The Pictorial Record of the Old West

V. REMINGTON IN KANSAS

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It may safely be said that nine-tenths of those engaged in the stock-business in the Far West are gentlemen. Here is a fascinating, health-restoring and profitable occupation for the great army of broken-down students and professional men, and in crowds they are turning their backs upon the jostling world to secure new life and vigor upon these upland plains.—George R. Buckman in Lippincott’s Magazine, 1882.

Among the many diverse, interesting and entertaining social phenomena that have made up the past American scene and its life, one of the most curious—and, in retrospect, one of the most romantic—was the wholesale migration to the plains of the Great West in the early 1880’s. The professional historian has catalogued this emigration as one of the factors making up the life of that age, but the phenomenon itself deserves more than mere cataloguing, for it is an important—exceedingly important—movement that was to affect profoundly American life and American culture in subsequent years.¹ That this judgment is more than mere rhetoric becomes

¹ Previous articles in this pictorial series appeared in the February, May, August and November, 1946, issues of The Kansas Historical Quarterly, with the general introduction in the February number.

¹ The Buckman article, quoted above, “Ranches and Ranchers of the Far West,” Lippincott’s Magazine, Philadelphia, v. 29 (1882), p. 455, begins by commenting on the Western exodus of young collegians and professional men from the overcrowded East. As far as I know, there has been no specific or extensive study of this Western migration of the late 1870’s and early 1880’s. The fundamental origin and the economic causes of the migration and the organization and conduct of the huge cattle companies have been satisfactorily dealt with by Ernest S. Osgood, The Day of the Cattleman (Minneapolis, 1923), especially in the chapter “The Cattle Boom.” W. P. Webb, The Great Plains (Boston, 1931), pp. 233-239, and Louis Filler, The Cattlemen’s Frontier (Glendale, Calif., 1936), are other sources of information on these topics. The social aspects of the migration in all their interesting features, however, still lack a chronicler. The contemporary literature listed in Footnotes 10 and 11 (far from complete, but somewhat more extensive than is available elsewhere) may serve as a starting point for such a study; and, incidentally, the present series contributes, I trust, to this interesting subject.
apparent when one considers the careers of a single quartet of Western emigrants. The most notable of the quartet was the young and bespectacled Theodore Roosevelt whose cattle-ranching career of several years began in the Dakotas in 1883. His ranching life led eventually to the leadership of the Rough Riders and their part in the war with Spain. The ultimate reward of the spectacular leader of the Rough Riders was his elevation to the White House. Emerson Hough, the second of our quartet of the West, began his professional life (the study and practice of law) in a cow camp at White Oaks, New Mexico territory, in 1881. His experiences at White Oaks laid the foundations for a career as a noted chronicler of the West, which probably reached its zenith in one of the greatest of our motion picture plays The Covered Wagon. The third member, Frederic Remington, ventured his patronym in a sheep ranch in Kansas in 1883, and the fourth member was Owen Wister who made his first trial of ranch life in Wyoming in 1885. In The Virginian, Wister’s most popular book, he created characters and lines that live to the present day. One has only to recall Wister’s line—now used so much as to be threadbare—“When you call me that, smile,” to appreciate the point.

Of these four men, only Roosevelt and Wister were known to each other previous to their Western life. None of their trails crossed in their early years in the West, but in later life all became very intimately acquainted with each other and with each other’s work. Roosevelt and Wister were to become Remington’s most ardent admirers and protagonists; Hough, on the other hand, was doubtless Remington’s severest critic. All four, however, were extremely active and articulate exponents of the West and its life.

2. The standard source of information on the Western experiences of Theodore Roosevelt is Hermann Hagedorn, Roosevelt in the Bad Lands (Boston and New York, 1921). The ranching experiences of Roosevelt as only one of the chapters of his life are described in many biographies, for example, Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt (New York, 1961). It is not argued in the text, of course, that Roosevelt would not have been President save for his ranch experience, but the route, which began with the Dakota ranch, and then led through the Rough Riders and Spanish war to the governorship of New York, to the Vice-Presidency and then to the White House, got him there more quickly than if his Dakota experiences had not occurred. After I had written the lines in the text concerning Roosevelt, and the effect of Western life on his career, I chanced across John Burroughs’ Camping & Tramping With Roosevelt (Boston and New York, 1907). On pp. 14 and 15 Burroughs made a statement credited to Roosevelt himself that is practically the same as my summary.

3. There is no satisfactory biography of Emerson Hough. His original Western venture, not dated with certainty, is briefly described by Lee Alexander Stone, Emerson Hough: His Place in American Letters (Chicago, 1930), p. 16. The Covered Wagon was called “the one great American epic that the screen has produced” by Robert E. Sherwood, ed., The Best Moving Pictures of 1922-23 (Boston, 1928), p. 72. Lewis Jacobs in The Rise of the American Film (New York, 1959), gives a more reasonable judgment of the film but even he called The Covered Wagon “forthright, impressive, and vigorous.”

For every one of this articulate quartet, however, there were
thousands of inarticulate embryo ranchers in the West before 1885. 
Although Mr. Buckman’s estimate that ninety percent of these new-
comers were “gentlemen” may be unduly optimistic, it is probably 
true that the sunny atmosphere of the wide open spaces was 
rent by many a curse with a pronounced Harvard accent. Cursing, 
indeed, seemed to be almost a necessary requirement of the difficult 
life of the West, a fact recognized by that genial philosopher and 
fount of considerable wisdom, Mr. Dooley, a contemporary well 
known to the quartet mentioned above. “No wan,” points out Mr. 
Dooley, “eud rope a cow or cinch a pony without swearin’. A 
strick bringin’ up is th’ same as havin’ a wooden leg on th’ 
plains.”

This sage observation is given added point when it is 
recalled that the inability of the future leader of the Rough Riders 
to use some of the stronger parts of speech in the Saxon language 
early led to discrediting him as a rancher. At his first round-up, 
Roosevelt urged one of his hands to head off cattle that were making 
a break for freedom with the shrill cry “Hasten forward quickly 
there!” The roar of laughter that followed was echoed at many a 
campfire and Roosevelt almost became the laughing-stock of the 
country round about, but his vigorous character eventually 
weathered the near disaster.

More pertinent, however, than the question of language on the 
plains, is the question “What brought this great influx to the former 
haunts of the buffalo?” The answer to this question is too long and 
involved to consider in detail here. The immediate causes in each 
were doubtless as numerous as the immigrants themselves but 
there are certain broad aspects of the problem that we can point 
out and which will not be irrelevant in understanding Remington 
and the success that he later achieved.

The building of the railroad westward and the removal of the 
Indian barrier were of fundamental importance in the westward 
migration. Once the main barrier was down and access to the vast 
new country was easier, the trek began. Adventurers, big-game 
hunters, settlers in search of cheap land, health-seekers, gold-seekers, 
terprising young politicians, restless young men—these and many 
other types—joined the army of the new forty-niners. Leading the 
van was the world-roaming, inquisitive Englishman. Many of this 
class were sportsmen, but England’s need of beef was also an 
important factor in the westward surge, so important that a Royal

Commission was sent from England in the late 1870’s to study cattle raising on the plains. As a result of its favorable report—and even before—many Englishmen were among those who sought the plains of the New World. “The American cattle-trade is exciting much interest in England, where two of our most pressing needs just now are cheaper meat and outlets for our boys” is, for example, the preface of a contemporary account in an English periodical.\(^7\) If the Englishman started the trail west, the whole world soon followed suit and representatives from nearly every civilized nation of the globe could be found on the prairies and plains of the West.

