

OLD SETTLERS STORIES

Transcribed from The Emporia Gazette
October 12, 1912

The column herewith following contain stories written by the old settlers of Lyon County, and read at their annual meeting in Emporia this week. These stories form part of the history of the town and county. They show what kind of men and women made this part of Kansas. The men and women who record these facts were sturdy brave young people a generation ago. They faced dangers, endured hardships, "lived life to the full," and now are resting in the twilight. They put their life into what was then the wilderness that we who have come after them may enjoy comforts and luxuries and blessings that in their early lives they could only dream of. These stories that are herewith set down, should be read at every fireside in this county. Boys and girls should know what they owe to life, what sacrifices, what hard barren hours of toil are behind them, in the lives of their grandfathers and grandmothers.

"The Spirit of the Old Settlers" was told of most interestingly by Mrs. Anna Randolph. Mrs. Randolph said:

"What a long, long time to look forward from 1856 to 1912. How the time shortens as we look back to 1856. It does not seem to me such a long time ago since Kansas was young and new, her prairies stretching out so broad, so clean, so fair. When I first saw the Neosho Valley, it appeared to me like the Seventh Day; when the Lord had finished the land, pronounced it good, ready and waiting for man. Man came bringing his women, children and flocks, with brawn and fit to break the sod, to sow, to reap, to build homes. Little of the bitter strife, the struggle for free or slave territory, had reached this fertile valley. That question was practically settled before the settlement of Breckenridge County. It was the land of the free and they would make it the home of the brave.

"At that time it took brave hearts to break old home ties, travel hundred of miles in prairie schooners, to start a new home in a new and untried country. The brave, the courageous came. They were progressives. The reactionaries stayed in the east. These very early settlers, these pioneers, came not to seize these fertile acres for speculation or with the expectation of gaining great wealth, but to secure homes for themselves and their children. As they drove the first stake, made necessary improvements for filing on their quarter sections, it was with the thought they were laying the foundation for a home that was to be their for life.

"Full of hope and health and love for the new land, they went to work,

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building their little cabins, breaking the sod. There were no wild Indians or animals to guard against, no forests to fell, nor stumps to grub, and as their forefathers had in settling the Eastern states. Nothing to do but to turn the sod and sow the seed. How they loved the country; winds never swept over fairer land; Sun never shone on more fertile ground. The winters were delightful--one long Indian summer. This is the story they told us when we came to Kansas in '58.

"It was not that they found fault with Kansas and loved her less that some of the women secretly sobbed themselves to sleep, longing for their old homes and home folk. This homesick feeling grew less and less and in time was overcome.

"We stopped with old friends whose quarter sections lay along Logan Avenue. Anderson Painter's first greeting was: 'I am so glad to see you, but am sorry you have come. Kansas is a humbug.' 'Don't talk so, Anderson,' said his wife, 'It is not fault of Kansas that we are having the ague, we are not going to have it always, and maybe the Watsons won't have it at all. Kansas is all right.' This was Painter's chill day. Wrapped in some comforts, he was lying in the shade of the house. Like most men, when sick, he was fussy. We went to sympathize with him. 'Oh Lord! Oh Lord!' he was saying, 'my gall is busted this time sure.' The poor fellow looked awful sick, but we laughed at him. This ague was similar to sea-sickness, severe while it lasted but never killed.

"The next morning Painter was feeling pretty well, and went to bragging about what you could do in Kansas. 'Look what corn we have raised this summer, on the sod.' He showed us big watermelons and pumpkins. 'I have a patch of onions out there that are as big as saucers. The seeds were sown on the sod and were raised without a bit of cultivation.' They were fine onions, and some of them were as big as small saucers.

"I went one day with father and mother to see some sick folks. We found the mother sick in bed, a boy about twelve wrapped in a shawl sitting by the fire, his lips blue, his teeth chatters; another little fellow was lying on a pallet, his eyes bright, his cheeks rosy. The father remarked that Abel was just having a chill, and that John's fever was coming up. We asked the mother how she like Kansas. 'First rate. We have a fine farm here, we had little cold weather last winter, everything we put in the ground grows, and another thing, we have so much better health here. Why in Indiana there was some of us sick most of the time. It took almost all we could earn to pay the doctors' bills. 'We found almost every family sick with the ague, but no fault was found with Kansas. It's climate, it's soil or its possibilities.

"Every newcomer was given a most hearty welcome. They were comrades. In spite of homesickness, ague, small houses and corn bread, they were cheerful, hopeful and happy.

"War came, taking away husband, father and brother. What could a new country do with men all gone? Many of these new homes would have been

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abandoned, but for the heroism of the women. They stayed by the farm, ending the long days and night of weariness and dread. Many took their husband's place at the plow that the children might be fed. During war time men became accustomed to doing, business on a large scale, new enterprises sprang up. After the war a quarter section of land on the Cottonwood seemed a small affair for the foundation of the fortune they were going to make. The great love of home then seemed to change into a desire to accumulate wealth. I wish I could make everyone understand, the spirit of these pioneers, the love they had for Kansas; how devoted to her interests; how proud in the possession of their homes.

"Stranger, if you think Emporians are boastful in their admiration for their schools, their churches, their beautiful town and the fertile country that surrounds it: Forgive them, they inherited it. The habit was formed in pioneer days."

Mrs. M. Pickett gave the experiences of her father's family when they came to the new state in a paper entitled, "How We Came to Kansas." Mrs. Pickett said:

"Early in the spring of 1857 my father, George W. Kirkendall, and my brother, E.B. Kirkendall, started from our home in Van Buren County, Iowa, with a wagon drawn by a two-horse team hoping to find a new home in the Golden West of which we had heard so much. After reaching Kansas and looking around for several days, they decided to locate near the Cottonwood River, five miles southwest of the townsite, which was then being laid out and which the town company decided to call Emporia. As the best claims were already taken, my father bought a claim of 160 acres, having a house of 16 x 18 feet, of hewn logs, roofed with clapboards. Ten acres of the ground was broken, and my brother Elijah remained and planted this in sod corn, watermelons, and garden, while father returned to Iowa to make preparations for moving the family to the new home.

