Kansas historical collections

Section 209, Pages 6241 - 6270

This seventeen volume series is the first serial published by the Kansas State Historical Society from 1875 until 1928. The publication of the Kansas Historical Quarterly followed in 1931. Volumes 1-10 were officially titled the "Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society." The title changed to "Collections of the..." beginning with volume 11. The series contains addresses and papers delivered at the annual meetings, biographical sketches, compiled historical information, and transcriptions of select collections in the Historical Society's holdings. The first seven volumes contain biennial reports of the board of directors. Beginning with volume 8 the biennial reports were published separately. Searchable tables of contents and indexes for each volume are forthcoming.

Creator: Kansas State Historical Society

Date: 1875-1928

Callnumber: SP 906 K13

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 221606

Item Identifier: 221606

www.kansasmemory.org/item/221606

time in the '60's, I don't remember the year with certainty, H. D. Shepard, the merchant in Wilmington, bought a whole trainload of wool that had been brought that far on the way from the distant Southwest, and he made a large profit on it. I think that the breaking out of the Civil War in 1861 had the effect of lessening a little the amount of government freighting over the trail, but it by no means extinguished it. The Mexican freighting that started from the other end of the route I think remained as vigorous during the war as before; and after the war was over, until the Union Pacific was built, freighting by ox and mule teams over the trail continued as prosperously or increased. After the building of this railroad, however, railway stations on the line of the road were brought much nearer the source of the Mexican trade than Westport Landing, and ox and mule team freighting over the trail rapidly declined.

These Santa Fe ox and mule trains were usually large; in fact, there were no small trains. They had to pass through a country for a long distance occupied by wild Indians, and it was necessary for them to travel compactly and in large bodies. Usually there were from four to six yoke of oxen, or from four to six span of mules, to a government freight wagon, and the train would be made up with from twenty to twenty-six wagons. The oxen of which the trains at the eastern end of the trail were made up were good, large, native work oxen, probably raised in Missouri, while the mules were good sized, and from the same locality. Both classes of teams were good. The trains, however, made up at the western end of the trail—that is, the Mexican trains—were of small Mexican cattle, many of them black or black-and-tan in color, and they had small black horns, and usually there were from five to seven yokes of them to a wagon. It was rather rare to have any longhorns with them. The mule teams of the Mexican trains also were made up of small animals, and usually from five to seven spans to a wagon.

EGGS AND SALERATUS.

By Judge J. T. Keagy.

Some ten or a dozen years ago Herman Meseke, now deceased, but then a farmer, who prior to the year 1860 had located a land warrant on 120 acres of land in section 14, township 13, range 8 east, near Templin, told me an incident of the drought year 1860.

He said that in May, 1860, he got married, and in that spring and summer built a little house on his land, into which he and his wife moved; that he tried to do some farming, but that the drought was so severe he raised nothing. He had at the time a yoke of oxen, a wagon, a plow, a scythe, an ax and a hoe as farming implements; also two cows, no hogs, and no other stock except a yoke of oxen and two hens, but no rooster. In the late autumn he found he had enough money to provide flour for himself and wife sufficient to reach into the next spring, besides rye to parch for coffee. When he had provided thus for the winter his money was all gone, and he and his wife settled down for the winter.

He told me (and this is the incident I am reducing to writing for perpetuation) that during this late autumn and early winter the two hens had laid an occasional egg, and that he and his wife both agreed to save these eggs until their needs became greater. By the time winter was fairly on and the winter holidays very near, his wife had so often wished that she

had saleratus to bake buscuits out of the flour, a desirable change from the continuous diet of only light bread and rye coffee (saleratus is a soda, known fifty or sixty years ago only by the name of "saleratus" in the stores, and it preceded the baking compounds now known as baking powders, and was used with sour milk, or with sweet milk and cream of tartar, as baking powders are now used), and the winter weather being mild for a considerable part of the day, he resolved to go to Council Grove, the then nearest market, distant eighteen miles, to get saleratus, provided they had eggs enough to make the trade. He and his wife counted up and found they had eleven eggs. He then made a good search to see if an egg might not have been laid that day so as to make a full dozen, but could not find one. So, on the next morning, the weather being clear, he yoked up the oxen to his wagon, and with his eleven eggs drove to Council Grove, and got there a little before night. He camped there for the night, intending after camping to do his trading, so that the eggs should not freeze, and he would be ready to get an early start for home next morning. Before doing his trading he met Mr. Carl Grunewald, a Wabaunsee county neighbor (though living a half dozen miles from each other), and told Grunewald why he had come to Council Grove, and the embarrassment he was in because he only had eleven eggs. Grunewald said, "Why, I had an extra egg, and the store gave it back to me. I'll give you that egg." Meseke thankfully accepted the proposition, got the egg from Grunewald, and bartered his now full dozen of eggs for saleratus. He slept in his wagon, and next day drove home, having spent two full days and one night in a trip to Council Grove for no other purpose than to get saleratus so his wife could bake biscuits.