Why our countrymen—the Easterners—joined this march to the West is not as readily explained. Emerson Hough in later life ironically attributed the “discovery” of the West to three well-known Americans and infers that these three were responsible for the great interest in this region. “Buffalo Bill, Ned Buntline and Frederic Remington,” writes Hough with feeling, tinged no doubt by envy, “ah, might one hold the niche in fame of e’er a one of these tripartite fathers of their country! It is something to have created a region as large as the American west, and lo! have not these three done that thing?”\(^8\) Hough, of course, was referring to the West created in the minds of the Easterner by the above trio, for the West, it scarcely needs be said, was discovered long before Remington’s day. Hough’s commentary, however, is revealing in that it serves to emphasize the part that Remington played in American life during his heyday (1890-1909). But what was the lure that led Roosevelt, Hough and Wister to the West? Remington felt that Catlin, Gregg, Irving, Lewis and Clark aroused his incentive for the Western venture.\(^9\) Their influence, I am sure, was supplemented by still other sources; sources that consciously or unconsciously affected many Americans who migrated to the plains in the early 1880’s. In the first place, there was considerable popular literature, both in book and periodical form on the subject, preceding and contemporary with the beginning of the decade in question. Such books as Col. R. I. Dodge’s \textit{The Plains of the Great West} (published in England as \textit{The Hunting Grounds of the Great West}), Vivian’s \textit{Wanderings in the Western Land}, Campion’s \textit{On the Frontier} (Campion made his Western venture as a result of

\(^7\) \textit{The Spectator}, London, March 17, 1877, p. 341. The report of the Royal Commission referred to is \textit{Report on American Agriculture, With an Appendix} (1880), which is part of the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture (depressed condition), 1879. Buckman, \textit{loc. cit.}, also states in connection with this Western migration, “The English first sought out the new land.”


10. Richard I. Dodge, The Plains of the Great West (New York, 1877), or its English edition, The Hunting Grounds of the Great West (London, 1870), was one of the best known books of its kind and doubtless was the incentive that drew many to the West. Many years after its publication, Theodore Roosevelt and George Bird Grinnell called it “The best book upon the plains country.”—See their American Big-Game Hunting (New York, 1901), p. 323.

The other books mentioned in the text were published as follows:

J. S. Campion, On the Frontier (London, 1878). Experiences of some years in the West, ranching, hunting and traveling.


William A. Baillie-Grohman, Camps in the Rockies (New York, 1889). A London edition appeared the same year; a second English edition in 1888, and a second American edition in 1884. The book, based on four trips to America, was essentially a sporting book but it contains a chapter on ranching and an appendix which estimates the probable profits to be gained from cattle ranching. Other books bearing on the same general period are numerous. A few are listed below. Altogether their influence, quite apart from any real merits the books may or may not have possessed, must have been considerable. The interested reader will note how many are of English origin or had English editions. Some others of the period 1870-1886 (my list does not exhaust the subject) are:


Although lying outside the dates specified above, it is given as an illustration of an elaborate emigrant brochure.


Frank Whittaker, George A. Custer (New York, 1876).

Edward L. Wheeler, Deadwood Dick Library (Cleveland, 1878-1889). Over fifty published in this period. All were Westerns.

James B. Fry, Army Sacrifices (New York, 1879). Western Indian war.


William F. Cody, Life of William F. Cody (Hartford, 1879).


Rosser W. Raymond, Camp and Cabin: Sketches of Life and Travel in the West (New York, 1880). Nevada, California and the Yellowstone country.

Stephen R. Riggs, Mary and I: Forty Years With the Sioux (Chicago, 1889). Missionary life from 1857 to 1877.

Samuel N. Tousmand, Our Indian Summer in the Far West (London, 1889). Description of a tour of Kansas, Colorado and the Southwest.


J. W. Buel, Heroes of the Plains (St. Louis, 1881).

James A. Little, Jacob Hamblin (Salt Lake City, 1881). Frontiersman in Utah and Arizona.

Gen. James S. Brabham, The Beef! Romance, or How To Get Rich on the Plains (Philadelphia, 1881; also an English edition with the same imprint). Here’s a daisy! There was no curb on General Brabham’s enthusiasm. By five years, according to Brabham’s estimate, the annual income from a cattle ranch would be bigger than the original investment. “After the fifth year the profits will be enormous.” Sheep ranching also was boosted and the prospective sheep rancher was told that he could “sell on herd and ranch worth $12,000 in three years.” To prove his points for skeptical readers Brabham has the expenses and profits all carefully tabulated for a five-year period.


G. Thomas Ingham, Digging Gold Among the Rockies (Philadelphia, 1882).


Richard I. Dodge, Our Wild Indians (Hartford and Chicago, 1882). The Indians were blackened.

Dodge and an army officer, wrote with the authority of a good many years’ experience on the plains as this book and The Hunting Grounds of the Great West show.

George F. Price, Across the Continent With the 4th Cavalry (New York, 1883).


