Some Notes on Kansas Cowtown Police Officers and Gun Fighters—Continued

NYLE H. MILLER and JOSEPH W. SNELL

SHORT, LUKE L.

(1854-1893)

The story of Luke Short in Kansas is also the story of the “Dodge City war.” Though by his own statement Luke had been in Dodge City some two years before the difficulties began his name appeared in the city papers only intermittently, the earliest known mention being nine months before the trouble broke out. That first news item appeared in the Dodge City Times, August 3, 1882, and has been reprinted in the section on Bat Masterson.

Luke next made the newspapers when he purchased Chalkley Beeson’s interest in the Long Branch saloon. The Ford County Globe, February 6, 1883, carried the first of a series of notifications:

DISSOLUTION NOTICE.

This is to certify that C. M. Beeson, and W. H. Harris doing a saloon business in Dodge City, Kansas, under the firm name of Beeson & Harris, has this day been dissolved by mutual consent. Mr. Beeson selling his interest in the business to Luke Short who will continue the business with Mr. Harris and who assume all the liabilities of the late firm and collect all outstanding accounts due the same.

February 6th 1883.

C. M. BEESON

W. H. HARRIS.

Shortly after the transfer, Luke’s new associate was nominated to run for mayor of Dodge City. At a voters’ mass meeting in the court house on March 17, Harris was suggested for mayor and Pat Sughrue, T. J. Tate, Nelson Cary, Henry Koch, and Charles Dickerson for councilmen. Among Harris’ supporters were former mayor James H. Kelley, Clerk of the District Court W. F. Petillon, and the Ford County Globe.

A few days later, on March 19, a second and similar meeting named an opposition ticket backed by Nicholas B. Klaine’s Dodge City Times, Mike Sutton, Former Rep. R. M. Wright, and Mayor A. B. Webster. This ticket included L. E. Deger for mayor and H. B. Bell, H. T. Drake, H. M. Beverley, George S. Emerson, and Henry Sturm for councilmen.

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Note: It is hoped eventually that these articles on Kansas cowtown officers and gun fighters, with additional information and an index, can be reprinted and offered for sale under one cover.

The election was accompanied by much vilification, especially on the part of the *Times* which assured Dodgeites that should Harris be elected the town would become a snug harbor for all the robbers, drunks, con men, and general n’er do wells in the area. The *Globe* seemed content to let the election take whatever course it chose and instead spent most of its time condemning Editor Klaine for his vitriolic attacks. Perhaps Klaine’s tactics paid off. When the votes were counted on April 3 Larry Deger had defeated Harris 214 to 143.4

Three weeks later the new city administration passed two ordinances which were to have a profound effect on both Luke Short and Dodge City. The first dealt with prostitution:

(Published April 26, 1883.)

ORDINANCE NO. 70.

**AN ORDINANCE FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF VICE AND IMMORALITY WITHIN THE CITY OF DODGE CITY.**

*Be it ordained by the Mayor and Council of the City of Dodge City:*

Section 1. Any person or persons who shall keep or maintain in this city a brothel, bawdy house, house of ill fame, or of assignation, shall upon conviction thereof be fined in a sum not less than Ten nor more than One Hundred Dollars.

Sec. 2. Any person whether male or female, being an inmate or resident of any brothel, bawdy house, or house of ill-fame in this city, shall upon conviction thereof be fined in a sum not less than Five nor more than Fifty Dollars.

Sec. 3. Any person or persons as defined in sections one and two of this ordinance found upon the streets or in any public place within the corporate limits of the city of Dodge City, for the purpose of plying or advertising her or their calling or business as defined in section one and two of this ordinance, shall upon conviction thereof be fined in a sum not less than Five nor more than Fifty Dollars.

Sec. 4. The general reputation of any such houses mentioned in the foregoing sections, or of its inmates and residents, shall be prima facie evidence of the character of such houses or persons.

Sec. 5. All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect [and] be in force from and after its publication in the Dodge City Times.

Passed by the council April 23d, 1883,

Attest,

Approved April 23d, 1883.

L. C. HARTMAN, City Clerk.

L. E. DEGER, Mayor.

The other ordinance dealt with vagrancy:

(Published April 26, 1883.)

ORDINANCE NO. 71.

**AN ORDINANCE TO DEFINE AND PUNISH VAGRANCY.**

*Be it ordained by the Mayor and Councilmen of the City of Dodge City.*

Section 1. Any person who may be found loitering, loafing or wandering within the corporate limits of the city of Dodge City without any lawful vocation or visible means of support, shall be deemed guilty of vagrancy under this
ordinance, and may be fined in any sum not less than Ten nor more than One Hundred Dollars.

Sec. 2. Any person who may be found loitering around houses of ill-fame, gambling houses or places where liquors are sold or drank, without any visible means of support or lawful vocation, or shall be the keeper or inmate of any house of ill-fame or gambling house, or engaged in any unlawful calling whatever, shall be deemed guilty of vagrancy under this ordinance, and may be fined in any sum not less than Ten nor more than One Hundred Dollars.

Sec. 3. All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 4. This ordinance shall be in force and effect on and after its publication once in the Dodge City Times.

Passed the council April 23d, 1883.

Attest: L. C. HARTMAN, City Clerk.

Approved April 23d, 1883.

L. E. DECKER, Mayor.5

On Saturday night, April 28, two days after the ordinances became effective, arrests were made under their provisions. These arrests were of women ostensibly employed as singers in the Long Branch. No one seemed to question that their real occupation was prostitution; what caused the subsequent trouble was the apparent partiality in which the laws were enforced. The Ford County Globe, May 1, 1883, reported:

The annual revolutionary spirit was again exhibited on our streets yesterday. Wars and rumors of war, was the out-cry all along the line. The smouldering volcano broke forth on this day and wiped out the wicked and the ungodly, they having to flee from the wrath that was to come. It was a hot day for the vagrant, the gamblers and the inmate of the house of ill fame, but they must yield to the majesty of the law or take the consequences. All day, armed groups of officials, both city and county, might have been seen by the least inquisitive, and the very determined look of their countenances indicated to the most confiding that they meant business, and business it was. In order to show why this determined stand was being made by the authorities, we must go back to the passage of sundry ordinances by the new city council, to which some exception was taken by those whom it seemed to press down upon most heavily the same being “an Ordinance for the Suppression of vice and Immorality within the city of Dodge” and another “to Define and Punish Vagrancy” passed April 23d 1883. It was not the ordinance itself that was objectionable to those it was calculated to reach but the partial manner of its enforcement as they think, which caused the trouble.

Saturday night the first arrest was made under the new ordinances, the same being that of three women in the long branch saloon. This was peaceably accomplished and without any resistance so far as we are enabled to learn. Yet, later in the night, Luke Short and L. C. Hartman met upon the street and paid their respective compliments to each other by exchanging shots, fortunately no one was hurt. Hartman, it seems, was a special who helped to make the arrests. Short was one of the partners of the saloon from which these women were taken. It was claimed by the proprietors that partiality was shown in arresting women in their house when two were allowed to remain in A. B.
Webster's saloon, one at Heinz & Kramer's, two at Nelson Cary's, and a whole herd of them at Bond & Nixon's dance hall, and if this is true, it would be most natural for them to think so and give expression to their feelings. No doubt they spoke unpleasant words toward our city government, that may have caused them to rise in their majesty and cause the arrest on yesterday of Luke Short, Thomas Lane, saloon keepers, and half dozen others known by the professional name of gamblers. All were hustled into the city bastile without any resistance on their part, and were allowed to languish there until the arrival of their choice of trains, both east and west come along, when they were invited to take passage without any further ceremony or explanation. The women who had been jugged Saturday, were all brought up before his honor Bobby Burns and he imposed a heavy fine on each one of them for their disregard of the law.

Thus the smouldering volcano has burst forth in all its fury, and has stricken terror to the hearts of the inhabitants that so closely surround it and causes one to reflect as to whether or not it will be followed up by a St. John cyclone and sweep away in its train the dispenser of ardent spirits, and thus give us another evidence of the moral and temperance element of our citizens and show that the righteous must and shall prevail in the city of Dodge.

On May 3, 1888, the Times told its version of the difficulty:

**ENFORCING THE LAW.**

The city has been under an intense commotion for several days, growing out of the ordinance in relation to the "Suppression of gambling and prostitution." On Saturday night an additional police force was put on, and the work of enforcement was commenced. Three prostitutes pretendedly employed in Harris & Short's saloon, as "singers," but employed evidently to evade the ordinance in relation to prostitution, were arrested and put in the lock-up. This action engendered bitter feeling, and City Clerk Hartman who was on the police force, was afterward met by Luke Short, and his assassination attempted. Short fired two shots at Hartman, the latter replying with one shot, none of the shots taking effect. Short was arrested and placed under $2,000 bonds. Mayor Deger, learning that a conspiracy had been formed, which had for its object the armed resistance to the enforcement of the law and consequent murder of some of our best citizens, organized a police force on Sunday, and on Monday the plan was carried out. Luke Short was the first one arrested and placed in the calaboose. Subsequently, five others were arrested, as follows: W. H. Bennett, a former New Mexico desperado, Dr. Niel, a Mobeetie gambler, Johnson Gallagher, a gambler, and L. A. Hyatt, a gambler. These men, Hyatt, being retained a couple of days, were given the "choice of trains," and on Tuesday, under orders of Mayor Deger, were sent out of town. Short, Lane and Gallagher went east, Bennett went west, and Niel went south.

As a precaution, about one hundred and fifty citizens were on watch Monday night, and a large police force is still held on duty night and day. Mayor Deger, the police force and the citizens of Dodge City are determined that the lawless element shall not thrive in this city. No half-way measures will be used in the suppression of either lawlessness or riot. Mayor Deger is a resolute, fearless and obstinate officer. All good and law abiding citizens are standing by him in this trying emergency.

It must be understood that no foolishness will be allowed in the conduct
of city affairs. Let the people employ their pursuits peacefully. And evildoers must stand the consequences of their lawless conduct.  

Of the three gamblers who boarded east bound trains, Tom Lane, at least, stopped in Topeka and sought legal counsel. The Topeka Daily Commonwealth, May 4, 1883, reported his failure:

WILL SUE DODGE CITY.

MR. LANE, ONE OF THE MEN RUN OUT OF TOWN,
ON THE WAR PATH AGAINST THE CITY.

Mr. Lane, one of the men who were ordered out of Dodge City recently, was in town yesterday and applied to one of the prominent attorneys of the city to commence an action for damages against Dodge City. He claims that he has lived in Dodge since 1876, never had a lawsuit or any trouble except once when he paid a fine for fighting, and that there is no reason why he should not be allowed to remain there and conduct his business, saloon keeping, as before. He admits that two of the men were bad characters, and says that the others were forced to leave on account of the unfriendly feeling of the mayor toward them, resulting from the recent election. The attorney did not take the case, and Mr. Lane took the train for Dodge City in the afternoon. He says that he intends to stay there, if he can; that he will not fight a mob, but that if he has to go, he will sue the city.

On May 3, 1883, the Commonwealth had said:

A gentleman who knows the crowd that was driven out of Dodge City, as announced in our special dispatches yesterday, says that some of the men are now in this city. The number includes all classes of roughs, and it is possible that some of them were implicated in the burglaries here. It is also a fact that there are several Kansas City thieves in town.

Luke had established himself in Kansas City and was kept informed of the local situation by letters from friends in Dodge. Otto Mueller, a saloon owner, wrote on letterhead stationery bearing the name of W. H. Harris’ Bank of Dodge City:

DODGE CITY, KAN., May 5th 1883

FRIEND LUKE:

I intended to write you before this, but did not know your address until informed by Myton this morning that a letter directed in care of “Marble Hall” [522 Main street, Kansas City, Mo.] would reach you.

The situation here in town is unchanged except so far as relates to public opinion, which is gradually but steadily changing in your favor. All your friends are at work with a determination which is bound to win in the end. Of course every movement must be made with the greatest care and caution, and as many are too timid to express themselves, it will naturally require time, before the organization that style themselves “the Vigilantes” will be convinced that they must give way to public opinion. And a beautiful lot of reformers they are, these vigilants, under the leadership of their captain, Tom Nixon of Dance Hall fame. But no matter how slow, you may rest assured that this time will surely come. As the heat of passion subsides and men begin to look over the past more calmly, they can not help to see that a great wrong has
been committed and many are frank enough to admit that fact. Men of good standing in this community, against whom nothing can be said, but who take little interest in the management of public affairs, feel that they are not safe in the enjoyment of their life and property in a place where such outrages may be committed without the interference of the authorities, and feel more alarmed when they begin to realize the fact that the outrages here were committed not only without interference, but under the guidance of the municipal government, whose duty it should be to protect even those charged with the commission of a crime against violence.

Harris feels very downhearted, but is untiringly at work to set matters right. You can form no idea how your enemies watch him at every step and move. No train passes this station without being searched and watched by the Vigilantes for Contraband. Harris and his friends feel confident that Bob Wright on his return to town will take the lead against the suppression of further outrages, and I think also that he is the best man for it. Our best men in town will back him, and I think that before long the "Reformers" will be compelled to surrender and lay down their arms. Do not feel discouraged, but feel confident that Harris will spare no effort to have everything fixed right and that your friends will assist him all they can. I will write again and keep you advised as times goes on.

Yours very sincerely

OTTO MULLER, 7

Luke wrote to Dodge City the same day. George Hoover, a wholesale liquor dealer and representative in the Kansas legislature, answered:

Dodge City, Kansas, May 7th 1883

MR. LUKE SHORT, Kans. City.

FRIEND LUKE.

In reply to your letter of 5th inst. I am sorry to say that the excitement is more intense now than ever and growing more so every day as the powers that be now in Dodge, are determined that what they have already done and what they propose to do, should any one else displease them shall stick. The Governor and all his power to the contrary notwithstanding and it would not be safe for Harris to appear in your petition in any shape for he was very nearly one of the selected ones. Nor for any of your friends to do so, for it would not only compel Harris to leave but also any who would appear in the matter should a petition be signed by the few who would have courage enough so to do, it would avail nothing for it would be immediately followed by one to the contrary—signed by numerous people which would make the one in your favor appear as nothing—for though you have many friends here and deserve them yet they would fear to sign a petition in your favor knowing that it would jeopardize themselves.

You know how a Governor acts. With the church element, the Railroad officials and part of the so called immoral element against you he would not interfere in the rulings of a city or mob ruling. My advice to you would be to either sell your interest in Dodge or else employ some one to look after your interests here and make up your mind to abandon Dodge at least during the
present administration. Much as I would like to see you at your own place I think this the only safe plan for both yourself and friends.

Very truly Yours

G. M. Hoover. ⑧

Short apparently sought legal assistance from Larned attorney Net Adams who wrote:

DEAR LUKE

Yours just received on my return from Stafford. Pete Harding was here yesterday he says the Shot Gun brigade are still boarding the trains. They won't let any body stop. Lon Hyat stoped here two days & went back but he could not get off. Lane is at Cimarron & Corn H[ole]. Johnny [Johnson Gallaghe] is also out. They are still running things with a high hand. I shall go up there in few days. Pete Harding says public opinion is growing against them fast there. I don't know exactly what I will do yet with them. Think strong of suing the whole out fit to gether with the W. U. Telegraph Co. & sue here, but don't know yet. I will be ready at any time to go and do anything I can for you. But if I were you I believe I would wait for a week or 10 days yet & let matters die down a little. They swear vengeance against you as I understand it, and are watching everything to work Harris so I am informed. Let me hear from you again soon & will write more.

Respect

NELSON ADAMS

Hyat made a rucktet over Harris when he was fined, but I think he is making terms. Don't let the Devils know that I furnish information

NET ⑨

The Dodge City Times, May 10, 1883, expanded on the attempted return of Hyatt:

Two of the men who were ordered out of town last week returned here on Thursday night. Hyatt stepped off the train on the south side of the track, but was confronted with about a dozen pistols presented to him. He gladly returned to the car and too gladly pursued his journey west. Lane did not get off the train here but at Cimarron, twenty miles west, where he continues to hold forth. Lane would like to make terms and return to Dodge and behave like a good citizen, but we believe there is no disposition to accept his proferred repentance and promises.

By this time things had progressed sufficiently for newspapers over the state and in the East to print recaps of the events. Depending on the source of information the papers were decidedly either pro Deger or pro Short. As an example, it is not difficult to determine the side on which the Kansas City (Mo.) Evening Star, May 9, 1883, had cast itself:

RUFFIANS REGIME.

A STARTLING STATE OF THINGS AT DODGE CITY.

