men, left the fort to convey the Pawnee prisoners to Bellevue, where they will meet their missionaries and some members of their own tribe.
WESTWARD BOUND

From the New York Daily Tribune, July 8, 1852.

ON THE PLAINS, 400 miles out from St. Joseph—

Having met a returning emigrant to-day from Fort Laramie, and feeling a good way off from home, I take this opportunity to send you a word, informing you that I am yet on the turf, and in running order, although not in as good order as I could desire. The cholera is the general topic among the emigrants, spreading consternation and alarm from one train to another. Many a strong arm and iron constitution, that were boasting yesterday of their strength, to-day are left on the plains without shroud or coffin.

The cholera originated on the Missouri river, among the emigrants, on the steamboat Honduras, which lost some seven passengers on her trip up to St. Joseph and some 20 or 30 died a few days after leaving here. There are but few but what have heard of the Missouri river, and few know what a miserable, dirty, crooked stream it is, where sand o'er sand, and snags o'er snags arise. Sometimes the boatman on the bow, throwing his lead, cries out three feet scant, and a few rods farther on, no bottom.

Missouri has the appearance of being a fine state, and there are many good-hearted people in it. It seems singular to a Northeastern man that so great a state should have been so long contented with no other thoroughfare of any kind on which to travel. We passed one boat that had blown up, another snagged, many on sand bars, &c. Taking all things into account, it is not good for anything at all. It is to be hoped a railroad will soon be got through to some place, if it terminates at St. Joseph. It is also to be hoped that some landlords will take charge of the tables and provide something to eat at the hotels.

We have now been 18 days on the plains, amid the greatest show in the world. The train is estimated to be 700 miles long, composed of all kinds of people from all parts of the United States, and some of the rest of mankind, with lots of horses, mules, oxen, cows, steers and some of the feathered creation, moving along about 15 or 20 miles per day; all sorts of vehicles from a coach down to a wheel barrow; ladies on horseback, dressed out in full-blown Bloomers; gents on mules, with their Kosuth hats and plumes, galloping over the prairies, making quite an equestrian troupe and a show ahead of anything Barnum ever got up. The plains are a pleasant place to travel; excellent roads—equal to any of our Eastern plank roads in dry weather, and were it not for the sick and the dying, that everywhere meet our eye, and the vast number of graves along the road, the journey would be a pleasant one. As near as I can ascertain by observation, there are about 80 graves to the 100 miles so far; that is, new ones. The old ones are nearly obliterated and their places no longer known to man. The Indians are numerous and somewhat troublesome, but we have had no battles so far. Our train is moving and I must close for this time. When I have a convenient season I will write again.

Yours truly,

Seth N. Dorr.
SLAVERY IN KANSAS

A news item and advertisement from the Proslavery *Squatter Sovereign*, of Atchison, September 9, 1856. Presumably the Negroes were not recovered for the advertisement ran six months.

NEGROES DECAMPED.—Two negroes belonging to Messrs. Frederick & Cabell were decoyed from this place on Tuesday night, taking with them two valuable horses. Five hundred dollars reward is offered for their apprehension. See advertisement.

$500 REWARD

RAN AWAY from the Subscribers on the night of September 9th, two Negro Boys, Ned and Harrison.

Ned is about 18 years old, stout and well built, about 5 feet eight inches high, and weighs about 170 pounds. At the time of his leaving was dressed in brown velvet coat.

Harrison is a bright Mulatto, about five feet four inches high, weighs about 120 lbs., is about 16 years old, and was rather shabbily dressed.

Said Negroes took with them two Horses.

One black, six years old, branded H. on left hip, quite thin, about 15½ hands high.

One Claybank, dark main and tail, rather bushy, 6 years old, about 15½ hands high—paces.

Five hundred dollars reward will be given for the apprehension and safe return of the Negroes and Horses, or $250 for the recovery of either of the Negroes and Horses.

A. J. FREDERICK,
R. H. CABELL.

Atchison, K. T.

DEBUNKING THE INDIAN OF 1860

From the Topeka Tribune, March 3, 1860.