Before writing the above, Judge Keagy went to Mrs. Meseke, the widow of Herman Meseke, who resides here in Alma, and she fully corroborated the story, and further said that by a trade her husband made later they got a large part of a hog for meat, and that he also caught some rabbits and prairie chickens, so that they did not suffer for meat that winter.

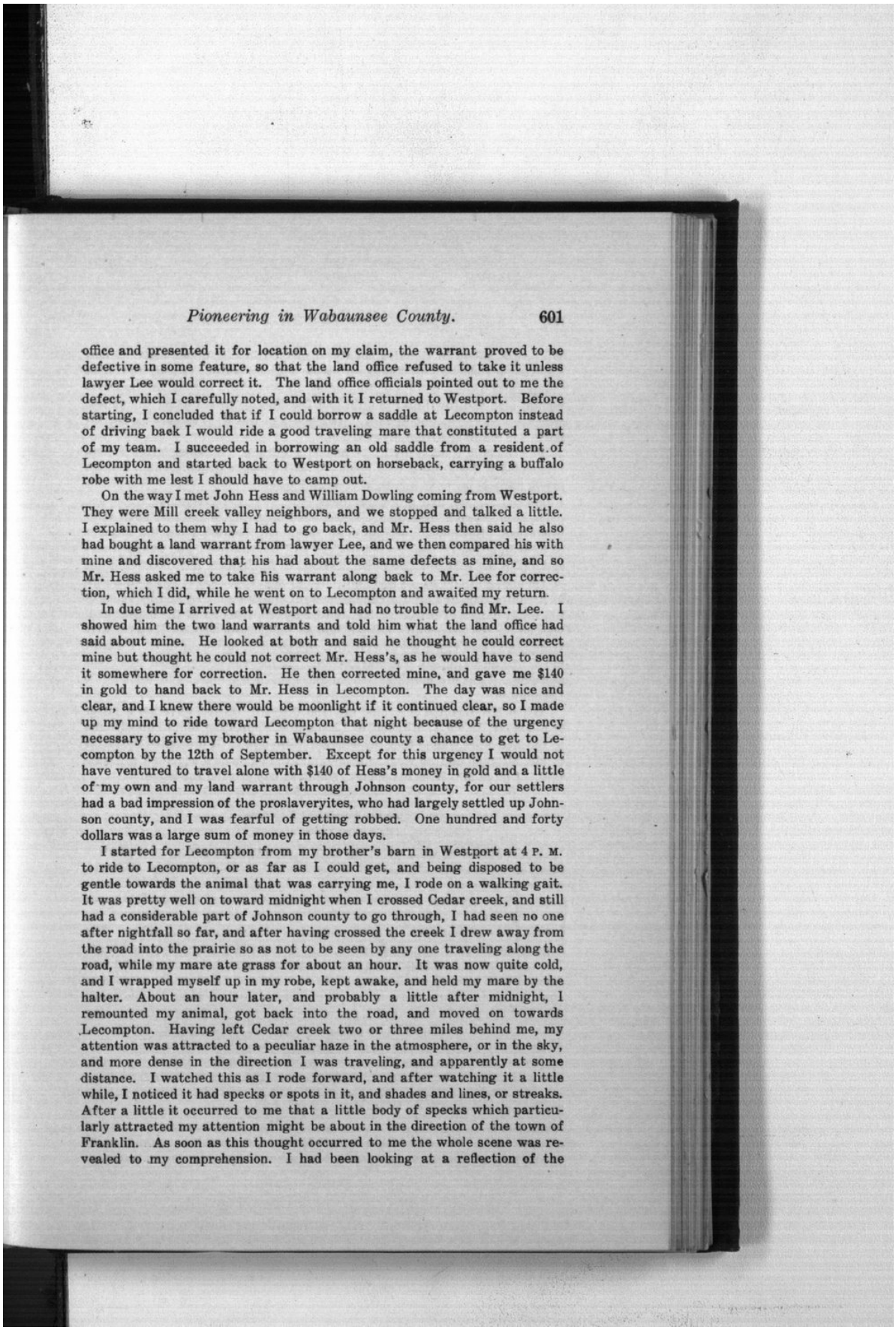
The pioneers who lived in Kansas through the later '50's and early '60's were made of sterner and more heroic stuff than this generation, and all honor and praise are due them for making Kansas the great state it is today.

