Bypasses of Kansas History

The Perils of Hauling a Cannon

From the "Thomas H. Webb Scrapbooks," v. 7, p. 256 (in Library division of the Kansas State Historical Society), apparently a clipping from the St. Louis (Mo.) Daily Democrat of December 31, 1855.

An amusing anecdote is related by a Kansas correspondent of the Carlisle Democrat, about the company from Kickapoo, a little town near Leavenworth. A notoriously eccentric character named Wash Hays, living in Kickapoo, was hired with his ox team to draw a cannon for the Missouri invaders. (Queer light artillery, wasn't it?) He started and got fairly on the road, appearing as if he was oppressed by some mighty thought—when all at once, he sang out, "Whoo Buck!" stopped his team, and addressed the "captain." "Look you, mister, s'pose you git whipt, how's my oxen to retreat? S'pose they take the gun and shoot the oxen, who's gwine to pay, eh?" and having delivered himself thus, he sat down on the muzzle of the gun and paused for a reply. "Oh, pooh!" says the Captain, "drive on, drive on! I'll be accountable." "Oh, yes, you will be accountable, if you get whipt; but who's gwine to pay?" At this juncture, a friend of the driver rode up, and said, "Drive on, Wash! go long, old fellow!" Wash turned around with "Look here, mister, none of yer friendly digs. I ain't such a fool as you think I am," and he very complacently unyoked his team, left the cannon in the road and retreated to Kickapoo, no doubt rejoicing over his sober second thought.

When Abraham Lincoln Spoke in Leavenworth in 1859

As described in the Leavenworth Weekly Herald, a Democratic newspaper, December 10, 1859.

Old Abe Lincoln.—According to announcement this venerable champion of Republicanism arrived Saturday afternoon about 5 o'clock, and was immediately surrounded by a respectable crowd of the "faithful," who bore him to the Mansion House, where the ceremonies of introduction and reception were gone through with. Col. J. C. Vaughan introduced him to the crowd, when he responded in a short speech—the pith of which was "he could not speak long, as he was to address them at night." He was probably afraid he would explore his 'one idea' and leave no capital for the evening.

At Night.

Stockton's Hall was filled to overflowing at an early hour—many Democrats being present. At half past seven, the hero of the occasion arrived, and after being greeted with a cheer, was introduced by Chief Engineer Delahay.—After elevating his nose, as if to scent the strength of the crowd in which he found himself, and taking a view all round, "Old Abe" took out his notes, and squared himself like a man who had work before him and felt equal to the occasion.

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The personal appearance of the individual is altogether different from any idea which a stranger would form. So far from appearing 'old' he bears the appearance of a man well in his prime, but without dignity or grace; he has the lank, loose stamp of a six foot Egyptian "sucker," who has had his supply of whiskey cut off in his growing days, and therefore suddenly "ran to seed." His style of delivery, though concise, and striking plainly on the hearer, bears the impress of labored efforts to collect a smooth and easy flow; while his ideas are put forth in language totally at variance with all rules of grammar.

His Speech.

We cannot review it in all its particulars; but we have seldom heard one where more spurious argument, cunning sophistry, and flimsy evasions, were mingled together, and made to work out all right—no doubt to the satisfaction of his audience. He seized the slavery hobby in the beginning and rode it out to the end; starting out with presumed facts, which the man could not but know were points in dispute in the war of parties, and by the surreptitious adoption of which he cunningly evaded any charge of inconsistency in his erratic and blundering harangue. His remarks throughout were but the reproduction of the same old Illinois stump speeches with which he bored his audiences in that campaign which made him famous, and gave him the notoriety which he is not entitled to, owing to the position of his opponent. He certainly has the same old arguments stereotyped, which, if reports be true, he treats his audiences to on each and every occasion. The most noticeable point was his appeal to the Republican in Kansas, "to let the slaves in Missouri alone; no doubt he thought they needed some advice on this subject. His last remarks were confined to a vindication of the policy and doctrines of modern republicanism, and here is where the weakness of the man was apparent. His reply to the charge of sectionalism was flimsy, and weak in the extreme, accompanied with the hesitating delivery and excruciating gesture of a man who finds himself upon ground with which he is unacquainted, and accordingly "old Abe" beat a hasty retreat, and wound up with the apology that "as he had to speak again on Monday, he could not say more"; afraid of taxing that one idea too heavily.