The fact, that for the past ten days a very remarkable and startling state of affairs has existed at as well known a point as Dodge City, Kas., and that
all mention of them has been kept out of the press, the matter, in short, entirely suppressed from the outside world, is an excellent illustration of what western lawlessness can do and the state of society in some of the border towns. That trouble of a serious nature has existed there can be surmised from the fact that prominent Kansas City attorneys left to-day for Topeka to petition Gov. C lick in the interest of Dodge City property owners that the town be placed under martial law.

The difficulty, which began only a little over a week ago, is but the culmination of a long standing feud between two elements of the place. Dodge City has long enjoyed the reputation of being a hard place. It was one of the few points in Kansas where saloons run openly and gambling is legitimized. The headquarters of the cowboys and cattle men of that vicinity, the majority of the institutions are designed for their especial selection.

Just before the last city election the mayor was a man named Webster, the proprietor of a dive, half saloon and the other half gambling house and variety hall. He was a representative of the tougher element of the sporting fraternity. The head of the other faction was W. H. Harris, of Harris & Short, proprietors of the Long Branch saloon. Harris represented the quieter and more reputable element and there was bitter feeling between the two.

At the last election Harris was beaten in the race for mayor by one Deger, Webster's candidate, and since then it has been conceded that it was only a matter of time when all of Harris's sympathizers would be driven out of the town. Thus Dodge has been hovering on the brink of trouble for a long time. About ten days ago it came. Mr. Short, who is Harris's partner, and a police officer, had a shooting affray. Neither were hurt, and the evidence showed that Short was fired on first. He was nevertheless placed under bonds, and next day thrown into jail. The marshal of Dodge, who made the arrest, is Jack Bridges, a well known character, who formerly lived here and traveled principally upon having “killed his man.”

A short time later five gamblers were arrested, and also jailed. That night a vigilance committee was formed with Tom Nixon, the proprietor of one of the hardest dance halls that ever existed in the west, at the head. This crowd repaired to the jail and notified the prisoners that they must leave town next morning and that they would be given their choice of trains going east or west. Meantime the vigilantes took possession of the town.

The correspondent of the Chicago Times [Dodge City Attorney Harry E. Gryden] and other leading papers were notified that they must not be permitted to send any telegrams in reference to the situation and a body of armed men watched the arrival of each train to see that there was no interference. A lawyer from Larned, sent for by one of the prisoners was met by a vigilante who leveled a shot-gun at his head and told him not to stop. He passed on. Next morning the five gamblers were put on a westward bound train and Short left for Kansas City where he is at present.

The trouble has by no means yet abated. The place is practically in the hands of the “vigilantes” and the situation is more serious from the fact that the mayor is acting with them and it was he who notified the prisoners that they must go. The trains are still watched and armed men guard the town, while a list of others who will be ordered out has been prepared. Every source of reliable information indicates that Dodge is now in the hands of desperadoes, and that incident to the ejection of Short and the others, the lives
and property of citizens are by no means safe. For this reason martial law is being asked. That there will be trouble of a very serious character there, is anticipated.10

From Kansas City Luke went to Topeka to see the governor. The Topeka Daily Capital, May 11, 1883, reported:

A MAN FROM DODGE.

KANSAS CITY, May 10.—Luke Short, the most prominent of the six men who were expelled from Dodge, came to this city and left to-night for Topeka, where he intends to lay his case before Gov. Glick. He claims that the authorities had no right to expel him from town, but if he has violated any laws he should be permitted to remain there and answer the charges.

A PROMINENT CATTLE MAN ALSO.

A prominent cattle dealer who resides in Dodge City, said in an interview here to-night that he believed the whole trouble was simply a war upon the gamblers; that the citizens had determined to have a more orderly state of society, and had, therefore, compelled certain parties to leave. He said that they had a similar experience about three years ago, and that there is nothing especially remarkable in the present movement. The law cannot reach these cases, and consequently the people are obliged to take the law to a certain extent in their own hands.

As Luke visited Topeka, another Dodgeite was summoned there by Gov. George W. Glick. This man was W. F. Petillon, a prominent Democrat and clerk of the district court. The Dodge City Times, May 10, 1883, said:

W. F. Petillon has gone to Topeka in response to a telegram from the Governor. Some affairs of state need the diplomacy of statesmen. We suppose the Governor’s intercession is desired on behalf of affairs in Dodge. The Governor will not interfere with our local laws and the manner of disposing of them. He might execute the State laws which would then render local laws of no use and no consequence.

In the capital city Luke presented Governor Click with a petition which he had drawn up in Missouri. It was corroborated by Petillon:

TO HIS EXCELLENCY. HON. GEO. W. GLICK, GOVERNOR OF KANSAS:

The Petition of Luke L. Short, respectfully represents to your Excellency that he has resided at Dodge City Kansas for nearly two years; that he is a member of the firm of Harris and Short of said city, that his said partner is vice President of the Bank of Dodge City and has large business interests at said place.

Your Petitioner further states that during his said residence in Dodge City he has ever been in the peace of the state, and have not been charged with any crime until the 30th day of April 1883 when he was arrested charged with an assault upon one L. C. Hartman of said city; that he was entirely innocent of said charge, and gave bond in the sum of $2000 to answer the same on Wednesday the [second] day of May, 1883. That he caused the said Hartman to be arrested on a charge of assaulting your petitioner and the
trial of said Hartman on said charge was set for hearing for Wednesday the 3rd day of May 1883.10

On Monday11 the 2nd day of May 1883 your petitioner was again arrested but on what charge your petitioner was at the time and is now ignorant. That no warrant was read or shown to him on the occasion of this arrest, and your petitioner was denied bail. Doctor S. Galland of said city offering to Execute a bond for any amount for your petitioner’s release, but said offer was refused; that about five o’clock of the evening of said 2nd day of May and while your Petitioner was in custody in the calaboose a band of armed men led by Larry Deger, Mayor of said city came to said Calaboose and ordered your Petitioner to leave said city and never to return, and then and there threatened your petitioner with great personal danger, upon a refusal so to do, and also informed him that if he returned he would do so at his peril.

Your Petitioner then & there remonstrated with the said Deger and his followers, and averred that he was guilty of no crime against the law; that he was ready & willing to meet any and all charges in the courts, where he would satisfy all of his innocence, that he was under bond to appear to answer the charge, in this petition before mentioned, that he had a prosperous business in said city and that no reason existed for any such extraordinary proceeding, but the said Deger and followers would not listen to your petitioners remonstrances, and repeated their demands, that he must leave.

Your petitioner avers that by reason of the aforesaid threats, he was put in fear of his life, and he verily believes that had he remained in said city, he would have been murdered; that upon advice of friends he left said city the next morning; that while your petitioner was confined in the calaboose he was not allowed to see counsel, and when his regular counsel, Mr. Dryden attempted to see him, he was refused admittance, and his life was threatened if he further attempted to see your petitioner that after said Dryden was refused admittance to your Petitioner, Mr. Harris your Petitioners partner telegraphed to Nelson Adams Esq of Larned Kansas to come to said city to act as your Petitioners counsel, that when said Adams arrived at 11 o’clock of the same day, he was met, as your Petitioner is informed and believes by said Deger and his band of armed men and ordered not to stop, on pain of his life and said Adams returned to his home.

Your Petitioner further states that the leading parties of the band that came to said Calaboose and intimidated your petitioner were Larry Deger, Fred Singer, Thomas Nixon, A. B. Webster, Brick Bond, Bob Vanderburg, Jack Bridges, Clark Chipman, L. C. Hartman and these were followed by about twenty five others all being heavily armed.

that said Deger is Mayor. Fred Singer, under sheriff, Thomas Nixon, a proprietor of a Dance Hall in said city. A. B. Webster, proprietor of a saloon & gambling house, Brick Bond, a proprietor of a dance hall. Bob Vanderburg a special policeman. Jack Bridges, a Marshal, Clark Chipman, Assistant Marshal. L. C. Hartman special policeman.

Your petitioner further avers that the cause of said act of violence was not anything that your petitioner had done against the law, but arose from political differences and Business rivalry; that many of the best and most prominent business men of said city stand ready & willing to become personally responsible
to the state for your petitioners good behavior, that he has no desire to return to Said city for the purpose of violating the law, but simply for the purpose of protecting his business interests. But that the parties above mentioned threaten your petitioners life if he returns and still maintain the same attitude of defiance to the law, and unless your Excellency as conservator of the Public peace acts in the premise your Petitioner is wholly without remedy. Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays your Excellency to take such action as to your Excellency may seem appropriate, to protect your petitioner from the unlawful violence of the above mentioned parties—to the end that he may return and remain in safety—and prosecute his business holding himself amenable to all lawful action of the authorities—

STATE OF MISSOURI  
COUNTY OF JACKSON  

Subscribed & sworn to before me, the undersigned Notary Public this 10th day of May 1883. My commission expires June 30th 1884—

LUKE L. SHORT  
Notary Public

W. F. PETILLON—Clerk of the District Court of Ford County Kansas, says that he has read the foregoing petition of Luke L. Short; that he is personally cognisant of the facts stated therein and that they are true, according to his best Knowledge information and belief.

STATE OF MISSOURI  
COUNTY OF JACKSON  

Subscribed and sworn to before me the undersigned Notary Public within and for said County and state this 10th day of May 1883. My Commission expires June 30th 1884.

CHRISTOPHER HOPE  
Notary Public

Luke's visit with Governor Glick apparently had some results. Though no copy has been found, Glick must have telegraphed the sheriff of Ford county asking the situation in Dodge. Sheriff Hinkle's telegraphic answer was:

Received at Topeka, Kan. 6:30 pm.  
Dated Dodge City, Ks.

To Hon. G. W. Glick:

Mr. L. E. Deger our mayor has compelled several persons to leave the city for refusing to comply with the ordinances. No mob exists nor is there any reason to fear any violence as I am amply able to preserve the peace. I showed your message to Mr. Deger who requests me to say that the act of compelling the parties to leave the city was simply to avoid difficulty and disorders. Everything is as quiet here as in the capital of the state and should I find myself unable to preserve the present quiet will unhesitatingly ask your assistance.

Resp'y

GEO. T. HINKEL,  
Sheriff
A few minutes later Glick received a similar telegram from Robert M. Wright and Richard J. Hardesty:

Received at Topeka, Kan. 6:35 pm
DATED DODGE CITY, KS.
To Gov. G. W. Glick:

Our town and county never was more peaceable and quiet than it is at present notwithstanding all reports to the contrary.

R. M. Wright
R. J. Hardesty

Before the three Dodgeites had been heard from Governor Glick had alerted two companies of the Kansas National Guard, company H at Sterling and company K at Newton. The commanders of each company wired back that they were ready for immediate service.

The receipt of Sheriff Hinkle's telegram, instead of placating Governor Glick, obviously incensed him. He replied:

Geo. T. Hinkle, Sheriff Ford County,
Dodge City, Kansas.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your telegram to me of the 11th is at hand. I am glad to be assured by you that you are able to preserve the peace of Dodge City, and of your county. The accounts of the way things have been going on there are simply monstrous, and it requires that the disgrace that is being brought upon Dodge City, and the State of Kansas, by the conduct that is represented to have occurred there, should be wiped out. Your dispatch to me presents an extraordinary state of affairs, one that is outrageous upon its face. You tell me that the mayor has compelled several parties to leave the town for refusing to comply with the ordinances. Such a statement as that if true, simply shows that the mayor is unfit for his place, that he does not do his duty, and instead of occupying the position of peace maker, the man whose duty it is to see that the ordinances are enforced by legal process in the courts, starts out to head a mob to drive people away from their homes and their business.

It was the mayor's duty, if he did anything, to have appointed and sworn in special policemen to protect citizens, and if he could not do it, to have called upon you, or have called upon me, for assistance to aid him in executing his duties as mayor, and in preserving the peace of his town. It is represented to me by affidavits, and by statements, that the best men in Dodge City have been threatened with assassination, and with being driven away from their homes, if they raised their voices against the conduct of this mob. Now if this is true, it is your duty to call to your assistance a respectable number of people, sufficient to enforce the law, and protect every man in Dodge City, without any reference to who he is, or what his business is, and if he is charged with crime, or the violation of law, to see that he has a fair trial before a proper tribunal, and that the sentence of the law is executed by you or by the authorities, according to the command of the court.

It is also represented to me that this mob is in the habit of going to the trains armed, searching for people that may be coming to their homes, and
for the alleged purpose of driving any persons away, or threatening their lives, who may seek to return to their homes, and to their business. The further statement is also made to me that instead of its being disreputable characters that were driven away for the purpose of peace, it is simply a difficulty between saloon men and dance houses, and that the mayor of the town with his marshal has taken sides with one party against the other, to drive them out of business, and instead of the mayor enforcing the ordinances against lewd women visiting saloons, it is reported to me that he has called to his assistance those who were running dance houses with women in them, and entered saloons to drive out men who were keeping other saloons, and that he has set himself up as the judge as to who may violate the ordinances and who shall not, and that he proposes to permit certain parties to violate the ordinances of the city, while others are driven from their homes for violating ordinances, and not prosecuting others according to law for the violation of the ordinances.

I hope this is all untrue, and that the mayor has not been guilty of any such offenses. I cannot believe these statements of the mayor of Dodge City, as I believe him to be a clear-headed, honorable gentleman, and would not become a party to such transactions, or permit any such things to be done. I hope to learn from you that he has been wrongfully represented to me. His own good name, and the good name of the state, that is placed in his hands for protection, certainly would be sufficient inducement to him to see that such charges could not be truthfully made.

It is represented to me also that at this very time, and ever since this pretense of the mayor that he was trying to enforce two ordinances against women visiting saloons, that he has prohibited it only as to one saloon, made arrests in one case, and permitted that ordinance to be violated every day and every night, to his own personal knowledge, and that of the marshal and police officers of the city, by other men who were running saloons where women are permitted to visit, and sing and dance.

Now Mr. Sheriff, I desire to remind you that your duty as a public conservator of the peace, and also having authority over and above the mayor of Dodge City, if he fails to discharge his duties, that it is your duty to see that these things are not permitted and are not tolerated, and that no citizens shall be interfered with, that no citizen shall be driven away from his home, that the mayor of Dodge City shall not pick out men and say that the ordinances shall be enforced against them, and shall not be enforced against others.

It is also represented to me that citizens who have been driven away from home attempted to return to their homes, and were again driven off. Now if this state of affairs is to continue, you can see what disgrace it will bring upon your city, upon your county, and upon the state of Kansas. The demand is made upon me, and is coming to me from all parts of the state, that it is a disgrace that must be wiped out. It is also demanded and charged by parties who are now demanding the enforcement of the liquor law, that every saloon and dance house in Dodge City must be suppressed, and there is coming up almost a universal demand over the state, that it shall be done, if I have to station a company of troops in the city of Dodge, and close up every saloon, and every drinking place, and every dance house in that city.

I am also informed that one of your deputies was aiding in this mob. If this is so, Mr. Sheriff, your duty to yourself, your duty to the public, and your duty under the law, and even decency requires, that you shall dismiss that man
at once. If these things cannot be suppressed now, it is your duty also to notify the judge of your district of the state of affairs, that he may come there and invoke the judicial power of the state for the protection of those people.

I desire also to inform you that I expect you to see now that the peace of Dodge City is preserved, that the life and property of every individual there is fully protected, and that any person who desires to return to his home and to his business, must be protected by you, and must not be permitted to be molested while he is in the lawful discharge of his business, and conducting himself in a peaceable quiet manner. If anybody attempts to interfere, if they refuse to prefer legal charges in a proper court, and permit them to be tried in a proper manner, it is your duty to at once notify me, and I will see that those parties are taken charge of in a manner that will satisfy them that they must preserve the peace of the state, and behave themselves as good citizens.

I ask you in addition to this, that you call together the good citizens of Dodge City, lay this matter before them, ask them to come to your assistance, to aid you in preserving peace, and preserving order and the quietude of the town, and the consequent preservation of the good name and reputation of the state. This outrage has been heralded all over the United States, not only to the disgrace of your town, but to the whole state of Kansas. If they offer to furnish you assistance, and will respond to your call I will order a sufficient amount of arms and ammunition into your custody, so that you can have any assistance that you require.

If this is not sufficient, a company of troops will be at once ordered to Dodge City, and placed under your command and control, so that you shall have full authority and full power to preserve the peace and protect every individual that may be in the city. If this is not sufficient, proceedings will be commenced, for the purpose of at once installing officers in power who will discharge their duties honestly and faithfully to the public. Please give me a full careful and correct statement of the condition of affairs now, and say to me whether people who have been driven away will be permitted to return to their homes. Use the telegraph freely at my expense, as I have a train ready, and a company of troops ready to go to your city on a moment's notice.