A TRIP TO THE LAND OFFICE.

By Joseph Thoes.

In 1859 the settlers in the United States land office district that had Lecompton for its place of business were required to pay for the lands on which they had filed declaratory statements by or before September 12, 1859. My brother and I had adjoining claims about four miles south of the city of Alma, in Wabaunsee county, and we were so situated that we could not both leave home at once—one had to care for some property of the other while the latter was absent. So about September 4 I started with my team and wagon to go to Westport to buy a land warrant to locate on my claim. I had to borrow most of the money to buy it with, and because of my acquaintanceship at Westport I believed I could do better there. I borrowed the money for a short time only from a friend who would take no note from me, and when I paid it back refused to take any interest.

I then bought my land warrant from a lawyer named Lee (I forget his first name) for $140, and went to Lecompton. When I came to the land



office and presented it for location on my claim, the warrant proved to be defective in some feature, so that the land office refused to take it unless lawyer Lee would correct it. The land office officials pointed out to me the defect, which I carefully noted, and with it I returned to Westport. Before starting, I concluded that if I could borrow a saddle at Lecompton instead of driving back I would ride a good traveling mare that constituted a part of my team. I succeeded in borrowing an old saddle from a resident of Lecompton and started back to Westport on horseback, carrying a buffalo robe with me lest I should have to camp out.

On the way I met John Hess and William Dowling coming from Westport. They were Mill creek valley neighbors, and we stopped and talked a little. I explained to them why I had to go back, and Mr. Hess then said he also had bought a land warrant from lawyer Lee, and we then compared his with mine and discovered that his had about the same defects as mine, and so Mr. Hess asked me to take his warrant along back to Mr. Lee for correction, which I did, while he went on to Lecompton and awaited my return.

In due time I arrived at Westport and had no trouble to find Mr. Lee. I showed him the two land warrants and told him what the land office had said about mine. He looked at both and said he thought he could correct mine but thought he could not correct Mr. Hess's, as he would have to send it somewhere for correction. He then corrected mine, and gave me $140 in gold to hand back to Mr. Hess in Lecompton. The day was nice and clear, and I knew there would be moonlight if it continued clear, so I made up my mind to ride toward Lecompton that night because of the urgency necessary to give my brother in Wabaunsee county a chance to get to Lecompton by the 12th of September. Except for this urgency I would not have ventured to travel alone with $140 of Hess's money in gold and a little of my own and my land warrant through Johnson county, for our settlers had a bad impression of the proslaveryites, who had largely settled up Johnson county, and I was fearful of getting robbed. One hundred and forty dollars was a large sum of money in those days.

I started for Lecompton from my brother's barn in Westport at 4 P. M. to ride to Lecompton, or as far as I could get, and being disposed to be gentle towards the animal that was carrying me, I rode on a walking gait. It was pretty well on toward midnight when I crossed Cedar creek, and still had a considerable part of Johnson county to go through, I had seen no one after nightfall so far, and after having crossed the creek I drew away from the road into the prairie so as not to be seen by any one traveling along the road, while my mare ate grass for about an hour. It was now quite cold, and I wrapped myself up in my robe, kept awake, and held my mare by the halter. About an hour later, and probably a little after midnight, I remounted my animal, got back into the road, and moved on towards Lecompton. Having left Cedar creek two or three miles behind me, my attention was attracted to a peculiar haze in the atmosphere, or in the sky, and more dense in the direction I was traveling, and apparently at some distance. I watched this as I rode forward, and after watching it a little while, I noticed it had specks or spots in it, and shades and lines, or streaks. After a little it occurred to me that a little body of specks which particularly attracted my attention might be about in the direction of the town of Franklin. As soon as this thought occurred to me the whole scene was revealed to my comprehension. I had been looking at a reflection of the

Wakarusa valley in Douglas county, displayed in this upper haze. I now could see a reflection of Wakarusa creek with its water, its bed, its timber fringes and bodies, and its bluffs, valley, and settlers' cabins and improvements; also the town of Franklin and the line of travel along the valley, which I well knew; but Eudora, Lawrence and the Kaw river were too far north for me to see from my position.

