

## Bypaths of Kansas History

### ZIP IN A POST OFFICE OF 1886

From *The Daily Sun*, Parsons, March 10, 1886.

Postmaster Frye attempted to clean out the stovepipe in the postoffice yesterday with a three-ounce charge of gunpowder. The powder was rolled in a lot of paper, thrown in on the coals and the stove door quickly shut. He intended that it should shoot up through the chimney, but it didn't do that way. It tore the stove and pipe down, and nearly frightened the postmaster and clerks out of their wits. Fortunately there was but little fire in the stove and the damage resulting was only trifling.

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### SOAKING IT UP

From the *Free Press*, Hays, January 2, 1897.

Two tramps in a neighboring town hit upon a novel plan to get some whiskey. They went into a saloon with a gallon jug and had it filled with liquor and offered a dollar in payment. Of course the bartender refused the money and emptied the liquor back into the barrel and the tramps took the jug and departed. Later they were seen to break the jug over a stone and squeeze out over a pint of liquor from the sponges which they had placed on the inside of the jug.

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### A KANSAS MUNCHAUSEN

From the *Hoisington Dispatch*, October 12, 1899.

Philadelphia *North American*.

"Kansas has produced a good many remarkable characters besides Mrs. [Mary Elizabeth] Lease, [Sen. William A.] Pepper and [Cong. 'Sockless' Jerry] Simpson," said the Club Philosopher. "I have reason to think the Kansas prevaricator can give points to Count Esterhazy and win out. I met him during a recent railway journey from St. Louis. He was reading a newspaper and threw it down impatiently, remarking that the ignorance of press correspondents was vast. 'They speak of a fitful blow in the south as like a Kansas gale,' he said. 'They know nothing of the steadiness of the winds of Kansas and Nebraska. These are better represented by the man who had been for a month there and who said, when asked how he spent his time, that for three of the four weeks he chased his hat. These winds are more tiresome and persistent than violent. That's why Pepper's long sun-kissed whiskers are only frayed at the ends. There are occasional cyclones which spare nothing in their path, except infants, which they deposit in a tree top miles away without awakening them, but they are forgotten in the long weeks of unceasing winds.'

"The Kansas man then spoke of the Interstate Hat Commission as though I must have heard about it. He appeared to be surprised that I had read

nothing of it. He said it was a commission recently appointed by the governors of Kansas and Nebraska to meet at Topeka next week. The cause of its creation he explained at length. It seems that in the summer months the winds are southerly. They carry the hats of all Kansas across the state line into Nebraska. The hats go sometimes in great clouds like a flight of crows, sometimes in scattered small groups or singly. Soon or late it is the fate of every man in Kansas to have his hat blown away, always to the neighboring state to the north.

"In the winter, of course, the biting Arctic winds sweep down from the poles. They are not less constant, and not less powerful than the hot winds of summer. The people of Nebraska then suffer the experience of the Kansans. The hats and caps go hurtling down into and all over Kansas. The experienced inhabitant of Nebraska never buys a summer hat, knowing he can depend on the friendly southern breezes. When the cold of winter touches the November air the winds shift, and the Kansas man stands bareheaded and with his eyes searching the northern sky for a headpiece from Nebraska. Year after year the citizens of the two states have wrangled over the matter. It is natural that in such windy communities they should often come to blows. Two years ago the legislatures of the two states took up the controversy, and the outcome is the appointment of the joint commission to effect an amicable settlement.

"The question at issue is the relative value of the hats blown into the two states. Nebraskans maintain that as the hats from Kansas are summer wear, they are mostly of straw and therefore of less value. The Kansas people reply that the Nebraska man doesn't venture out of doors when he can help it in winter, hence the number of hats that come into Kansas is much smaller. Also that a large proportion is of the home made coonskin variety. It is a knotty problem to determine which state shall give money to boot.

"However, there is a chance that trouble may be avoided in the future; that there will be no further loss of hats. The governor of Kansas has sent a committee which includes a hatter, to interview the Long Island boomerang thrower whose feats have been described in the newspapers. It is his hope that it will be possible to construct a hat rim on the principle of the boomerang, so that when the hat is lifted from a western head by the wind and carried toward a neighboring state it will turn after the usual gyrations of the stick and fall at the feet of its owner."

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#### WONDERS OF THE ELECTRICAL AGE

From the *Parsons Daily Sun*, September 7, 1915.

OSKALOOSA, KANS., Sept. 7.—This town is noted for the fact that the men here go to church, but, like the apt saying that originated in Battle Creek, there's a reason. The preachers must cut their talks short or leave the music off the program. The electric light plant is not operated on Sunday, but for the accommodation of the churches where there are pipe organs that are operated by electricity, the current is turned on an hour, from 11 to 12. The choirs must hurry up their music, and the preachers must cut their sermons short to get through within the hour. Churches which wish to increase the male attendance might try the short service plan and it would undoubtedly work in other towns as well as it does here.