"The first step was the public sale as we could bring with us only the things 'really necessary,' as there were only three wagons and fifteen in our party, besides bedding, provisions and cooking utensils, the chief of which was a large iron oven, with legs about four inches long and a heavy lid. We would set the oven over a bed of coals, place the lid on, and cover it with coals. The bread or roast meat cooked in this way could not be equalled even by that cooked in a range heated by Emporia natural gas.

"On the 11th of June all was ready, and two wagons stood at our door, one drawn by a team of horses, the other by three yoke of oxen. My brother, M.W. Kirkendall, had the third wagon, drawn by oxen containing his family and goods. Our last sight of the old home was sad, in spite of pleasant anticipations of the trip.

The yard was full of friends waving good-bye and sending all kinds of good wishes for our success in the new home in the wild west. We carried a tent, which served

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for sleeping room for the women and children, while the men slept in the wagons. Sometimes when it stormed we were able to get to a house, and the women would get to stay inside, but of course, the houses were far between.

“We were not favorable impressed with some of the acquaintances made in Missouri, during some of these stops. One family had a daughter of 16, who had never gone to school. She looked at my sister, (now Mrs. Newlin) and said, ‘You must be bout’s old as me; jew ever go to school?’ One being informed that she had, she said, ‘Jew know much ‘rethmetic?’ Upon being assured of her ability in this branch, she continued, ‘You don’t know jogerphy, do ye?’ After this she could not keep from staring with open mouth, at the girl who knew so many wonderful things.

The farmers through Missouri were none to friendly to us, as they were anxious for Kansas to be settled by pro-slavery people, and didn’t like to see Northern people coming in. They told us we would starve to death out here. Some of our part would reply that we expected to live on faith, and then we would all join in singing, ‘Neosho, Neosho, and we’ll all together go and settle on the banks of the pleasant Neosho,’ They were willing to sell us their produce but we paid top prices, such as 10 cents per quart for sour buttermilk to make bread.

“As our camping place always was near streams, in order to have water for stock, we generally found all the gooseberries we could use while some of the party prepared the meal, the others wandered off to hunt berries. These were stemmed during the next ride and ready to be cooked at our next camping place and made a much relished dessert during our trip. When not far from Kansas City, my brother, Math, was driving at the head of the procession. His oxen, seeing water ahead, started on a run to get a drink. When they reached the foot of the hill, the wagon was overturned and my brother’s wife received a broken collar bone. Their little daughter, 2 ½ years old (now Mrs. David Parker) was found crying bitterly, and when asked where she was hurt said, ‘I’m not hurt but pa’s things are all spilled.’ After we crossed the Missouri River, Indians came often to the wagon to trade. Generally they wanted to swap beads for something to eat. When we reached the Kansas plains, we saw deer and some antelope. As the men carried guns, we generally had wild meat to eat. Our last camping place before reaching our home, was near the junction of the Neosho and Cottonwood Rivers. While getting supper, a man who lived near came to camp and said they had such fine berries, he wanted to treat us. He went to the house and returned with a large bowl of mulberries with sugar and cream over them, but manlike, he didn’t think it necessary to remove the stems. But they were eaten, stems and all.

“When we came a few miles farther, father said, ‘There is Emporia,’ and how surprised we were to see only two houses. Mr. and Mrs. Storrs had a hotel and the printing office was on the upper floor. I think the first paper, The Kansas News, was printed the next week by Preston B. Plumb. John Hammond had a small building as a dwelling and carpenter shop. After looking over the town for a little

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while, we drove to the new home, where we were heartily welcomed by my brother. This was the second day of July and we had been just twenty-one days on the road.

“This is the way our family came and I supposed much the same as all others, who came prior to 1870, when the railroad reached Emporia.”

Elder Cyrus R. Rice, of Rice’s Rest, Hartford, who at 80-odd has the power of the old-time Methodist preacher, and is most eminently fitted to tell of “The Early Growth of the Churches,” made the following address:

“Having but ten minutes to talk on a big subject I must take a hop, skip and jump over a lot of ground. So here goes. In June 1856, I was sent to organize the Neosho Mission. I had the Neosho--Heap Big Water--from the Osage Reserve to Council Grove for my field. I made my headquarters at Cofachiqui, then the county seat of Allen county. There were few settlers on the Neosho at that time. No sane man would have taken a claim on the prairie in those days, for no one believed they were good for anything but pasturage; and every man wanted to get a little timber on his claim. On my first tour I found settlers at the junctions of creeks. The people, as a rule, were willing for me to preach in their cabins, and I left appointments at several points; among them, one near the junction of the Cottonwood and Neosho Rivers.

“Some time in June I organized the first church in Breckenridge county under some trees a little below the mouth of the Cottonwood, and appointed Dr. Gregg class leader. That society did not live long. So it is not worth while to spent precious minutes on it. I am not certain about dates, but I think, in 1858 Solomon Brown organized the Christian Church in Emporia; and not many months after the Congregational Church was organized; and a little later the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in a loft over a carpenter shop, and Emporia circuit, embracing Americus, Hartford, Elmendaro and some other points, found place on the minutes of the Kansas Conference. I think J. C. Fraker was the first preacher whose name was ready out by a bishop for the new circuit.

“In March, 1867, Bishop Ames sent me to organize the Emporia District. The following diagonal lines show the extent of territory I had to travel over: From Burlingame to Winfield; from Council Grove to Chetopa. I eventually took in Wichita and the Little Arkansas River. I not only organized the district, but organized societies and circuits in the southwest portion of the country named. I found churchless societies in some of the towns along the Neosho. I found three churches in Emporia, the Christian, Congregational and Methodist Episcopal. The Methodists had a new brick parsonage, unpaid for. The money was raised to pay for it during the summer by a festival. Some women of the Eastern Star made a huge Masonic cake which was sold at auction, J. C. Fraker bid it in at \$200. Other

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things sold for big prices, because the people had a will to pay for the parsonage. Samuel MacBirney was the first preacher to occupy that mansion and C. R. Rice, the last, Bernard Kelley and his family lived in it two years. Americus was the head of a circuit embracing Dow Forty-two and Allen Creeks. Hartford was the center of a circuit taking in Elmendaro, Coal Creek, Neosho Rapids and Lower Eagle Creek. The Cottonwood Falls circuit took in the eastern side of Lyon County, Palmyra and Toledo.

