

Bypaths of Kansas History

WHEN THE CRY OF "WOLF" SOUNDED IN LAWRENCE

From the *Kansas Free State*, Lawrence, April 7, 1855.

FIRST APRIL FOOL IN LAWRENCE.—The richest thing that ever came off in the way of an April Fool took place here on last Sabbath evening. Mr. Atwood and Mr. Boyer, of the *Free State* office, and Mr. Garrett, of the *Tribune*, concluded that the unnecessary fears of some of the citizens, and especially those of Mr. Brown [editor of the *Herald of Freedom*], should not pass off entirely unfounded, and after getting together, determined to "waive the question" as to the propriety of continuing religious services in such perilous times, and "proceed immediately to develope" the military propensities of the people of Lawrence. Accordingly, they proceeded, about 3 o'clock, P. M., down the road toward Westport, about a mile, and wrote the following letter, purporting to come from Mr. Mendenhall, of the Friends' Mission, and gave a messenger a dollar to carry it, in great haste, to Mr. Brown:

Friends' Mission, }
4th mo., 1st day, 1855. }

FRIEND BROWN—A large party of Missourians, camping at Mill Creek last night, got hold of the second edition of thy *Herald*, read it in camp, and immediately resolved to return to Lawrence, throw thy press into the river, and hang thee and other prominent Free State men. The plan is then to repair to Hickory Point, and hang Kibbee, and perhaps Goodin and others. I do not know their number, but as they have sent runners to inform other delegations coming in from different parts of the Territory, it must be large—not less than six or seven hundred.

The messenger who carries this will repair to Hickory Point and inform the people in that neighborhood.

In great haste,
Thy friend,
R. MENDENHALL.

G. W. Brown, Lawrence.

Mr. Brown read the letter, and, highly excited, rushed into a neighbor's house to give the news, and was soon seen with a bell in one hand, and a small spy-glass in the other, ringing and looking out for Missourians. After the people had gathered, he commenced haranguing them to rally to the defense of himself, his office, and the town generally.

He perceived a species of "nice diplomacy" on the part of the Missourians—that two had called at his office late on Saturday night, and bought two papers, and by some means got hold of the second edition of the *Herald*—and that they would have about time to get to Mill creek—that the messenger was greatly excited, and started off immediately to Hickory Point; and noticed a number of little things that he had said about Missourians that were "rather imprudent," and concluded that there was no doubt that the report from the enemy was all true. He then exhorted all to stand around him and preserve his life.

Great excitement prevailed, the letter was read and re-read, the churches were dismissed, and a number started out to beat up for volunteers. So great was the demand for volunteers, that every male of twelve years and upwards, all who were able to go forth to war, was impressed into service. The three typos above-mentioned came into town shortly afterwards, very much excited at the news, immediately put down their names as volunteers, and shouldering their guns, were ready to go forth to battle.

Every old gun, pistol and knife was called into requisition, and three military companies were formed and put on drill, under experienced commanders. The famous Dr. Robinson was Commander-in-chief of the military forces, and S. N. Wood (who understood the hoax,) was Secretary of War. Brown, after getting the forces in order, contented himself in the capacity of private, and was seen in the drill, behind a little boy, going through the evolutions with all the ease and grace of a green volunteer. The sage of Wall street, in company with another person, proceeded to reconnoitre the Wakarusa bottom. At the usual hour the old soldiers in such campaigns retired to rest, while others kept guard all night. The Commander-in-chief was enraged at the authors of the despatch, and threatened tar and feathers; but the typos rather think he won't try it. Wonder if he is waiting for assistance, in this matter, from the Emigrant Aid Company? Ah! men are very brave when there is no danger.

M.

George W. Brown's version in *The Kansas Herald of Freedom*, Lawrence, April 7, 1855.

FORGERY.—On Sunday, the 1st day of April, at a little past noon, a young man, the very picture of affright, galloped up on horseback to the door of the *Herald of Freedom* office, inquired if the editor resided there, and gave the following communication, closely sealed in an envelope, to a compositor who was in the room, with the request that it should be passed to us immediately:

[The purported Mendenhall message was then printed.—See above.]

We read the letter to a couple of friends who were present, and concluded it best to place ourselves in a condition to give the enemy a warm reception, in case he did return; though we strongly suspected the letter was a *forgery*, and that a *hoax* was being practiced on us. Still there appeared to be a crisis in the history of Kansas, and with the unsettled state of the country all were apprehensive it was best to be guarded.