For the only time in my life I beheld a mirage. It lasted after I comprehended it for fully a half hour. It was indeed a grand scene. I never saw a natural phenomenon that so much impressed me. While I beheld this I kept moving on, and probably about four o'clock I arrived at Eudora, a place of only two houses then. I concluded to stop here and stay until after breakfast. But nobody was up in all this town, judging from the absence of light in either of the two houses, and so I tied my mare and wrapped myself up in my robe and laid down, anxious to fall asleep, but too cold to get warm enough to do so. I laid and rolled around there eager to catch a sign of breaking day, or a lighted candle in one of the houses. By and by I caught the first glimpse of breaking day, and boldly went to one of the houses and, waking up the proprietor, begged him to build me a fire, as I was nearly frozen, and told him I would stay for, and pay for, my breakfast. He built me a fire and I finally got warmed up. There was a very hard frost that morning. I got my breakfast there and grazed my mare, and went on to Lecompton.

When Mr. Lee had corrected my land warrant, he also gave me a letter to a lawyer, David T. Mitchell, of Lecompton, requesting him to go with me to the land office when I took my warrant there again. I presented the letter to Mr. Mitchell and he went with me, and the office now accepted my warrant. I gave Mr. Hess his money, and next day started for home.

GOING TO MARKET IN 1862.

By JOSEPH THOES, of Alma.

In the spring of 1862, while the Civil War was in progress and traffic was interrupted between the interior of Kansas and trading points in Missouri, and when coin money was fast passing or had already gone out of circulation, and the general government was doing its utmost to provide a paper currency, including the fractional currency, I had at my farm south of the present city of Alma nearly a wagonload of choice cured pork meat. The hogs from which it was made were well fatted and young 200-pound hogs. The hams, shoulders and sides were neatly trimmed, brine cured, and well smoked with hickory wood smudge. It was country cured meat, as good as could be made. Only the country people who still cure meat for their own use, and the people who lived a generation or two ago, before the packing house business developed to its present stage, can know the vast superiority of the country well-cured ham over the packing-house cured ham of to-day.

My neighbor, Andreas Thowe, who lived a half-mile south of my place, also had about a wagonload of country cured pork, and we both had quite an accumulation of eggs. We planned to go together and sell this produce. There was no market for it we knew in Wabaunsee county; we thought we might sell it at Topeka, and if we could not sell all there we could sell the rest at Lawrence. We were afraid to go to Missouri, or I would not have thought of stopping at Topeka or Lawrence, because my acquaintances at Westport

had assured me if I once could get there I could easily sell my supplies; but I knew we would have to pass through Johnson county, Kansas, to reach Westport, and this county I personally knew was largely settled by secessionists, and had the reputation in the counties to the west of being a harbor for bushwhackers and people who might hold us up for a part of our loads.

So we loaded up our wagons with our meat and eggs, and with our ox teams set out for Topeka. In due time we got there. We went into every trading house and tried to sell our supplies, or part of them, but nowhere could we sell five cents' worth. We then camped our wagons near where John Branner and Jacob Klein, shoemakers with whom I was acquainted, were doing business. We spent part of the evening with them, and incidentally I remarked to Mr. Branner that we would go to Lawrence and if we could not sell our goods there we would go on to Leavenworth. Mr. Branner then said, "I will give you a letter to take along to Mr. Endreas, a leather dealer at Leavenworth, containing an order for leather, in the event that you go there, and you can bring the leather back on your return home." I agreed to this, and Mr. Branner gave me the letter and order for leather, and next morning Mr. Thowe and I set out for Lawrence. Roads were good and we got there all right. I had done some trading in Lawrence before and knew a few of the merchants. We saw all the provision dealers, but could find no one that desired to buy any of our supplies. They all said they were already oversupplied.

