

## Bypaths of Kansas History

CARRYING THE MAIL TO SANTA FE 100 YEARS AGO

From *The Western Journal*, St. Louis, September, 1850, pp. 414, 415.

### LINE OF MAIL STAGES TO SANTA FE.

We are gratified that the Post Office Department has at length established this line upon a footing that promises to be successful in the end; though we have heard that the stages on the first trip encountered a good deal of difficulty on account of the failure of their teams.

The *Missouri Commonwealth*, published at Independence, gives the following account of the departure and equipment of the first mail stage from that place westward. The first train left, we believe, on the 1st day of July last.

### SANTA FE LINE OF MAIL STAGES.

We briefly alluded, some days since, to the Santa Fe line of mail stages, which left this city on its first monthly trip on the first instant. It was our intention at that time to have noticed this matter as its novelty and importance demanded, but want of leisure prevented. This is an important extension of mail service, and will be of untold utility, both to New Mexico and the States. But we simply took up our pen to give our friends in other parts of the country, some idea of the *preparations* which have been made by the contractors, Messrs. Waldo, Hall & Co., to convey the mail safely through the Indian country—an undertaking which must seem hazardous, after the many murders that have been perpetrated recently by hostile tribes. The stages are got up in splendid style, and are each capable of conveying eight passengers. The bodies are beautifully painted, and made water-tight, with a view of using them as boats in ferrying streams. The team consists of six mules to each coach. The mail is guarded by eight men, armed as follows: Each man has at his side, strapped up in the stage, one of Colt's revolving rifles; in a holster, below, one of Colt's long revolving pistols, and in his belt a small Colt revolver, besides a hunting knife; so that these eight men are prepared, in case of attack, to discharge *one hundred and thirty-six* shots without stopping to load! This is equal to a small army, armed as in olden times, and from the courageous appearance of this escort, prepared as they are, either for offensive or defensive warfare with the savages, we have no apprehensions for the safety of the mails. The whole of the equipment for this expedition is of our own city manufacture, except the revolvers.

The enterprising contractors have established a sort of depot at Council Grove, a distance of 150 miles from this city [Independence], and have sent out a blacksmith, a number of men to cut and cure hay, with a quantity of animals, grain and provisions; and we understand they intend to make a sort of traveling post there, and to open a farm. They contemplate, we believe, to make a similar settlement at Walnut Creek next season.

Two of their stages will start from here the first of every month. The contractors are amongst our most responsible and wealthy citizens, and the firm is composed, as we understand, of Dr. David Waldo, Jacob Hall, Esq., and William McCoy, late Mayor of our city.—*Missouri Commonwealth*.

## KANSAS LONGSHOREMEN

From *The Kansas Herald of Freedom*, Lawrence, June 2, 1855.

We heard some of the officers of the *Emma Harmon* [river steamer] complaining bitterly, and not without cause, about some of our citizens who aided for a short time in unloading the boat, and proposed to charge fifty cents an hour for their services.—Persons must have supposed they were in California, and that labor was so scarce it would command any price. Let men have moderate desires if they wish to succeed in business.

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 HOUSES FOR \$500!

From the *Lawrence Republican*, November 8, 1860.

A FAT CONTRACT.—R. S. Stevens, of Lecompton, is a lucky man. We understand he has secured a contract of the Agent of the Sac & Fox Indians to build for the tribe two hundred houses, at the rate of five hundred dollars for each house. He sub-lets the contract, so that he gets the houses built for two hundred and eighty-seven dollars each—clearing on the job the snug sum of forty-two thousand six hundred dollars, which, for these hard times, is not a bad thing. He also builds a saw-mill for the tribe, on which, we are told, he clears the little matter of thirty-five hundred dollars.

Mr. Stevens is an enterprising, go-ahead man, and these results of his financiering cannot but be grateful to his feelings.

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 A SALINA JUSTICE WITH HIS BOOTS OFF!

From the *Junction City Weekly Union*, July 13, 1867.

A writer in the *Pittsburg [Pa.] Chronicle* says: "The excursionists on the recent trip over the Pacific railroad met with some interesting experiences, one of which is thus described: Some of the Pacific railroad excursionists stopped at Salina, a town on the Plains, and found the court house located in the second story of the printing office. The court room was fixed regardless of comfort, and was a good specimen of a frontier Temple of Justice. The trials were amusing. The counsel acted most unbecomingly to each other, calling one another hard names, and referring to them as Bill, Tom and Jack, while the Judge sat behind his desk enjoying his *otium cum dignitate*, with his boots off and his feet on the desk. The town was filled with all kinds of hard characters, and the excursionists kept their hands on their pocket-books. Mule drivers, bull whackers, Mexican greasers and gamblers, all waiting to get off."

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 MOVE OVER

From *The Commonwealth*, Topeka, September 2, 1876.

The *Belleville Telescope* contains this "want:" "Wanted, at this office, a don't care a d—n editor. We have tried to please everybody, and, having failed, we don't care a d—n, but would like some person else to take the position for awhile."

## PRESUMABLY HE GOT THE JOB

When the government of Kansas returned to Republican control in 1895, after two years of Populist domination, the clamor of office-seekers was more than usually deafening. Not only had the Republicans been deprived of patronage by the Lewelling administration, but the depression of 1893-1894 still lay heavy upon the land and many a party wheel-horse needed new shoes. Gov. Edmund N. Morrill was besieged by hundreds of applicants for places on the state payroll and necessarily had to slight most of them. He probably was glad, however, to receive the following request, written by the editor of the *Marion Record* and now in the correspondence files of the executive department, in the Archives division of the Kansas State Historical Society:

MARION, KANSAS, FEB. 13, 1895.

Hon. E. N. Morrill  
Topeka, Kan.  
My Dear Governor.

As you are aware, I have had, or have been supposed to have, a particular aversion to office seeking. I have believed in the old fashioned idea that the office should seek the man, and have honestly tried to practice what I have preached in this matter. Indeed, I have even gone so far, figuratively speaking, as to hang this ideal on the stars where it has been hanging all this long, cold winter. I do not now wish to renounce the theory, because I still think it is right, but stern necessity wrings from me the cold, clammy confession that I want an office, and want it bad, as I would say if I were one of "the boys." My friends, whom I have consulted about the matter, insist that the only way for me to get it is to go for it. I hate to bother you, Governor, and add to your burdens from this class of self-seekers, but can't help it. I have given the best years of my life to the grand old Republican party, and feel, without egotism, that my claims to the position I seek are at least as good as any of the distinguished gentlemen who aspire to this office. If necessary, I think I can furnish you credentials from those who have known me longest and best, abundantly testifying to my qualifications for this important place. If appointed, I shall endeavor to perform the duties of the position so as to justify your favor and shed as much effulgence as possible upon your administration so auspiciously begun. I have held this position before, but my term has expired, and I ask to be re-appointed a Notary Public.

With best wishes,

Yours, cordially,

E. W. HOCH.

The author of this request was himself well launched on an impressive political career. He had served two terms in the legislature and in 1894 had received strong support in the Republican state convention for nomination as governor. He was elected to that office in 1904 and was reelected for a second term in 1906.