E. S. Topping, The Chronicles of the Yellowstone (St. Paul, 1883). Historical and promotional.

Gen. George A. Custer, Wild Life on the Plains and Horrors of Indian Warfare (St. Louis, 1883). Reprints of General Custer’s Galaxy articles plus additional material. Presumably published for large circulation (cheap paper and extremely crude illustrations); it went through many editions. Intermediate between the more conservative books listed above and the still cheaper dime novels. Incidentally, dime novels by 1884 were being severely criticized on the grounds that the pernicious influence which they exerted was causing youngsters to commit crimes (robberies and holdups) so that they could “go West and be cowboys”; a criticism
interval contains numerous articles on the West and its attractions; many times illustrated by artists from first-hand observations. These Western illustrations are of sufficient importance to warrant more extensive discussion; a discussion which we will, however,
certainly pertinent in any discussion of the effect of literature on the Western migration.—See the Kansas City Star-WEEKLY TRIBUNE, March 11, 1884.
Reginald Aldridge, Life on a Ranch (New York, 1884); in England as Ranch Notes (London, 1884). Aldridge, an Englishman, out of work in the depression of the 1870's, came to the United States after reading letters from Kansas and Colorado published in the English periodical Field. The book reviews his cattle-ranching experience in Kansas, Indian territory and Texas from 1877 to 1883.
William Shepherd, Prairie Experiences in Handling Cattle and Sheep (London, 1884, and New York, 1885). Profits of Sheep and Cattle Raising in Southwest Kansas (Topeka, 1884). This pamphlet is cited as illustrative of still another type of literature which had marked influence in the Western migration of the 1880's. It is a stock raising promotional bulletin published by the Santa Fe railroad. That these bulletins did have a considerable effect—although not always the desired one—is attested by a Kansas correspondent in a letter to The Nation, New York, August 6, 1885, p. 113.
Elizabeth Coats, Boots and Saddles (New York and London, 1885). Although the life of the Custers on the Dakota plains in the 1870's is the topic, the book again focused Eastern attention on the West.
Walter, Baron von Richthofen, Cattle Raising on the Plains of North America (New York, 1885). The author states that he had lived in Colorado and was for many years engaged in the stock business. He gives a brief account of the extent of the cattle ranching by 1885 with estimates of costs and profits. Chapter 9 deals with the great ranches of the West and gives some idea of the magnitude of ranching as a big business. I have read that Baron Richthofen was the father of the celebrated aviator Richthofen of World War I and that the aerial tactics of the “flying circus” introduced by Richthofen were suggested by tales told by the elder Richthofen of the circling tactics used by the Plains Indians in the warfare against the whites. I have been unable to verify the relationship between the two Richthofens.
John H. Sullivan, Life and Adventures of a Cow-Boy or Valuable Hints on Raising Stock (New York, ca. 1885).
De B. Randolph Keim, Sheridan’s Troopers on the Border (Philadelphia, 1885).
Ernest Inglis, The Creek of the Continent (Chicago, 1886).
E. Marston, Frank’s Rancho or My Holiday in the Rockies (London and New York, 1886), ‘What We Are To Do With Our Boys.”
11. Among my notes on articles in the periodical literature dealing specifically with various aspects of ranching (not already cited) are those listed below. It should be kept in mind that articles dealing with Western Indians, the West, etc., should also be included in any complete bibliography of Western literature for the late 1870’s and early 1880’s all such material served to instruct and attract its readers in the West.
“A Wyoming cowboy on Cattle Raising,” one-half column in the New York Semi-Weekly Tribune, February 29, 1884, p. 3. This item is cited as illustrative of much of the fugitive contemporary literature, which altogether must have totaled hundreds of accounts. This story, for example, was reprinted in the Tribune from the Pittsburgh Dispatch. It is a hearty recommendation of ranch life with its great profits, plus an amusing tall story of Western justice.
Rufus F. Zogbaum, “A Day’s ‘Drive’ With Montauk Cow-Boys,” ibid. (July, 1885), pp. 188-193. Zogbaum was probably as nearly Remington’s immediate predecessor as any man.
The Nation, New York, v. 41 (July 2, 1885), pp. 15-17, has a long review and discussion of the well-known Report in Regard To the Range and Ranch Cattle Business in the United States, by Joseph Nimmo, Jr., another important item in any Western bibliography. How extensive the interest was in this report and in the West can be judged by the letters to The Nation—some of them of considerable length—on the same general topic (most of them are from Westerners) will be found in v. 41 as follows: (July 10, 1885) pp. 50, 51, (August 6) pp. 113, 114, (August 27) pp. 172-174, (September 17) pp. 237, 238, (October 2) pp. 369, 367.
postpone until later in this series. But probably more important
than the books, periodicals and illustrations of the period was still
another source of information—the newspapers. One can scarcely
pick up an issue of an Eastern newspaper of almost any decade
after 1850, without finding news items from the West concerning
Western migrations; accounts of Indian troubles; tall stories of
frontiersmen and highwaymen and letters from homesteaders,
miners and travelers—some of it authentic, much of it garbled and
a great deal of it lurid reporting of imaginary events. In fact, so
terrible was the reporting in many cases, that Western inhabitants
complained of the treatment they received at the hands of Eastern
newspapers. Robert Strahorn, a Westerner and a free-lance writer,
who wrote under the pseudonym of “Alter Ego” for the Rocky
Mountain News of Denver, and other newspapers, commented on
his colleagues in the East in the following acid vein:

Of manners and morals of western people generally, much is said that is
far beyond the pale of truth. Nearly every eager itemizer, from the manager
of a representative eastern paper down to the senseless and superficial scribbler
for the eastern backwoods press, comes to the new west with mind literally
charged with glowing absurdities and with an unyielding determination to
realize these absurdities. Why this should be is partly explained by the fact
that eastern readers demand experiences from the western plains and moun-
tains which smack of the crude, the rough and the semi-barbarous.12

The Indian question, especially, Strahorn pointed out, was in-
vitably overworked by these Eastern correspondents who saw
Indians behind every clump of sage brush, menacing the traveler at
every step in his journey across the plains.

No doubt, the cause of this extraordinary interest in the Western
Indian that the Eastern newspaper reporter displayed was greatly
stimulated by the appalling military disaster that overwhelmed
Custer and his command on the hills above the Little Big Horn
river in the summer of 1876—the centennial year.13

Custer’s defeat certainly had the effect of focusing the attention
of the entire world upon the Western region and the newspaper
interest in this event and succeeding Indian questions is readily under-
standable, no matter how imperfectly they were reported. The con-
siderable volume of Western literature—in newspaper, periodical

12. The quotation from Robert E. Strahorn will be found in his Hand-Book of Wyoming
(Cheyenne, 1877), p. 106. For a biographical sketch of Strahorn, see The National Cyclo-
That Eastern newspapers really gave many items of Western news can be seen from the
number of entries found in the Index To the New York Daily Tribune under the heads
“Indians,” “West,” “Cowboys,” “Ranching,” “Plains,” for the years 1868-1885 inclusive, a
period in which large migrations to the West took place.

13. See Part IV of this series: “Custer’s Last Stand,” in The Kansas Historical Quarterly,
and book—makes it apparent then that the West had been "dis-
covered"—in whatever sense the word may be used—long before
Remington's day. The West was early a part of the national
consciousness, and the events and literature in the decade from
1876 to 1886 had developed a consuming interest in the life of the
plains. No matter, for our present purpose, if the great bubble of
an abundant ranch life burst with sickening suddenness in the
terrible winter of 1886-1887 and if the migration from the plains
was almost as rapid as the earlier emigration to the Western land;
for, despite the bursting of the bubble, this consuming interest was
shared by a large audience, and there were many in that audience
who had partaken of that life. By the late 1880's the time was
opportune for still other chroniclers who could recall and recapture
the life just passed with pen, pencil and brush. They soon appeared
and among them was Remington. The fact that he was fortunate
enough to have lived for a time this life on the plains, led naturally,
if not directly, to his mature achievements as one of the country's
leading illustrators.

The year that Remington lived in Kansas was the only time that
he established residence on the plains, although in subsequent years
he made frequent Western trips for inspiration and fresh material.
In this respect he was unlike Charley Russell, whose work has
frequently been compared with that of Remington. Russell spent
most of his life as a resident of the West and worked for some years
as a cowhand. As a result, his work is frequently more exact, as
far as detail goes, than was that of Remington, who was primarily
interested in action rather than exact detail—an important point
to keep in mind in comparing the two artists.  

The Kansas experience, however, was not Remington's first
Western venture. Late in the summer of 1881, as a youth of 19, he
had spent some weeks on the plains of Montana and that trip had
apparently cast its spell over the youngster. Some sketches had
resulted from this trip and one had been published by Harper's
Weekly in 1882 which was used, however, to illustrate an incident
of life in the then Arizona territory.  

14. Russell will be considered later in this series and further comparisons of his work with
that of Remington will then be made.
15. Remington left Canton, N. Y., in August, 1881, for Montana, according to the St.
Lawrence Plaidedaler, Canton, N. Y., August 10, 1881, p. 3. I am indebted to Editor Atwood
Manley of the Plaidedaler for the courtesy of examining the files of the Plaidedaler in his
office. Remington several times referred in later years to this early trip to Montana.—See the
16. The sketch will be found in Harper's Weekly, New York, v. 26 (February 26, 1882),
p. 120. It was re-drawn by W. A. Rogers who mentions the fact in his autobiography A
World Worth While (New York, 1927), p. 246. Rogers himself had some experience as a
Western artist which will be recorded subsequently in this series.