I desire you also to read this letter to the mayor of Dodge City, and say to him that I invoke his assistance to aid you in preserving the peace of the town, and that I hope that the representations that have been made to me about his conduct are untrue. I should regret to hear or to know that the mayor of a city of the state of Kansas should so far forget the duties of the high office that he fills as to permit himself to become a party to a mob, and head anybody, or any crowd of individuals, in trampling upon the rights and privileges of other citizens. The good name of the city demands that it shall not be true, and the reputation of the state requires that no man occupying that position should be guilty of such conduct, or should permit such things to be tolerated in his city. Say to him in addition to this, if he cannot preserve the peace with the police force that he has, it is his duty to discharge every one of them, and appoint a new set of men who will act in preserving the peace, and if he cannot do this, to notify me, and I will furnish him with men who will act. I hope that all the difficulty has blown over, that there will be no more excitement or trouble over this matter.

I have assured parties who have written to me, and who have appealed to
me for protection and aid, that they might be permitted to return to their homes, that the sheriff of the county would see that they were protected. You have a right to call out all the men that you want to aid you in this, and in doing it, you will be simply doing your duty to the state, and maintaining the good name and reputation of your city, your county and the state of Kansas. The peace of the city is with you, Mr. Sheriff, and I expect it to be safe in your hands.

I am, my dear sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. W. Glick
Governor of Kansas

Geo. T. Hinkle,
Sheriff Ford County,
Dodge City, Kansas.16

Even after this letter Sheriff Hinkle seemed not to understand that driving persons out of town rather than trying them for their crimes, whether real or imaginary, in the courts, was an unlawful act. His next telegram to Governor Glick still upheld the actions of the mayor:

Received at Topeka, Kan. 11:15 am 5/12 1883
Dated Dodge City, Ks.
To Hon. G. W. Glick:

Your message recd this am, I will continue to do all in my power to preserve order in the community yet I cannot become responsible for the actions of any individual. Mr. Short’s expulsion from the city is the direct result of his own action and the feeling of the people generally is very strong against him. The city is as quiet now as it has ever been but I fear that if Mr. Short returns trouble will ensue. It is evident that but one side of the matter that caused these men to leave [the] city has been presented to you and would resp'y suggest that you ask a statement of facts from prominent men of our city among whom I will name Hons, R. M. Wright; G. M. Hoover; J. T. Whitlaw, County Atty.; R. J. Hardesty; Geo. B. Cox; F. C. Zimmerman; N. B. Klaine and numerous others.

Respectfully
Geo. T. Hinkle
Sheriff17

The Topeka Commonwealth, May 12, 1883, carried its regular daily resume of the troubles but also included an interview with an unnamed “gentleman from Dodge City”:

“What about these women?” asked the reporter,

“They are a necessary evil. The cattle men who come to the town expect to meet them. They are not the wives of gamblers, as has been stated. They have never insulted a lady yet and only show themselves at night.”

“D. M. Frost, who publishes a paper there [the Ford County Globe], was denouncing the mob, when he was threatened with death if he didn’t keep still.

“Dr. Chateau [A. S. Chouteau], who is a friend of Short, went with him to the calaboose when he was arrested and while returning, was denouncing
Short's arrest without a complaint. Mayor Deager said afterwards that the bullet which was aimed at him was only stopped because he (Deager) put his thumb under the hammer of the pistol and prevented its discharge. When asked why he didn't arrest the man who was going to shoot, he replied: 'He was one of our party.'"

Luke and W. F. Petillon were interviewed in the Topeka Daily Capital, May 12, 1883:

THE MEN FROM DODGE.
THEIR MISSION TO TOPEKA, AND THEIR STORY OF THE TROUBLE—IT PUTS A VERY DIFFERENT FACE ON THE MATTER.

The editorial rooms of the Capital were visited last evening by Mr. Luke Short, of Dodge City, and Mr. Petillon, district court clerk of Ford county, whose residence is the same. Mr. Short's name has appeared in the dispatches several times lately, as that of one of the persons expelled from Dodge City, in the interests of morality and good order. Learning that he was in Topeka yesterday, a reporter called at the Copeland, but finding him absent, left his card. In response he called during the evening, with Mr. Petillon, and jointly they gave a full statement of the controversy from their point of view, bringing forward a number of facts which have not been presented heretofore.

The narrative below is given substantially as drawn from these gentlemen in conversation, and solely on their authority, subject to all allowances which may be necessary, because of Mr. Short's personal interest in the matter.

THE SHORT AND PETILLON OF IT.

Mr. Short is a Texan, who came to Dodge some two years ago, and having been interested in the cattle business himself—as, indeed, he is still—he had an extensive acquaintance with other cattlemen and their employees. At Dodge he engaged in the saloon business with a man named Harris, and his friendly relations with the numerous Texans coming to Dodge has made Harris & Short's saloon the most popular and profitable one in the city. Mr. Webster, late mayor of Dodge City, is also a saloon keeper, and during his term of office removed from a more remote location to one next door to Harris & Short's "Long Branch," on Front street.

While Short's popularity has increased, that gentleman modestly stated, Webster's has declined, and finding it impracticable to secure his re-election to the mayoralty, Webster some weeks before election brought out Mr. Deger as a candidate, against whom Harris, Short's partner, was nominated. Deger had been a foreman for Lee & Reynolds, who are engaged in freightage, and had their place of business outside the city limits. About March 1st, however, it is said, Deger began boarding at the hotel in town, in order to gain a legal residence.

The night before election the construction trains of the Santa Fe railroad, manned by men residing at different places scattered along the line, were run into Dodge, and the next morning the men were all on hand, obtained control of the election board by filling vacancies under the forms of law, and voted. Thus Deger was elected by a majority of seventy-one in a poll of between 900 and 400 votes. Deger, Messrs. Short and Petillon declare, is a mere creature of Webster.
The saloons of Dodge City, these gentlemen say, are all of similar character including bars for drinking, gambling tables, and games of various kinds, arrangements for variety performances, or at least singing, and all employ women who are admittedly of loose character, and are provided with facilities for plying their business. In addition to the saloons there is a dance house, carried on by a man named Nixon, who was formerly an adherent of Harris, but shortly before election transferred his allegiance to the Deger-Webster party. His place is said to be of the lowest and vilest character.

Gambling is recognized and licensed by ordinances of the city, a “fine” of $5 a month being collected on account of each table, and the same amount being levied on every dealer of any game. An attempt was made in the common council to raise the tax to $12.50 a month, but it was not carried. An ordinance was passed, however, shortly after the accession of the new administration, prohibiting loose women from pursuing their solicitations in any public place.

As a collateral incident it is asserted the Webster-Deger party promised Nixon, in consideration of his support in the election, not only that he should be unmolested in his dance house business, but that he should have no competitor in the city.

The remainder of the article was merely a rehash of Luke’s petition before Governor Clicx, except that in the article Short claimed that “the sheriff of Ford county has taken no part in the matter. Mr. Short says that officer sent word to him that he (the sheriff) was a sufferer from heart disease and dared do nothing for fear excitement might prove fatal.”

On the afternoon of May 12 Luke had returned to Kansas City and Petillon was bound for Dodge hearing the governor’s message to Sheriff Hinkle. The next day, Sunday, the governor received this telegram:

Received at Topeka, Kan.
Dated Dodge City, Ks.
To Hon. G. W. Clicx:
Your letter to Sheriff has been laid before committee of citizens. We judge you have been badly misinformed. Send adjutant genl. or some proper person to investigate before you act. Answer.


Also on Sunday, May 13, 1883, a well-known ex-Kansan arrived in Kansas City to aid Luke Short. His name was Bat Masterson. The Kansas City (Mo.) Journal, May 15, 1883, reported:

The troubles at Dodge City are assuming serious proportions, and the governor must interfere very soon or a terrible tragedy will undoubtedly result. The men driven out may be men who are classed with the sporting fraternity,
but as far as known they are no worse than the men who have been chiefly instrumental in driving them out. But setting all question of comparative respectability aside, the whole affair resolves itself into a matter of victory for superior force, and not law. Luke Short, the chief of the band of men lately exiled, has his interests in the town, and claims he has been wronged. The vigilantes who drove him and his friends away assert that they are evil characters. Law has been set aside and force is the sole resort. Governor Click has been attempting to preserve the peace, but so far has made no great progress. The sheriff acknowledges that he cannot protect the exiled men should they return, and so the matter stands at present.

Yesterday a new man arrived on the scene who is destined to play a part in a great tragedy. This man is Bat Masterson, ex-sheriff of Ford county, and one of the most dangerous men the West has ever produced. A few years ago he incurred the enmity of the same men who drove Short away, and he was exiled upon pain of death if he returned. His presence in Kansas City means just one thing, and that is he is going to visit Dodge City. Masterson precedes by twenty-four hours a few other pleasant gentlemen who are on their way to the tea party at Dodge. One of them is Wyatt Earp, the famous marshal of Dodge, another is Joe Lowe, otherwise known as "Rowdy Joe," and still another is "Shotgun" Collins; but worse than all is another ex-citizen and officer of Dodge, the famous Doc Halliday.

A brief history of the careers of these gentlemen who will meet here tomorrow will explain the gravity of the situation. At the head is Bat Masterson. He is a young man who is credited with having killed one man for every year of his life. This may be exaggerated, but he is certainly entitled to a record of a dozen or more. He is a cool, brave man, pleasant in his manners, but terrible in a fight, and particularly dangerous to the ruling clique, which he hates bitterly. Doc. Halliday is another famous "killer." Among the desperate men of the West, he is looked upon with the respect born of awe, for he has killed in single combat no less than eight desperadoes. He was the chief character in the Earp war at Tombstone, where the celebrated brothers, aided by Halliday, broke up the terrible rustlers.

Wyatt Earp is equally famous in the cheerful business of depopulating the country. He has killed within our personal knowledge six men, and he is popularly accredited with relegating to the dust no less than ten of his fellow men. "Shot-Gun" Collins was a Wells, Fargo & Co. messenger, and obtained his name from the peculiar weapon he used, a sawed off shot gun. He has killed two men in Montana and two in Arizona, but beyond this his exploits are not known. Luke Short, the man for whom these men have rallied, is a noted man himself. He has killed several men and is utterly devoid of fear. There are others who will make up the party, but as yet they have not yet arrived.

This gathering means something, and it means exactly that these men are going to Dodge City. They have all good reason to go back. Masterson says he wants to see his old friends. Short wants to look after his business. Earp and Holliday, who are old deputy sheriffs of Dodge, also intend visiting friends, so they say, and Collins is going along to keep the others company. "Rowdy Joe," who has killed about ten men, and is the terror of Colorado, goes about for pleasure. Altogether, it is a very pleasant party. Their entrance into Dodge will mean that a desperate fight will take place. Governor Click
has, up to the present time, failed to preserve order, and unless he takes some determined action within the next twenty-four hours, the men swear they will go to Dodge and protect themselves. For the good of the state of Kansas, it is hoped the governor will prevent violence.\textsuperscript{20}

When news of Bat’s arrival at Kansas City, and the rumor of the proposed visit from these celebrated “dead-eye” gunslingers reached the ears of Sheriff Hinkle he frantically wired Governor Glick:

\begin{flushright}
8 pm  May 15, 1883
\end{flushright}
\begin{flushleft}
To Hon. G. W. Glick, Emp.[oria]:

Are parties coming with Short for the purpose of making trouble? Answer quick.

GEO. T. HINKLE.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{flushleft}

Whatever the governor’s reply Hinkle must have misinterpreted it for he assumed he was directed to enlist a large posse with which to greet Short on his arrival. Glick, however, denied that this was his intention. The Topeka \textit{Daily Capital}, May 16, 1883, did little to clear matters up:

\textbf{DODGE CITY AGAIN.}
\textbf{A RUMOR OF INTERVENTION WHICH GOV. GICK DENIES.}
\textbf{THE EVICTED IN CONSULTATION—THOUGHT THEY}
\textbf{PROPOSE TO RETURN—DISPOSITION OF THE}
\textbf{PEOPLE OF DODGE—TROUBLE AHEAD.}

\textbf{UNDER WHAT LAW?}

\textbf{DODGE CITY, May 15.—}Much excitement exists here to-night. The sheriff has been ordered by Gov. Glick to arm forty men and have them at the train, to see that order is preserved on the arrival of Luke Short, who is supposed to be on his way here. Short is a prominent whisky and sporting man, and was, by the authorities, forced to leave the city. He comes, it is said, on the Governor’s permission, and things this evening look threatening.

(Governor Glick returned from Emporia at 2 o’clock this morning. He says he sent no such orders as stated above, but positively declined to say what directions he had given asserting it was a private matter between himself and the sheriff.)

\textbf{CONFERENCE IN KANSAS CITY.}

\textbf{KANSAS CITY, May 15.—}An informal committee of three citizens of Dodge City arrived this evening to confer with Luke Short, who is here with Bat Masterson, one of his friends. The members are G. M. Hoover, banker and Representative in the Legislature; R. M. Wright, merchant; C. M. Beeson, a prominent cattle man. They were in consultation with Short and Masterson all the evening. Being interviewed afterward they were very reticent, saying they would remain over to-morrow and would then reach some conclusion. Their mission is to effect a settlement of the present difficulty if possible and they brought letters to Short from Sheriff Hinkle who it is understood, says if Short returns to Dodge he (the sheriff) and the mayor will endeavor to afford protection, but that the feeling is very strong and he would advise Short not to come. One of the committeemen said that if Short were to go
back he would probably be allowed to remain unmolested long enough to settle his business affairs, but if he should insist upon staying there there would most likely be trouble, and his life would be in danger. It is not known tonight whether Short intends to start to-morrow as intended, with his friends, who were to meet him at Topeka. The committeemen here are apparently urging him to give up the idea, or at least to wait a day or two in hopes of a peaceful settlement of the difficulties.

AN INTERVIEW WITH HIS EXCELLENCY.

EMPORIA, Ks., May 15.—A reporter of the Emporia daily Republican interviewed Gov. Glick, who was in this city this evening, in relation to the condition of affairs at Dodge City. The Governor said that the trouble there has grown out of a misapprehension in the management of local affairs, and the feeling between the parties has become so intensified that many of the citizens expect, not without cause, that serious trouble may follow. Governor Glick says the sheriff of that county, with whom he is in constant communication by telegraph, has ample means at his command with the aid of good citizens to preserve the peace. The Governor expressed the hope that he would not be called upon to interfere in the settlement of their local difficulties and thinks that by a judicious course on the part of the local authorities peace will be maintained.

Meanwhile Sheriff Hinkle organized a posse and met the train which he thought carried Luke Short and Bat Masterson. The Dodge City Times, May 17, 1883, said:

THE SHERIFF’S POSSE.

Under orders from Gov. Glick, Sheriff Hinkle organized a posse of 45 men Tuesday evening, and upon the arrival of the “Cannon Ball” train proceeded to the depot, under the assumption that Short and Masterson were on the train destined for Dodge City. Yesterday the Governor telegraphed the sheriff to keep his men in readiness, in case of necessity. We trust the Governor’s nerves have become quieted by this time and that he is tired of the Dodge City business. The Governor will be a very sick man before many days.

Obviously the Times was Republican in sentiment.

On the day that Luke and Bat were expected to arrive in Dodge a group of citizens of that place prepared a statement which they sent to the Topeka Daily Capital. The statement exhibited the sentiments of the pro-Deger group and was published in the Capital, May 18, 1883:

A PLAIN STATEMENT

OF THE RECENT TROUBLES AT DODGE CITY, Ks.,
AS MADE BY THE OFFICIALS OF THAT CITY—SIMPLY A DESIRE TO RID THEIR COMMUNITY OF BLACKLEGS AND GAMBLERS.

DODGE CITY, Ks., May 15, 1883—There has been quite a commotion among the papers of Kansas City and Topeka, and while they would have the readers of their respective papers believe that Dodge is in the hands of a mob, and that the persons and property of peaceable citizens are in constant jeopardy
from destruction, the city itself and its inhabitants have been pursuing the
even tenor of their way, the city assuming an aspect peaceable—if anything,
more so than it has for years. The doings of violence to person and property
by the mob in Dodge City is all being done in Kansas City and Topeka through
the press, while in fact Dodge City itself, the scene of all the lawlessness as
stated, is quiet, orderly and peaceable.

