Bypaths of Kansas History

To Pike's Peak on Foot

From The Daily Times, Leavenworth, April 4, 1860.

Pedestrians for the Peak.—We were amused, and at the same time somewhat saddened, yesterday, at a sight familiar enough a year ago, and the terrors of which, through the history of the Blue brothers and the thousand unwritten tales of horror like it, have been terribly taught to others. Still we were amused, as we saw twelve hearty fellows, each with his carpet sack and rifle trudging manfully and hopefully on their road. "Which way?" we asked.

"Pike's Peak or bust!" was the answer, and on they went, cracking their jokes and laughingly turning their faces Westward. To Pike's Peak on foot, with no sufficient provision, or sufficient means for obtaining it—"or bust!" Some will get through—a stout heart, a manly purpose and a sound constitution, will bring success—but some, we fear, "will bust." A hazardous experiment, at least. We would not like to try it.

God speed them on, however, and may they all arrive safely and find plenty of the golden store they seek, and never have need to "bust.'"

The First Plug Hat in Emporia

From the Emporia News, July 25, 1863.

Much excitement was caused in town last Thursday, by the arrival of a "plug hat"—the first seen in the place since its settlement. It soon became noised abroad that the "plug" was here, and that F. G. Hunt, Register of Deeds, was its proud possessor. Curiosity was on tip-toe to get a sight at the strange object, and the crowd, obeying a sort of natural instinct, made a rush for Hallberg's, where the receptacle for bricks was found to be undergoing a process necessary to fit it for use. At this point the excitement became so intense that Felix was compelled to mount a beer barrel and make a speech to the assembled multitude—apologizing for making this innovation upon the time-honored customs of the village and entreating the crowd to disperse, after which he hired a small boy to fire a bunch of fire-crackers in honor of the new hat, and the people retired peaceably to their homes.

Thus ended one of the most exciting scenes ever known in the history of Emporia. No cause is known for this unwarranted act of Mr. H., unless it is that he has found the position of Register a very lucrative one. At any rate, such is the general belief, and accordingly two new candidates for that office have appeared since Thursday.

The Law in Wallace County in 1873

From The Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, January 22, 1873.

When the Kansas Pacific train [now the Union Pacific] from Denver reached Wallace, on Wednesday morning, the train men—who go no farther than that
station eastward from Denver, partook of their breakfast and then retired to bed, as is their customary habit. Two of these men, Charles Stillman and Dick Herring, the former baggageman and the latter brakeman, occupied one room together at the station house. Stillman had a pair of new eighteen dollar boots, of fine workmanship, which he placed near his bed, and put his vest, containing a small amount of money, under his pillow. Herring had in his clothing a horse shoe nail, a comb and a tooth brush, and twenty-five cents in money. The two slept long and soundly, and when they awoke, and Stillman attempted to put on his boots, he discovered that his nice ones had become strangely metamorphosed, having turned into a pair of coarse $6 affairs. The boys then began searching their clothing, and Herring found that his horse shoe nail, comb, brush and money were gone. Then they began investigating the matter. Stillman suspected a fellow who had been working his way along the road as fireman, and thought he had gone off on a freight train; but he was shortly afterward found at the table eating his dinner. Stillman then went to a man in Wallace who sells boots, and asked him if he had any like the ones the thief had left him, and the storekeeper said he had, and, further, pointed out the fellow who had bought them there before. It proved to be the identical chap then at his meal. Pat Greeny, deputy sheriff, was summoned, and when the young man finished eating, the officer told him that he wanted to see him a little while. They took him into a back room and investigated his foot gear, and sure enough, there were Stillman’s boots. Furthermore, he had in his clothing the articles taken from Herring.

Pat Greeny, the deputy sheriff, thereupon constituted himself a court, and the evidence being of the most positive kind he pronounced the prisoner “guilty,” and proceeded at once to pass judgment upon the offender. The court didn’t fumble over law books or statutes any—not he; neither did he assess damage or pass sentence in the good old style. He had his man right before him, and, being a practical sort of fellow, he just “passed the culprit one” with his clenched fist, letting him have the benefit of a demolishing blow right between the eyes. This laid the offender out on the floor, and the court administered another dose of “justice” to him as he lay there, when, considering that he had gone to the extent of the “law,” Wallace law, he let him up, and told him most emphatically to “get up and dust himself” right away, and the fellow “dusted,” and he didn’t wait for a train either.