So we drove on to Leavenworth. I had never been there before, and Mr. Thowe had no acquaintance there. We went to all the stores and tried to sell our goods, but at no place could we sell anything. Mr. Carney had a large store there and I looked through it, and the quantity of hams, shoulders and side meat that filled his provision department was simply wonderful; the joists hung full, and the floors were piled up and stacked with it, so I did not wonder that the dealers did not want any more.

We thought now that we were at the end of our string, but we had Mr. Branner's letter and order for leather to Mr. Endreas, and we went to see him and to deliver the letter. He was a German, as we were, and was very courteous to us. We gave him the letter and with it Mr. Branner's order for leather, and narrated to him our experience on the trip, and that now there appeared no other course to pursue but to go back home a hundred miles with everything we had started with.

Mr. Endreas had carefully listened to our story, and after a little reflection said: "Now I will direct you to a German who has just recently come to Leavenworth from Missouri, having been run out from there, and who lost much of his property. He has started a small store out towards the fort. He probably has no money to pay, but maybe you can get some trade for your provisions, and if you are willing to take pay in trade maybe you can dispose of a part of your load."

We concluded to act on his suggestion, and Mr. Endreas directed us to follow certain streets in reaching the place. This man's place of business was one of the last towards the fort. We set out for the place, which was owned and conducted by a Mr. Gretzer. The last street on the way there was pretty well built up, and some women who were outside of some of the dwellings seemed to me to wonder what we had in our wagons. The thought occurred to me that "these women think we are peddlers, and peddlers probably travel this street." So thinking I would test the correctness of my

judgment, I pulled my team to the side and stopped in front of a dwelling where a woman was standing. She advanced a little toward the road and I spoke to her and told her what I had to sell. She came to my wagon, I showed her my nicely cured meat, and I made a sale to her, and made a few more sales of hams and eggs between there and Mr. Gretzer's, selling the hams along the way at five and one-half and six cents a pound and the eggs at six cents a dozen, getting cash for these sales, and the only money we got for our produce.

We now arrived at Mr. Gretzer's, and halted in front of his place of business. He was cordial to us, and looked at our stock. We explained to him where we came from and what we had tried to do at Topeka and Lawrence, and here in Leavenworth, and that we had sold nothing but a few things on this street. He said, after he had seen our goods, "I have no money, but if you will take pay in trade, I will take all you both have. Go into my store and see my stock. I'll take your produce at the market price, and will sell to you at the market price." We went and looked over his stock in the store and concluded to make the deal with him, though we thought we would have to take some things we did not much need and hardly wanted. We weighed and counted out our supplies and calculated what they came to, and it took several hours to select and pack what we thought would be sooner or later most needful and useful, or that we might probably sell again at home. We took everything in trade. He had only a grocery stock, and dealt justly by us.

We now started for home, going by way of Mr. Endreas's leather house. We thanked Mr. Endreas for what we were bound to consider good luck. We took along Mr. Branner's leather and delivered it to him at Topeka, and later we got home. I don't know the exact distance we traveled, nor remember the exact time it took us to make the round trip; distance by wagon road must be about 200 miles, which ordinarily would mean an eight days' journey for an ox team. The trip was one of the sacrifices demanded of the pioneer farmers of Wabaunsee county.

THE WABAUNSEE MILITIA COMPANY.

By George S. Burt.

Sometime in the fall of 1863, about October 1, an order was issued by Thomas Carney, governor of Kansas, for all able-bodied men to organize themselves into militia companies, and in accordance with that order the Wabaunsee boys met in the old town hall and perfected an organization by the election of the following persons as officers: Captain, Chauncey Noyes; first lieutenant, Wm. Mitchell; second lieutenant, Geo. S. Burt. They voted to organize as a cavalry company, forming company B, Fourteenth regiment. I do not remember who were the regimental officers. Soon after the organization, William Mitchell was appointed as one of the staff officers. By that appointment the lieutentants were advanced, Geo. S. Burt to first lieutenant, and W. S. Griswold to second lieutenant, and as such we secured our commissions from Governor Carney.

We began drilling, as nearly every one had some kind of a horse, and some of the mounts were truly ludicrous. We held quite a number of meetings before all the able-bodied men were in line. We met to practice every Saturday afternoon, going through the common cavalry maneuvers. Cap-

tain Noyes had been in the three months' service at the beginning of the war in 1861, so he knew a few of them. We continued to practice through the fall and into the winter, as the people were not rushed with work, and there was no objection to those who had no horses coming to look on.