The occasion for what the press have called trouble is only a repetition of
what is found to be necessary about every two years in Dodge City; that is,
a clearing out of an element composed of bold, daring men of illegal profession
who, from toleration by the respectable portion of the community, are allowed
to gain a prestige found difficult to unseat. This element has to be banished,
or else the respectable people have to be bulldozed and browbeat by a class
of men without any vested interest or visible means of support, who should
be allowed to remain in a decent community only by toleration, but who, in
stead, after gaining prestige, they undertake to dictate the government of the
better class. This is the element which Dodge City has recently ordered
out of town, an act which is done in every town of good government. The
facts have been misunderstood, both to and by the press, and to the Governor.
The true state of facts is about as follows:

At the last April election Deger and Harris ran for Mayor of the city.
Harris is a gambler by profession and living in open adultery with a public
prostitute, and the interest which he has in the town is merely of a local
character. He could close up and settle his affairs in one day. The only
real estate that he owns, and on which he pays taxes, is a small house in
which he lives, and he would not own that only it is cheaper than for him to
rent. It is worth about $400. He is a man whose character no respectable
man in the community in which he lives would vouch for. He is a man that
is recognized by the decent people as a sympathizer, friend and shielde
of the gambler, thug, confidence man and murderer, who may be arrested
by the authorities for offenses against the law. He is always to be found
on their bond for recognition, no matter how glaring the deed or heinous
the offense for which they stand charged.

This man was the candidate for mayor representing the gambling element.
Deger, who is a man of irreproachable character and honesty, is an old resident
of the town and represented the better class of people and as a matter of
course, as was conceded, he was elected by a large majority, but it was very
apparent that Harris felt very sore over his defeat. It was also very apparent
that he and some of his followers who were mostly composed of gamblers were
going to buck against everything the new administration done.

At the first meeting of the new administration it was found necessary to
pass and revise certain ordinances and among them was one to prohibit women
of lewd character from loitering around saloons and upon the streets. This
ordinance was passed upon the application of a majority of the business men
including the saloon men, of the town. They also passed another ordinance
in regard to gamblers, which they considered stringent, and loudly denounced
it, and upon the application of a committee representing the gamblers, the
councilmen made concessions, and in fact, made all the concessions asked, in
order to preserve peace and harmony. The ordinance in regard to women,
got into effect two days before the concession was made by the councilmen.

The first day and night the women obeyed the ordinance without a single
PRINCIPALS OF THE DODGE CITY "WAR"

W. H. HARRIS, co-owner with Luke Short of the Long Branch saloon, was also vice-president of the Bank of Dodge City.

LUKE SHORT, epitome of frontier sartorial perfection and a gambler, was chief protagonist in the celebrated "war."

C. M. BEESON, one of three prominent Dodge Citizens who attempted to effect a peaceful settlement by visiting Short in Kansas City.

MICHAEL W. SUTTON, an attorney and former friend of W. B. "Bat" Masterson, was in the camp of the opposition during the troubles.
Opposed by the governor, and the touted superior fire power of ousted Luke Short's recruited "army" of assorted gunslingers, Dodge City administration forces knuckled under, and Short was allowed to return. Before disbanding, several of the victorious "army" posed for a picture (June, 1883) which long has been labelled "The Dodge City Peace Commission."

The most widely used print (upper left) is that showing only seven members, though the photograph is obviously, and crudely, retouched.

Another version (left) contains the correct number but William M. Tilghman, who was not the marshal in 1883 and who had little part in the trouble, has been substituted for W. F. Petillon.

The third and correct version (above, and see p. 100) shows Petillon at the right. The men have been identified as (back row, from left): W. H. Harris, Luke Short, W. B. Masterson, W. F. Petillon; (front row, from left): C. E. Bassett, Wyatt Earp, M. F. McLain (or McLane), Neil Brown.

The Tilghman print, courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society. The Petillon photograph, courtesy Mrs. Merritt L. Beeson, Dodge City.
D. M. FROST, editor of the Ford County Globe which favored Short.

NICHOLAS B. KLAIN, antagonist of Short, and editor of the Times.

GEORGE WASHINGTON GLICK, ninth governor of the state of Kansas (1883-1885), and the first Democrat to hold that office. Governor Glick supported Gambler Luke Short's return to Dodge City, contending that due process of law—not "mob" rule—should prevail.

ADJ. GEN. THOMAS H. MOONLIGHT, Governor Glick's emissary to Dodge City. Traveling incognito, he sent word: "Meet me on train this evening. Important. Will be on platform holding up newspaper." In that era whiskers obviously were insufficient identification.
exception, but the second night, which was the night of the concession made by the mayor and councilmen, Short, Harris, and another gambler, who were loud in their abuse of the ordinance, there being no women down town, went to a house of ill fame, and, according to their spoken words, forced two of the inmates down to their saloon to violate the ordinance, saying that they would pay the fines and costs assessed against the women. The women, after being tried and fined for the offense, had to pay their own fines and costs themselves, and when ordered to leave town, and after Short and Harris refused to pay their fines, as above stated, they made a statement, as above set forth, before the police judge, and since,

The officers, as was their duty, arrested the women and locked them up in the calaboose, for a violation of the city ordinance. After this arrest, Short, the partner of Harris, who is a gambler and an acknowledged hard character, attempted to assassinate L. C. Hartman, a special policeman who assisted in the arrest, by shooting at him from an obscure spot after night, which happened about as follows.

After making the arrest, Hartman walked down the principal street, and, when in front of a general store, which was closed, the front being dark, Hartman met Short and another gambler coming up the street. While passing by, Short and his companion, Short turned and drew a pistol and said, "There is one of the son's of -------; lets throw it into him," immediately firing two shots at Hartman from his six-shooter. Hartman, in his endeavor to turn upon Short, in some way fell to the ground. Short, supposing he had killed him, started to the saloon of one Tom Land, near by, but Hartman, immediately recovering himself, fired one shot at Short. Strange to say, neither of the shots fired took effect.

Short gave bonds in the sum of $2,000 and afterwards filed a complaint against Hartman, stating that Hartman had fired the first shot, half a dozen of Short’s confederates being ready to testify that he (Hartman) had done so, although there are several reliable business men who witnessed the affair, who will testify that Short fired the two first shots as above stated.

The women were locked up. Short and Harris were bound they should not remain locked up all night, as is customary with prisoners when locked up by city authorities. By intimidating some of the city officers by threats, etc., they affected their purpose. In all these proceedings, Short was the leader and spokesman. He is the man who but a few weeks ago pulled out his pistol and beat one of our most respectful citizens over the head until he was carried home on a stretcher, and his life was despaired of for several days. He is a man who, on several occasions, has picked up chairs and broke them over the heads of men who, as it happened, had done something in his place of business that displeased him. He is a man that killed his man, an old gray headed man 57 years old, in Tombstone, Arizona, and has been run out of that and other places by the respectable people. He is a man who was an intimate friend of such men as Jack McCarty, the notorious and well known three card monte and confidence man, known all through the west as being a hard character, and who recently died near this place after being convicted of highway robbery and about to receive his sentence of ten years.

Harris and Short keep a saloon that is a refuge and resort for all confidence men, thieves and gamblers that visit the town, and the statements that have been made in regard to the place kept by Webster are false. He is regarded as
a man of personal honor and integrity, and as mayor of the city, an office he held for two terms, he so conducted the affairs of the city, and made such vigorous war on bunko steersmen, thugs and confidence men as to gain the gratitude and respect of every law abiding citizen of the place.

It was very apparent to the mayor and councilmen of the city that this element, with Harris and Short at their head, were going to violate, encourage, shield and protect all violators of the laws of the city, and that the probability was that there would be trouble in the city during the whole of their administration if they and their followers remained. Short had attempted to assassinate an officer in the discharge of his duty, had bulldozed the city officers, had violated, aided and abetted in the violation of the laws, and at a meeting of the mayor and a large number of citizens, including the council, it was, after due deliberation and consideration, determined to arrest Luke Short and his followers and let them leave town, and accordingly, he, with six other associates, were arrested on complaint and warrant and locked in the calaboose and precautions taken that they did not escape, and were allowed to leave town the next day. There was no mob violence used whatever. None but regular officers of the city made the arrest, but in case they were resisted there was sufficient force composed of armed citizens held in reserve to aid in the arrest.

It was afterwards ascertained by one of the parties arrested, who peached on the balance, that it was known by Short and party they were to be arrested, and as soon as the officers came to arrest them it was understood they were organized and that Short was to start the shooting and the balance of the party were to follow it up, but as stated by him “somebody weakened.” The citizens understood the characters of the men they were dealing with and were prepared for them, and this was the occasion for the circulation that it was a mob. It was bona fide citizens armed to aid the officers if necessary in the enforcement of the laws.

Much of the confusion and misunderstanding regarding the situation in our city is due to the misrepresentations made to the Governor by one W. F. Petillon. Petillon is clerk of the district court and lives about six miles north of Dodge City on a claim of 160 acres. He had been recognized and identified as a Harris man some time before the election, which came about as follows: Jack McCarty had been arrested at this point for highway robbery, and had given bond for $2,000. Harris, as one of the bondsmen, and Short, having no property against which execution could issue, got a citizen worth some real estate to sign the bond and he (Short) deposited the amount to secure the party so signing. The bond was given for McCarty’s appearance to be tried. McCarty appeared and in the course of the trial it was evident that from the evidence McCarty would be convicted. After conviction and before sentence, McCarty escaped.

When his escape became known, the clerk, Petillon, was applied to for the bond, he being the proper custodian of the papers in the case. Upon application, he could not give it, as he did not know where it was. He had it at the last day of court and was the one seen to have it last. The bond was never found, although he acknowledged it was properly filed, and it is impossible to obliterate from the minds of a great many respectable people here that Petillon knew why and where that bond disappeared. It has been a noticeable feature that since that time Petillon has been a firm believer and supporter of the
Harris and Short combination. This is the kind of a man Governor Glick sends for, instead of sending for a proper representative as any reasonable, intelligent, discreet man should to investigate.

The condition of Dodge City at present is orderly and law-abiding, and the prospects are it will so continue if these men remain away. If they are allowed to remain it will be against the will and without the consent of a majority of the law-abiding citizens of this community, and if the Governor, through his interference and encouragement, forces these men back on us he does so at his peril, and if there is bloodshed as a result the responsibility will not rest entirely with the Governor, who, had he not given the matter encouragement, it would have passed unnoticed, as an occurrence frequent in all cities desirous of being law-abiding, and of good government.

Dated at Dodge City, Kansas, this 15th day of May, 1883.

L. E. DEGER, Mayor, R. E. BURNS, Police Judge,
H. B. BELL, N. B. KLAINE, City Treasurer.
H. T. DRAKE, L. C. HARTMAN, City Clerk.
HENRY STURM, C. E. CHIPMAN, Assistant Marshal.
GEORGE S. EMERSON, FRED T. M. WENIE, City Attorney.
H. M. BEVERLEY, J. L. BRIDGES, City Marshal,
Councilmen of Dodge City. T. L. McCARTY, City Physician.

On May 16, 1883, Luke and Bat returned to Topeka for another visit with the governor. The Topeka Daily Capital, May 17, reported their coming:

THE MEN FROM DODGE.

Luke Short, Bat Masterson and Mr. Petillon, of Dodge City, returned from their conference with friends at Kansas City yesterday, and are at the Copeland. Mr. Short is fully aware that his return to Dodge will be strongly objected to and that forcible means will be used to prevent his remaining any time. It is understood, however, that he intends soon to make an attempt.

That day, too, Sheriff Hinkle had learned that Short and Masterson would not make the attempt to re-enter Dodge via the Cannon Ball. At 1:20 A.M., May 16, 1883, this message arrived in Topeka:

To Hon. Geo. W. Glick:
Agreeable to your message I was at train with fifty armed men. No one came. Shall I hold these men in readiness for use? Geo. T. Hinkle.22

Governor Glick’s reply has not been preserved, but in answer to his own question Hinkle telegraphed this message to Topeka at 2:02 P.M. that same day:

To Hon. G. W. Glick:
Will have men ready to act if occasion demands. If Short returns peaceably and alone I can protect him and will continue to do all in my power to preserve order in the community.

Geo. T. Hinkle
Sheriff.23
By this time, after having heard from numerous parties on both sides, Governor C lick must have desired some first hand information from an objective reporter. Possibly that was the reason Kansas Adj. Gen. Thomas Moonlight turned up in Dodge City on May 16. Whatever his motives, C lick did not escape further visits from "committees" from southwest Kansas. One such group, composed of 12 Dodgeites, boarded the eastbound Santa Fe on May 16 with the intention of setting the chief executive straight in the matter of the Dodge City troubles. *The Dodge City Times*, May 17, 1883, reported:

**GONE TO SEE GLICK.**

Twelve citizens left on the cannon ball train this morning for Topeka, where they will appear before His Excellency George Washington C lick, Governor of Kansas, and present him with the facts on the situation in Dodge City. The Governor's counsel has been such men as Petillon and Galland, and he has been woefully misinformed. His proffered protection to murderers has aroused indignation. The following are the names of the citizens who left for Topeka: R. J. Hardesty, G. S. Emerson, Elder Collins, R. E. Rice, S. A. Bullard, P. G. Reynolds, S. Mullendore, T. L. McCarty, Henry Sturm, A. Dienst, F. J. Durand, L. W. Jones. They will return tomorrow afternoon.

On May 18, 1883, the Topeka *Daily Capital* made an attempt to draw reason from confusion but only added to the complexity by including an interview with Luke:

**MOONBEAMS ON DODGE.**

**THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL ON THE GROUND—**

**A COMMITTEE IN TOPEKA—**

**EXPRESSIONS FROM ALL SIDES.**

It was learned yesterday that Governor C lick had commissioned Col. Tom Moonlight Minister Plenipotentiary to Ford county, to negotiate a treaty by which peace might be restored to that distracted community, and that Col. Moonlight was on the ground.

**THE SHERIFF'S INSTRUCTIONS.**

A reporter of the *Capital* yesterday called Gov. C lick's attention to the statement in the dispatches of yesterday morning, that:

"The sheriff, Geo. T. Hinkle, by order of the Governor, met the 11 o'clock train with fifty armed men to protect Luke Short and his companion, who was understood to be the famous Bat Masterson, formerly sheriff of this county, but now outlawed by the city officials."

The Governor again said he had given the sheriff no such orders. He had simply reminded that officer that it was his (the sheriff's) duty to preserve the peace of the community; had advised the sheriff to call to his aid a sufficient number of good citizens and had assured the sheriff that he would be supported by the authority of the State if necessary.

In response to explicit inquiries Governor C lick said he had directed the sheriff in no respect whatever as to the details of his action or the means to
be taken to preserve the peace—had not advised him to organize and arm a posse of any specific number of men, and had only suggested particular watchfulness about the railroad station on the arrival of trains.

The Governor added a statement that as a result of his counsel, Mr. Short, and his immediate friends, had relinquished the idea of returning to Dodge City at present, and had pledged himself to use his influence to preserve peace and good order in that place.

Mr. Short Admits It.

At a later hour in the day Mr. Short was found at the Copeland, and on inquiry he admitted that he had given the pledge referred to by the Governor and would make no effort to return to Dodge City, at least at present.

The sheriff, Mr. Short said, had given assurance that ample protection would be afforded him in doing so. But Mr. Short continued, "If the sheriff is sincere in saying so, why has he not put some of my friends on his posse? Instead of doing that he has called to his assistance men known to be my bitterest enemies. I would as soon trust myself in the hands of the mob as to the protection of the sheriff's posse." Mr. Short said he was convinced that the plot for his assassination was perfected, and that his life would be the forfeit if he revisited Dodge City.

He said he expected to remain in Topeka some days yet, but was not questioned and made no statement in relation to his intentions for the future.

Mr. Short, who has been observed by many on the streets of Topeka during the last week, would hardly meet, in his personal appearance, the expectations of many who have heard and seen him described as a "red-handed desperado." He is a man rather under medium height, but well built and firmly knit, with nothing in his features or complexion to indicate irregular or dissipated habits. He is cleanly-shaved, excepting only a natty little moustache, and is dressed with great care and in good style. He sports a magnificent diamond pin, and yesterday twirled between his fingers an elegant black walking stick with a gold head. The Capitol knows little of his past history, and can say nothing as to his claim to the reputation which has been given him, but there is no doubt he is able to take care of himself in almost any kind of a crowd.

A Committee from Dodge.

Mr. S. A. Bullard, J. F. Durand, R. E. Rice and other gentlemen, making a committee of twelve representative citizens of Dodge and Ford county, arrived in Topeka yesterday afternoon and called upon Gov. Glick. They had an extended conversation with him, as a result of which they became satisfied that peace would be maintained, and the interests of all good citizens protected. Mr. Short will be assured that he will be permitted to return to Dodge and remain there ten days for the purpose of closing his business. During that time he will be perfectly safe against molestation of any kind.

The gentlemen of the committee called at the Capitol office for the purpose of extending their thanks for the course it had taken in this matter, expressing their gratification at the fairness with which it had been discussed, and at the assistance it had given in reaching a satisfactory solution of the difficulty.