The length of Remington's Montana visit has not been established with certainty. He was
Frederic Remington
(1861-1909)

In his Butler county days. A photograph probably made at Peabody in 1883.
My time for a quiet life.
LAMING TIME

Robert Camp, Remington's immediate neighbor. From an original sketch made by Remington in 1883 and identified by Mr. Camp in 1943. Courtesy the Remington Art Memorial.
A year and a half spent at the Yale Art School was terminated early in 1880 by the death of his father who left him a patrimony of several thousand dollars.\textsuperscript{17} After he quit school, Remington corresponded with a Yale friend, Robert Camp of Milwaukee. Camp was graduated with the class of 1882 and late in the same summer went to south-central Kansas to try his hand at sheep-ranching, one of the many individuals in the Western migration of the early 1880's. Remington, if he could have followed his own interests, would doubtless have found his way to the cattle range and established his own cattle ranch. But the initial venture in a cattle ranch on any small scale, was an expensive business. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, in less than a year invested over eighty thousand dollars in establishing his cattle ranch in the Bad Lands of Dakota.\textsuperscript{18}

Remington had no such sum to invest and Camp, in his correspondence, pointed out that a sheep ranch could be established with the small patrimony that Remington had available.\textsuperscript{19} Further, Camp described the country where he had made his establishment, and life on his ranch with such enthusiasm that Remington was soon eager to join his friend. Camp made the necessary arrangements for the purchase of a small ranch adjoining his own on the south, and early in the spring of 1883 Remington left Albany for a farewell visit to his family at Canton and then set out for the plains of Kansas.\textsuperscript{20}

back in Albany, N. Y., by October 18, 1881, as I have a copy of a letter written by Remington on that date in which he states that an interview with George William Curtis, editor of Harper's Weekly, had been arranged for him so that Curtis could be shown some of Remington's sketches.

17. Remington was enrolled at Yale for the school years beginning in 1878 and 1879 (Yale University Catalogues for these years). He left school during the Christmas holidays of 1879 and did not return because of the ill health of his father who died on February 10, 1880.—Ogdensburg (N. Y.) Journal, February 18, 1889. I have studied in some detail Remington’s life at Yale as well as his life in Albany, N. Y. He held some five or six jobs in Albany from 1880 until he moved to Kansas in 1883. I hope to publish these studies subsequently.

18. Roosevelt's investment in the Bad Lands ranch will be found in Hagedorn, op. cit., appendix, p. 482. Mr. Hagedorn estimates that Roosevelt lost over fifty thousand dollars in Dakota, a considerable share of the loss being caused by the terrible winter of 1886-1887.

19. My information on Robert Camp and Remington is based on personal interviews with Robert Camp in 1943, who was then over eighty and living in Milwaukee. I am indebted to Wilbur J. Barth of the First Wisconsin Trust Company, Milwaukee, who interviewed Mr. Camp for me on three different occasions, asking him many questions and returning the replies. Mention of “Bob” Camp’s activities in Kansas will be found in the Peabody Gazette for the period under discussion as follows: August 24, 1883, p. 5, mentions the presence of Bob Camp and the issue of September 7, p. 5, in its Plum Grove notes, mentions that Mr. Camp moved onto his place “some two weeks ago”; also mention of the Camp venture on October 19, p. 5, November 10, p. 5, and December 25, p. 4. The last item states that Camp owned 900 sheep and “thinks sheep raising the best business.” The location of his ranch is also given as Sec. 25, T. 23, R. 3. It is thus seen that his ranch was in the same section as Remington’s (see Footnote 20). The issue of June 1, 1885, p. 4, states that Camp “clipped between six and eight thousand pounds of wool this spring.” Camp lived in the Peabody neighborhood for some years. The last reference that I have found to Camp in the Gazette is in the issue of September 9, 1886, p. 5.

20. An item in the St. Lawrence Plundeder, Canton, N. Y., February 28, 1883, states that Fred Remington had resigned his position in Albany and was in Canton and would leave for the West “in a few days.” An examination of records in the office of the register of deeds of Butler county (at El Dorado) was made for me by Mrs. Corah Mooney Bullock of El Dorado, to whom I am in-
The Kansas “ranch,” the purchase of which Camp had arranged for Remington, was a quarter section (one hundred and sixty acres) in northwest Butler county. Butler county is—and was also in Remington’s day—a huge rectangle of land, so large that it has been humorously referred to as “the State of Butler.” It is a rolling upland that lies on the extreme western edge of the Flint Hills, a high escarpment running north and south which roughly divides the eastern third of Kansas from the remainder of the state. The escarpment rises abruptly from the prairies on its eastern side but slopes upward gently on the western side, merging again into prairie level, and still farther west—much farther—becomes eventually the High Plains. The Flint Hills proper are vast swells, treeless but covered with bluestem grass, and form one of the great natural pasture lands of the world. Sheep and cattle raising and grazing had begun in the eastern Flint Hills almost with the opening of Kansas territory in 1854. As settlers moved west after the Civil War, the stock industry gradually moved with the migration. In the late 1870’s after a year or so of extremely dry weather and the failure of grain crops, greater attention was directed to the utilization of the natural resources of the country, especially the native grasses. As a result, a considerable boom in the raising of sheep developed in the western Flint Hills. Butler county and its neighbor to the south, Cowley county, became the leading “sheep counties” of the state.  

A good many young bachelors were attracted by this boom, among whom was Robert Camp; and shortly after, Remington arrived.

The immediate country where Camp and Remington had their ranches—if farms of 160 acres could be called ranches—was a sloping plain with almost no trees save along the water courses. Most of the water courses—deep gashes giving rise to steep bluffs—were dry except during the wet seasons, although the principal one, the Whitewater river, usually was a flowing stream. Their immediate neighborhood was well settled so that the country could by no means be regarded as frontier. Ten years earlier there had been frontier difficulties with horse thieves and vigilantes, and the then-cowboy capital, the rough and turbulent town of Newton,22 was only fifteen miles to the west of Remington’s ranch. But these difficulties had long disappeared by the time Remington arrived. They had left their effects, to be sure, on the country. The language was that of the horse and cow country and the sheep ranchers rode horses as extensively as their neighbors to the west and wore the characteristic “chaps” as well. This sheep country, too, was still largely unfenced, each farm owner fencing a patch of his land for his “corral.” It should be noted that in the early 1860’s there was no odium attached to sheep ranching, nor any of the conflict between sheep and cattle interests which was so widely publicized later in Western history.