“Give me three minutes to look at the growth of the churches. The beginnings were small: the growth has been marvelous. The churches have kept pace with the growth of the cities and country. For instance, take Emporia. We are all proud of Emporia, one of the best towns in the state. We are proud of her public building, and fine residences; but go with me in a walk about Zion; see the great churches of the several denominations, and while you are admiring the beauty of the walls and towers think of the splendid congregations that meet on Sundays and week days to worship within the walls of these churches; and do not go by the College of Emporia, but outgrowth of one of the big churches of this beautiful town. All the church people helped to build and nurture that fine institution. The Christian people live and work together in peace and unity.”

“The First Days in Emporia,” than whom none is better fitted to tell than Mrs. Elizabeth Storrs, was given in an interesting paper, read by Mrs. Storr’s daughter, Mrs. G. W. Newman. Mrs. Storrs said:

“While we lived in Lawrence, General Deitzler, G. W. Brown, Lyman Allen, a brother of Mrs. Perley, Columbus Hornsby and P. B. Plumb organized the Emporia Town Company. They had made two trips down here to look over the ground, and in the spring of 1857 they bought an Indian float for the location of the town. They decided on this place because two Indian trails crossed here--and they thought it would be a good trading point.

“Mr. Plumb boarded with us and the men came to our house to organize the company. They had fourteen shares, and I heard Mr. Plumb say, ‘There are only two more shares left, and I think I know who will take them.’ I said, ‘Mr. Plumb, I will take one.’ One share was fourteen lots. I paid him \$100 in gold for it. Mr. Storrs was at Osawatomie at the time. When he came home Colonel Learnard wanted him to go and look at Burlington with the idea of locating there. It told him I had bought a share in the Emporia Town Company with some money I myself had earned. He said he would look at both places, so he went with Learnard to Burlington the next day, but he did not like that place; it was so flat. He walked on to Emporia, as there was no way to ride. He like the lay of the land and thought the point ought to make a good town some time. Mr. Storrs came back to

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Lawrence, bought a stock of goods and took it to Emporia and built a store building.

Then he came back for me and the baby. The town was laid out in April and we moved down in June of '57. The night we came it was pretty cold; had rained on the way and the roads were so bad our three loads of goods had not got in. We stopped at John Hammond's hotel and got our supper and asked if we could go to bed. He said he did not have any place for us to sleep. Mr. Deitzler said we could go over to his house, which stood where the State Bank now is, and the hotel was on the corner where the Citizens Bank now stands. Mr. Deitzler's house was 10 x 16, with a little loft overhead. One load of our groceries was in this building. As our bedding had not arrived, we asked Mr. Hammond if he could let us have some. He said he did not have any for himself. There were wide cracks in the floor, but I lay down with a salt sack for a pillow, and wrapped my baby in a double shawl I had with me. About 10:30 there was a rap on the door and Mr. Plumb called, 'Is that you Storrs? Is your wife in there?' Then he wanted to know if we had any bedding. Mr. Storrs told him just a double shawl for me and the baby. He insisted on my having his blanket. Afterward I found out he did not have any bedding himself that night.

"The next morning we had breakfast at the hotel and Mr. Storrs rode out to meet he loaded wagons; they did not get in till noon. I took Nellie and walked out to the Hinshaw place, which was just beyond where the M. K. & T. Railroad now is.

A calf belonging to Mr. Eskridge was so frightened at the sight of a woman and a child that it jumped out of its pen. I was so homesick I cried. Then I lay down in the sunshine on the grass and went to sleep. Pretty soon Nellie said she heard a bell. It was the dinner bell. After our good came I was so busy I did not have time to get homesick.

"The town company insisted on our taking the hotel, which we did in about a month and stayed there a year. Then Major Bancroft bought it from the town company. He kept it a year and did not like it, so we bought it from him and kept it till 1867, when we closed it. In 1868 we sold the building to Dan Holderman.

"When we first came here, Mr. Storrs brought two loads of potatoes for which he had paid \$5 a bushel, thinking he could sell them to the settlers for seed. But it was so late in the season and the price was so high he could not sell them. I thought we might as well cook what we wanted. I was peeling some for dinner one day when a man came along and expressed surprise at the idea of eating those potatoes; said they just taste like gold. He said he would like to get a couple of bushels to plan on the shares. Mr. Storrs was away, but I let him have them thinking I was making a good bargain. When Mr. Storrs came home, I told him what I had done and he asked me who the man was. I said I had forgotten to ask him his name. The next spring I went into the store one day and saw a man whom I recognized as the one I had let have the potatoes. I called Mr. Storrs to one side and told him. He said, 'Oh, his name is Fowler, and he is all right, but you had

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better ask him about the potatoes.' I spoke to him and asked if he raised any potatoes from the two bushes he planted the summer before. His reply was 'Nary a tater.'

"The greatest drawback, when we came to the town, was the lack of water. We had to pay a dollar a barrel to get it hauled in. The town company decided to dig a well. A water witch came down and told them where they could get water. A man named Ketcham, an Englishman from Lawrence, dug and dug and dug till he had gone down about a hundred feet, but did not find water. Then they bored down between thirty and forty feet, but did not get water. They went to another place and dug fort feet, but still no water. One day several of the women were together, wishing we had something to do for diversion. Mr. Ketcham said he would let us down into the deep well. I said I would have to go first, as I had some baking that would need attention soon. He let me down in the bucket about ninety-seven feet till I could not see anything at the top and felt I must get out. He let the others, Mrs. Bancroft, Julia Rogers and Mrs. Perry, down one at a time.

"They finally found water on Mechanic Street and Fifth Avenue. John Hammond took the contract and got water in twenty feet, but it was not a strong well and did not afford enough water. They soon dug wells in several other places. Hammond had a block on State Street where he dug a well and found good water. This well, I think, is still in use. The night after John Hammond first struck water we had an oyster supper to celebrate.

"The first house built in Emporia was moved into, April 7, 1857, by the family of David Plum. One of the first houses built was by John Hammond, for himself, on his lots on State Street, just north of where the Hood house now stands.

The first issue of the Kansas News was printed outdoors, June 6, 1857."

Mrs. George Plumb's topic, "How We Lived Through the Winter of 1860 and 1861" was given without manuscript but Mrs. Plumb put it into writing, as nearly as she could recall it yesterday, to be printed in the Gazette. Mrs. Plumb said:

"When this topic was suggested I said that it ought to be given to someone that could make ti funny, for it seemed to me that after the lapse of over fifty years the said part would be gone from our memories. But after it was given to me, I looked at it first from one point of view and then from another, and somehow I failed to see the funny side.