The Atchison Globe says: "F. C. Zimmerman, of Dodge City, one of the largest general merchants in the State, in a private letter to Howell, Jewett & Co., says; 'I suppose you have heard of the Dodge City trouble. The facts are that we are having no trouble at all, except that the decent people are driving out the bunko men, and disreputable citizens generally. These men complained
to Gov. Glick, who now wants to send them back under the protection of the militia. Every decent citizen of Dodge City is indignant at the Governor’s action, who did not consult the respectable people about the matter, receiving his information entirely from the other side. Everything is peaceable and orderly here, and you may say as much to the newspapers."

The Topeka Daily Kansas State Journal, May 18, 1883, introduced a new angle when it reported that the Dodge City ladies might petition the governor for Luke’s return:

A NICE YOUNG MAN.

Luke Short over whom all this Dodge City excitement and sensation has been created, don’t look like a man that would be dangerous to let live in any community. In fact he is a regular dandy, quite handsome, and Dr. Galland says, a perfect ladies man. He dresses fashionably, is particular as to his appearance, and always takes pains to look as neat as possible. At Dodge City he associates with the very best element, and leads in almost every social event that is gotten up. Dr. Galland thinks the ladies will yet be heard from in Mr. Shorts’ behalf. They have been very anxious to get up a petition among themselves to send the governor and it will probably come yet.

On the same day the Topeka Daily Commonwealth published a short interview with several of the 12 apostles out of Dodge City:

Col. Hardesty said that Dodge City was no more excited than Topeka; that the trouble exists chiefly in the newspapers outside. That he had friends on both sides; was an outsider so far as the row is concerned and didn’t know much about it.

Meeting another member of the committee, a reporter said he had been informed that Sheriff Hinkle was disposed to preserve the peace and asked whether he would protect Short.

“No,” said the committeeman, “Short has been ordered out of town by the citizens and will not be permitted to return.”

“What are the charges against him?” asked the reporter.

“Disobeying the ordinances.”

“Why don’t you try him in the courts there and punish him?”

“Well, he is a bad man generally. He was ordered out of town a year ago, and allowed to return on promise of good behavior. But he is a bad man to have around, and we don’t want him there, and won’t have him. Our proceedings may not be just exactly according to law, but it’s a custom, and he can’t return.”

“What will be done if he attempts to return?”

“He will be ordered to go on. If he does all will be well. If he resists the order and tries to come back there may be trouble. But I guess all will be peaceably settled.”

Short said last night that he should go back; just when he don’t know, nor how. If he don’t have an escort he will have to go under cover, and can’t tell how long it will take him to get there. If he persists in this intention, and carries it out there may be trouble yet, but Gov. Glick says he thinks all will be settled in a few days.
After hearing the committee of 12 from Dodge City, Governor Glick sent this letter to Sheriff George Hinkle:

May 17th 1883

Geo. T. Hinkle
Sheriff of Ford Co

Dr Sir

I understand from the Com-tee of gentlemen, who called on me today that you seem to have understood me as requiring you to protect Luke Short. My advice and directions to you should be understood as requiring you to keep the peace between all parties. I have not regarded Short in this trouble at all, but only the peace and quiet of Dodge City and I have wanted to aid you and support you in doing your duty as the chief peace officer in the county, and in the discharge of that duty I offered you assistance to be under your control and under your orders alone till you advised me that you could not preserve the peace and in that case I would give you more assistance. I am well pleased with your course and the vigilance as to which you have acted & I can assure you shall have my support in the good work that the Gentlemen say you have done and the faithful manner in which you have acted in the discharge of your duty.

Your obt svt

G. W. Glick
Governor

At this point the Santa Fe railroad, perhaps at the governor’s suggestion, instructed its Dodge City representative that he owed it to his company to assume a position of strict neutrality:

ATCHISON, TOPEKA, & SANTA FE RAILROAD CO.

LAW DEPARTMENT.

George R. Peck,
General Solicitor

Hon Geo. W. Glick
Governor

Dear Sir—

I have sent telegram—copy enclosed—to Mr. Sutton at Dodge City. Shall be glad to do anything in my power to aid in restoring quiet.

Yours

G R Peck

The telegram Peck had sent to Mike Sutton read:

ATCHISON, TOPEKA, & SANTA FE RAILROAD CO.

LAW DEPARTMENT.

Telegram via R. R. Line

Geo. R. Peck,
General Solicitor.

Topeka, Kansas, May 17, 1883

M. W. Sutton

Dodge City,

Parties will not return to Dodge. Considering your relation to the Company and our large interests at Dodge City I think you should hold yourself aloof
from both parties to the existing troubles. Do everything you can to allay the excitement, and to prevent any hostility to the company.

Geo. R. Peck. 27

In the afternoon of May 17 Governor Glick began to receive telegraphic reports from Adjutant General Moonlight. Unfortunately the governor’s answers have not been preserved. Moonlight’s first wire arrived in Topeka at 2:25 P. M.:

To Gov. G. W. Glick:
Luke Short to return alone to settle up private business within ten days or until official release of his bond for McCarty and his own bond in city case. All parties agree hereto.

Thomas Moonlight, Adjt. Genl.
L. E. Deger, Mayor
Geo. T. Hinkle, Sheriff

Five minutes later a second wire arrived:

To Gov. Glick:
Short can be protected from public attack but not from private assault. The agreement gives safety. Is best for all concerned and only safe course.

Thos. H. Moonlight.

The adjutant general sent his final wire which arrived in Topeka at 9:06 P. M., May 17:

To Gov. Geo. W. Glick:
Short has a right to come to his home. There will be no open riot or assault. The sheriff will do his duty but cannot protect against private attack. This is Short’s danger. The agreement secures Short publicly and privately. It will be the beginning for reconciliation & harmony will follow. I implore you to accept this beginning and time will do the rest. The Sheriff is earnest but should excitement continue he cannot secure men to do his bidding. I again implore you to advise Short to return on the agreement. All his friends say so and they ought to know. I leave for home in the morning unless you order otherwise. Let me know.

Thos. Moonlight. 28

The Ford County Globe, May 22, 1883, had this to say about Moonlight’s visit:

Col. Thomas Moonlight, the Adjutant General of the state, was in the city all day Thursday, to ferret out, if possible, the late trouble in our midst, and we believe on his return, will show to the governor that the people of our fair hamlet are not half so bad as they were represented to be through the press of the east. In fact, he made diligent search and inquiry, irrespective of persons, cliques and combinations, and impartially listened to all who had anything to relate concerning the trouble that is supposed to exist. We know not what his report may be, but we feel confident that he will do justice to our people and that he will in a great measure refute many of the very exaggerated reports that have been spread broadcast over the land, concerning the insurrection of our inhabitants. Justice is all we want and all our people can reasonably ask for,
On May 20, 1883, the Topeka Commonwealth published a letter from an anonymous Dodgeite refuting the statement published in the Capital on May 18 and signed by Mayor Deger and officials of Dodge City. Though much of the letter was merely a relash of the pro-Short position, some new material was introduced:

**THE FACTS IN THE DODGE CITY MATTER.**

**REPLY TO CAPITAL ARTICLE OF MAY 18TH.**

**DODGE CITY, KAN., MAY 18, 1883.**

**TO THE EDITOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH:**

It is an old saying and a true one that “Might makes right,” and judging by the affairs in Dodge City we almost believe the “old saw.” The article in the Topeka Daily Capital of Friday, May 18th, signed by the mayor and city officers, but publicly fathered by A. B. Webster, misrepresents entirely the affairs in our city. All who live in Dodge City and know the ins and outs of its business know that this feud originated in the jealousy of Webster against the Long Branch saloon, kept by Harris & Short. Webster, as mayor, having shown himself tyrannical and overbearing, found it was impossible for himself to be re-elected. He therefore imported a man who lived outside of the city, an old friend of his from Hays City, named L. E. Deager. Deager is an old “compadre” of Webster’s, and well understood for years to have been his tool. The election resulted in favor of Deager, owing to the importation of illegal railroad votes by M. W. Sutton, the railroad attorney, who is a nephew of Webster, assisted by Drake, a self-constituted guardian of railroad voters. . . . [The paper here repeated the alleged agreement between Deger and Bond & Nixon concerning the operation of dance halls and the difficulty between Short and Hartman.]

A delegation picked and chosen by the Webster faction, headed by Captain Deinse, their chosen judge at the late city election, and composed of twelve men are now visiting Governor Glick on free passes furnished by the A. T. & S. F. railroad, through M. W. Sutton, local attorney of said railroad company. Some of this committee don’t live in or own a cents worth of property in the city. The cowardly attack on Mr. Harris in the said article has caused much comment. His large interests here in cattle and other business, his living here for seven years, his never having been charged with violating the law, make prominent citizens feel and say that the Capital article is venomous, scurrilous and unfair. It is stated in the Capital article that all his interests in Dodge City is a $400 house. It is well known and of record in the state that he is vice-president of Dodge City Bank and owns one-fourth interest in the same. He is also the owner of one-half of the well-known C. O. D. brand of cattle [Chalkley Beeson owning the other portion] and holds a large stock of bonded whisky in Kentucky, and could not wind up his affairs in six months without sacrificing thousands of dollars. He represents more wealth than all the signers of the Capital article combined.

Mr. W. F. Petillion, who is stigmatized and abused as a shyster from Chicago, is a man who came here with his family on account of their health and this climate. He has been here about six years, and has spent more money here than he has made. He is an active, energetic and aggressive politician and believes what he believes very strong. A democrat-dyed in the wool and always takes a strong stand for his friends. This, of course, makes him enemies,
and bitter ones, and the cowardly charge of his malfeasance in office of destroying certain bonds in the McCarty case. The facts in the bond business are as follows: McCarty was found guilty by the jury on Friday evening, and on the same day a motion for a new trial was made by one of his attorneys, and a bond was also given by McCarty and approved by the judge, J. C. Strang, and the bond was kept by the judge and not filed with the clerk. On Monday the motion for a new trial was argued and overruled at 5:30 p.m. The court then adjourned until 7:30 p.m., at which time on the call of the case Mr. Gryden one of McCarty's attorneys, announced that he was unable to find McCarty. The court immediately took a recess, and deputy sheriffs were started to hunt McCarty.

Mr. Petillion during the recess of the court and while the hunt for McCarty was going on, happened in the office of M. W. Sutton, where he met Judge Strang and M. W. Sutton. Judge Strang asked him for the McCarty bond. Petillion told him he did not have the bond, and never had seen it. Then Judge Strang said, "I handed the bond to Sutton to-day, and he (Sutton) said, 'I threw it on your table while you were making out jurors' certificates and it fell at your elbow.'" Petillion then told them it was a careless trick, as he had not seen it. Judge Strang, Sutton and Petillion then went to the court house and searched for the bond and failed to find it. This is the statement of Petillion, which will be sworn to if necessary.

A Lover of Justice and Law.

In the Daily Kansas State Journal, Topeka, May 23, 1883, Luke himself replied to the same Topeka Capital article of May 18, and applied the tar brush with vigor:

SHOTS FROM SHORT.

Topeka, Kan., May 21, 1883.

Editor State Journal:

I hope you will be obliging enough to give me sufficient space in your valuable paper to refute the malicious statement contained in the Topeka Capital of the 18th inst., under the caption of "Plain Statement" coming from Dodge City. It must be apparent to all those who have any direct knowledge of the circumstances that brought about the recent state of affairs at Dodge, that the article referred to was written for the purpose of justifying the parties who participated in running me away from the town; as not one word of truth appeared in the statement, which was unquestionably written by an adviser and principal director of the mob, and who is too cowardly to openly identify himself with them.

I simply refer to Mike Sutton, he who has been playing the part of "Judas" in this matter all through. He endeavors in his carefully prepared statement, which he had signed by all the city officials, to show that it was a fight between the city authorities on one side and the gamblers thugs, thieves and prostitutes on the other, which I denounce as a base, malicious falsehood, at least so far as my side of the question is concerned. Myself and Harris have never championed the cause of thieves, thugs and prostitutes since we had a business in Dodge City, which is more than can be said of those who have opposed us. They have published the lying article for the purpose of blackening the reputation of Mr. Harris and myself, in order to vindicate their own cowardly and
dastardly acts. They speak of Harris not having any interest in the city, and that he only owns one little house, worth $400. To this I will say that he bought this insignificant little house and paid for it and did not obtain it as the writer of the "Plain Statement" obtained his, by jobbing and swearing a poor unfortunate creature into the penitentiary, as he did, in order to get possession of his little homestead.

They speak of Mr. Harris being a man without character and that he is living in an open state of adultery with a prostitute, which is an infamous lie, and I will venture to say that there is not a man in Kansas who knows Mr. Harris but will say that he is an honest and an honorable man, and a good citizen, and can buy and sell every man whose name appears on that official list. As to his living with a prostitute, I consider that a rather broad assertion to make and consider such things his own private affairs and no body's business. I can say however that if the accusation is true it is nothing more than what Sutton, Webster, Diger, Chipman, Hartman, and others of that outfit have done in the past, and are doing at present. Webster abandoned his family for a prostitute, Nixon did the same, and there are only those who cannot get a prostitute to live with, who have not got them, and it is a conceded fact by all who have any knowledge of Dodge, that all the thieves, thugs and prostitutes who have been in the town in the past two years have been directly and indirectly connected with the city government. These assertions I am prepared to prove in any court of justice in the world.

They go further on and state that I am a desperate character, and that not long since I murdered an old grey haired man in Arizona and that I have been run out of nearly every country I have lived in. Which is as infamous as it is false, as there is not a civilized country under the face of the sun that I can not go to with perfect safety, excepting Dodge City, and there is no law to prevent me from living there, nothing but a band of cut throats and midnight assassins, who have banded together for the purpose of keeping all those out of the place who are liable to oppose them at the polls, or offer them opposition in their business.

As to my murdering an old grey haired man in Arizona I was tried in a court of justice for any offence I committed there, and the records will show that it was a fair and impartial trial, and that I was honorably acquitted. The delegation who came here to see the governor, and who claim to represent the moral element of the town, was principally composed of tramps, who do not own a single foot of ground in the country, and never have, and I want to specially refer to the two leading spirits and spokesmen of said delegation, the Rev. Mr. Collins, and Capt. Dinst,—one an itinerant preacher, who by his peregrinations, through charitably disposed committees manages to eke out a miserable existence, and who, on the eve of the last municipal election at Dodge, sold the influence of his congregation and his own, for fifteen dollars; the other, Cap. Dinst, it is positively asserted by the most reputable citizens of Dodge City, was engaged in robbing a safe at the flouring mills owned and operated by one H. F. May. He is a man wholly without character, and cannot get employment of any description with any responsible parties.

They further maliciously and unjustly assail Mr. Petillon because he had the temerity to visit the governor in my behalf, and in behalf of justice. They accuse him of stealing a bond, which he did not do, and which he is prepared to prove he did not do, as he never had the bond in his possession. It is a
fine accusation for such a man as Mike Sutton to make against such a man as Pettilon.

There is not a responsible man in Ford county that believes Pettilon stole the bond, but there is not an honest man in the county but believes Sutton would steal a bond or anything else that he could get his hands on, and they base their opinions on his past record as an official of the county. Every inhabitant of the county knows that not over eight months ago he resigned his position as county attorney in order to accept a two thousand dollar fee to defend one of the most cold blooded murderers that ever appeared in any court of justice. He knew that by resigning he could defeat the ends of justice, as the man whom he had appointed in his stead was wholly incompetent to conduct a successful prosecution and the result was an acquittal and a red-handed murderer turned loose upon the world to repeat his crime. This man was not run out of town or molested by the city officials, who are so loud in their vaunted pretentions of justice.

They state in their article that I attempted to assassinate one of their policemen, and that I fired at him from a place of concealment, which shows it to be a lie on its face, for had I done as they say I did, it would be an easy matter for them to convict me, and they would only be too glad to do so had they the evidence to warrant a conviction, but on the contrary they knew their policeman attempted to assassinate me and I had him arrested for it and had plenty of evidence to have convicted him, but before it came to trial they had organized a vigilance committee and made me leave, so that I could not appear against him. And this is what they call justice and the law abiding element clearing out the lawless characters. If it be true, it is a sad commentary on Kansas justice and those who are supposed to execute the law.

I am invited to return on a pledge given me that I can remain for a period of ten days, and that during that time I will not be in imminent danger of being murdered, but that should I persist in remaining after the allotted time, they then would not be responsible for any personal safety. A very liberal concession on their part I must admit, but I will say for their benefit that I have no desire to accept their terms. I would be afraid of meeting with the fate General Canby met with when he accepted the invitation extended to him by the Modocs. I would sooner trust myself in the hands of a band of wild Apache Indians than trust to the protection of such men as Webster, Nixon and Diger, with Mike Sutton, in the background to perfect the plans of my assassination. When I return, it will be when they least expect me, and it will not be in answer to any invitation which they may extend to me.