The Camp and Remington ranches joined each other. El Dorado, the county seat, was twenty miles south. Peabody, the nearest town on the railroad, was some ten or twelve miles to the north. It was from here that the young men laid in most of their supplies and carried on their business transactions—the trips to town, of course, being made at infrequent intervals by horse. A tiny settlement, Plum Grove, was within three miles of Remington’s ranch, but the settlement consisted only of a general store—Hoyt’s store—a schoolhouse, and two or three houses.23

Camp and Remington soon struck up an acquaintance with two other young bachelors and the four soon became inseparable in their enterprises and sports. One of this group was James Chap-

22. By Remington’s day, the cowboy capital had shifted to Dodge City, over 150 miles west of Newton.
23. A very valuable source of information on Remington’s life in Kansas is found in an article by Remington “Coursing Rabbits on the Plains.” Outing, New York, v. 10 (May, 1887), pp. 111-121. Appearing only three years after Remington’s residence in Kansas it is especially useful as it gives names, geographic localities and incidents which, in many cases, can be actually verified. Mrs. Myra Lockwood Brown of Rosalia (also in Butler county) has been especially active in collecting Remington material relating to his Kansas residence. In the past fifteen years she has interviewed many of the older residents of Butler county who had personal recollections of Remington in Kansas, including Judge R. A. Scott and J. H. Sandifer of El Dorado, Rolla Joseph of Potwin, and others. She was able to verify all the geographic locations mentioned by Remington in his article and has visited the Remington “ranch.” As a result of the efforts of Mrs. Brown and the writer, a brief illustrated review of Remington’s activities in Kansas appeared in the Country Gentleman, September, 1947, p. 16 ff. Reference to material collected by Mrs. Brown is referred to hereafter as “M. L. Brown.”
man, a youngster from Illinois, who "ran" another sheep ranch nearby. And, of course, the ubiquitous Englishman was present. Remington, in an account of his Kansas experiences, designated him only as "Charlie B———", probably a pseudonym to hide the real name of one of that small army of remittance men then scattered over the West. Remington wrote:

Charlie B——— was your typical country Englishman, and the only thing about him American was the bronco he rode. He was the best fellow in the world, cheery, hearty and ready for a lark at any time of the day or night. He owned a horse ranch seven miles down the creek, and found visiting his neighbors involved considerable riding; but Charlie was a sociable soul, and did not appear to mind that, and he would spend half the night riding over the lonely prairies to drop in on a friend in some neighboring ranch, in consequence of which Charlie's visits were not always timely; but he seemed never to realize that a chap was not in as good condition to visit when awakened from his blanket at three o'clock in the morning as in the twilight hour.24

Strange, isn't it, that Charlie was able to wander over the prairies at night without danger from the redskin; or wasn't it still stranger that friends visited casually back and forth at their own free will whenever fancy struck them? It can thus be seen that life on a Kansas sheep ranch was a far more prosaic affair than life in the West was so luridly built up to be by the newspapers of the period. To be sure, to Remington's New York friends in Albany and Canton, Kansas was really West and doubtless they felt it would require all of Remington's ingenuity and strength to keep his scalp from being lifted by the savage redskin on week days and great skill with the weapons provided by Mr. Colt to prevent his massacre by the Bad Men of the West when he went to town on Saturdays. Probably, too, Remington himself was not unwilling that his Eastern friends should have this impression. Not long after his arrival in Kansas, he wrote a hasty note from Peabody to William Poste, a legal friend in Canton, N. Y., who had examined some papers for him:

May 11, '83, Peabody

Poste

Dear Sir—

Papers came all right—are the cheese—man just shot down
the street—must go

Yours truly

Frederic Remington 25

The tantalizing effect of this note on the recipient can readily be imagined and it certainly would do nothing to relieve the popular

24. From the Outing article. See Footnote 23.
25. The copy of the letter given in the text (to William A. Poste) was kindly lent to me by Mrs. Alice Poste Gunnison of Canton, N. Y., a daughter of William A. Poste.
impression of the West, an effect which young Remington was trying to perpetuate, for an examination of Peabody newspapers shows no such catastrophe recorded.

Remington probably arrived in Kansas early in March of 1888. He was met in Peabody by Robert Camp, who was eager to take the new arrival on a tour of inspection. The Camp ranch was first visited, but Remington was impatient to see his own property, and so without further delay they were off to the Remington place. There he found a small frame house of three rooms, a well, two barns and a good-sized corral. The main part of the house, a story and a half high, consisted of a long living room below and a bedroom above. Built on the north side was a single room, a gable-roofed affair, that served as the kitchen. The barns were chiefly for horses and considerable remodeling and extension was necessary for conversion to sheep. Remington had arrived early enough in the spring to witness lambing and sheep-shearing on the Camp ranch, so he soon had some idea of the trials and tribulations of his new business. That Camp had really gone into sheep raising on a considerable scale is seen from the fact that Remington witnessed a wool clipping amounting to some seven thousand pounds.

As soon as he had gained some idea of his new undertaking, Remington set to work. Almost his first move, necessarily, was the purchase of horses. Although sheep raising was the principal business of the region, horses came first in the interests of the

26. Mrs. M. L. Brown interviewed Rolla Joseph of Potwin (see Footnote 23) some years ago and he described the Remington house, barns and corrals for her before either of them had seen the sketches reproduced in this article. Writing January 6, 1888, after having viewed the drawings, Mrs. Brown said: "In regard to the house as Remington knew it, this is what I know: Rolla Joseph of Potwin described to me the house in detail—the barns, corrals, etc., the shape of the house and roof, the number of rooms and what they were used for, the color of the house, etc., and the way it faced. "Everything is just as Remington sketched it, according to Mr. Joseph. The one-story room on the north with a gable roof, not shed roof, was the kitchen where Remington prepared meals, including pancakes and beef steak, for the ranch hands, the men that were constantly coming in, and for the little boys he had out there to ride his horses and watch whatever fun, such as wild steer riding, boxing, or just planning something, might be under way. Mr. Joseph told me that Remington was always, to use his phrase, 'mixing in' with the smaller boys, particularly those at a disadvantage in any way.

"The other room downstairs, besides the kitchen, would now probably be called a living room. I think that Remington and his fellows often ate there. At any rate, it was in this room that the small diary, blank and about the size of an ordinary pocket loose-leaf notebook, was one day discovered, opened. Mr. Joseph told me about the book. One of the two Lathrop men, one a Peabody banker, the other a Wichita oil man, which I do not at the moment recall, told me of what he read there. At that time the Lathrops were neighbors of Remington. Remington had been attempting to do something for a problem sent west by his father for Remington to make a man of him. The words inscribed were: 'You can't make a man out of mud.' The book lay on a table.

"The half-story room upstairs was sleeping quarters. Billy Kehr stayed at the ranch most of the time. There were other guests. The door, in the sketch, in which a man appears standing, is on the east.