"You must know that the very few had been here not more than two or three years, and some, like ourselves, had come the fall before; and we, at least, had been fortunate enough to buy a crop of corn; the rest had come to 'Sunny Kansas' that spring and sunny they surely found it, for it rained so little that when there was a light shower the dogs would try to keep out of the mud by stepping on boards or

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stones. A few years ago, I said to a gentlemen who came with us to Kansas, that nothing but sugar cane grew that year. 'Oh yes, there did, for I put in ten acres of wheat and got ten bushels, and stored them in your father's house.' So, I wonder if we really lived or just existed through that long, cold winter of 1860 and '61.

"Our houses were so poor that we could see through the cracks and often were buried in snow during the night, for we had six weeks' of sleighing that winter.

I was a young girl then, and while I never went hungry unless it was for some of the things we could not have, I remember being sent into other homes with some little thing that we had for a sick person, and being told that their food was usually cornbread and that made with water. I sometimes found the children barefooted, and perhaps there was a floor and perhaps not. As for clothing--well I guess the less said would suit the quantity better, as well as the quality. Even those who came with what seemed a good supply had outgrown or outworn them, usually the latter. How well I remember a large box of clothing sent to us in the spring of '61 by friends, and how I begged and begged for just one dress and finally was allowed a basque, mother getting me a new calico skirt to wear with it, and I wore it to Americus to quarterly meeting. The stovepipes went up through the ceiling those days and next morning we were awakened by smoke, and there against the pipe, in flames, was the precious new dress and the rest had all been given away.

"Of course, there was the aid and while there was a lot of red tape connected with it, still there would have been a great deal more suffering without it and it furnished the seed for the bountiful crop that came in 1861.

"Young as I was, I never can forget the men who came from the Walnut River, south of us, half starved themselves and their horses so poor they were hardly able to drag the improvised sleighs loaded with jerked buffalo meat which they hoped to dispose of for something to help them on to Atchison to get something for their loved ones at home. But they saw the uselessness of trying, so father took some of the meat and they some of the precious corn and started home. As I look at it now, from a woman's standpoint, we did not live, we simply existed, and although despair must often have been a guest, we still said, 'Our Father,' and trusted that all would be well sometimes, and it was."

D. C. Grinell, of Americus, and editor of the Greeting couldn't get away from the office on press day, so he sent his paper to Emporia, and it was read by Parson J. H. J. Rice, of the First Congregational Church. The committee assigned Mr. Grinell the topic, "How Americus Lost the County Seat," but Pap Grinell, loyal Americus and that he is, changed the title to "How Emporia Stole the County Seat."

Mr. Grinell said:

"It was away back in the dark ages--it must have been in the dark ages, for

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electric lights were not yet invented, nor did the gasoline lights scintillate from the coal oil circuits of our theaters, nor had the coal oil lamp with its blackened chimney and foul odor yet even entered the mansion of the rich, and the nabob and the serf alike used the tallow candle and the dip. As we were about to say, the momentous events which gave Emporia the county seat occurred during the dark ages, and no doubt the darkness aided and abetted their plans, as the county seat was stolen after night in the dark of the moon, away back in the early sixties.

“Americus then was a pretentious town, boasting of a few small houses, but it’s people were enterprising and felt the need of a county seat, as the one ‘long felt want,’ to hasten them on to prosperity and opulence. County seats were then a scarce commodity in the thinly settled territory, and the only way Emporia could get one of its own was to steal it. The territorial legislature was held at Lecompton, and a bill was got up to add a strip of territory to the south line of the county, and cut off a strip from the north. At this time Emporia was near the south end of the county, but by this change in the boundary lines it was moved several miles nearer the center. A delegate was chosen and a petition circulated, signed and delivered to him, asking the legislature to ratify the proposed change in the county lines. He was not a walking delegate, but was put astride a sure-footed mule, which was the fastest conveyance in old Breckenridge county, and he wended his way to Lecompton. When he reached the Wakarusa he was taken sick with fever and ague, and was marooned at a farm-side in. The mule, however, was immune and remained intact. A few days later a representative of Americus and the north end of the county started to Lecompton with a remonstrance against the proposed change in the boundaries of the county, and he overtook the man with the mule and the ague, and there in that lonely wayside inn, for the paltry sum of \$400 and a few town lots, the heading was torn from that remonstrance and the list of names was pasted on the petition for the change, and the man and the mule went on their way rejoicing; that it, at the last the man did, and that legislature made the change, without a single man or name appearing against it, and the county seat that was sold for a mess of pottage went to Emporia, and the people in the north end were not aware for some time of the transaction which lost them the only available county seat in this part of the country.

“This Americus county seat had not been in active operation long, nor had it done much business at the old stand, when in the dead hours of night, amid the howl of the coyote, and the weird whistling of the Kansas winds across the bleak prairies which added gloom to the surroundings; when even the moon felt ashamed to lend its luster to the occasion, the last foul act in the drama was perpetrated, when a representative citizen of Emporia drove up to Americus in a buggy, and stole the entire records at one load, and dumped them in a little building in that town.

“At the time the county had a jail, part of which is in Americus yet. A

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courthouse was partially built in the public square, and afterward town down to build the first schoolhouse in the Greenlee district. It was from the steps of this courthouse that Col. Preston B. Plumb spoke, and organized two companies of the Eleventh Kansas, and led them to greater deeds of valor and glory than bartering petitions for town lots, or stealing little innocent county seats and in after years, when his noble soldiers stole anything from the enemy, it was something to replenish the inner man, and not unprotected county seats and must records.

“But the past is forgotten. Many of the old-timers are dead and gone, and those will still survive are resigned to their fate. The arch conspirators have long since passed over the River Jordan, and are now in high Heaven, and as they clasp their hands and circle around the great white throne, they chortle and smile as they tell the old, old story of ‘How Emporia Stole the County Seat.’”

“When We Went to the War Away,” was an unassigned topic on the program. Elder Bernard Kelley, who was an Illinois soldier, was drafted by Toastmaster Kellogg. The elder claimed he couldn’t speak for the Kansas Old Boys, but here is what a stenographer caught:

“I will do my best to make everything hear except the merry-go-round. I never could understand the relation between a merry-go-round and an old settlers’ picnic.