In conclusion I will say that they may be able to keep me out of Dodge City by brute force without the sanction of law, but there are many towns in America that I will keep them out of, or make them show a valid cause for remaining.

Respectfully,

Luke Short.

After both sides had relieved themselves verbally, the maneuvering began. On May 21 Bat headed west but went beyond Dodge. Luke traveled to Caldwell. The Dodge City Times, May 24, 1883, told of Bat's passing:

Bat Masterson went west Monday night, passing this city on the cannon
ball train. Some of the citizens of this place went on the train but they could not gain access to the sleeping car which contained the redoubtable Bat. No one in Dodge wants to offer Bat any harm so long as Bat offers no harm himself. The country has been anticipating some fearful things judging from the promulgation of the proposed movement of a notorious gang. But the denouement is just as the people of Dodge City anticipated. We suppose however, few people believed the statements in the Kansas City papers about the proposed action of the gang. And the chief shall flee unto the mountains of Colorado, where the lion roareth and the whangdoodle mourneth for its first born.

Of Luke the Caldwell Journal, May 24, 1883, said:

Luke Short, about whom the fuss at Dodge City was kicked up, arrived here on Monday. Mr. Short is a quiet, unassuming man, with nothing about him to lead one to believe him the desperado the Dodge mob picture him to be. He says the whole trouble arose from business jealousy on the part of Webster, Nixon and others. As to his plans he has nothing to say, but he is determined to take all legal measures possible to secure his rights.

For the next few days, until May 31, 1883, the Dodge City troubles simmered down. Then, at 3:00 P. M., this telegram heralded the re-eruption:

To Geo. W. Glick, Govt.
Can you send Col. Moonlight here tomorrow with power to organize company of militia? I have ample reasons for asking this which I will give to Col. Moonlight so that he can communicate them to you.

Geo. T. Hinkle, Sheriff.

The “ample reasons” were probably embodied in the person of the celebrated individual mentioned in this Ford County Globe item of June 5, 1883:

Wyatt Earp, a former city marshal of Dodge City arrived in the city from the west, last Thursday. Wyatt is looking well and glad to get back to his old haunts, where he is well and favorably known.

The Topeka Daily Commonwealth of June 5, 1883, reported the impending battle:

MORE TROUBLE AT DODGE CITY.

SHORT AND HIS FRIENDS ORGANIZING FOR A
RAID ON THE TOWN—THE LIVELY TIMES
COMING IF THE PLANS ARE SUCCESSFUL.

It appears that there is to be more trouble at Dodge City and less talk than has been indulged in, if the news from there and the indications mean anything. The military organization under the name of the Glick Guards, which was effected a few days ago, is largely composed of men who are friends of Luke Short or enemies of the city administration of Dodge, and so great has been the objection since it was organized that Adjutant General Moonlight has issued an order suspending the organization for the present.
From a gentleman who came in from the west yesterday, we learn that an arrangement has been made for Short's return to Dodge, but that he cannot return peaceably, no matter how willing some of his old enemies may be. He does not trust them himself and will not come back without his friends, and so surely as the two forces meet there will be blood shed. Such is the opinion of men in Dodge and out of that town who should know whereof they speak. All the parties are tired of the life they are forced to lead on account of this trouble and want to end it. When they leave their places of business it is with six-shooters strapped upon them and eyes on the lookout for a hidden enemy. One man prominent in the late trouble said, "I can stand it no longer. It worries the life out of me, and I'm going to sell out and leave."

The rumor that Short intends to return with friends is confirmed by the following, which comes direct to The Commonwealth, and is reliable.

Short's Scheme.

To The Editor of The Commonwealth:

Masterson, Wyatt Earp, and all the sports in the country, held a meeting at Silverton and decided to take Dodge City by storm. Short is at Caldwell but will meet the party at Cimarron, 18 miles west of Dodge, perhaps Sunday night or soon after. Horses will be taken at Cimarron and the whole party will rendezvous at Mr. Oliver's, two miles west of Dodge. Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp are now secretly in Dodge City, watching matters. When the time for action comes a telegram will reach them worded as follows: "Your tools will be there at ______," giving the time agreed upon. The plan is to drive all of Short's enemies out of Dodge at the mouth of the revolvers.

This information is correct. I have it from undoubted authority, and h--l will be to pay at Dodge City soon. I think Gov. Glick has an intimation of it, but am not certain. . . . I write this so you will know all about it when the time comes, and can write intelligently."

As if to still further confirm the report, we learn that Earp and other friends of Short were registered at Kinsley on Sunday at the eating house. They probably left Dodge for further consultation with friends and are preparing to carry out the plan outlined above.

Later.

About 9 o'clock last night it was rumored on the street that a fight had already begun at Dodge City and that Gov. Glick had information of it. A reporter called upon the Governor at once and found him in bed, unable to see visitors. Adjutant-General Moonlight was in the adjoining room and said no information had been received. He stated that the city and county authorities were amply able to take care of themselves and had not asked for assistance. The state could not interfere until they made application for help or said they were unable to preserve the peace. The sheriff has the custody of the arms belonging to the state and under ordinary circumstances ought to be able to take care of the city.

General Moonlight said he had no doubt there would be a fight between the factions, but that he had no information concerning any at that time.

The difficulty in obtaining news from Dodge is well known to our readers, but we hope to keep them posted and shall endeavor to do so.
The adjutant general, too, by this time was becoming a bit disgusted. In a letter to the sheriff he said:

June 4th, 1883.

MR. GEO. T. HINKLE,
Sheriff Dodge City,
Kans.

MY DEAR SIR;

Upon a petition (which was embraced in Special Orders No. 7) signed by 42 of your citizens, and a dispatch from yourself of May 31st, a company of militia was ordered organized, and a copy of the order furnished you. The Governor believed that it was your desire, and the desire of the good people of Dodge City, to possess themselves of a military organization for frontier protection, and as the arms and accoutrements were in Dodge City, the company was ordered mustered into service by Major [Harry E.] Gryden. Today a dispatch was received from Mayor Diger, Geo. M. Hoover, R. M. Wright and Fred Singer acting Sheriff, to stop organization of company on account of excitement.

The Governor desires the peace and quiet of Dodge City and the protection of all her citizens, and cannot understand the various changes of opinion and action among the citizens, as some who signed the petition sign the dispatch. However believing that it might be better to defer the organization for the present, the Governor so telegraphed you, as also Major Gryden, and Mayor Diger and others who signed the dispatch. I have always believed that you could convince the citizens of your county that they were injuring themselves by the bickerings and dissensions that have lately taken place, and have also believed that you could keep and maintain the peace; and the Governor desires me to convey to you this faith and trust in you, and that the arms and accoutrements of the State will be safe in your hands—

The cattle men will soon begin to throng your streets, and all your citizens are interested in the coming— It is your harvest of business and affects every citizen, and I fear unless the spirit of fair play prevails it will work to your business injury. Every man has his friends be he great or small, and I cannot but believe that there will be trouble unless the spirit of proscription ceases to prevail in the council of the city government— I write to you frankly knowing your people and knowing the elements engaged on both sides and being particularly desirous for the welfare and success of Mayor Diger, knowing his people as I have for a long time, I ask you to convey my feelings to Mayor Diger in this respect and wish upon you all a conciliatory policy for a house divided cannot well stand.

I am with much respect
THOMAS MOONLIGHT
Adjutant General.30

The Commonwealth was correct in stating that Earp and Luke Short had met in Kinsley on Sunday, June 3. The Kinsley Graphic, June 7, 1883, reported they had been in town:

Luke Short, Earp and Petillon were in Kinsley last Sunday and took the afternoon train for Dodge City, where they expect to be joined by Shotgun Collins and Bat Masterson. Unless the authorities of Dodge back down we may expect some lively news from that city this week.
The big news broke and the *Ford County Globe*, June 5, 1883, prophetically sized it up with this simple statement: "Luke Short returned to the city Sunday afternoon, and we believe he has come to stay."

By the evening of the day following Luke’s return, Sheriff Hinkle despaired of peace settling over the town. In a telegram to Governor Glick he said:

I think it impossible to prevent a fight but we will try to arrest and lock up every one engaged in it. We stopped all gambling today. An agreement was made allowing Luke Short to return to Dodge City on condition he would send his fighters out of town which he has failed to do. I think a fight imminent.

A special dispatch to the Leavenworth *Times*, June 5, 1883, explained Hinkle’s reference to the prohibition on gambling:

**GOING FOR GAMBLERS.**

**A Positive Proclamation.**

**The Dodge City Gambling Houses Closed By Order of Mayor Deger—**

**The Alleged Cause of the Issuance of the Order.**

**Dodge City, Kan., June 4. [Special]—**Mayor Deger to-day issued a proclamation in which he ordered the closing of all the gambling places. This action on the part of the mayor was brought about by the failure of Short’s friends in fulfilling the compromise agreed upon, which was to the effect that Short should return peaceably and that several hard characters here, in his interest, should leave town. Their failure to leave to-day caused the issuance of the proclamation. As soon as the proclamation was issued every gambling place in the city was promptly closed, and have remained closed until this hour. Whether the trouble will end here, it is hard to determine.

On the night of June 5, 1883, Maj. Harry Gryden wired the adjutant general: “Everything here settled. Parties have shook hands across the bloody chasm. A number of men with a record are here but all is lovely.”

Gryden’s telegram was received in Topeka at 8:23 A. M., June 6, 1883, just two minutes before this telegram of an entirely different nature, addressed to Governor Glick:

Our city is overrun with desperate characters from Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and California. We cannot preserve the peace or enforce the laws, Will you send in two companies of militia at once to assist us in preserving the peace between all parties and enforcing the laws.

Geo. T. Hinkle, Sheriff  
L. E. Deger, Mayor  
N. B. Klaire, Post Master  
Geo. S. Emerson, Councilman  
F. C. Zimmerman  
Hon. R. M. Wright, Co. Commissioner.

The governor wired back: “Moonlight will go there on first train. Keep me fully advised of the situation.” Moonlight wired militia major Harry Gryden: “Keep peace at all hazards—will be at Dodge tonight—meet me.”
Twenty minutes after the adjutant general boarded the noon train for Dodge City this telegram was received by Governor Glick:

The difficulty is all settled. Shorts fighters have left town. I am satisfied we will not have any more trouble.

Geo. T. Hinkle,
Sheriff.

Events were happening so quickly that the *Daily Kansas State Journal*, June 7, 1883, had difficulty keeping up with them in a single article:

A HOWL FOR HELP.

**The City of Dodge Surging to the Front Again With Its Sensation.**

Trouble at Dodge City is not over with yet. A call came to Governor Glick this morning, for assistance. It was signed by the sheriff, Mayor [omission] Bob Wright and others. They fear an outbreak from Luke Short and want militia to protect them. Adjutant General Moonlight went down on the noon train and will arrive there at 12 o'clock to-night. No action is to be taken by the governor, until he is heard from, further than that Sheriff Hinkle has been ordered to keep the peace. He has fifty Winfield rifles in his possession and one thousand rounds of ammunition. The general took a supply of ammunition with him, and if it becomes absolutely necessary, troops will be ordered at once to Dodge City. When Moonlight gets there and learns the true situation he will probably make the fur fly, one way or the other. Yesterday evening, an agreement was made between both factions at Dodge, that they would drop their differences and declare peace.

Short and his friends are there, and were parties to the compact. Short went back home Monday evening, by invitation of the citizens on condition that he give $1,000 bonds to keep the peace, which was done, and a man who is in this city now, that has stood steadily by him through the whole difficulty went his security. In an interview with him, the JOURNAL reporter learns that Short has proposed to act white this time, but the other side broke its pledges and is to blame—in fact has been from the start. A few hot headed officials, backed by half the gambling and sporting fraternity undertook to run the other half out, and the break is now having its reaction. They have found the game one that two can play at. The renewed hostilities this morning seem to be of a more serious nature than at any previous time, and the antagonizing element is sufficiently alarmed to want the aid of military interference and protection. There seems to be a general opinion, now very frequently expressed here, that a few of the ring leaders ought to be allowed to fight and kill each other off if they want to.

**The Very Latest.**

Governor Glick received the following dispatch this afternoon: [the Hinkle wire announcing the settling of difficulties was reprinted here].

Those who have watched the row all along, are inclined to believe that this is no indication as yet that trouble is over. Another call for the “milish” is expected by tomorrow morning.

Bat Masterson told of his triumphant entry into the town now

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bursting with brotherly love in a letter which was partially reprinted in the *Daily Kansas State Journal*, June 9, 1883:

**MASTERCSON’S MUSINGS.**

**AMONG OTHER THINGS FROM DODGE “BAT” MASTERSON TELLS THE SITUATION.**

All information from Adjutant-General Moonlight indicate that the war at Dodge City is actually over and peace has been declared sure enough. Luke Short, however, comes out on top as usual, and is again sporting in the playful sunlight beneath his own vine and fig tree.

Of the situation, as it is now, Hon. W. B. Masterson, ex-sheriff of Ford county, writes in a letter to his friends here as follows, under date of June 6th:

“T arrived here yesterday and was met at the train by a delegation of friends who escorted me without molestation to the business house of Harris & Short. I think the inflammatory reports published about Dodge City and its inhabitants have been greatly exaggerated and if at any time they did ‘don the war paint,’ it was completely washed off before I reached here. I never met a more gracious lot of people in my life. They all seemed favorably disposed, and hailed the return of Short and his friends with exultant joy. I have been unable as yet to find a single individual who participated with the crowd that forced him to leave here at first. I have conversed with a great many and they are unanimous in their expression of love for Short, both as a man and a good citizen. They say that he is gentlemanly, courteous and unostentatious—‘in fact a perfect ladies’ man.’ Wyatt Earp, Charley Bassett, McClain and others too numerous to mention are among the late arrivals, and are making the ‘Long Branch’ saloon their headquarters. All the gambling is closed in obedience to a proclamation issued by the mayor, but how long it will remain so I am unable to say at present. Not long I hope. The closing of this ‘legitimate’ calling has caused a general depression in business of every description, and I am under the impression that the more liberal and thinking class will prevail upon the mayor to rescind the proclamation in a day or two.”

Although the dove of peace had settled on Dodge City—gently, as is wont with doves—the news, nevertheless, took several days to reach all portions of the state. The Kansas City (Mo.) *Evening Star* did not have it on June 7:

**KILLERS AT DODGE.**

**THE FAMOUS BAND ARRIVE THERE AT LAST.**

The much talked of band of noted killers who were to congregate here and accompany Luke Short, the exile, back to Dodge City, Kas., are in part at least, at that place now. Advices from there state that Luke Short, Bat Masterson, Charley Bassett and Doc Holliday at present hold the fort and that trouble is liable to ensue at any moment. Mr. Bassett was here for quite a time and with Col. Ricketts at the Marble Hall. He is a man of undoubted nerve and has been tried and not found wanting when it comes to a personal encounter. But Masterson and Doc. Holliday are too well known to need comment or biography. A notice has been posted up at Dodge ordering them out and, as they are fully armed and determined to stay, there may be hot work there to-night.
By June 8 the Topeka Daily Commonwealth was reporting everything serene, in Dodge:

ALL QUIET AT DODGE.

DODGE CITY, June 7.—Adjutant General Thos. Moonlight has been here for the past twenty-four hours and has succeeded in effecting an amicable settlement between the warring factions. He will leave for Topeka to-night. The Short faction are in the ascendency, so to speak, but are peaceably disposed. There is no danger of trouble. The organization of the militia company, which some days ago was stopped by the governor, will be perfected and the commissions of the various officers will soon arrive; so says Col. Moonlight.

On June 10 Bat and Wyatt Earp left Dodge headed west. Upon their going Mike Sutton probably felt he could now return to his place of business, so said the Larned Optic, quoted in the Ford County Globe, June 12, 1883:

MIKE SUTTON, my lord is an exoduster from Dodge. On the return of Luke Short and his friends, it didn’t take Mike long to arrive at the conclusion that Kinsley was a much healthier locality, and that town is now his abiding place. Net [Nelson Adams] sends greetings to Mike, and a notification that Larned is quarantined against him. When Dodge becomes too hot for Mike Sutton h—I itself would be considered a cool place—a desirable summer resort.

In another column the Globe right unneighborly went on:

As soon as Bat Masterson alighted from the train on his late arrival into this city Mike Sutton started for his cyclone building on Gospel Ridge, where he remained until a truce was made.

In the same issue, June 12, 1883, the Globe thus summarized this so-called “Dodge City war,” an event that was apparently destined to go down in history as a war to preserve the rights of “singing ladies,” i.e., until the above related facts could be assembled:

Our city trouble is about over and things in general will be conducted as of old. All parties that were run out have returned and no further effort will be made to drive them away. Gambling houses, we understand, are again to be opened, but with screen doors [probably ornate oriental type door shields designed to obscure the view from one room to another rather than fly screens] in front of their place of business. A new dance house was opened Saturday night where all the warriors met and settled their past differences and everything was made lovely and serene. All opposing factions, both saloon men and gamblers met and agreed to stand by each other for the good of their trade. Not an unlooked for result.