"This is right for the lay of the land and the road as I saw it. I do not believe any of the former buildings could be recognized from present structures, which are modern in every respect. According to what Clifford Lathrop told me, one of the last of the old buildings to be razed was the one of the barns which held inside—not on the door, as some reports have it—the sketch of the cowboy roping a steer, which Remington had cut there with his knife. That sketch was a neighborhood pride. This barn also served as a sort of gymnasium, as did the yard near it."
ranchers and every chance meeting at Plum Grove or Peabody was an opportunity to discuss the merits of horses, to maneuver a swap of the animals or to promote a horse race whenever a new-comer of any reputation put in his appearance. Every rancher kept a small string of horses for work and play. Upon the advice of Camp, several were purchased and finally Remington was able to secure, after considerable dickering, a most unusual animal of which he became very fond. She was “a nervous little half-breed Texas and thoroughbred, of a beautiful light gold-dust color, with a Naples yellow color mane and tail.” She was promptly named Terra-Cotta, although to the other boys on the ranch, who had not had the advantage of a year and a half at the Yale art school, she was called Terry. After the horses were purchased, a ranch-hand, Bill Kehr, was employed. Bill was still younger than his employer and was really more a boon companion than a hand. Bill also had several horses; one of them, Prince by name, was in appearance a grey sleepy old plug, but his appearance belied his character for he was really a speedy animal and his owner had been able to use Prince’s undistinguished outlines for his own advantage on several occasions. In fact, Prince had so much of a local reputation that it was hard to match him up for a race. Jim Chapman, the friend of Camp and Remington, had acquired a horse, Push-Bob, with a reputation for speed, about the time Bill Kehr went to work for Remington. A good deal of discussion as to the relative merits of Prince and Push-Bob took place in the evenings after the chores were done, but the owners were cautious about putting the horses to the actual test. The race was eventually run but not until late fall under circumstances that were unusual, to say the least, and with a most disconcerting outcome; but we must postpone for the moment this story until we get Remington well started on his ranching career.  

With his horses purchased and a ranch hand employed, Remington plunged eagerly into the task of getting the ranch in operation. A large sheep shed was erected at the top of a slope overlooking his range, many hundreds of sheep were purchased, and supplies were freighted from Peabody. Kehr, being accustomed to ranch work, took the lead in getting most of these tasks accomplished, leaving Remington the task of looking after horses and herding the sheep, although Remington was always able to get relief from the latter task by employing one of the many neighborhood youngsters—and

27. The Peabody Gazette items cited in Footnote 31 reveal some of these facts; others come from the Outing article. Kehr appears in the Outing article as Carr.—M. L. Brown.
his dog—to stand guard while he went about occupations more to his liking. Remington also had to do the cooking for the ranch. He prepared the meals for Kehr and himself as well as the not-infrequent callers. An idea of the cooking may be had from a story told about the daughter of a neighboring rancher. Her hospitable mother had sent her over to Remington’s one day with two loaves of freshly baked bread. As the youngster entered the bachelor’s kitchen, Remington dumped a large basket of dirty potatoes into a huge pot on the stove, covered them with water, and kindled the fire beneath them. “Why, Mr. Remington,” she exclaimed, “don’t you wash the potatoes before you cook them?” Remington regarded the youngster gravely and replied, “Wash them? I should say not. I’ve tried them both washed and unwashed and they taste better unwashed. Have you ever tasted boiled unwashed potatoes?” The bewildered youngster agreed that she never had. “Well you tell your mom to cook them that way and you’ll see—and besides, it takes time to wash them.”

Fortunately for Remington and his boarders, the monotony of a diet of unwashed potatoes could be varied with canned sardines and canned tomatoes; and doubtless the pile of empty tin cans outside Remington’s corral grew steadily larger with the months.

As spring advanced, Remington had more time to roam the prairies and he grew more enthusiastic about his new life. The quarter-section directly west of his was offered to him and he promptly bought it. The toil and drudgery of ranching were easily forgotten in the momentary enthusiasm. This was the life, and how he did enjoy it. “The gallop across the prairie,” he wrote in describing an early morning run to Bob Camp’s place, “was glorious. The light haze hung over the plains, not yet dissipated by the rising sun. Terra-Cotta’s stride was steel springs under me as she swept along, brushing the dew from the grass of the range. . . .”

His rising exuberance as his new life developed was in marked contrast to his behavior when he had first reached the Kansas ranch. Several acquaintances who knew him then recalled that he was inclined to be melancholy, “moody beyond anything I had ever seen in man” reported one of his friends. “In his moments of despair he was not only morose but recluse. He hid from the majority of all his fellows save one, a chap of his own age, James Chapman, who hovered near as something of a guardian angel.”

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29. Quotation from the Outing article.
this attitude is now hard to ascertain. All his life Remington was inclined to be volatile—for a time intensely enthusiastic, then despairing; but as he grew older this behavior gradually disappeared. Possibly the youthful Remington, when he first reached Kansas, had been disappointed in love or it may have been that one of his chief interests in life—drawing—had as yet brought him little satisfaction, or the death of his father, all may have played a part. But in the development of his new life the melancholia wore off and Remington soon became more jovial and was well known and popular over the countryside. Many of the children of the period recall the interest he took in them. His drawing, too, was by no means neglected, for he spent considerable time with his sketch book. He sketched his ranch, his sheep, his neighbors and their activities. He went to Plum Grove and sketched the preacher who visited the schoolhouse on Sundays and the sketch was then passed around the audience. A neighbor bought a trotting horse and Remington drew the horse. Bob Camp’s cook was greatly pleased when Remington drew for him on rough wrapping paper a sketch of a cow defending her calf from the attack of a wolf. Many evenings a crowd would gather at the Remington ranch and Remington would sketch the individuals as they “chinned” with one another or as they boxed, for boxing was a favorite sport of the young ranchers. Few cared to put on the gloves with Remington as he was almost in the professional class and his opponents were always in for a good mauling when they fought with the ex-Yale football player.31

The work of the ranch was so well settled into routine that by July Remington was getting restless again. Leaving the ranch in Bill Kehr’s hands, Remington, together with a friend from Peabody, George Shepherd, decided to take a look at the country south and west. Just how extended a trip—on horse, of course—they made at

31. I have made extensive examinations of the Peabody and El Dorado newspapers of the period and have found occasional contemporary mention of Remington in these sources. In the Plum Grove notes of the Peabody Gazette, June 21, 1883, p. 4, is the item “Mr. Remington, on the ‘Johnson place,’ is building a large sheep barn.” The issue of July 5, p. 5, mentions a prospecting trip of Remington and George Shepherd to “the southern part of the State.” The Gazette, October 15, p. 6, reports that “Fred Remington’s father started for his home in the East, last Monday morning.” “Father” is obviously in error and should read “uncle,” for Mrs. Ella Remington Mills and Pierre Remington both wrote me that Lamarine Remington, an uncle of Frederic Remington, visited the Kansas ranch and caught a cold that developed into tuberculosis.

Mention is made of a trip that Remington and Robert Camp made to El Dorado in ibid., December 18, 1883, p. 5, and the El Dorado Republican, December 7, p. 3.

From the interviews of M. L. Brown, it seems certain that preliminary sketches that Remington afterward worked into his more mature productions were made during his Kansas stay. Included among these were “The Last Stand” and “The Bronco Buster.”

In addition to a small album of original Kansas sketches (approximately quarto in size) in the Remington Art Memorial at Ogdensburg, N. Y., reproductions of sketches of direct Kansas interest appear in the Outing article (Footnote 23), and in Harper’s Weekly, v. 32 (April 28, 1888), p. 206, a half-page illustration, “Texas Cattle in a Kansas Corn Corral,” which has been reproduced on the cover of this Quarterly.
These Remington Sketches and Those on the Following Page Were Made in Butler County in 1883. All the Original Remington Sketches Here Reproduced Are Important Historically as They Are Contemporary Pictorial Documents of Kansas Life and Agriculture in the Early 1880's. Reproductions Courtesy the Remington Art Memorial.
this time is now unknown. They probably went down into Indian
territory, not many miles south of Butler county and then may have
gone west into New Mexico territory and back by way of Dodge
City. At any rate, Remington had made a horseback trip of some
distance into the Southwest—a further exploration of the Western
scene.