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**THE INTRODUCTION OF POSTAL CARDS**

*From The Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, June 6, 1873.*

The first lot of postal cards for distribution at the office in this city arrived yesterday, and are now on sale. The demand for them is almost beyond the ability of the department to supply. Probably the novelty of the arrangement has much to do with the demand, but the indications are that the cards will come into very general use.

While everybody has been looking eagerly for the appearance of this cheap method of communication, acknowledging in them very pleasant mediums of correspondence, there are some who have expressed a fear that the foul-minded may make these sources of the interchange of business intelligence and friendly feelings, real nurseries of evil. It is a gratification to be able to state, however,
that such parties as may write indecent matter on these cards are headed off in two ways. One is, that it is made the duty of all postmasters and clerks to throw such indecently worded cards into the waste-basket. The other is, that all such writers, if discovered, are subject to “a fine of not less than $100, nor more than $5,000 for each offense.” After a few splurges of the foul-thoughted and dirty-penned, some criminal will be detected; some example will be made; the evil will disappear; and postal cards will become what they are intended to be, a great public convenience for the transmission of correspondence that is not meant to be altogether private.

**Society Reporting in Early Dodge City**

*From the Dodge City Times, August 4, 1877.*

**The Social Hop.—**Another of the social hops for which the Dodge House has become famous, was on yesterday evening indulged in by quite a number of our citizens who worship Terpsichore. The names of Ike Johnson, John Newton and G. E. Hadder as managers were sufficient to insure a success, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather. Our special reporter who was detailed to write up the costumes of the ladies, and who was in our usual liberal way furnished an excessive amount of pocket money to make himself agreeable with, has in some way got the boot on the wrong leg, and submits the following varied description of the paraphernalia of the Lords of Creation:

Mr. J. F. L. appeared in a gorgeous suit of linsey wolsey, cut bias on the gourd with red cotton handkerchief attachment imported by Messrs. H. & D. from Lawrence.

Mr. H. was modestly attired in a blue harbus wool undershirt, firmed. He is a graceful dancer, but paws too much with his fore legs. His strong point is “the schottisch, my dear.”

Mr. I. G. J. was the envy of all; he wore his elegant blond moustache a la ginsling, and was tastefully arrayed in arctic over shoes with collar buttons and studs.

Mr. J. N.—The appearance of this gentleman caused a flutter among the fair ones; as he trimmed his nails, picked his nose and sailed majestically around the room, the blurr of admiration sounded like the distant approach of the No. 3 freight train. His costume was all that the most fastidious could desire. His train cut “ae regale,” his mouth set “pour en milkpunch,” it was evident that he sails on Love’s golden pinions far into the blue ethereal.

Mr. H. H.—the Duke! the Duke! was whispered as the nose and eye glasses of this gentleman commenced to appear in the doorway. This stranger is some distinguished foreigner traveling incog. It is darkly hinted that he is the Prince Imperial in disguise. He was beautifully ornamented with two pair of eye-glasses; his hair was trimmed by Mr. Sam. Samuels at an enormous expense; his beard cut a la pompadore, he was the loveliest flower of them all.

Mr. G. E. H.—“Oh! the charming creature,” said a beautiful angel on our left, as Mr. H. appeared fantastically arrayed in a sad, sweet smile, which occasionally exploded into a laugh of the most unearthly sweetness. He wore full Georgia costume, lacking the collar and spurs.

Mr. A. H. J.—There was a split in the air, a streak of white whirling through
space, and Sam was performing a highland fling with grape-vine accompaniments, as only Sam can do it. He was costumed as an angel playing on a harp of a thousand strings. Were it not for a slight gang-saw movement of his hind legs, which occasionally shook the foundation and jarred loose the bridge on the base viol, his dancing would indeed have been the essence of a car-load of long horns.

Notice.—It is evident that at this point something happened [to] our reporter. There is a maundering description of P., but it is so mixed with gin slings, straights, and cigars and lemons, as to be unintelligible.

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**News in 1908**

From *The Daily Union*, Junction City, November 18, 1908.

A touring car and a roadster, both Ramblers, passed through the city this afternoon on their way from Kansas City to Russell.