The mayor stood firm on his gambling proclamation, but as his most ardent supporters have gone over to his enemies, it will stand without that moral support he had calculated upon to help him in enforcing it. We have all along held that our mayor was over advised in the action he has taken and had he followed his own better judgment, and not the advice of schemers and tricksters who had selfish interests at stake, and not the best interests of this community, he would have fared much better. No one knows this now any
better than himself. He has freed himself from that cropped-winged moral
element and stands on the side of the business interests of Dodge.

The Globe, June 12, 1883, also said, with what seems a bit of
pardonable pride:

Within the past week the city had more distinguished visitors and more
ex-city and county officers in it than we ever saw together at any one time.
It was a regular reunion of old-timers. They all appeared to have some say
about our late trouble and felt a deep interest in the future prosperity of our
city.

The Dodge City Times struck a discordant note by listing the
visitors as Shot Gun Collins, Black Jack Bill, Cold Chuck Johnny,
Dynamite Sam, Dark Alley Jim, Dirty Sock Jack, Six-toed Pete, and
Three Fingered Dave.33

Before Bat and Wyatt left town the group gathered for a now
historic photograph (See between pp. 80, 81). The Times, June
14, 1883, recorded the event:

The photographs of the eight visiting “statesmen” were taken in a group
by Mr. Conkling, photographer. The distinguished bond extractor and cham-
pion pie eater, W. F. Petillon, appears in the group.

Just as Adjutant General Moonlight had promised, the local militia
unit was commissioned and given the name “Glick Guards.” Within
its ranks were both former pro-Short and pro-Deger men. Truly,
the Dodge City war was over. The captain of the unit was Pat
Sughrue and the second lieutenant was James H. Kelley, both Short
adherents. The surgeon, Dr. S. Calland was a former Deger man.
In the ranks could be found Neil Brown, C. E. Chipman, W. H.
Harris, W. F. Petillon, Luke Short, I. P. Olive, and William M.
Tilghman.34

In August Luke had the police judge of Dodge City arrested.
Possibly some remaining hard feelings of the troubles of May and
June were the reason. The Times, August 23, 1883, reported:

ARRESTED.

Police Judge Burns was arrested and brought yesterday, before Justice Cook,
on complaint sworn out by Luke Short, in which he is charged with misconduct
in office and the collection of illegal fees. Judge Burns has incurred the
enmity of those who unfortunately come under his official jurisdiction. He has
spared no one, having inflicted heavy fines upon every one brought before him
for violation of law.

There is a certain clique in this city that feel the legal halter drawing tighter
and tighter, with an ultimate tightening of grasp never to be loosened. The
law is coming down upon indecent conduct and illegitimate traffic, and the
handwriting is so plain that some means must be used to thwart the swift
and impending justice. The arrest of Judge Burns will not accomplish the
purpose desired. On the contrary, law-breakers will feel the full power of justice. Threats of assassination will not deter the administration of the law.

Luke and his friend Bat Masterson journey to Fort Worth, Tex., in November, 1883. The Dodge City Times article reporting this has been reprinted in the section on Bat. Luke had sold his interest in the Long Branch as had his partner, Harris. The Ford County Globe, November 20, 1883, carried their notice of dissolution:

A Card.—We take this opportunity in informing our numerous patrons and friends that we have this day sold out our interest in the Long Branch saloon and billiard hall to Mr. [Roy] Drake and [Frank] Warren, who will continue the business and are authorized to collect and receipt for all accounts due us. Any accounts against the late firm will be settled by us. Thanking past patrons for their many favors shown us, and trust the new firm may receive a like generous treatment at their hands.

November 19, 1883.

W. H. HARRIS.
LUKE SHORT.

Perhaps Luke had seen opportunities in Texas and decided to transfer his operations to that locale. In another column the Globe had said:

Luke Short came up from Texas during the past week, spending several days here, during which time he sold his interest in the Long Branch and returns to Fort Worth, Texas, accompanied by W. B. Masterson.

On December 28, 1883, Luke returned to Dodge for a visit. The Globe, January 1, 1884, reported:

Luke Short and Chas. E. Bassett returned to the city last Friday looking well, and show that they have been kindly treated by their friends in the east. They will remain here until after the holidays.

Luke's friend, W. F. Petillon, now editor of the Dodge City Democrat, merely said in his issue of December 29, 1883: "Ex-Sheriff Bassett and Luke Short are in town, both looking as if the Missouri Sunday law agreed with their corporosities." The Democrat, May 10, 1884, again mentioned that Luke was in town: "Luke Short is here from Fort Worth. He will remain until after the arrival of St. John and Campbell [ex-Governor John P. St. John and A. B. Campbell, ardent prohibitionists], as he is anxious to meet these learned gentlemen." Perhaps the last was written with tongue in cheek!

Along in the summer of 1884 Luke decided to sue the city of Dodge for throwing him out in 1883. Petillon announced the action in the Democrat of August 9, 1884: "Luke Short has now sued this city for $15,000 damages for the trouble he was put to sometime ago. Summons was served on our Mayor [no longer Larry
Deger but now George M. Hoover[, while at Larned last Monday."
The city employed the county attorney to represent it in the case:

The city council have employed county attorney Whitelaw to appear for
them, in the case of Luke Short against Dodge City, pending in the Pawnee
county district court, and have agreed to pay him $250 retainer, and $740 ad-
ditional if he wins the case, or reduces the judgment asked for to $500. Mr.
Whitelaw agrees to furnish any counsel he may need to assist him in the de-
fense.35

The case was eventually settled out of court.

The next time Kansas newspapers carried the name of Luke Short
they were announcing his final days on earth. Luke, with his wife
and his brother, Young Short from Kiowa, Barber county, checked
in at the Gilbert hotel in Geuda Springs, Sumner county, about
August 25, 1893. Geuda Springs was at that time a renowned
health resort, its springs reportedly containing health-restoring
minerals. Luke was suffering from dropsy.

The springs did not help Luke, however, and in less than a month
he was dead. The Geuda Springs Herald, September 8, 1893, re-
corded his passing:

Luke Short died at the Gilbert this morning of dropsy. The remains were
embalmed by W. A. Repp today and will be shipped this evening to Ft. Worth,
Tex. The remains will be accompanied by the wife and two brothers of the
deceased.

The Dodge City Democrat, in its parting salute, September 16,
1893, went overboard when it said: "Thus ends the life of one of the
most noted and daring men in the west."36

1. In 1877 the Long Branch saloon, on Front street, was owned by D. D. Colley and
J. M. Manion. Chalkley Beeson and W. H. Harris owned the Saratoga five or six doors
east of the Long Branch. About March 1, 1878, Chalk Beeson purchased from Robert M.
Wright the building in which the Long Branch was located, possession to be "in a few
weeks." Colley and Manion moved one door west into the Alamo saloon which had been
operated by George M. Hoover, and H. V. Cook.

The Alamo was actually a sample room and billiard hall run in conjunction with Wright,
Beverley & Co.'s mercantile store next door west. The Alamo should not be confused
with George M. Hoover's wholesale liquor house at No. 39 Front street, just east of the
Long Branch.

Strangely, as these changes were made the saloon names stayed with the building,
instead of following the prior owners.—See Dodge City Times, December 22, 1877; March
2, 1878.

2. Ford County Globe, Dodge City, March 20, 1883. 3. Ibid. 4. Dodge City
Times, April 5, 1883. 5. Both ordinances were published in the official city paper, the
Dodge City Times. 6. See, also, the Topeka Daily Commonwealth, May 2, 1883. 7.
"Governors' Correspondence," archives division, Kansas State Historical Society. 8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. 10. See, also, Kansas City (Mo.) Evening Star, May, 1883; Kansas City Journal,
May, 1883; Topeka Daily Capital, May, 1883; Topeka Daily Kansas State Journal, May,
1883. 11. Luke was confused; May, 1883, began on Tuesday. 12. "Governors' Cor-
respondence," loc. cit. 13. Ibid. 14. Ibid. 15. Ibid. 16. Ibid. 17. Ibid. 18. See,
also, Topeka Daily Kansas State Journal, May 12, 13, 1883. 19. "Governors' Cor-
respondence," loc. cit. 20. See, also, Kansas City (Mo.) Evening Star, May 15, 1883. 21.
COWTOWN POLICE OFFICERS AND GUN FIGHTERS


SINGER, FREDERICK

(1852—___)

Fred Singer was another Dodgeite, in a long list, who held positions at nearly every level of governmental police responsibility. He had been a township constable before he was appointed under sheriff of Ford county by newly elected Sheriff George T. Hinkle on January 12, 1880. Singer was apparently well thought of in Dodge for the Ford County Globe, January 20, 1880, called him “a straightforward, honest man” and added “we trust he may never give anyone cause to speak otherwise of him.”

Hardly had Singer entered upon the duties of his new office, however, when he came down with a severe case of diphtheria and was temporarily replaced by Ed Cooley. By February 10 the under sheriff was again on his feet and tending his duties.

Fred Singer was probably 27 years old when he was sworn as under sheriff. The 1880 United States census, enumerated in Dodge township on June 6, listed him as being 28 years old, his wife Lula was 18. He was born in Wales, she in Missouri.

The first year of the Hinkle-Singer reign was a quiet one, most of their duties consisting of delivering prisoners to the state penitentiary at Leavenworth. The newspaper notices telling of these trips have been reprinted in the section on Hinkle.

On April 6, 1881, Fred Singer was appointed city marshal of Dodge. He and his assistant, Tom Nixon, were to replace Marshal Jim Masterson and Assistant Neil Brown whom the new city council did not see fit to retain. One of the marshal’s first performances which were reported in the local papers was printed in the Ford County Globe, May 3, 1881, and was somewhat less than the glamorous image in the minds of most latter day Western fans: “Marshal Singer was seen headed for the City Pound on the 1st inst., having a hog by the ear and a dog by the extreme appendage.”

The new marshal also held a position on the county police force, and about the first of May traveled to Pueblo, Colo., to receive a prisoner, a railroad man, with the legendary name of John Henry. The Dodge City Times, May 5, 1881, reported:

John Henry, a railroad employee, was arrested last summer on a charge of
grand larceny, but was discharged on a want of insufficient testimony. He was lately rearrested in Wyoming territory, by Deputy U. S. Marshal C. B. Jones, and the prisoner was brought to this city last week from Pueblo by Deputy Sheriff Fred Singer. John Henry made his escape from the train while in the temporary charge of a guard, but was soon recaptured. A preliminary examination was had and the prisoner was bound over. It is said sufficient evidence has been collected to warrant conviction.

Another railroad man was arrested by Singer on May 16. The Globe, May 17, 1881, told of it:

Marshall Singer, on last night took in Charley McCollum, fireman on the switch engine of this city for relieving a brother railroad man of seventy-five dollars in cash and a gold watch and chain, which robbing occurred some time during the night. The watch and chain as well as a portion of the money was in possession of aforesaid individual, who is now awaiting his preliminary in the county jail.

Dodge City, now almost nine years old, was emerging from its days as a frontier village into the status of a full fledged city. At least it had reached the place where it was thought that the police should wear conforming uniforms. The Ford County Globe, May 31, 1881, said: "City Marshal Singer and Assistant Nixon came out in the standard uniform of navy blue last week, and their appearance is like that of metropolitan officers." And the Times, May 5, 1881, remarked: "Who says Dodge City isn't 'tony?'"

Still another railroader was the accidental victim of the marshal's marksmanship on July 22, 1881. The Dodge City Times, July 28, recounted the story:

Joseph McDonald was shot by Marshal Singer Friday night last and died three hours afterward. The circumstances which led to the shooting are as follows: The woman to whom Nate Hudson willed $8,000 sent word to the marshal that three men were prowling around her house, and from their suspicious actions she believed they were trying to rob her. Marshal Singer obeyed the woman's request, and when near the premises, in a thick growth of sunflowers, was commanded to halt by McDonald, the latter raising his arm horizontally, as though in the act of firing. The marshal apprehended some danger from this movement, and not knowing whether the man had a pistol or not, raised his weapon and fired, the shot striking McDonald in the hand and passing into his right side, causing death in three hours. The wounded man remarked that his brother shot him. He gave no account of his wandering in the vicinity of the woman's premises.

McDonald was in the employ of the railroad company, and in company with another man came down from Syracuse on Thursday, the day previous to the shooting. He was in questionable company on that day, though this circumstance had no bearing on the shooting, but there is an impression that robbery was the design. Marshal Singer's quick forethought and knowledge of frontier pistol practice, prompted him to make defense when halted in the darkness and almost hid from view of the person who commanded him to halt. The ball entering the hand and striking the right side at a direct angle would in-
dicate that McDonald held his hand in the position ascribed by the marshal.

A coroner's jury was summoned and an inquest held over the body. The
verdict was justifiable homicide.

The deceased was 23 years of age. The body was sent to Topeka, where
the parents of the unfortunate young man live.

At the inquest held over McDonald’s body, Marshal Singer had
testified:

I am city marshal of Dodge City; was sitting in front of Peacock’s in a chair
between 11 and 12 o’clock. A little Mexican came and asked me to take a
walk. I said certainly I will go. Started with him and got about half way
over to Johnson’s blacksmith shop; while we were walking together he said
that May Ingram had been looking for Tom Bugg [a deputy sheriff] but did
not think she had found him; that some parties had been prowling around Sarah
Ratzell’s house, and that she thought they were going to rob her. The Mexican
said I had better go and get a gun. I told him no, that it was not necessary.
We then went over to Mrs. Woodard’s house, near Johnson’s shop, where Sadie
Ratzell was; Sadie and Tom Bugg were sitting on the porch when the Mexican
and myself got there. I said to Sadie to come into the room that I wished to
speak with her. Asked her if she had any money there; said no, that she had
deposited it in town. Mrs. Peacock had before told me that the said Sadie
had $575 in her trunk, and she was mighty foolish for keeping it there. I
said to Sadie as she had a good deal of money and intended leaving very soon
that she had better take only enough to defray expenses and take a check for
balance, and then draw the same through some bank wherever she might be.
Afterwards we walked out on the porch; I sat down on the porch; I believe
she sat in a chair; I sat there about five minutes; I saw a man walking back
of Johnson’s shop, going northeast; I walked out to see who it was; I got within
about thirty feet of him; he started out in the weeds and turned and threw
his hand out, just as if he was going to shoot, and said, “Stand!” He said it
very emphatically. When he threw up his hand and commenced to say the
word I drew out my gun, and fired. I know Geo. Early [McDonald’s com-
panion] as one of the two fellows that I ordered out of town. The other fellow
wore eye-glasses, and was fined in the Police Court.

Tom Bugg testified:

I am deputy sheriff; I was notified by Dutch Jake that May Ingram was
looking for me. Jake said that May Ingram wanted me to go to the house
where Sadie Ratzell was stopping; that two or three men had been around
there since early after dark. Went up to the brick store with Brick Bond, thence
to the dance hall, and from there to Johnson’s house, on the corner; left Brick
Bond at the last named place, when I went to the house and dwelling of Mrs.
Woodard. We stayed there about twenty minutes, when Bond left. I remained
sometime afterwards. Mr. Singer and the little Mexican came after Mr. Bond
had left. After Mr. Singer came I went with Mrs. Woodard over to Andy
Johnson’s house, while Mr. Singer remained at the house of Mrs. Woodard.
I was gone with her four or five minutes before I returned to the place where
I had left Singer. On my return I thought I heard some one going between
Johnson’s blacksmith shop. I popped between the two buildings, thence to
Mrs. Woodard's porch. When I stepped on the porch referred to I heard some one say, "Halt!" or, "Stop!" A shot was fired immediately thereafter; the flash made everything dark. I then went in the direction of the firing; met Fred Singer, and asked him if some one had shot him, answered no; "I think I have shot some body." Asked him who, said he did not know. I then went to Mrs. Woodard's and got a match, returned to the man that was shot, lit some matches, turned him over and asked him his name and where he was shot, and he said through the breast and that his name was McDonald. Myself and others took him to the restaurant and from there to the southeast room of Hudson's dance hall. The man upon whom this inquisition is being held I identify as the man that was shot; saw one man moving near Mrs. Woodard's house in a suspicious manner about three-quarters of an hour before the shooting took place.  

After the shooting of McDonald, Marshal Singer apparently created no news, for the town's newspapers gave him little notice until his announced resignation was published in the November 1, 1881, issue of the Ford County Globe. The Dodge City Times, November 3, 1881, said:

Fred Singer has resigned the office of City Marshal, and Mayor [A. B.] Webster has appointed B. C. Vandenberg to the position. Mr. Singer made an energetic and attentive officer. He was always on duty, and faithfully discharged his trust. Fred gave up the office in order to engage in more profitable business.