Last Monday, the Kaw Indians gave a war dance in our city. Many of the Indians were arrayed in war costume, and made an appearance ludicrous in the extreme. One wore an otter skin cap, with horns about eight inches in length upon each side of the head. Two wore around their necks collars of bear claws, and two others were dressed in buckskin suits, profusely covered with fringes of the same material, and which streamer-like, trailed a foot behind. All of the dancers were painted; some black with streaks of red, some altogether red, some with blue in streaks, and one, a Comanche, probably through some freak peculiar to his position or tribe, was painted a ghastly pale yellow. The dance was conducted by about twenty persons, with about ten or twelve more sitting in a circle, and around which, in slow procession, the dancers moved. In the circle were seated the musicians, who kept time and made a sort of music by beating upon drums constructed of raw-hide, while all kept time and joined in a kind of low, dirge-like chant, with an occasional Ugh! Ough! by some of the braves. To us, the scene was not at
all like the glowing descriptions of war dances, which we read in books of Indian legends, and descriptions, also, given us by those who have witnessed such scenes among the warlike tribes of western Kansas and Texas. The activity, the grace and lofty bearing were sadly wanting. The stoical look of indifference, so characteristic of the American Indian, was all that remained to redeem them from the degeneracy to which they have declined.

BUFFALO HUNTING NEAR JUNCTION CITY

From the Junction City Statesman, October 13, 1860.

BUFFALO HUNTING.—This sport is becoming quite popular. Everybody and all their relations are indulging. Men and women, married and single, take to it like a duck to water, or a hog to a mud-hole. Junction is nearly depopulated and has been all the fall, caused by this unprecedented rush to see the “monarch of the prairies.” There’s no one seriously injured yet, but we have some hopes that the news of a fatal accident will reach us by the next express—we mean, of course, fatal to the buffalo. They are grazing now within thirty miles of Junction—just one-half day’s ride. All who wish to get a glimpse had better go now. We shall start in the morning on bull back! Who wants to ride behind?

FIREMEN’S BALL

From The Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, May 5, 1872.

The citizens in the neighborhood of Kimeo, Washington county, were in great danger one day last week from a prairie fire, and the men and women turned out in force, subdued the fire at a late hour in the evening, and then, securing the services of a fiddler, they spent several hours in the giddy mazes of the dance, right upon the blackened prairie.

DEALER’S CHOICE

From The Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, June 16, 1872.

Game is abundant in Ellsworth just now. Buffalo, draw poker, antelope, old sledge, venison, faro, quails, billiards, rabbits, euchre, elk and keno are the prevailing varieties.

A WICHITA COURT SCENE OF 1875

From the Girard Press, October 21, 1875.

While a northern attorney was visiting in Wichita he dropped into the court room to see how the law was administered in that locality. A placard above the judge’s seat read: “No smoking allowed,” but the judge, nine of the jurymen, and half of the attorneys were smoking pipes or cigars.
BYPATHS OF KANSAS HISTORY

UNAFRAID OF COMPETITION

From the Eureka Herald, June 15, 1876.

Not many days ago a young man applied to the probate court for license to marry one of Greenwood’s fair daughters. The judge issued the document for the usual fee and the swain went on his way rejoicing. A day or two later another young man came in and also applied for license. The judge went to work to make it out, but when he came to the lady’s name the young man mentioned the same damsel that No. 1 had obtained license to marry. The judge told him that one license with her name in it was out, and that she couldn’t well marry both of them. No. 2 hesitated a moment and then said he wanted a license anyhow, it wouldn’t do any harm. It was made out and he departed, but before many hours passed he came back to the judge’s office with the young lady, and then and there the twain were made one flesh. And now No. 1 has a license to sell at half price.

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LEGS WERE PAINTED IN 1876, TOO

From the Inland Tribune, Great Bend, September 2, 1876.

Sioux squaws do not wear striped stockings. Three streaks of green paint are cooler and cheaper.

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WHEN BAT MASTERTON DIDN’T KEEP THE PEACE

From the Dodge City Times, June 9, 1877.