An express was sent down the road for several miles, and returned with the information that nothing was seen in that direction. Our people, in the mean time, anticipated the organization which they had laid out for the morrow, and formed four military companies, determined that they would not be caught napping. A genuine letter was found from Mr. MENDENHALL, and the impression became general that some despicable wretch, who had no regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath, who did not scorn to *lie*, who had descended to act the part of a base *forgery*, and in whose heart was concentrated the *genuine essence of meanness*, had practiced a gross imposition upon the public, and had availed himself of the present crisis to work upon their feelings. The villain moved in the crowd, and contributed his share towards exciting the populace. He had his abettors, and they played their part well. They labored in secret, and supposed they were safe from public gaze. An Argus eye was

upon them, and when a few more links to complete the chain of evidence shall be furnished, we pledge ourself to strip the lion's skin from the villainous deceivers, and expose them to the scoffs and sneers of an insulted and outraged populace.—In the meantime they may jeer us as much as they please, but they shall stand before the community with FORGER written on their brow, and *baseness* visible in every lineament.

LATER.—Just as we were going to press we received the *Kansas Free State*, from which we quote the following article—

[The first paragraph of the *Kansas Free State* story was reprinted.]

Then follows a copy of the letter given above, and the assertion that we appeared in the streets with a bell in one hand and a small spy-glass in the other, and that we rang up a crowd and harangued them to rally in defense of ourself, our office, and the town generally. A greater number of falsehoods was never embraced in a more limited space.—The editor has our thanks for connecting the *Free State* and *Tribune* offices with this base outrage. It has saved us some labor which we should have expended in getting the proof. If our citizens are disposed to swallow the insult which these villainous men have practiced upon this community let them do so. If *forgery* and *falsehood* are to be tolerated, and even made a subject of mirth by the press, in whose hands, to a great extent, are the morals of a community, then it is time that *vice* should be respected instead of VIRTUE, and the most brazen and heartless of wretches be held up as examples of imitation.

A year later the Missourians did sack and burn part of Lawrence and the type and presses of the *Herald of Freedom* and the *Kansas Free State* were thrown into the river.

ANTECEDENT OF THE KAW VALLEY POTATO?

From the *Kansas Free State*, Lawrence, April 14, 1855.

STRAWBERRY AND WILD POTATO.—These plants are indigenous here, and are found in great abundance on the bottom lands, especially on those of the Kansas.—In some localities the strawberry is springing up very thickly, and are said to grow very luxuriantly. The potato appears to be a small variety of the Yam. In the loose, rich bottoms the soil is full of them. They are very small and quite inferior for cooking. Probably cultivation might improve them so as to make them valuable. The experiment is at least worth a trial. A root resembling the artichoke is also found in many places.

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF A WAGON TRAIN

The following is a copy of one of several pages—torn from an old record book—which have come into the possession of the Kansas State Historical Society. Possibly the document here reproduced was in the hand of Enoch Painter who was a settler along the South fork of the Nemaha river (in northeastern Kansas) in 1855. The train

obviously was one of the many which crossed the Kansas prairies in 1857 but there is nothing to further identify the outfit or its destination.

June the 20th 1857

Rules and Regulations of Frosts Train

we the members of the above mentioned train do believe it to be our duty to keep good order and decorum in said train by makeing and entering in to the following Rules and by-laws

Atr fst resolved that one man from each wagon shall rise early at any given signal and attend the stock till brakefast also those who remain at camps to go out as soon as they git their Brakefast and drive up the work cattle

Article 2nd res that when the capt of the train thinks it expedient that all hand will unanimously turn out to mind stock &c.

it is mutially agreed that Elijah Frost is to act in the office of capt of the train and that Jas Frost be assistant and is to act as cpt in the absente or inability of the cpt

we the undersigned jointly and severly bind our selves to stand up to the preceding Rules when not providentialy hindered

it is further agreed that Wm Sharp and Alfred Rockholt attend to the waking of the hands in the morning

and also Wm Sharp is wagon master

Elijah Frost cpt

Jas Frost asst

Wm Sharp, wagonmas

Alfred Rockholt w. m.

Loyd Rockholt

Enoch Painter

Thos. Arnold

D. D. Moughlin

Tim Moody

E B Harris

Jacob Green

Jesse Green

John Cain

H. M. Rockholt

N A Guill

E. Froyway

Loyd Rockholt [II?]

Levi McKosksie

Rheuben Rockholt

J. W. Rockholt

Leonard Metz

Clinton Donald

HUMOR OF EMIGRANTS

From *The Kansas News*, Emporia, July 9, 1859.

Notwithstanding the thousands of wagons daily returning from the West, and the thousands of persons who are heart sick, weary and foot sore, a slight tinge of humor is frequently manifested by various devices on the wagon covers.