Quantum sufficit. "Honest Abraham" will not make one more Republican voter in this Territory. Bring on another importation of "blooded stock," gentlemen.

Abraham Lincoln Again.—This last importation of the Blacks again addressed a shivering squad of his admirers at Stockton's Hall yesterday.

An effort was made beforehand to persuade him to touch more directly upon our political history, and serve up "bleeding Kansas" in its peculiar and forcible style, but he preferred to stick to his "nigger," and twang upon the old and worn out arguments, which by some inexplicable operation have been stereotyped upon his brain.

Again he seized upon the subject of slavery at the outset, and after borrowing largely from his harangue on Saturday evening, went into a long strain of vilification, invective and abuse against all who opposed him and his party. His audience cheered and clapped him on, in his miserable attempt to make capital out of the occasion, by prostituting his ability to pander to an animosity which delights itself in slurring personalities, and filthy expectorations against the opposition.
It is a wonder to many how such a man as Abram Lincoln, can so prostitute himself. Is there no other issue in this wide country, but that of “nigger”? Has he forever and firmly wielded his talents and ability in the fanatical crusade of Abolitionism, and sees nothing upon the political horizon but the African? Where, we ask, are those issues, in which he once battled with a worthiness which won him renown? Are they dead? No, but he has forgotten their importance, and has allowed himself to be irrevocably drawn into the whirlpool of fanaticism.

“He had a word to say of Old John Brown.” (Cheers for Brown.) “So far as Brown’s sentiments for the negro were concerned, he sympathized with him; (cheers) but he condemned his lawlessness and bloodshed; (a faint cheer,) and he had yet to hear the first Republican say, he supported him in it.” (Old Abe paused in expectation of applause, but it didn’t come; his hearers were not with him there.)

In reply to this balderdash, we would ask him if Conway, Thatcher, Lane & Co., of this Territory, are not Republicans? and if they did not support Brown, why did they hold sympathy meetings at Lawrence, on the day of his execution? Why did the prominent Republican leaders in the States do the same thing, and raise money for him and his? “Honest Abram” don’t read the papers, or if he does, he’s blinded by the “nigger.”

His whole speech was but just such trumpery as the above, and every position had about as much foundation. We don’t wonder that Douglas takes the man “fore and aft,” for he is “open” enough, and shows a good target between “wind and water.” To sum up the whole, we characterize his efforts as weak in the extreme, and himself an imbecile old fogy of one idea; and that is—nigger, nigger, nigger.

As seen by the Republican Leavenworth Daily Times, December 5, 1859.

Enthusiastic Reception of Hon. Abe Lincoln.—Saturday was a wintry day. The sky was clear and a northern wind whistled over plain and street alike. But warm hearts and willing hands laughed the wintry elements to scorn. The coming of an honored man—crowned with Nature’s patent of nobility—touched the hearts of our people, and they paid him such loving tribute as to make the day seem one of sunshine, joy and peace. No conqueror, with trophies and hostages, circled by martial pomp, was he who came amongst us, and yet no laureled chief—with all the honors of bloody victories—was ever welcomed with more cordial cheer than honest Abe Lincoln by the Republicans of Leavenworth.

It having been previously announced that Hon. Abram Lincoln, of Illinois, was to visit Leavenworth at an early hour, preparations were made to give him a reception befitting the man, and the cause of which he is such an able and fearless champion. It was understood he would arrive on the outskirts of the city at 12 o’clock, and that the reception would take place at the Mansion House at 1 o’clock.

A large number of citizens in carriages, on horseback and on foot, accompanied by the band, all under the direction of Capt. Dickson, the Marshal of the day, proceeded about a mile on the Government Lane, and there met our city’s honored guest, greeting him with a rousing round of cheers—such as Republicans only can give.
The procession then turned and proceeded to the city in the following order:
1. Band.
2. Citizens on foot.
3. Carriages.
4. Horsemen.