Bobby Gill done it again. Last Wednesday was a lively day for Dodge. Two hundred cattle men in the city; the gang in good shape for business; merchants happy, and money flooding the city, is a condition of affairs that could not continue in Dodge very long without an eruption, and that is the way it was last Wednesday. Robert Gilmore was making a talk for himself in a rather emphatic manner, to which Marshal [L. E.] Deger took exceptions, and started for the dog house with him. Bobby walked very leisurely—so much so that Larry felt it necessary to administer a few paternal kicks in the rear. This act was soon interrupted by Bat Masterson, who wound his arm affectionately around the marshal’s neck and let the prisoner escape. Deger then grappled with Bat, at the same time calling upon the bystanders to take the offender’s gun and assist in the arrest. [Marshal] Joe Mason appeared upon the scene at this critical moment and took the gun. But Masterson would not surrender yet, and came near getting hold of a pistol from among several which were strewn around over the sidewalk, but half a dozen Texas men came to the marshal’s aid and gave him a chance to draw his gun and beat Bat over the head until the blood flew upon Joe Mason so that he kicked, and warded off the blows with his arm. Bat Masterson seemed possessed of extraordinary strength, and every inch of the way was closely contested, but the city dungeon was reached at last, and in he went. If he had got hold of his gun before going in there would have been a general killing.

The fastidious Col. Norton fell next. He ranks next to Bat Masterson in point of courage, being somewhat more cautious and much more inclined to
make a bloodthirsty talk. He is said to be tolerably handy with his gun, and
to muddle at shoulder hitting. Norton had been accused of "ways that
were dark and tricks that were vain" in a poker game, by a Texan, and several
other Texas men "took a hand" in the game of talk which followed. Norton
soon discovered that the gang was oversized, and amiably went against the
boose joint for the house. But the flowing bowl raised his courage above all
cautious measures and he gave it out solid that he was a fighter and thirsted
for blood. Sim Holstein, a cattle drover, quietly gave it as his opinion that
Mr. Norton couldn't fight very much; that there were several men in town
he could not lick—Sim himself, for instance. A light-weight drover by the
name of Lee then interfered and claimed the fight for himself. Norton and
Lee then had a little scuffle, which was soon interrupted by the police. Larry
soon after espied Norton in a crowd recommending himself as a fighter, and
ordered him to disperse. Norton proudly reminded Mr. Deger that he was a
sovereign citizen of Dodge City, and as such had certain inalienable rights.
For answer Mr. Deger promptly marched him to the dog house.
Ed. Masterson—a newly-appointed marshal—accomplished his first official
act in the arrest of Bobby Gilmore the same afternoon.
Next day Judge Frost administered the penalty of the law by assessing
twenty-five and costs to Bat, ten to Norton and five to Bobby.
The boys are all at liberty now.

PLAYFUL NIMRODS OR THE HAZARDS OF RAILROADING

From the Atchison Patriot, October 13, 1877.

Yesterday, while a train was going from Waterville to Washington, a party
of huntsmen flagged the engineer to stop. Conductor Murphy rang his bell to
go on, whereupon the party began to throw stones and mud at the train, and
the train men replied with coal. One of the party got very much excited
over the fun and discharged his gun at the train, and the result was, Jimmy
Griffin, representative of McPike & Allen, who was on board, got thirty-two
bird shot in his leg. He came into Atchison today. His wound is not con-
sidered dangerous but it will lay him up for a few days. Tommy Plunkett
did the shooting, but it was not with evil intent.

A WILD BED FELLOW

From the Barbour County Mail, Medicine Lodge, October 24, 1878.

A thrilling incident in the neighborhood of Lodi, occurring last night, the
night of the 19th of October, caused quite a sensation. Mr. Millis, who is
living in a tent on his claim, was awakened about midnight by some dis-
brance, to find, to his infinite surprise, a large animal of feline specie, on
his bed, with his fore paw upon his breast. After recovering somewhat from
the sudden surprise caused by a realization of his situation, he reached for a
butcher's knife which he always keeps at hand. A terrible fight ensued, in
which M's large and valuable dog came to his rescue; thus fortunately rein-
forced, the animal was speedily dispatched. Mr. Dollar who helped to skin
the monster, says that it is the largest of the kind he ever saw. We do not
know the animal; some call it cougar, others a catamount, at all events I
should say rather an uncomfortable bed fellow, let him be what he may. . . .

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THE CONTROVERSY RAGES YET

From the Atwood *Pioneer*, January 29, 1880.

The newspapers of Kinsley are debating the question as to which is the
least harmful at church socials, dancing or kissing games.

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BLITZ TRANSPORTATION, 1881

From *The Independent*, Kirwin, May 11, 1881.

Quite a sensation was aroused among the people of town yesterday by the
appearance on the square of a team of elk's, being driven to a buggy. They
are the property of Tom Sides and Charlie Parks, and are both females, aged
four and six years. They make a perfectly matched team, except in size, but
time will remedy this defect and make them a very valuable driving team,
capable of one hundred miles a day.