For instance:

We saw, the other day, a weatherbeaten wagon, on which, however, the following letters stood out in bold relief:

P. P. B. D.

Our curiosity was excited. The cabalistic initials were too much for our comprehension, and we were fain compelled to inquire their meaning.

The teamster responded, in a voice husky with emotion and indignation:

"What does thes 'ere letters mean, eh? Them letters, sir, expresses my sentiments, and means *Pike's Peak be damned.*"

We would have lectured this indignant emigrant on the sinfulness of depravity, but, on a survey of his exterior, came to the conclusion that it would be piety thrown away to no purpose, and let him pass.

Such devices as "D—d Humbug"—"Sold"—"Tuck in"—"Gold for sale by the bushel," &c., &c., are numerous and quaint.

We noticed on one wagon a huge Peak, pictured in yellow paint, on the top of which sat an individual represented as saying: "Here's the place where *gilding* is done." An immense crowd was scampering in the reverse direction.

One emigrant told us that Pike's Peak would be the greatest Ossuary the world had ever seen; and another, that the gold fever would break every Life Insurance Company in the country.—Leavenworth *Times*.

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ECHOES OF THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION IN CHICAGO IN 1860
WHEN SEWARD AND LINCOLN WERE THE LEADING CANDIDATES
AND KANSAS SUPPORTED SEWARD

From *Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln* (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), by Gilbert A. Tracy, p. 141. [Note: According to Albert Beverage's *Abraham Lincoln*, v. III, p. 308, Mark Delahay was married to a "fifth cousin of Lincoln's mother."]

Springfield, Ills.

April 14, 1860.

M[ark]. W. Delahay,

My Dear Sir: Reaching home last night I find your letter of the 7th. You know I was in New England. Some of the acquaintances I made while there, write me since the elections that the close votes in Conn. and the quasi defeat in R. I. are a drawback upon the prospects of Gov. Seward; and Trumbull writes Dubois to the same effect. Do not mention this as coming from me. Both those states are safe enough for us in the fall. I see by the dispatches that since you wrote, Kansas has appointed Delegates and instructed them for Seward. Don't stir them up to anger, but come along to the convention, and I will do as I said about expenses.

Yours as ever,

A. Lincoln.

From Ewing Collection, MSS. division, Kansas State Historical Society.

Leavenworth, Kansas, May 6, 1860.

Dear Sir.

You will probably have observed that the Kansas delegation to Chicago were instructed by the Convention by which they were selected to cast their votes (if they should have any) for Mr. Seward—and that Mr. Wilder, who is for Mr. Seward from choice, was chosen as the delegate from Leavenworth, over Col Delahay who was understood to be strongly in favor of your nomi-

nation. I have desired that you should know how both those things happened—and as I can not be at Chicago, where I had expected to talk the matters over with you or with some of your personal friends, I shall take the liberty explaining them to you directly by letter.

Here as nearly everywhere in the North, Mr. Seward has more ardent, zealous & earnest admirers than any other candidate—and they are in the *radical* wing of the party which has possession of nearly all the presses, and controls all the minor conventions and less important movements of the party. As it was by no means certain that the Kansas delegates would be accorded seats in the National Convention, or the right to vote, the great majority of the party took no interest in the movement—and the meetings called to appoint delegates to the Territorial Convention were scarcely attended at all except by the *managers*. In that convention no interest was taken in any subjects except in selecting the delegates—three of whom are first for Mr. Seward from choice, but all of whom regard you as a highly acceptable and available candidate. The Convention selected men who had done good service for the party and received no honor or reward—and who well merited the compliment of an appointment—none of whom were selected with reference to their preferences among the gentlemen named for the Chicago nomination—

In the apportionment Leavenworth was accorded but one delegate—Wilder, who has done a great deal of hard work for the party here, had announced himself as a candidate for the place more than a year ago—and the place had been accorded to him without dissent, until the time for selecting delegates to the Territorial Convention was near at hand. Col Delahay then, feeling assured that the great majority of the Republicans of Leavenworth favored your nomination, became a candidate in opposition to Wilder— The Colonel was on all hands regarded as one of our best men and as representing truly the preferences of the majority of our republicans—but he had just had one of the best offices of our poor Territory— Wilder had worked as hard, had held no office, and had all along been accorded this place—and as he had a big start, and the most money, the Colonel could not make the race against him.

Our delegation at Chicago will, in perseverance of instructions, if given a vote, cast it for Mr. Seward. Three of them will adhere to him pretty tenaciously. Mr. Seward & Chase dropped, I think you would be the next choice of every man in the delegation—

Yours very truly
Thomas Ewing Jr.

Hon Abraham Lincoln
Springfield Ills.