Arriving at Turner’s Hall the procession halted, and the large crowd then gave our guest three times three, while “the Kickapoo” [a cannon] was uttering a loud-mouthed welcome in thunder tones.

The procession then moved on through Delaware street, up Main, and Shawnee to the Mansion House. There the crowd was so dense that it was difficult for the carriages to get through. Mr. Lincoln was received on the balcony of the Mansion by Col. J. C. Vaughan, who welcomed him in behalf of the Republicans of Leavenworth in a brief but appropriate speech.

Mr. Lincoln was called for with loud cheers and made a few remarks, alluding briefly to political matters, giving a short sketch of the progress of the Republican party; of the trials of the Free State men in making this beautiful country the home of the free. He said their battles would never have to be fought over again. (Loud cries of “that’s so,” and “hail no!”) and after returning his sincere thanks for so flattering a reception, and remarking that he should address them in the evening, he retired amid the cheers of the crowd.

Long before the time appointed for the speech, the Hall was filled to overflowing. Many ladies were present. Mr. Lincoln was introduced to the audience by Col. Delahay, amid enthusiastic cheering. He spoke for about an hour and a half, and every few minutes was interrupted by the applause given. We have not room to give even an outline of his speech. He showed up popular sovereignty in its true light; showed conclusively that the Democratic party of to-day was not the Democratic party of a few years ago; that the Democratic party was not a conservative party; that the Republican party was the only party in the Union that attempted to carry out the principles of Washington, Madison, Jefferson, and the founders of this Government.

After he concluded, many were eager to take by the hand one of whom they had heard so much.

Of the many receptions that Mr. Lincoln has received, we venture to assert that he never had a warmer one than that extended to him by the Republicans of Leavenworth on Saturday last.

Mr. Lincoln’s Speech.—We desire to dwell briefly upon the speech made by Mr. Lincoln, and, as our brother methods so often say, to make an exhortation after it.

The first characteristic of Mr. Lincoln is truthfulness.
He has no clap trap in or about him. He is simple and downright. No matter how he deals with parties, or the measures of parties, he deals with them plainly and justly. No speaker, in our belief, is freer from prejudice, or those passions which cloud intellect or narrow it. He sees what he believes to be truth and he presents it as he sees it. Men of heart and of truth, consequently, consider what he urges, whether they agree with him or not.

The second characteristic of Mr. Lincoln is common sense.
Oratory is an art. The mellow voice falls sweetly on the ear, and the rounded period dies away as a musical note. Yet there may be—often there is—no grit, no marrow, no food for reflection or thought—on the part of those
thus gifted. It is all manner—passionate, persuasive, vehement—but it is the passion, the persuasion, the vehemence, generally of shallow feeling or animal impulse, and nothing more. Mr. Lincoln, on the contrary, taking a broad common sense view of principles and measures, presents and argues them with a broad common sense strength. He is clear and solid. His clearness and solidity, too, are felt, must be felt by bitterest opponents, save those among them who live upon the stimulus of party, or who seek to lead party.

Mr. Lincoln, consequently, is true to principle without being ultra.

He plays no part, and he would have no political organization play a part, in State or national affairs. There is the Constitution of the Union. He stands by it and will do so while he lives. There is its great principle of freedom. He will compromise that for no triumph—yield it up for no defeat. Either the slaveholder has the right under the Constitution to bring his human chattels into the Territories of the Union, or he has not. If he has, we must submit. If he has not, we must restrain him. Hence he repudiates Squatter Sovereignty, and all and every clap trap which conceals or seeks to conceal the true issue, and he does it, too, with a force of logic which cannot be successfully resisted—with a power of reasoning which no mind or party can overthrow.

But better yet, Mr. Lincoln is full of hope and of faith.