“I do not understand why it is that this should be called an ‘old settlers’ picnic, anyway. The best part of a man’s life is from the time that he is 70, on. He is not old until he is a hundred. I am not one of the Kansas fellows, and I hardly think that I should be called to speak at a picnic of Old Kansas Settlers. I could speak at an Illinois picnic much better. But I know the spirit of the Kansas boys, how, when they fought in the war, they conquered all before them and looked for more victories to win. I remember a story they told on one of the Kansas boys whom the others, thought had been killed in the battle. They carried him tenderly into an undertaking establishment and told the undertaker to prepare him for burial. So he was placed in a coffin in a back room. The undertaker left the room, leaving the coffin open. The soldier then became conscious and sat up in the casket and looked around. Seeing a lot of empty coffins about, and no comrades, he shouted in a loud voice, ‘Three cheers for Kansas. First in war, first in peace and first at the day of ressurection.’”

“The Kansas boys went to the war in the spirit of patriotism. They conquered everything before them, and have been talking about it ever since.”

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Evan L. Jones of Dry Creek, was put on the program to tell of "The Early Settlement of Dry Creek," and something of the part of the Welsh in the upbuilding of Lyon County. Charles Evans, another old-time Welshman, has written the following story, in place of Mr. Evans:

"My father and mother, Edward and Martha Evans, and their four children, John, Charles, Lizzie and Mat, and a widow named Ann Williams, and her three children, David, Hugh and Ann, started from Montello, Wis., May 10, 1857 with four yoke of oxen, two covered wagons and a few cows to make the trip to Kansas. In Iowa we were joined by a doctor and his wife, named Wallace. In Missouri two more families with ox teams joined our ranks. They were Mr. and Mrs. M. Howard and two daughters, and a widow named Diracking and her two sons. About July 12, 1857, we stopped in front of a board building on the southeast corner of Sixth Avenue and Commercial Street, occupied by Fick & Eskridge, dealers in general merchandise. Here we were pleasantly entertained for several hours by G. W. Rick, C. V. Eskridge, Jacob Stotler, N. S. Storrs and others. There were but three buildings on the townsite, but all were hopeful and working hard for the future growth of the town. From here we journeyed on across the Cottonwood river above Soden's dam. The river then was dry except pools here and yonder. By this time we were tired after traveling over 700 miles of unmade roads, either crossing the streams on ferry or fording them. We forded the Kaw River near Lecompton. So here we concluded to take a rest and for two weeks we were camped near the home of Curtis Hiatt. At the end of two weeks we again started in a southwesterly direction and reached the Walnut River in Cowley County, where we stopped and finding many walnut trees, we called the river Walnut River. Here we camped for two days and then started on our way back towards Emporia, leaving the Wallace and Diracking families on the Walnut. In a few days we were back on our old camping ground near Mr. Hiatt.

"The three families started at once to hunt for claims, and all filed for preemption on what was then called Fowler Creek. Previous to this time three claims had been filed, one by a man named Parker, one by Milton Chamness and one by one of the Fowlers. Finding the creek was dry and didn't look like a Fowler, we named it Dry Creek. The creek is three miles south of Emporia and was at that time in Madison County, the north line being Logan Avenue. Soon after this a strip three miles wide was taken from the north end of Madison county and added to Breckenridge county and then we were in Breckenridge County.

"So far, everything was a success and we took off the wagon boxes with the covers on them and used them to live in, while we took the running gears to gather material to build us a home, made of native lumber and logs cut from the timber along the creek. They made fairly good-looking shanties, with clapboard for a roof and boot leather for hinges to swing the doors. By fall that year many more had come to locate on Dry Creek, among whom were John Bennett, Bob Morris, G.P.

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Griffith, Evan Davis, and families. By the end of the year our store of provision was getting short and so my father, John Bay and Howard went to Independence, Mo., to mill and get provisions for the winter. The winter of '57 and '58 was pleasant, with hardly any snow or cold weather. The spring of '58 everybody was busy fencing and breaking the ground to put in a crop. The weather was favorable and everything went well and no one suffered for something to eat. Game, wild turkey, prairie chicken, etc. were plentiful and they made good eating. The crop of 1858 was planted on sod ground and yielded fairly well, being mostly corn, potatoes and watermelons.'

"By this time there was a mill on the Neosho that ground corn. We called it the corn cracker, and we took our corn there to be cracked and then we made corn bread of the cracked corn. We called it johnny cake. The fall of 1858 was the time our trouble began. We all got the chills and fever, and everyone was sick. No one was able to do anything and so everything was at a standstill and this condition continued through the year of 1859, and then came the drought of 1860, the history of which has been many time written.

"Of the twenty persons who traveled with us in covered wagons drawn by oxen three are still alive, myself and two sisters, but none of the old fifty-seveners are on the creek and but one of those that settled there in 1858--E.L. Jones, who still lives on the farm he preempted. He is past 81, and he looks as though he may be there for several more years."

John Grimsley, of the oldest of the old-timers, of the north end of Lyon County, was to tell "When and Why Was the Name of the County Changed?" Mr. Grimsley couldn't come, but he sent his paper, which was ready by George Plumb. Here is Mr. Grimsley's story:

"As this is an old settlers' meeting and I am an old settler, I have been asked to make a short talk about early Kansas days. I am glad it is to be short, for I might run out of anything to say. We landed on our claim on Allen Creek, May 19, 1856. Two families came with us and settled near by. A man named Allen had taken a claim the year before we came, but had gone away. Allen Creek was named for him, and Dow Creek got its name from a Mr. Dow, who came in 1855. Robert Abraham also came in 1855. Those were the only neighbors we had.

"At that time this county was called Breckenridge in honor of John C. Breckenridge, who was born in Kentucky January 21, 1826. He was vice-president from 1857 to 1861. He was senator in 1861 and went over to the confederacy and became a major-general. He was expelled from the Senate in December 1861. Kansas could not stand his fighting the North, so in 1862, by an act of legislature, Breckenridge County was changed to Lyon County in honor of General Lyon, the

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hero of the Battle of Wilson's Creek, where he lost his life in defense of the Union.