In the three ballots necessary to nominate Lincoln Kansas regularly cast its six votes for Seward. And like the Kansas delegates to the Democratic convention in Chicago in 1844 who failed to note the trend for Truman for vice president in time to assist with his nomination, Kansas Republicans joined the Lincoln parade too late to do much good except to have their final votes recast with the winner.

JUST MARRIED

From the Leavenworth *Herald*, April 21, 1860.

The following amusing incident took place upon one of the Missouri river steamboats, and was reported to us by an eye-witness. While the boat was lying at Kansas City, just ready to start for Leavenworth, a young man came on board leading a blushing damsel by the hand, and approaching the polite clerk, in a suppressed voice, said:

"I say," he exclaimed, "me and my wife have just got married over at Westport, and I'm looking for accommodations."

"Looking for a berth?" hastily inquired the clerk—passing tickets on to another passenger.

"A *birth!* thunder and lightning, no!" gasped the astonished man, "*we haven't but just got married;* we want a place to stay all night, you know, and—and a bed."

 THE GOOD OLD DAYS?

From "Record of Members of The Congregational Church, Topeka."

January 4th 1862.— . . . To the Congregational Church of Topeka. We, the undersigned, committee appointed by said church to investigate the charges of attending dancing on the part of some of the members of said church would respectfully report, that on the part of Miss Mary Pickett, (now Mrs Ferguson) one of your committee has called on her, and she was very sorry, and said she should do so no more;

Brother Stringham was spoken to by one of your committee. He said he did wrong in attending public dancing, but private dancing parties, he thought were proper. Brother Mills is absent from town, and your committee do not know how he feels in the matter.

Sister Harriet Cole has been admonished by one of your committee, and gave no evidence that she was sorry, but has continued to attend balls.

E Tefft Ch'n Committee.

Mr Bunker, Mrs Stone, Mrs Scales and Miss Foster were chosen to confer with Mrs Cole and Mr Mills in regard to their action mentioned in the above report. Com. to report at meeting prec— next Prep. Lecture. . . .

March 8th 1862.— . . . The committee appointed Jan 4th, reported that having conferred with Mr Mills and Mrs Cole, and both having expressed sorrow in the opinion of the Com. no further action in these cases is necessary.

Report accepted and committee discharged.

Sherman Bodwell, Clerk.

PERSONAL!

From the Leavenworth *Evening Bulletin*, May 30, 1865.

A fellow living near the Trading Post, who invariably signs his name Seneca Curney, M. D., we believe to be a common liar, and a creature too mean to be contemptible. We never saw the man, and God forbid that we should ever be contaminated by proximity to his carcass.—Mound City *Sentinel*.

This seems rather "personal."

MR. "LO!"

From the Marysville *Enterprise*, July 14, 1866.

BIG INJUN WARM.—We saw a lovely-looking, raw-boned, greasy Otoe Injun walking around the suburbs of our town the other day in a delectable and cool style of dress. He had on his head a cast-off old hat, as full of holes as a pepper-box, through which a lot of innocent little "varmint," commonly called lice, were playing a lively game of "bo peep," while his feet were decked in a pair of buffalo moccasins. The rest of his apparel consisted of a twine string around his waist, while over his head he held an umbrella with which he protected his brown shoulders from the hot rays of the sun. With large drops of perspiration oozing from his ginger colored features, he approached us with a broad smile that looked like the opening of a valise, and said sweetly, "Me Big Injun; very warm!" We thought, "let her warm."

AN INDIAN CHIEF SERVES AN ULTIMATUM ON THE COMMANDING OFFICER AT FORT DODGE

From *The Weekly Free Press*, Atchison, March 16, 1867.

A correspondent under date of Feb. 28th, on Arkansas river, writes as follows:

"A party of three hunters, engaged in strychnining wolves on the Cimarron river, were on the 17th, inst., attacked by Indians and lost all their stock, two mules and four horses. The band, numbering 20 Kiowas, first attempted to get their provisions, but were driven off, then succeeded in stampeding the entire stock. One of the men has just come in, walking ninety miles in thirty-six hours without fire or water, to get help to save their wagon and peltry.

"The names of the hunters are C. C. Baker, P. F. Goodfellow; the other man's name I could not learn. The Indians are very insolent. One of the Kiowa chiefs went to Fort Dodge the other day and ordered the commanding officer to leave the Fort; if he did not in a month, he would scalp the garrison.

"Yours, E. E. SMITHE."

NOT RATIONED, ANYWAY

From *The Kansas Daily Commonwealth*, Topeka, December 18, 1872.