The impatent sink down after defeat, and the impulsive grow weary after victory. He avoids both errors, and the people must avoid them, if they would defend their own rights or secure their own progress. It is the iron will—it is the steady and oft repeated blow—it is the energy which never flags after victory or pales before defeat—which conquers. All history establishes this truth. All human experience proves it. Looking, then, to the progress of the cause of constitutional liberty, in the near past, and to the certainty of its success in the near future, Mr. Lincoln earnestly advocates the use of those means essential to win it. What is worth having, is worth working for. Let us be hopeful and active—let us have faith, and never tire whether defeat or victory crown our efforts.

Mr. Lincoln's visit will do good to the Territory. No man can speak as he speaks or work as he works, without sowing seed which will bear rich fruits.

From the Daily Times of December 6, 1859.

SECOND SPEECH OF HON. ABE LINCOLN.—Pursuant to notice, Hon. Abe Lincoln addressed the citizens of Leavenworth, yesterday, at Stockton's Hall. The day was fearfully unpleasant, but the Hall was filled to overflowing—even ladies being present.

Mr. Lincoln opened by reviewing the Territorial policy of our Government at the start, proving conclusively that it was in favor of liberty and was ever so exerted except in some of the Southern States where slavery existed by municipal law or was made a distinctive feature of the articles of cession. But where these causes were not there was freedom proclaimed.

The Fathers did not seek to interfere with slavery where it existed but to prevent its extension. This was the policy of the Republican party of to-day.

The divisions of sentiment in the Democratic party in regard to slavery were flimsy and immaterial. The most advanced element could boast of no higher sentiment than an indifference to the peculiar institution. No part of the Democracy ever declared slavery wrong in itself; and they reached a sublime height when they said they didn't care whether it was voted up or voted down.
This indifference was all the slave-power could ask. It was a virtual recognition of the right of slavery to universal extension.

If a house was on fire there could be but two parties. One in favor of putting out the fire. Another in favor of the house burning. But these popular sovereignty fellows would stand aloof and argue against interfering. — The house must take care of itself subject only to the constitution and the conditions of fire and wood.

The speaker alluded, with much force and wit, to the great line (which we are assured by Senator Douglas was ordained of God) on one side of which slave-labor alone could be employed — on the other free-labor. Thought the Missouri River might be the line referred to. If the line was ordained of God it ought to be plain and palpable, but he had never been able to put his finger upon it.

The attempt to identify the Republican party with the John Brown business was an electioneering dodge. Was glad to know that the Democracy underrated the good sense of the people as the great Republican victories in New York, New Jersey, Minnesota and Iowa — where the argument was brought out with extraordinary emphasis — clearly demonstrated. In Brown's hatred of slavery the speaker sympathized with him. But Brown's insurrectionary attempt he emphatically denounced. He believed the old man insane, and had yet to find the first Republican who endorsed the proposed insurrection. If there was one he would advise him to step out of the ranks and correct his politics. But slavery was responsible for their uprisings. They were fostered by the institution. In 1850-51, the slaves themselves arose and killed fifty-eight whites in a single night. These servile upheavings must be continually occurring where slavery exists.

The democracy was constituted of two great elements. First. The original and unadulterated Democrats. Second. The Old line and eminently conservative Whigs. This incongruous party was ever charging the Republicans with favoring negro suffrage, sustaining this charge by instancing the two Republican States of Massachusetts and New Hampshire where negroes are allowed to vote. But it so happens that the law conferring this franchise was enacted by the Old Whigs in Massachusetts and the Democrats in New Hampshire. Kansas was the only State where the Republicans had the framing of the organic law and here they confined the elective franchise to the white man alone.

Mr. Lincoln said that, in political arguments, the Democracy turned up their noses at “amalgamation.” But while there were only one hundred and seventy-nine mulattoes in the Republican State of New Hampshire, there were seventy-nine thousand in the good old Democratic State of Virginia — and the only notable instance of amalgamation that occurred to him was in the case of a Democratic Vice President.

Mr. Lincoln wanted the races kept distinct. Because he did not wish to hold a negro woman as a slave it did not follow that he wanted her for a wife. Such flimsy diatribes were perpetrated by the Democracy to divert the public mind from the real issue — the extension or the non-extension of slavery — its localization or nationalization.