He was back on his ranch before many weeks, for his uncle La-
martine came out to visit him early in the fall. It was an unfor-
tunate and tragic trip for Lamartine, for he and Frederic, in returning
one day from the twelve-mile trip to Peabody were caught in a
violent plains’ rainstorm. Exposure to the elements led to an illness
for the elder Remington that eventually developed into tuberculosis
and led finally to his untimely death. To the burly young rancher,
hardened by an outdoor life of many months, the storm was just a
passing incident and without effect. It was with genuine regret,
however, that he put his ailing uncle on the train for home, for he
and Lamartine, not greatly separated by years, had many interests
in common.32

It was shortly after his uncle left in mid-October, 1883, that one
of Remington’s most memorable experiences in Kansas occurred.
He had ridden up to Bob Camp’s ranch with James Chapman one
evening, and after supper the three, together with Camp’s cook,
gathered around the kerosene lamp on the kitchen table. As Jim
leaned his chair back against the wall, he suggested, “Look here,
boys, what do you say to running jacks tomorrow?”

“I seconded the motion immediately,” wrote Remington in recall-
ing the evening, “but Bob, the owner of the ranch, sat back and
reflectively sucked his big pipe, as he thought of the things which
ought to be done. The broken fence to the corral down by the creek,
dredging the watering holes, the possibilities of trading horses down
at Plum Grove and various other thrifty plans weighed upon his
mind; but Jim continued,—‘It’s nice fall weather now, dry and cold;
why a hoss will jest run himself to death for fun; that old Bob mule
scampered like a four year ole colt all the way to Hoyt’s grocery
with me today, and besides, there hain’t nothing to do, and the jacks
is thicker’n tumble weeds on the prairie.’”

With Remington’s added urging, Bob Camp was soon won over
and the sport was planned for the next day. “Jacks,” it should be
pointed out, are jack rabbits, animals that have “the most pre-
posterous ears that ever were mounted on any creature but a jackass”

32. See reference to Peabody Gazette and Lamartine Remington in Footnote 31.
according to Mark Twain, who also remarked that the jack rabbit, when really frightened, “straightens himself out like a yardstick every spring he makes.” At any rate, coursing the jacks was a thrilling chase, but usually not a very dangerous one—for the rabbits. They were coursed by using dogs—usually fleet-footed greyhounds—to rout the rabbits out of their cover and on to the range. There the chase was taken up by the mounted hunters, each armed with a lance, a light pole some six feet in length. The object of the chase was to touch the rabbit with the lance, a feat not often accomplished. The chase consisted of quarter- or half-mile dashes in the open, followed by a sudden swerve in the line of the chase as the rabbit broke for cover. This was usually a slow (a depression) filled with tall grass, or a rough creek bed—a deep gash in the prairie ordinarily dry but containing dwarf willows. Coursing jacks was thus excellent training in horsemanship even if other gains were meager.

The hunt arranged by Chapman and Remington included seven horsemen; for, in addition to the original trio, there were John Smith, who furnished the greyhound, “Daddy,” by name; Bill Kehr, Remington’s ranch hand, who was riding Prince; Phip, Bob Camp’s cook, who really should not be called a horseman since he was riding “Bob,” a mule somewhat advanced in years and who at various times in his long career had “elevated some of the best riders in that part of the country toward the stars”; and, lastly, Charlie B———, the Englishman, on a blue mare and rigged out in regulation English hunting togs, with the exception of the red coat, which several years’ experience in the West had taught him was not appreciated for its true worth. Remington was mounted, of course, on his favorite, Terra-Cotta, and Bob Camp on a dependable but not speedy mare, Jane, by name. Jim Chapman was riding Push-Bob, Prince’s much-discussed rival; in fact, one of the reasons for arranging the hunt seems to have been the chance offered to get more real facts on the relative merits of the two horses.

The party assembled at Camp’s corral, moved down across a dry branch of the Whitewater river that cut across Bob’s quarter, up the bluffs and out on to the open range. They had not gone far until

“There’s a jack—take him, Daddy,” came a quick cry from Johnnie, and the next moment Johnnie’s big bay was off. There goes the rabbit, the dog flies after. “Go on, Terra,” I shouted, loosing on the bit, hitting her lightly with a spur, and away we went, all in a ruck. Old Prince was shouldering heavily away on my right, Push-Bob on my quarter, Jane off to the left, and
Pictorial Record of the Old West

Phip at a stately gallop behind—the blue mare being left at the post as it were. The horses tore along, blowing great lung-fulls of fresh morning air out in snorts. Our sombreros blew up in front from the rush of air, and our blood leaped with excitement. Away scurried the jack, with his great ears sticking up like two antique bed-posts, with Daddy closing the distance rapidly, and our outfit thundering along some eight rods in the rear. Down into a slew of long grass into which the rabbit and dog disappeared we went, with the grass snapping and swishing about the legs of our horses. A dark mass on my left heaves up, and “ho—there goes Bob head over heels.” On we go. “Hope Bob isn’t hurt—must have put his foot into a water-hole,” are my excited reflections. We are out of the slew, but where is the rabbit and the dog?

“Here they go,” comes from Phip, who is standing on the edge of the slew, farther down toward the bluffs of the bottoms, where he has gotten as the result of a short cut across.

Phip digs his spurs into the mule, sticks out his elbows and manifests other frantic desires to get there, all of it reminding one strongly of the style of one Ichabod Crane, but as we rush by, it is evident that the mule is debating the question with that assurance born of the consciousness that when the thing is brought to a vote he has a majority in the house.

The rabbit dodged, doubled in its tracks when out on the plain again, and came almost directly at Remington who lunged with his lance but missed as Kehr and Charlie swept by. This time the rabbit made for a dry creek bed. Kehr and Charlie crashed together as they went down into the bed and both were unhorsed. Remington, attempting to head off the rabbit, chose to go over a high bluff above the creek. But the descent was so steep that Terra’s knees bent under her and both she and her rider went down. Remington was thrown to the bottom with such violence that he lay stunned on the ground, but soon he and Terra were up again. To continue the comedy of errors, another rabbit was run out of the creek and made straight for Phip mounted on his mule. Phip prepared to deal the fatal blow, but as he made ready the mule spied the rabbit coming at him, shied violently and sent his rider sprawling and cursing on the plain.

The riders slowly gathered for a council of war. Bob Camp was the last to arrive, “a sketch in plaster,” since the spot where he had been unhorsed was a hole of soft blue mud. After a breathing spell, the horsemen were out for another round. One rabbit had been run down and another was started. It made its escape through the corral of a newly-settled rancher, “old” John Mitchner. John came out with a hospitable “how-de boys” and asked them to dinner, an invitation which was eagerly accepted. While waiting for John’s boy to cook up a meal of bacon and eggs, the conversation turned
to horses. As the hunters looked over John’s stock in the corral, Jim Chapman began to “rib” the old man about his horses and John replied, “Wall, my hoss stock ain’t nothin’ to brag on now, because I hain’t got the money that you fellers down in the creek has got fer to buy ’em with, but I’ve got a little mare down thar in the corral as I’ve got a notion ken run some shakes.” This statement was an open invitation for a race and in practically no time Jim had wagered Push-Bob against old John’s little mare. Bill Kehr promptly joined in. “I’ll bet Prince can beat either of you,” he said. “I’ll ride him, and we’ll all three run, the winner to take both, ... and it’s a good time to see whether Prince or Push-Bob is the better horse.”