"There has been a great change since those days. We had no 'auto-bowl-you-overs,' no buggies and few horses in those good old days, but we had a good time and were happy. When we wanted to take our girls to a part, we would yoke up the oxen, fill the wagon bed with hay and away we went. Someone had to walk and drive the oxen. When we went to church, if it was too far to walk, we again yoked up 'Buck' and 'Brindle' and sped away, light-hearted and gay and more sure of reaching our destination than if we rode in a \$2500 car of the present day. Church was held in a cabin on some of the neighboring claims. With many regrets that I cannot be with you, I will close."

Mrs. G.C. Morse, who had a prominent part in the early educational work of Lyon County, gave a most interesting paper on "The Early School of Lyon County." With Mr. Morse, she did much for school and church and all uplifting influences. Mrs. Morse said:

"Had I been asked to choose my subject for discussion today, 'The Early Schools of Lyon County,' would have been my choice, with one exception, that of the 'Early Church,' which properly belonged to the Rev. C. R. Rice. For twelve years I was a teacher in your city school, the High School and the Normal, and of the entire fifty-five years of my life in Kansas, my absorbing interest has been its churches. The atmosphere of my prairie home was charged with it. Probably some persons expect me to consider the territorial and state school laws of our state in the late fifties and early sixties, giving the school population, the erection of schoolhouses, the taxes raised and the comparative progress of each year, but I have chosen the human rather than the statistical.

"Let us live again in 1857-58-59-60. We found ourselves here on the prairie with nothing prepared for our coming except the climate and the soil. We were all young and inexperienced. In the homes we had left, our fathers and mothers took the lead in all public measures. But our children must have as good a chance as we had had, and the conclusion was that if they did, we, ourselves, must arise and build. We were a cosmopolitan people. We were from Iowa and Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and New York. Each state had its school system that they considered perfectly adapted to Kansas. I knew some Massachusetts people who thought their schools could not be improved upon, and the would be a perfect success if adopted by Kansas. There were heated discussion, but in an incredibly short time we agreed on what a good school should be. Massachusetts had been argued with and Missouri had been above, and the first step had been well take.

"The next surprise was the willingness with which the people taxed themselves to build schoolhouses and support the schools. Perhaps some of the

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early settlers remember than there were hard times in those early years. I have almost forgotten them, and if any of you need to have your minds refreshed on that point apply to some of our Eastern newspapers. They will tell you, without consulting the records, in how many of the fifty-five years everything in Kansas was eaten up by grasshoppers, and how often the cyclone swept everything before it, and left Kansas in its original state--a desert. And yet you voted every year a reasonable tax of the support of your schools.

“The first school in Emporia was taught by Miss Mary Jane Watson--refined, cultured, strong and winning; her influence for good is still felt by many of the fathers and mothers of this town, and their children are today better for her teaching. Early settlers of Emporia, let us keep her memory green.

“It was said in early days, it was easy to leave your religion on the eastern bank of the Mississippi. But not so with refinement and culture. In this Miss Watson set a high mark for the Lyon County school. The turbulence and boisterousness, so often ready about in stories of early schools of other prairie states, was at a minimum here. Not satisfied with her attainments, Miss Watson belonged to the first graduating class of the State Normal School, with Miss Ellen Plumb. She deserves to have a high place in the molding of first things here.

“Mr. Tripp and Mr. and Mrs. Thompson taught successful schools in the early time. The Christian Church opened its new building for school purposes and later the Congregationalists' building was placed at their disposal. It was a little shock, at first, but deep in our hearts we knew ‘there was nothing too good for Emporia school.’

“Then came the Civil War and our boys went marching away. Those that were left kept working--other people came in to help--and when they came marching back, we had something to show them. It was a two-story four roomed stone schoolhouse. There was said to be only in the entire State of Kansas that excelled it. And I believed it. With my later experience I might have called for an investigation, but we did not feel any need of that then; we all believed it. We had issued the first school bonds every issued in Kansas. The architecture of the building was so severe that it was actually repelling, but it had its compensation. When the Normal School was located here we had a ‘room to rent.’

“We labored and begged that the University might be located here. We were disappointed, but the legislature gave us the Normal. The wise ones said the school would be worth more to us for the first twenty years than the University. We can estimate the influence of the State Normal School on the schools of Lyon county. The teachers of the county met regularly and he told them of the best methods of teaching geography and arithmetic--he talked of self-control and the discipline of the schools and all the schools gained in efficiency. Then we secured the best kindergartner we could, for our primary work. She had a model school five days in the week, and gave the county teachers instruction in this new branch.

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The schools of Americus and Hartford were efficient.

“Then came Mr. Norton, whose memory is dear to all our hearts. It would be impossible even to sketch the work he did for the Normal--for all our school--for the whole people. So our schools flourished until the outside world stopped and took notice.

“But we had some drawbacks--I will indicate only a few. I received a call from a young woman who had been given her diploma that morning from the Normal. She was still in her beautiful graduating dress. I spoke of the worth, to her, of our Normal--that our teachers could go out as well equipped for their work as from the great educational centers, Bridgewater, Bloomington and Oswego. She replied, ‘Yes, but I am not fool enough to try these new methods on my school.’ I made no reply. I thought if three years of good training had not ‘rung out the old and rung in the new,’ no word of mine would help the matter. So there was one school that year that ‘jogged along in the old rut.’

“When Mr. Morse was running for your superintendent, the following conversation was reported. Two men met, and one said, ‘I’ll tell ye now, I’m not going to vote for Morse. Hain’t a bit o’ use for all these new-fangled notions. I got readin’, writing’ and a little cipherin’, and that has stood me well enough, and it is good enough for my children. They’ll never get me to vote for Morse.’ ‘Well,’ said the other, slowly, ‘Them was just my sentiments, exactly, awhile ago, but I see it’s a comin’, and you and I can’t stop it, and I’d just as soon Morse would bring it in and finish us up, as anybody. So, I am going to vote for Morse. You’d better do some thinking before you vote against him.’

You would not expect me to talk on this subject, without recalling one who passed away more than forty years ago. For the thirteen years he lived among you, he labored incessantly and most strenuously for the church and the schools of Kansas. Before he was our superintendent, he would visit the new schools, encouraging the lonely teacher, and talk to earnestly to the boys and girls, that after man years, men and women--now old--tell me of the inspiration that came to them. As your superintendent, he repeated this work, and then lectured to the parents in the evenings--drumming up his audience and reaching home at 11, 12 and often after 1 o’clock. From the establishment of the Normal he was regent until his death, and I need not remind you of his intense interest in that institution from the first.