Mr. Lincoln closed by a clear and forcible definition of the aims and the principles of the Republican party. He showed how they harmonized with the teachings of those by whom the Government was founded and how their
predominance was essential to the proper development of our country—its progress and its glory—to the salvation of the Union and the perpetuity of Free Institutions.

We have given but the merest outline of Mr. Lincoln’s speech, which we count among his ablest and happiest efforts. He sought to make no display, but gave home-bred truths in a home-bred style that touched the hearts of his hearers and went home to all. The noble sentiments he uttered and the force of his logic carried conviction with them and aroused an earnest enthusiasm. At the close of his speech he was greeted with a cordial round of cheers which made the old hall ring.

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**REMEMBER THE DAY—**

From the Olathe *Mirror*, July 11, 1863.

Kansas city is a large town, but it can’t support a theater. Takes Leavenworth to do that.

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**BUFFALO HUNTING ALONG THE SANTA FE RAILROAD IN 1874**

From the Newton *Kansan*, October 29, 1874.

Immense herds of buffalo are now coming into the Arkansas valley along the line of the A. T. & S. F. Road; they are moving north along the line of the railroad from Kinsey to some miles west of Dodge City. This will prove of immense benefit to the settlers along the line as it will give them profitable employment as well as furnish them with excellent meat at a cheap rate. This will also afford another opportunity for amateur sportsmen to have an exciting hunt. The trains on the Santa Fe Road were stopped four times in one day to let the buffalo pass. One passenger shot three from a car window.

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**THE DEATH OF A COLBY LITERARY SOCIETY**

From the *Thomas County Cat*, Colby, February 18, 1886.

**THE TRIAL CLUB GONE.**—After much trial and great tribulation the “Colby Trial Club,” alias, the Colby literary society, has followed the way of all good things, and gone up. It departed this life on Friday eve. Feb. 12th, amidst the deep and cheerful silence of many friends and neighbors. The solemn stillness of its closing hours was only broken by the dulcet tones of acting ex-President Wilcockson as he occasionally arose to pitch into something said by acting ex-Secretary Hall. Only these two unregenerates out of that vast congregation of mourners, were not awed and shut up by the agony of the dying struggle. As usual in cases of demise in this region, it died for want of breath. It was a sad and solemn time. All was quiet. Anon the gentle soothing voice of Bro. Bullers, rising to object, would steal in upon the deathly stillness and then died away like a hot biscuit in the hands of the hired man. Only once it rallied a little, when Bro. Sager arose and set his teeth into the language of sixty millions of people and scattered the ripped out, gory and bleeding fragments over the surrounding gloom.
Though dead, there is still hope, for the spring time is coming, by jerks, Gentle Annie, and bye and bye, when the roses bloom again, the now tired and anxious friends of this dead "gone before," may be able to pull the little-old-dried-up society out of the hole it has been put into, and breath into it a new lease of existence. The writer of this, was made a special "committee of one," to "rustle" for the society and report. We have rustled, and this is our report.

The thing is dead. Over the cause of its premature departure, we draw the kind mantle of silence, and speak in hushed and reverent tones of postponement, no coal, no janitor, a non est programme and repudiation. The Colby Trial Club is like bread cast upon the waters, but we have got a string to it, and may be able to pull it in again sometime. The last society editor is hereby notified that he can come in out of the woods, as the danger is over. Dear friends, farewell. In the name of the Colby Trial Club good bye.

Be virtuous and you will be happy, but you will be lonesome sometimes. Think of this lesson of tribulation, and govern yourselves accordingly. We will not murmur about this dispensation of providence, but in the spring try and "get there" again. We may not get there, but we will try. It will not do to gamble on. In the spring will be time enough to gambol. In the spring, when the railroads, the street cars and the water works come, we will buy us a new plug hat. If the weather is severe, we will have two of them. Kind friends, farewell. We are done. We have spoken. We have no more to say. Sic semper domino. Plumbago erysipelas in hecque eureka sciatica usufruct limburger go braugh. Pull down the window shades. So note it be.

By Order of Committee.