When spring opened we did not meet very often, and had begun to think that there would be no call for the militia, but all at once, in July, 1864, a call came one Sunday morning to the captain to get every available man who had a horse, and proceed to Fort Riley at once. The Indians had attacked a wagon train near the great bend of the Arkansas river, killed some of the drivers, and stole goods, cattle and horses, and had escaped into the hills northeast of Fort Larned.

By one o'clock Sunday about twenty-five men were in saddle or bareback. We were a motley crowd, with big horses and little ponies. James Enlow had just bought a big horse of Mr. Haines, in Zeandale, which had never been ridden, or even halter broken, but Jim wanted to go, so the boys got two long lariats, and with three or four of the boys on each side to hold, Jim got on him, twisted his legs under the horse's belly so he could hold his seat, and the word was given to forward march, and march we did, in all shapes.

We went up southwest through Tabor valley and over south of Manhattan, up through Ashland bottom, arriving at Fort Riley about dark. We had nothing to eat through the day, except that which some of the more thoughtful ones had put in their pockets. No one seemed to know what to do with us, and as it was warm weather we camped in the bottoms along the Republican river, picketed our horses, took our saddles—those who were fortunate enough to have one—for a pillow, spread our blankets to lie on, and went to bed supperless and hungry.

The next morning we were out early to see what was the prospect for breakfast. We found a sutler's or government wagon with commissary stores. They issued us bacon, hard tack, flour, coffee not browned, sugar, and two camp kettles that would hold about ten quarts. The question now was, How were we to fry the bacon and make the coffee with no cooking utensils? Finding we could get nothing more from the government, we went on to Junction City, where there were a few stores. The company clubbed together, and while one would buy a coffee mill another would get frying pans, others tin cups, baking tins, etc. Then we proceeded to cook our first meal near the city, so if there was anything lacking we could get it before leaving civilization.

At Junction City we were joined by the Pottawatomie and Riley county companies; also the Zeandale company, with Perry McDonald as captain. J. M. Limbocker was captain of the Riley county company. Here we were all put under the command of Capt. Henry Booth, of company L, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, who was going west after the Indians. We also had one section of battery. General Curtis was with us in his ambulance. I do not know what he came for, as we only know of his giving one order, and that was to his bodyguard, to catch a big skunk that was making across the prairie with his big, bushy tail over his back. Of course the boys took after the old fellow, being careful to keep a proper distance from him until they got over a rise in the ground where they were lost sight of by the general. I don't know what their report was, but Byron Cotton might tell you, as he was one of the bodyguard that day.