“We have been looking backward, at small beginning. With what a source of pride do we witness today the growth of our school--the Normal with it’s twenty-five hundred student--the College, whose scholarship is recognized by the entire state--the Business College--the music conservatories--the noble high schools scattered over Lyon County--the graded schools of this city, the towns and the country, all with fine school building. In 1857 no imagination of ours was far-reaching enough to picture the present. Early settlers, the Lord called us to

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Lyon County to make it a worthy part of a great nation. We have about finished our work. 'We builded better than we knew.'

Mrs. Elizabeth French, who lived in Elmendaro Township for many years, was given "The Hospitality of the Old Settlers." Her paper was read by her daughter, Miss Laura French. Mrs. French's paper follows:

Do you recall how the disciple Peter, when he went to preach, was besought by a lame man from birth for alms? The lame man got his living by begging, and expected a gift of money from Peter and John. Peter, taking the lame man by the hand, said: 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee,' and commanded him to rise up and walk. This the man did. He had received a gift far surpassing any gift of money--life, and health and strength.'

"The Kansas pioneers gave of their best to all who came among them--not money, but such as they had, which was more than money and more than money could buy. They had opportunity for the broadest sort of hospitality, and they never failed to exercise their high privilege. Most of us in those far-off days lived in small houses, poorly furnished, and with little to cook--the latter for two reasons: There was not much to cook, and few of us had money to buy anything except the most necessary provisions even had they been plentiful, which they were not. But always we had enough to share with friend and neighbor and wayfarer.

"Those of us who were among the early arrivals--I came here with my father's family in 1856 shared our homes with those who came later. Families of ten or a dozen took into their one-room cabin with a lean-to--maybe--a family of friends or relatives, and gave them shelter for weeks or months, as the need might be till the new people could get located. This meant crowding up in a way no one nowadays would think of doing. It meant taking beds on the floor every night. It meant two tablesful at every meal--there were few extension tables those days, and they didn't grow among the pioneers--it meant endless inconvenience and planning how to get the greatest returns out of the scanty supplies.

"A family I recall came to Kansas with three teams and two cows and five children. They arrived in April, and it was June before they found the claim they wanted and got a house built and the necessary improvements for moving in. All this time they stayed with a family they had known in Indiana--not relatives, but just a family who knew and practiced the grace of hospitality. There were dozens of such instances here in the Cottonwood Valley, and of course, in other sections of the state.

"There was much of the social life among us, too. People came for miles to attend church services, often, in those earlier years, held in the homes of the preacher or other church member. We used to drive eight and ten miles to church,

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after we moved out on the prairie, and I can't recall that we ever went home without dinner. People who lived near the place of 'meeting' always entertained those who came from a distance, and would have been really hurt had their friends refused to accept their hospitality. They fed the teams and the guests stayed all day and visited. Then there were the play parties and the candy pullings and the dances, at which the boys and girls enjoyed themselves as much--or more--than do the young people of the present day at then proper parties I hear about'

"Often I regretted that we didn't stay on out Cottonwood River claim, for when we moved further south and my husband took advantage of his soldier homestead rights and we picked on a quarter section homestead in the south part of Lyon county, on the prairie in Elmendaro Township, the really lonely part began. Here, we were near out relatives and friends. There, we were the only people on a wide stretch of prairie--the real 'first family' of what became the Summit neighborhood. We could see just one house--and that was eight miles away down the Verdigris. We had nearer neighbors, but the hills hid their house from view, and it was several months before we discovered them. We welcomed most heartily everyone who came over the dim wagon trail from the north---there was not east and west travel.

"We were the first people on the divide between Eagle Creek and the Verdigris because the prairie settled so much more slowly than did the land along the creeks and rivers. Settlers thought at first they couldn't live away from the streams, and when they began to see the fallacy of this idea they scattered. In our first years on the homestead began the settlement of Cowley County, and many Lyon County people went to the Grouse Creek region which, it was claimed, was the real garden spot of Kansas. It is a garden spot, but there are many such. The road past our house became the regular highway to Cowley County, and the coming of covered wagons grew more frequent. The children, outdoors at play, could see a long distance in every direction, as there were no trees to break the view, and the sight of a covered wagon brought them scampering to the house to see who would be the first to tell the welcome news. Then all the family took a look, and the children boldly secured the best points of vantage and stayed there watching till the wagon drove up--when they didn't run to meet it.

"Often the occupants were some of our old neighbors, but if they were total strangers they were just as welcome. They put up their team and stayed all night, if it was anywhere near evening, or they ate dinner with us if it was the middle of the day. Often I could give them mighty poor fare, and often they helped out with some of their camp supplies, but no guests ever were more appreciated--or more appreciative. Our log cabin was one big room with a lean-to kitchen and a loft under the ridge-pole. There were two beds in the big room, and I have made beds down on the floor until there would be room only to step around them carefully. In the loft were a couple of beds, and we 'slept' eighteen or twenty persons many a

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night. Many a time I sat up in bed to dress, first throwing a sheet over my head to conceal myself from the occupants of the room, for the eighteen or twenty persons in that one room was a mixed crowd, let me tell you, and there was no thought of immodesty in men and women sharing the same room.

“We entertained everybody. As the country settled came the peddlers, as we called them frankly in those days. Lightning rod agents, sewing machine men, young fellows selling nursery stock, book agents after our school was started the teachers hunting schools and the county superintendents on their annual visits. Preachers turned in at our gate and got refreshment for man and beast, and wanderers of all kinds stopped there. Occasionally we were offered money for our hospitality, and occasionally, if the stranger looked prosperous and we thought he wouldn't miss the two bits he offered, we took it. One time along in the fall when we were feeling especially poor and wondering how we were going to get shoes for the children when cold weather came and they should start to school, a weary-looking stranger on a discouraged-looking old horse rode up just after noon and asked if he could get dinner and horse feed. Dinner was over, but he was told that he was welcome to what we had. The boys took his horse and he came in with my husband, washed his face and hands in the tin basin and sat down to what was left of our corn bread and soup beans, the latter seasoned with a bacon rind. He ate heartily, and told us he was looking for some cattle that had strayed away. He didn't tell his name, and didn't seem inclined to be communicative, and after dinner, when he asked how much he owed, I looked at my husband and saw he was thinking the same thing I was thinking--that this man looked poorer than we were and much as we needed money, we told him we wouldn't think of charging a neighbor for his dinner. Then he told his name--which was that of one of the wealthiest cattle men of Lyon County. He lived ten or a dozen miles from us, and many of you here today would recognize his name should I tell it. He has been dead for many a year. But always I wished I had taken his quarter.