From the Norton County *People*, Norton, December 22, 1881.

The other day two oxen passed through Glen Elder, all saddled, one with a
lady rider, the other with a gentleman.

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THE UNAPPRECIATED PRESS

From the Cawker City *Free Press*, July 28, 1881.

The Dead-Head Editor—The following from an exchange is a pretty fair
version:

"One of the beauties and charms of the editor's life is his dead-heading it on
all occasions. No one who has never tasted of the sweets of this bliss can begin
to take in its glory and happiness. He does a hundred dollars worth of adver-
tising for a railroad company, gets a pass for a year, rides twenty-five dollars
worth, and then is looked upon as a dead-head. He 'puffs' a concert ten dol-
ars worth and gets one dollar in compliments, and is thus passed 'free.'
If the hall be crowded he is begrudged the room he occupies, for if his compli-
mentaries were paying tickets the troupe would be so much more in pocket.
He puffs a church festival free, to any extent, and does the poster printing at
half rates, and rarely gets a 'thank you' for it. It goes as part of his duty as
an editor. He does more work for a town and community than the rest of the
population put together, and gets cursed for it. O, it is a sweet thing to be an
editor."
THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

From *The Times*, Clay Center, July 19, 1883.

Our street commissioner has had a mower running the past week on the streets of this city, and they now present a clean, tidy appearance.

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THE BEGINNING OF A WESTERN TOWN

The enthusiasm of Editor George H. Hand who started the Ludell *Settler* in Rawlins county on October 18, 1884, was as boundless as the prairies around him. Five columns of the first number were devoted to news items relating to Ludell’s people, problems and prospects. Among these were the following:

The type for the first number of *The Settler* was set in a sod-house, with the fleas and bed-bugs having a fall round-up on all the territory below our shirt-collar.

A wind-mill in town is needed.

The dance in honor of the opening of the Ludell *Settler* building was well attended, and passed off in fine shape. As an index to the morality of the community, we will state that not a drop of anything intoxicating was indulged in; in fact, not a drop was to be had.

There’s no graveyard in Ludell, and probably will be no need for one in the next ten years, unless an accident happens.

The mammoth milch cow staked in front of *The Settler* office is an advertisement for the nutritious buffalo grass with which every acre of uncultivated land in Rawlins county is covered. We will soon be compelled to either shorten the rope or feed anti-fat.

Five new buildings put up within two weeks, five more contracted for.

We buy, sell or trade anything that walks on four legs and eats buffalo grass.

No papers sent out of the county unless paid for in advance, Oberlin excepted.

We want one hundred shocks of sorghum, on subscription. Wood of any length, green or dry, is just as good as cash on subscription—in fact, better. Rye, corn, hay, millet, potatoes, eggs, chickens, etc., will be credited on subscription to *The Settler*. We want to place the paper within the reach of all, and shall endeavor to make it sufficiently interesting as a local paper to cause a healthy demand for it. Any one with a dollar and a half can act as a special agent.

The sound dry ash wood delivered to us by A. C. Blume makes us feel like a Christian.

The school bonds have been accepted, and the new frame schoolhouse will be erected as soon as the lumber can be hauled.

A pocket knife presented to us by George Colby, a year or two ago, is now used as a razor; it’s good stuff—so is George.
Prairie dogs are numerous within thirty yards of our office. A few years hence they will command a premium as curiosities.

One threshing machine, between Ludell and Herndon, recently had work for seven weeks in sight of where it was then staked.

Richard Riley fell from a house the other day in company with a ridge-log. Dick wasn't hurt much and the ridge-log is recovering.

Remember, no lots in Ludell are sold for speculation. They are disposed of only to those who intend to build and become residents.

We have adopted as a brand a two-inch letter H (full-faced gothic). We do not believe in the partial cremation of cattle in branding.

Whether or not it is polite to drink out of the same bucket after your pony depends entirely on the distance the water has to be drawn.

Thursday, October 16, 1884, we are setting type in the open air at sunrise while the carpenters are finishing up our office in handsome shape.

The editor of The Settler will buy the four lots on which the old sod schoolhouse stands. The object is to secure the old ground for the planting of fine shrubbery.

On Sunday afternoon we counted twenty-seven men in front of one store in Ludell, eighteen of whom were land-seekers. They come in squads.