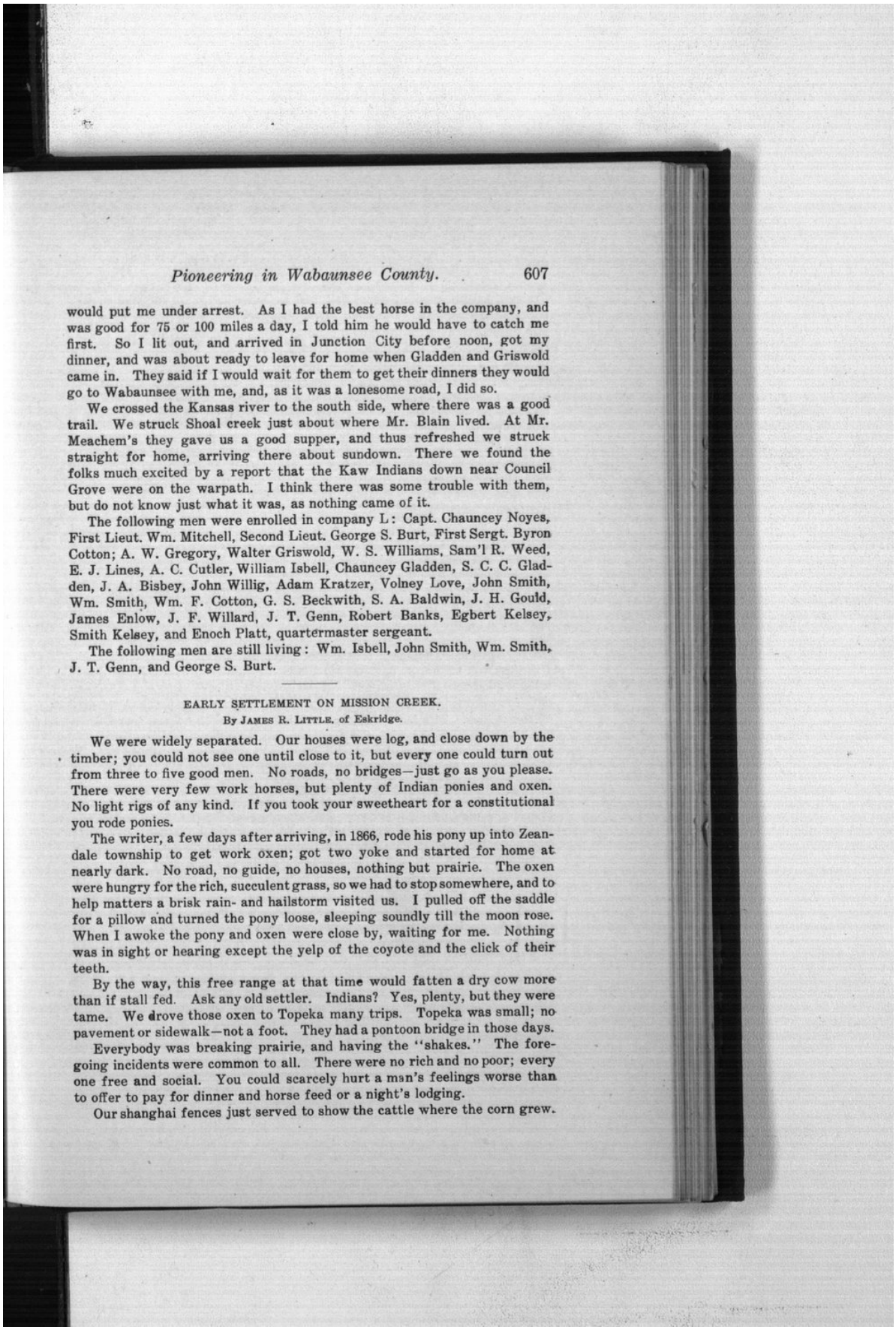
The command left Fort Riley sometime in the forenoon, Monday, I believe. Our camp that night was on the Solomon river. The next day at noon we camped where the town of Salina was just started. I remember there was a sawmill there. This was Col. Wm. A. Phillips's town. We camped the third night at Fort Ellsworth, near the Smoky Hill river. Here we had our first fresh meat. Sol Metty, of the Pottawatomie company, cut a fine fat heifer out of a bunch of cattle, and with the help of some of the other boys drove her in front of the command nearly all the afternoon, until we camped. Then she was killed and divided among the militia companies. The volunteer company did not get any of it. All I got was a little broth from one of the shin bones, but it was better than the "sow belly" that the government issued to us.

The next morning, about two o'clock, the bugler of company L routed us out, and we were in the line of march by three o'clock, on our way to the great bend on the Arkansas river, near the mouth of Walnut creek. That was what we called a forced march, as we arrived there about three o'clock in the afternoon. Here we found where the Indians had attacked the train. The Indians had cut open some sacks of flour, and it had scattered on the ground, and that was all the evidence we had that the Indians had been in that vicinity. Here along the Arkansas river were acres of sand plums. We ate our fill and tried to cook some, but it was no use, as they were so bitter we could not eat them, no matter how much sugar we used. The government commissary wagon had plenty of provisions and we were well supplied.

The next day we marched to Fort Larned, where we camped about one week. We were there on the 1st of August, 1864. In the two weeks we were away from home I don't remember that there was any Sunday. From Fort Larned we were ordered northwest. I think we must have reached what is now Trego county. Up on the Smoky Hill river we found lots of buffalo, and from this time on the hunters kept us well supplied with fresh buffalo meat, which was the first fresh meat we had eaten except the one heifer. Up here we found six Indian ponies and one lone ox that the Indians had left in their haste to get out of the way of the soldiers.

Up to this time the Indians had not been very bad. The command continued northwest until it struck Big creek, without seeing any Indians. We followed down Big creek to what was later Fort Hays, and from that place the militia companies were sent home. While camped in the bottoms near the future Fort Ellsworth, our company got a settler's wife to make us some biscuits, paying her in flour. From here our company marched alone. By this time our ranks were depleted, not by deaths, but as soon as the horses got used up their owners were sent home.