“As the prairie settled and the neighbors came, we were relieved of the desperate loneliness that assailed us during the first year or two. Our neighbors were kindly, hospitable people, and many were the pleasant visits we had with them. Always on dark and stormy nights there was a lamp in every window of the scattered farmhouses to guide to rest and shelter whoever might be wandering on the unfenced prairie. And many times have wagons drive up to our gate, late at night and its occupants were warmed and fed and given a place to sleep.

“Nowadays we hear much of the decline of hospitality and perhaps there is a reason for such criticism, but on the other hand there is not the need for its exercise that existed in pioneer days. But the hospitality of the pioneers was the real thing for of such as we had we gave freely to all who came.

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Mrs. P. L. Hollingsworth, of Brownsville, Ore., was asked for a talk on old times. She couldn't come, so she sent it. Mrs. Hollingsworth was one of the ten Spencer girls, who helped to liven up the town in the early days. Here is Mrs. Hollingsworth's paper:

"By request of your program committee for a paper from me, I will endeavor to brush the dust and mist from memory's pages and at least give a few snap shots, rather than photographic views of the olden time, and yet brevity, 'the soul of wit.' will be difficult when memories come in like a flood, at the mere mention of the old prairie home, Emporia.

"In the early sixties our whole state, that we had come to help rescue from slavery, was in the tolls of the great struggle for the emancipation of the slave, and human freedom was winning her way to the sisterhood of states and 'through difficulties to the stars.' No easy way or flower-strewn path marked her progress, but courage, heroism, even martyrdom, was the lot of the early Kansan.

"Emporia, alive and loyal to her country's needs, responded to her call, and sent her bravest sons to the front in her defense. She proved herself equal to the great needs of the hour, and won lasting fame. Those were thrilling days, which we all love to recount, covering the darkest as well as the brightest pages in our nation's history. I would love to enumerate the boys and dwell upon the sacred pages of those days, but I know other tongues and pens, more fluent than mine, will do full justice to those thrilling times, and as I have furnishes snap shots only, I will refrain.

"I must, however, pay a loving tribute to the long-neglected wife and mother of those crucial days who 'stood by their guns,' or rather by their homes without guns, and manifested the same loyalty, the same courage, as those who marched to the front.

"Yes, the wife and mother of those days deserves an honored lace beside their illustrious dead. With streaming eyes and breaking hearts, they sent husbands and sons to the front, into the jaws of death, while they, burying their sorry, set their faces like a flint, and with renewed courage, consecration and loyalty, turned to their home duties. In many cases, they tilled the fields, tended the flocks, defended their homes from Indians and marauders, and looked after the schools and the business interests.

"May the day speedily come when the world may hear and grasp the higher concept of the blessed gospel of the Prince of Peace, and usher in his kingdom 'when the sword shall be beaten into ploughshares and the spear into pruning hooks.'

"Perhaps the most vivid picture of those early days, and one that was interwoven with the meshes of war, was the founding of the Kansas State Normal School. It meant much to my own life, friends and associates, and was the civilizing, refining, uplifting influence so much needed, after years of nomadic life

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on the plains where schools and churches and all refining influences had been at a premium. So I look back and point with pride to that February day in 1865, when I, with two sisters, and other neighbor girls and boys were permitted to lay the foundations, with L. B. Kellogg, the chief corner stone, of an institution that sprung rapidly into prominence, and whose influence had been felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, and will reecho through all eternity.

“The names of C. V. Eskridge and G. C Morse present themselves as fathers of the institution, while a score of other familiar names assisted and nurtured the school in its infancy, and lent their talents and energies to the building up of the material, educational and religious interests of the community and lay the foundations of future greatness. The names of Watson, Plumb, Ruggles, Spencer, Murdock, Stotler and scores of others call for recognition in their various activities of those days.

“In conclusion, I send greetings from the great Northwest, the Pacific coast, to dear old Kansas, the center of all god things, ‘the hub of the universe,’ with a message to stand by your altar fire, your inborn principles of freedom--freedom from the liquor traffic, from monopoly and the greed of this age, as well as from that of slavery.”

Charles S. Gleed, of Topeka, made a short talk which pleased the people. Mr. Gleed said:

“When a hungry Topeka lawyer gets a chance at fifty-seven varieties of good grub, and eats all he wants it is perfectly natural that he should be able to make a speech. That is what has happened to me. I was invited here by your fellow citizen, Mr. Plumb, who left a happy home in a beautiful place to come up to Topeka and he said that I should not feel obligated to speak more than an hour. Another citizen of Emporia intimated to me that if I made my speech longer than ten minutes I would be apt to get shot at, so I will try to confine my remarks to ten minutes.

“I had an experience not long ago that has made me careful in regard to old settlers. A gentleman in my home town asked me how long I had been in Kansas and I told him since 1866. I then felt called upon to make a little speech about pioneer days, and about the roughness of the frontier life. Than I asked how long he had been in Kansas, and he said since 1836. Since then I have been more careful.

“I lived in Lawrence through the dark days of the grasshopper period. I lived there through the dark days of drought, and through troubles and trials of every kind. I remember when I was a lad when rummaging through an old house, I found the original copy of the Wyandotte constitution. Thought just a boy I

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recognized its value, and I gave it to the State Historical society. It was drawn on the plan of the Ohio constitution and was made by men from Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio.

They worked over it carefully for days, these fifty-two delegates, representative of the people. They formed first a bill of rights, and in that bill of rights they preserved every imaginable right. There was not a single human need that was not mentioned in that bill. They provided that the making of laws should be in the hands of certain delegates of the legislature. The legislature was carefully limited and could meet only so often. They provided for the judges and arranged that the courts should be presided over by just one man. Everything separately and collectively, that Kansas has today is a result of that constitution and was mentioned in it. It will be wise of us to consider carefully before we diverge from that course that has brought us where we now are.”

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