Medical men have long made a mistake in regard to hydrophobia. We have been married seven weeks and find it's the sight of an empty water bucket that does the work.

No more sod houses should be allowed inside the town limits. While admissible for stock sheds, they are outrageous in appearance as dwellings in a town like Ludell.

In Indianapolis, when we were young, Henry Ward Beecher urged our father to educate the present editor of this paper for the ministry. How our father missed it!

Peter Kesselring has our thanks for the return of a calf lost from a bunch being brought up from Oberlin. It was too fine-haired to be running around without a brand.

Think of it, ye slaves on morning papers! The editor of this paper takes in more fresh air in one minute than is to be found in the composing room of a daily paper in a natural lifetime.

The arrival of our new dress from Philadelphia (nonpareil and brevior, with light-faced celtics for display type) will enable us to make The Settler as handsome a county paper as there is in the state of Kansas.

One hundred tons of sorghum is nothing uncommon for one man in this county. It is a sure crop, can be sown broadcast and a second crop cut. It's a shiftless man indeed that can't raise plenty of feed for his stock in Rawlins county.

The new schoolhouse should be furnished with the most improved bentwood furniture. Ludell wants no second-class articles, to cast away in a year. In fact we want nothing second-class in the town. If it is only a pig-pen or a chicken-coop, build it right, and then paint it.
Daniel Freeman made the first homestead entry in the United States five miles northwest of Beatrice, Neb. He has again used good judgment by taking a timber claim in Rawlins county, where the opportunities now are just as favorable as they were around Beatrice when he located there.

A really good shoemaker (none other need apply) will receive support, also a donation of a lot or two, by applying, prepared to go to work, at once. . . .

The little five column occasional up the creek is wormy; its issues are not regular enough for journalistic health. Neither the county seat nor a division of the county bother us. We have joined hands with live men for the purpose of building a live town, and intend to succeed. We will endeavor to advertise the entire county in the best shape, yet shall not be led into a controversy that would give the benefit of our circulation to a paper of irregular issue.

Strangers arriving at the rate of ten a day. They all take land, and seven-eighths of them will become actual residents. They are all financially prepared to take advantage of the rare opportunities offered for soon living in opulent ease in a rich, healthy, country; water as pure as crystal and air as refined as nature’s most improved machinery can make. The climate is a cross between Florida and Maine. Society is a mixture of Western vim with New England purity. Come and see the country and people, is all we ask.

The location of Ludell is lovely; second bottom, with an abundance of good well water at a depth of twenty feet. On the south is the Beaver, with its beautiful banks crowded with timber. The scene to the east of town, the stream making a dozen lovely curves within sight, is bewitchingly beautiful. Add to the above scene countless knowls capped with coves of bright and shining grain stacks, and some idea can be formed of the richness of the country adjoining the stream. And yet there is vacant land within a mile or two!

. . . When a country editor realizes the fact that he doesn’t know it all, and accords merit where it belongs, correspondents will step to the front and assist in making a paper. We are even now looking, and probably won’t be compelled to look long, for assistance with more brains than we possess.

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A NEW DEPARTURE

From the Oskaloosa Independent, April 7, 1888.

OSKALOOSA TO BE Governed by Women OFFICIALS.—As is well known by the world at large now, Oskaloosa elected Mary D. Lowman mayor and Mrs. Morse, Mrs. Balsley, Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Golden, members of the council, at the election last Monday. The action was taken in good faith, in the belief that needed public improvements would be pushed thro’ better by the ladies. Notoriety was not sought or expected, and a very brief Associated Press dispatch announced the result. Then, suddenly, our lady officials found themselves famous, and the name of our little city is on everybody’s lips. The like had never before been done in the wide world, and telegrams, letters and special reporters have deluged us, while interviews and photographs are in great demand.
Our good-looking and intelligent but retiring and modest city officials have been sorely amazed and perplexed at the turn of affairs, but finally concluded to good-naturedly bear the honors thrust upon them and make the best of the novel situation. Accordingly they took the oath of office yesterday, and will bravely assume the responsibilities made doubly great by the fact that the eyes of the whole country are upon them.

The ladies have no light task before them, and they should have the utmost encouragement and assistance from all good citizens. We believe they will demonstrate that they can wisely govern the city, and that we will have something to show for their work at the end of the year.