The work Singer chose was saloonkeeping. The Times, November 3, 1881, ran this ad:

Old House—Fred Singer has taken charge of the "Old House," lately occupied by Mr. Webster. Fred is an excellent caterer to the taste of thirsty people. His place will be a popular resort in Dodge City. The Brower Bros. have opened a restaurant in the "Old House" and a "square meal" on the European plan may be had by the hungry and fastidious visitors.

Singer still held his county commission and a few months later he was called upon to arrest a soldier at Fort Dodge. The man was not to be found, according to the Dodge City Times, June 1, 1882:

A soldier broke open the city prison and liberated a fellow soldier confined there. A warrant was issued for the arrest of the soldier, and under-sheriff Singer and Marshal Vandenberg went down to the Fort to arrest the man, but he was either concealed or had flown. It was said he had deserted.

After a group of festive Kearny county cowboys had gaily shot up the Santa Fe's eastbound No. 6, at Lakin on October 18, 1882, Undersheriff Fred Singer rounded them up with the aid of a Ford county posse. Kearny county came under the undersheriff's authority since, being unorganized, it was attached to Ford for judicial
The Ford County Globe, October 24, 1882, described the crime and the capture:

DESPERATE DOINGS
OF A PARTY OF COW-BOYS AT LAKIN.
THEIR CAPTURE BY A DODGE CITY POSSE.

When train No. 6, due in Dodge City at 12:45 p.m. pulled up to the depot last Wednesday, the coaches presented the appearance of having undergone a heavy siege, the north windows of the entire train being completely demolished, while the side of the cars underneath was perforated with numerous bullet holes, the result of an attack on the train by a party of cow-boys at Lakin, the particulars of which are as follows:

Frank Meade, who had been in the employ of the railroad company for some time past as night operator at Lakin, was discharged on Monday of last week, for drunkenness and general cussedness, and in company with a trio of friendly cow boys proceeded to drown his troubles in an overdose of conversational fluid. On the same day the party attended the funeral of a deceased cow-boy at Deerfield and while there attempted to board the engine of a freight train, culminating in a fight with engineer Norton, in which the cow-boys and operator were badly worsted. The following morning the four returned to Lakin, vowing to shoot Norton on his next trip west, and for that purpose, armed with Winchester and six-shooters kept a close surveillance over all trains arriving from the east, but failed to discover their man, as he had been notified of their intentions, and in consequence changed off at Garden City and returned to Dodge.

Wednesday morning, train No. 6 due at Lakin about 10 o'clock, was detained some twenty minutes in consequence of a broken draw-head. While the train men were repairing the damage, the friends of Meade mounted their horses and charged up and down the depot platform in veritable cow-boy style, whooping and yelling in demoniac glee, discharging their arms at the coaches, all of which were well filled with passengers, and clubbing in the windows with their revolvers. Four bullets entered the coaches, while dozens were imbedded in the wood work underneath the windows. A lady whose name we failed to learn was severely cut about the face by the smashing of a window at which she was sitting. The citizens of Lakin were completely terrorized and powerless against them, as they were known to be heavily armed and desperate men.

The facts of the attack were at once forwarded to Superintendent Nickerson who telegraphed Sheriff Hinkle to have a posse in readiness to proceed to Lakin by a special train immediately after the arrival of No. 6 at Dodge City. Upon receipt of the telegram, with the promptness characteristic of Ford county officials, Under Sheriff Fred. Singer and posse, consisting of Brick Bond, Al. Updegraff, Tom Bugg, R. G. Cook, Joe Morgan, Jack Marshall, Henry Smith, Ed. Bower, Charles Dowd and O. D. Wilson, all heavily armed; M. W. Sutton, representing the railroad company; Station Agent Graves, and Frank Wandress, representing the Globe, boarded the special, and immediately after the arrival of No. 6, took their departure for Lakin. The train was in charge of Conductor G. W. Stover; engine 25, Harry Forges at the lever. The run from Dodge City to Lakin, seventy-two miles was made in one hour and fifty five minutes, including a stop at Pierceville for water.
Upon arriving at Lakin, several horses were discovered tied in front of a store immediately in the rear of the depot, and as the posse left the car and made a run for the horses, two cow-boys made their exit from the building and with drawn revolvers attempted to mount the animals. But they were too late, for a dozen Winchesters in the hands of men who never failed in bringing a desperado to terms, were frowning upon them from every side, and considering discretion the better part of valor, they gracefully acquiesced to the command of “hands up” and were taken in charge of by the officers. Their names are John Rivers and Peter Corder, their occupation herdmen, and this, we are told, is the first affair of the kind in which they have been interested. When captured each had in his possession a six-shooter. They were taken into the waiting room of the depot, shackled together and guarded by a detachment of the posse.

At this juncture Tom Bugg, who had been in search of Meade, the operator and supposed instigator of the difficulty, emerged from the pump house with his trophy by the ear. Meade had been in a state of semi-oblivion throughout the day by quaffing too freely of what the law forbids, and gave himself up without any resistance.

Upon inquiry, it was ascertained that the ringleader of the party, John Cass by name, was quartered in a house of ill-fame about a mile west of the depot, and Messrs. Singer, Bond, Updegraff and Morgan mounted the only available horses in the place and started in quest of their man, who they had been informed would not be likely to surrender without a fight, as he is considered the most reckless man and best shot in that section. They were discovered by the desperado when about a hundred yards from the house, and he at once mounted his horse and galloped toward the north, giving them a parting shot or two as he scampered over the prairie. The quartette of officers gave hot pursuit and returned the fire of the fugitive with a will. The chase was kept up for a mile or more with a rapid exchange of shots, when a well-directed shot from one of the officers crippled the horse of Cass in such a manner as to make him worthless for a long chase. Cass thereupon abandoned his horse and sought shelter in a dug-out about a mile north of the depot, and as he had shown himself as a man of superior fighting calibre, and was well armed, a consultation was held to consider the best means of dislodging him without endangering the lives of any of the officers. The dug-out was then surrounded and a brisk fire opened upon it, during which the horse of Cass, which was grazing in front of the dug-out door, was shot by the officers and rolled over dead.

As “a man from Texas” is no man without his horse, Cass gave up all hopes of escape at the death of the animal, and displayed a flag of truce through the door of the dug-out, following it himself a moment later. With hands up and under cover of the rifles, he advanced toward the officers, was safely corralled and searched. Besides the regulation Winchester and six-shooter taken from his person, there was fished from the depths of his saddle-bags a quart of Lakin fire-water, which in itself is quite a formidable arsenal, as we can vouch for its accuracy at forty yards or even less. During the running fight, Mr. Singer twice cut the fringe from Cass’ buckskin leggins, while he in return came within an inch of taking off one of Mr. Singer’s ears, and with another shot attempted to decrease the proportions of Al. Updegraff’s nasal appendage, which he missed by only a hair’s breadth. Cass is the “bad man” of the party, and it is rumored, with a strong ground of probability, that he is one of the
parties implicated in the murder of Marshal Meagher at Caldwell early last spring.

The prisoners were given a preliminary examination before Justice Dillon, who bound them over in $1,500 each to the February term of the district court to answer to the charge of assault with intent to kill. Immediately after the hearing the prisoners were taken to the train, brought to Dodge City, and quartered in the county jail where ample time will be afforded them of dwelling on the vicissitudes of western life, and repenting the act which will in all probability place them for several years to come where the dogs won't bite or the pesky fleas annoy them.

Notwithstanding the fact that the merchants of our city keep constantly on hand a well assorted stock of arms, ammunition and ready made coffins, Dodge has proved to be, under the present municipal administration, not only a law-abiding but a law preserving community. Her officers are ever ready to protect the lives and property of citizens or corporations, which fact is fully appreciated by the railroad officials in their selection at all times and under all circumstances of Dodge City men for work requiring the administration of law and the capture of fugitives from justice.6

On February 17, 1883, Singer and Deputy Sheriff H. P. (or Charles) Myton delivered eight prisoners to the penitentiary.7 A couple of weeks later they journeyed south to capture one Jack McCarty who was soon to die from small pox. The Dodge City Times, March 1, 1883, stated:

Under Sheriff Singer, Deputy Sheriff Myton and Jos. Morgan were the parties who went after McCarty, but they abandoned him, and the remains were taken charge of by Tom McIntire, who brought the body to 5-mile Hollow, south of Dodge, where he buried the remains. The city authorities forbade the bringing of the body through the city. A simple board indicates the burial spot.

As a police officer Singer had a part in the famous "Dodge City war" of 1883. The small role he played has been covered in the section on Luke Short.

Fred Singer was being mentioned as a candidate for sheriff as early as August, 1883. At that date, long before any nominating conventions had assembled, it was generally known that Singer and Patrick F. Sughrue would battle for the important office.8 As election time neared the fight became heated, possibly because of the troubles, of the preceding spring for Singer was of the Deger faction and Sughrue was of the Short crowd.

On November 6, 1883, the day of the election, the regular edition of the Ford County Globe came out with two stories designed to injure Singer at the polls. The first had to do with his attempt to arrest Jack McCarty last winter:
Another chapter in the history of the opposition’s candidate for sheriff.

When McCarty was lying sick at a ranch south of Dodge City, Sheriff Singer, Mr. Chas. Myton and Jas Morgan were sent out to capture McCarty, under a promise of a three hundred dollar reward, made by the Kaiser of the Board of County Commissioners. A promise they had no more right to make them than the writer of this article, but the reward was paid and Ford county tax payers will have to pay their part of it. It may be a matter of news to some of our tax payers to know that the said Board of County Commissioners are personally liable for the said reward.

To return to our story, when Mr. Singer and his two assistants arrived at the ranch, thinking that discretion would be the better part of valor, halted, and the lady living at the ranch was hailed, and asked whether the said McCarty was there, she answered yes; they then asked her whether there were any guns in the house; she answered, plenty of them. They also asked her whether she thought that McCarty would make a fight, she said he would to a certainty. They, the posse, then told the lady of the house that if she would go in the house and would succeed in getting all the guns outside of the house, so that they could capture McCarty without taking any chances at all, they then would give her one hundred and fifty dollars, which would be half of the whole reward which they were to receive. She agreed to the said proposition and went to the house and put all the guns on the outside of the house, and the posse then had an easy capture, as McCarty was then lying on his death bed.

After they received the reward they must have forgotten their promise to the lady in question, as they still owe her the half of the said reward. If any one doubts the truth of the above, the lady is in town and will gladly make an affidavit to the above statements. A man or a party of men who would break their word to a woman under such circumstances will deserve defeat as an aspirant for any office.

The other was of a similar nature:

One of Fred Singers official acts as a deputy, under Sheriff Hinkel.

About three years ago, Singer and an assistant went down to Mrs. Brown’s ranch, on Bear creek, (the place generally known as the soldier’s grave,) for the purpose of arresting the notorious thief and bandit of the plains, named Jim O’Neill, (they succeeded in making the arrest,) but through the influence of Mrs. Brown, his mother, and the magical influence of about one hundred dollars, paid to Singer and his assistant, the redoubtable Jimmy was allowed to pack his grip and depart in peace. This is another bit of evidence as to how the sheriff and his deputies in the past few years have done their duty.

Apparently the items had the desired effect for Sughrue defeated Singer 488 to 343.9

Though he had been defeated at the ballot box evidently Singer was continued as under sheriff while Hinkle remained in office. On December 19, 1883, he, with John Meagher (Mike Meagher’s brother) and the marshal of Trinidad, Colo., captured a suspected
murderer. The Caldwell Journal, December 27, 1883, reported the story:

ED. HIBBARD CAPTURED.

John Meagher, sheriff Singer, of Dodge, and City Marshal Kreager, of Trinidad, returned from Chautauqua county last Saturday with Ed. Hibbard, alias Ed. Lee, charged with the murder of a man near Trinidad, as stated last week.

The officers left this city Wednesday, went to Grenola, where they procured a team and started for the home of Hibbard's parents, near Wauneta, a small town about eight miles from Cedarvale. Arriving at Wauneta about 3 p.m., they went into the village store, which they found full of people, and Ed. standing by the counter, behind the stove, surrounded by a throng, to whom he was relating his western adventures. The officers knew him at a glance, and sheriff Singer at once stepped up to Ed. and taking him by the hand, said: "How do you do, Ed? I want you." Ed. reached for his revolver with his left hand, but by this time Meagher had him covered with a six-shooter, and he quietly submitted to being hand-cuffed, led out, and put into the wagon. In less than three minutes from the time the officers entered the store, they had their man and were on their return trip. Ed. claimed he did not know what he was arrested for, but at the same time requested the officers not to tell the people anything about it.

Shortly after passing Cedarvale, the party were overtaken by Hibbard's mother, who wanted to know by what right they were taking her son off in that manner. Ed. told her it was all right, the strangers were his friends, and that he would be back in a couple of weeks. This was satisfactory to his poor mother, and the party proceeded on their way, arriving here at the time above stated.

While at Cedarvale, on their return, a constable of that place stepped up to Meagher and told him that Hibbard was a hard case, that he, the constable, had carried a warrant against him for four years on the charge of horse stealing. It seems that about four years ago Hibbard left suddenly and went to Texas, where, it is stated, he killed a man. Thence he drifted to Colorado, where he ran across his uncle, stopping at his uncle's ranch until he killed the old man.

On being searched after his arrest, $105 in money was found upon his person, all that was left of the $1,100 taken off his victim, an old account book, with several leaves torn out, and the name "Reynolds" written on the inside of the cover. The writing was so worn that the initials could not be made out, but the name is supposed to be the name of the man killed.

Saturday afternoon Messrs. Singer and Kreager started for Trinidad with their prisoner, and he is ere this safely locked up in the jail at that place. There can be no doubt as to his guilt, and according to the laws of Colorado, he will suffer the penalty of his crime.

The Dodge City Times, December 27, 1883, reported that Singer had taken the prisoner on west:

Under Sheriff Singer left Monday [December 24] for Colorado with the prisoner Hibbard, who was arrested in the southeastern part of the state. Fred is an excellent officer, and does his duty faithfully.
With the end of the Hinkle sheriffship Fred Singer returned to private life judging from the 1885 Kansas state census which listed him, March 1, as a 32-year-old merchant.

On July 31 he and Mysterious Dave Mather were in Topeka, staying at the Windsor hotel. By September 1 he was again mentioned as a deputy sheriff. The Dodge City Democrat, September 5, 1885, told how he prevented a kidnapping:

A HALF-BLOWN ABDUCTION.

A bold attempt to abduct a child was made last Tuesday morning. The particulars, as we learned them, are as follows:

About three weeks ago Harry Logue, a well known gambler and general "rustler" of this place, parted from his wife. They had one child and he wanted it, and had threatened to kill her if she did not give it up. Last Tuesday morning he procured a rig and drove to the house where his wife was living. He went in and snatched the child from its mother's arms while she was in bed and ran out to the buggy, jumped in and started off south at a pace that astonished the natives. Mrs. Logue followed, screaming at every breath, calling on the people to get her baby. Deputy sheriff Fred Singer happened to be passing on a horse and immediately gave chase. He overhauled the gentleman just as he was driving on the bridge, and made him turn around and wend his way back amid the jeers of the populace.

It was an affecting sight when the babe was given into its mother's arms. She was wild with joy and hugged and kissed the innocent cause of all this excitement to her heart's content.

Half the population was out to see the chase, and all expressed their sympathy for the unfortunate mother, and all were glad when she got her child.

A month later Fred Singer was appointed deputy U. S. marshal for the district. "This was quite a compliment," said the Globe Live Stock Journal, October 6, 1885, "and the result of one of the finest endorsements ever sent out of this county. Everybody who is acquainted with Mr. Singer knows he will make a good officer." Singer's appointment was effective October 1.

In another month, however, Singer was apparently replaced by H. B. Bell who was appointed about November 5, 1885. No reason has been found for Singer's short term of office.

Singer was once again named marshal of Dodge City on September 23, 1886, by A. B. Webster. The Globe Live Stock Journal, September 28, 1886, noted the change in officers: "Mayor Webster on last Thursday morning made a change in the police force, removing Marshal [T. J.] Tate and Policeman [J. A.] Marshall, and appointing Fred Singer marshal and Nelson Cary assistant." Singer served until shortly after Mayor Webster's death, resigning May 10, 1887.

Singer was, in January, 1889, one of several former Dodge City
police officers involved in the county seat fight in Gray county. The complete story of the street battle in which they were engaged will be told in the section on William M. Tilghman.


(To Be Continued in the Summer, 1962, Issue.)