Oxen are getting quite common. They look like the same ones that used to work for Russell, Majors & Waddell, and as if they had not had a square meal since the old freighting days.—*Lawrence Journal*.

Yes; when the restaurant keepers used to serve up those old oxen to their customers and attempt to pass off the whip lash marks on the sirloins as the effects of broiling. It was pretty "thin" for oldtimers, but Eastern chaps used to get away with it without a murmur, for choice buffalo steak.

BIG GAME HUNTING NEAR OXFORD

From *The Sumner County Press*, Wellington, March 19, 1874.

The Oxford *Enterprise* says: "Frank Simington, a lad of fourteen years of age, living two miles below town, chased a large buck until it took refuge in the river. He kept it in the river until it became stiffened with cold, and then waded in and cut its throat with a butcher knife. A rather hazardous undertaking for a boy of his age, as a full grown deer is more than a match for an able-bodied man."

NOT "IRISH JOHN RILEY!"

From *The Commonwealth*, Topeka, August 4, 1875.

John Riley sends his "card" to the *Paola Spirit*. It reads thus: "Sir—In your report of the commissariat business in the last week's issue of the *Spirit*, I see that one J. Riley has received two bushels of potatoes. Now, whether this is John, James, Joe or Jerry Riley, I know not, but this I do know, that it is not Irish John Riley, of Scott's valley. When he becomes a pauper he will go to the poor house, where all paupers ought to go, but he will not go there while there is the butt end of a cow's tail left."

A "HOTFOOT" HIGHER UP

From the *Dodge City Times*, September 29, 1877.

Judge R. W. Evans held court last Saturday evening. The case was one of great interest, and about two hundred people were present. It was Mr. Brown of Garfield vs. somebody—Mr. Brown could not find out exactly who. But these are the particulars: While Mr. Brown was inoffensively taking a drink at Beatty & Kelly's some one ingeniously set fire to the lower extremities of his coat from behind. Mr. Brown exhibited great presence of mind by shedding his coat as soon as he felt the flames. Suit was brought to find out the guilty party and punish him. Owing to the great crowd the case was tried in Mayor Kelley's hall. But no decision was reached, owing to the fact that eggs were

too freely used to suit His Honor, the Judge. The Judge took his seat with his usual gravity, and was beginning to investigate the case, when an egg struck him somewhere near the back of the head, and as eggs usually do when they strike, it scattered considerably. The Judge immediately adjourned court and proceeded to hunt soap and water. Mr. Brown says he has no faith in Dodge City courts, and will appeal his case to the Governor.

A DAY IN DODGE

From the *Ford County Globe*, Dodge City, September 9, 1879.

It was casually observed several times by several old timers last Friday that Dodge City was redeeming herself. By this remark they intended to convey the idea that we were extricating ourselves from that stupid lethargy which had fallen upon us of late, and were giving vent to our uncurbed hilarity—"getting to the booze joint," as it were, in good shape, and "making a ranikaboo play for ourselves." We speak in the plural number because a large portion of our community were "to the joint" and we cannot mention the pranks of each without overlooking some and causing them to feel slighted. The signal for the tournament to begin was given by a slender young man of handsome external appearance who regaled his friends with a pail of water. The water racket was kept up until it merged into the slop racket, then the potatoe and cucumber racket, and finally the rotten egg racket, with all its magnificent odors. This was continued until the faces, eyes, noses, mouths and shirt bosoms of several of the boys were comfortably filled with the juicy substance of the choicest rotten eggs, compelling them to retire from the field, which they did in a very warlike manner. As the evening shades began to appear the skirmishers were soon actively engaged, and at a little before the usual hour slugging commenced all along the line. One or two "gun plays" were made, but by reason of a lack of execution, were not effective. We cannot indulge our readers with a lengthy description of the scenes of this glorious occasion. It is described by many eyewitnesses as being equal to the famous "Mystery of Gil-Gal," where the inspired poet says:

"They piled the 'stiffs' outside the door,
I reckon there was a cord or more,
And that winter, as a rule,
The girls went alone to spelling-school."

Upon the sidewalks ran streams of the blood of brave men, and the dead and wounded wrestled with each other like butchered whales on harpooning day. The "finest work" and neatest polishes were said to have been executed by Mr. Wyatt Earp, who has been our efficient assistant marshal for the past year.

The finest specimen of a polished head and ornamented eyes was bestowed upon "Crazy Horse." It is said that his head presented the appearance of a clothes basket, and his eyes, like ripe apples, could have been knocked off with a stick. He was last seen walking up the railroad track, on his way to Las Vegas. It was not until towards morning that the smoke cleared away, the din of battle subsided and the bibulous city found a little repose. And such is life in the far, far west.