They agreed, and dinner was forgotten as old John went into the corral for his horse. When he led her out, so old and decrepit did she seem, cupidity got the best of the remaining hunters. Remington put up his favorite Terra-Cotta against another mare and her colt in old John’s corral; Bob Camp bet Jane against four head of John’s cattle; Jack Smith entered his horse in the wagering; and Charlie, the Englishman, staked his blue mare against a likely looking three-year-old in the old man’s string. Only Phip on his mule was immune to the fever and he expressed his doubts in no uncertain manner. But his voice was lost in the excitement as the three horses came into line for a quarter-mile race. Remington was to fire the starting shot. Charlie and Bob, together with old John’s son, rode out on the plain and marked the finish line and acted as judges. But let Remington tell the story of the race.

The three racers came up to the scratch, Bill and Jim sitting their sleek steeds like centaurs. Old Prince had bristled up and moved with great vim and power. Push-Bob swerved about and stretched his neck on the bit. The boys were bare-footed, with their sleeves rolled up and a handkerchief tied around their heads. Old John came prancing out, stripped to the waist, on his mare, which indeed looked more game when mounted than running loose in the corral. The old man’s grey, thin locks were blowing loose in the wind, and he worked his horse up to the scratch in a very knowing way. We all regarded the race as a foregone conclusion and had really began to pity old John’s impoverishment, but still there was the interest in the bout between Prince and Push-Bob. This was the first time the victors of the Whitewater bottoms had met, and was altogether the greatest race which that country had seen in years. How the boys from the surrounding ranches would have gathered could they have known it, but it is just as well that they did not; for as I fired the gun and the horses scratched away from the mark, Old John went to the front and stayed there to the end, winning by several lengths, while Prince and Push-Bob ran what was called a dead heat, although there was considerable discussion over it for a long time afterwards. There was my
dear little Terra gone to the hand of the spoilsman, and the very thought almost broke my heart, as I loved that mare as I shall never love another animal. I went back to the corral, sat down and began to whittle a stick. It took Bob and Charlie a half an hour to walk the quarter of a mile back to the ranch. Bill and Jim said nothing kept them from flying the country to save their horses but the fact that they had no saddles.

The six stood disconsolately looking through the fence of old John’s corral as he herded in his newly acquired string. Then he reminded them of dinner, but for some reason they had lost their appetites, and with a last look at their former mounts they started dejectedly for home, ten miles distant. Phip and old Bob were used to good advantage, for all the saddles were piled on the mule.

“Every man in this country will know this inside of two days,” was the disheartening comment as they got under way. The full force of this observation became only too apparent that evening when Remington and Bill Kehr rode down—on new mounts, of course—to Hoyt’s grocery at Plum Grove to renew their larder. As they approached the front of the store and looked through the window, they saw by the pale light of the lone lamp, old John perched on a sugar barrel. He had quite an audience and as he reached the climax of his story, there arose a shout of laughter which was probably heard in El Dorado, twenty miles distant. Bill and Remington looked at each other and quietly decided to go hungry the next day as they turned their horses about and headed for home without going into the store.33

If this episode lingered long in Remington’s memory, still another one, following the horse race by a month or so, must have been equally well remembered—and remembered with still greater regret—for it was probably one of the causes leading to his withdrawal from ranch life. A Christmas eve party had been arranged for the residents of Plum Grove and the ranchers and settlers in its outlying territory. That night saw the schoolhouse crowded to its small capacity. Remington and all “the boys” were there and so was a prominent member of the community who had incurred their dislike. It is probable that a few drinks had made the boys more boisterous and careless than usual, for as they saw the bald head belonging to the object of their dislike well up in the front of the audience, the target was irresistible. Large paper wads and small balls of mud began to fly toward the gleaming bald dome. Such conduct was, of course, immediately reprimanded, and the guilty parties were asked to leave the schoolhouse. The public reprimand

33. The description of the race and the quotations are from the Outing article.
left its sting and made the culprits more obstreperous than ever. As they gathered outside the building, one of them spied a pile of straw. It was hastily piled outside the window and set blazing with a cry of “Fire, Fire.” A near panic resulted. The crowd poured from the doors and even from some of the windows, but fortunately, it was not disastrous. The affair naturally aroused considerable feeling, and the more staid members of the community swore out warrants for the arrest of the perpetrators of the thoughtless prank. The *Walnut Valley Times*, published at El Dorado, even noted the event in its columns:

Some of the youngsters up in Plum Grove [northwest Butler county], on Christmas eve, at an entertainment in the schoolhouse, behaved in most unseemly manner, judging by report, and got up a row which assumed almost the proportions of a riot. The matter has culminated by a suit in the district court; Fred Pennington [Remington], Wm. Kehr, John Smith, Chester Farni [Harris?] and Chas. Harriman being the defendants. The first trial resulted in the disagreement of the Jury. Another trial is set for February 4th. The boys are a little “wild and wooly” occasionally in the northwest.³⁴

The *Times* account is essentially correct save that the matter was adjusted in the justice court before Justice Charles E. Lobdell rather than in district court. We have Lobdell’s word for it that after a two-days’ trial in which the jury disagreed, the case was dismissed upon the payment of costs, which, along with the attorney’s fees and all other expenses, were borne by Remington. One of the attorneys referred continually to Remington as “Billy, the Kid,” an allusion which evidently greatly disturbed young Remington, as well it might. In fact, the whole affair was a source of considerable embarrassment to him and he doubtless wished many times that he had not been so foolish and reckless. Up to this time, he had been popular in the community, but, as a result of the prank, which easily might have had a far more serious and tragic conclusion, he was looked upon with less favor. If Remington felt guilty and brooded over the affair at the time, his sins have long since been forgiven.³⁵ The story above has been told in Butler

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³⁴. *Walnut Valley Times*, El Dorado, January 11, 1884. The item was discovered by Mrs. Bullock of El Dorado.

³⁵. The affair at the Plum Grove schoolhouse was recalled by Rolla Joseph (mentioned above) who states that “it never would have happened if the boys hadn’t been drinking,” and by the justice of the peace in the case, Charles Lobdell. Lobdell, later a member of the state legislature and still later the editor of the Kansas City (Kan.) *Tribune*, gave his recollections of the affair in the *Tribune*, October 29, 1897. Still another version of the story appears in the recollections of H. A. J. Coppins, a resident of the Plum Grove community in Remington’s day. The Coppins’ recollections, a valuable contribution as they contain several interesting sidelights, appeared in the *El Dorado Times*, November 24, 1943. I am indebted to Mrs. Bullock, who became so much interested in this Remington affair that she attempted to trace the records in the justice court of El Dorado but found, as the result of her search, that some cleanly and God-fearing former mayor of the town, had, in a burst of zeal for cleaning up things, thrown away all old reports, the accumulation of years. Probably it is just as well that they were destroyed for many a sinning soul will rest easier in his grave since the records of his misdeeds are thus forever hidden from the eye of man.