In the final roundup for home there were Captain Noyes, First Lieutenant Burt, Second Lieutenant Griswold, Commissary Enoch Platt, privates Wm. Mitchell, S. A. Baldwin, Chauncey Gladden, James Enlow, and two or three others whose names I do not remember. W. S. Williams, who had gone as far as Fort Larned with us, went south with a wagon train, but arrived home about the same time we did. After we left Fort Ellsworth for home we made good time. The last night we camped on the Solomon river, and when we were ready to start for home the next morning I told Captain Noyes that I was going to leave the company and go home that day. He said I could not, but must stay with the company, and if I did not he



would put me under arrest. As I had the best horse in the company, and was good for 75 or 100 miles a day, I told him he would have to catch me first. So I lit out, and arrived in Junction City before noon, got my dinner, and was about ready to leave for home when Gladden and Griswold came in. They said if I would wait for them to get their dinners they would go to Wabaunsee with me, and, as it was a lonesome road, I did so.

We crossed the Kansas river to the south side, where there was a good trail. We struck Shoal creek just about where Mr. Blain lived. At Mr. Meachem's they gave us a good supper, and thus refreshed we struck straight for home, arriving there about sundown. There we found the folks much excited by a report that the Kaw Indians down near Council Grove were on the warpath. I think there was some trouble with them, but do not know just what it was, as nothing came of it.

The following men were enrolled in company L: Capt. Chauncey Noyes, First Lieut. Wm. Mitchell, Second Lieut. George S. Burt, First Sergt. Byron Cotton; A. W. Gregory, Walter Griswold, W. S. Williams, Sam'l R. Weed, E. J. Lines, A. C. Cutler, William Isbell, Chauncey Gladden, S. C. C. Gladden, J. A. Bisbey, John Willig, Adam Kratzer, Volney Love, John Smith, Wm. Smith, Wm. F. Cotton, G. S. Beckwith, S. A. Baldwin, J. H. Gould, James Enlow, J. F. Willard, J. T. Genn, Robert Banks, Egbert Kelsey, Smith Kelsey, and Enoch Platt, quartermaster sergeant.

The following men are still living: Wm. Isbell, John Smith, Wm. Smith, J. T. Genn, and George S. Burt.

EARLY SETTLEMENT ON MISSION CREEK.

By JAMES R. LITTLE, of Eskridge.

We were widely separated. Our houses were log, and close down by the timber; you could not see one until close to it, but every one could turn out from three to five good men. No roads, no bridges—just go as you please. There were very few work horses, but plenty of Indian ponies and oxen. No light rigs of any kind. If you took your sweetheart for a constitutional you rode ponies.

The writer, a few days after arriving, in 1866, rode his pony up into Zeandale township to get work oxen; got two yoke and started for home at nearly dark. No road, no guide, no houses, nothing but prairie. The oxen were hungry for the rich, succulent grass, so we had to stop somewhere, and to help matters a brisk rain- and hailstorm visited us. I pulled off the saddle for a pillow and turned the pony loose, sleeping soundly till the moon rose. When I awoke the pony and oxen were close by, waiting for me. Nothing was in sight or hearing except the yelp of the coyote and the click of their teeth.

By the way, this free range at that time would fatten a dry cow more than if stall fed. Ask any old settler. Indians? Yes, plenty, but they were tame. We drove those oxen to Topeka many trips. Topeka was small; no pavement or sidewalk—not a foot. They had a pontoon bridge in those days.

Everybody was breaking prairie, and having the "shakes." The foregoing incidents were common to all. There were no rich and no poor; every one free and social. You could scarcely hurt a man's feelings worse than to offer to pay for dinner and horse feed or a night's lodging.

Our shanghai fences just served to show the cattle where the corn grew.

Prairies were burned off every fall, and we have had some thrilling experiences in fighting fire. The wind would change with a rush in the night, and you would awake with the whole country ablaze, making lively work to save stacks and stables, and we did not always save them. First thing to do was to turn the stock loose onto the breaking. Everybody would turn out and try to save a strip up and down the creek for stock to run on during the winter, and keep that black dust from blowing into the houses. There were no roads for firebreaks. It required expert managing to head it off, and it was no picnic, either.

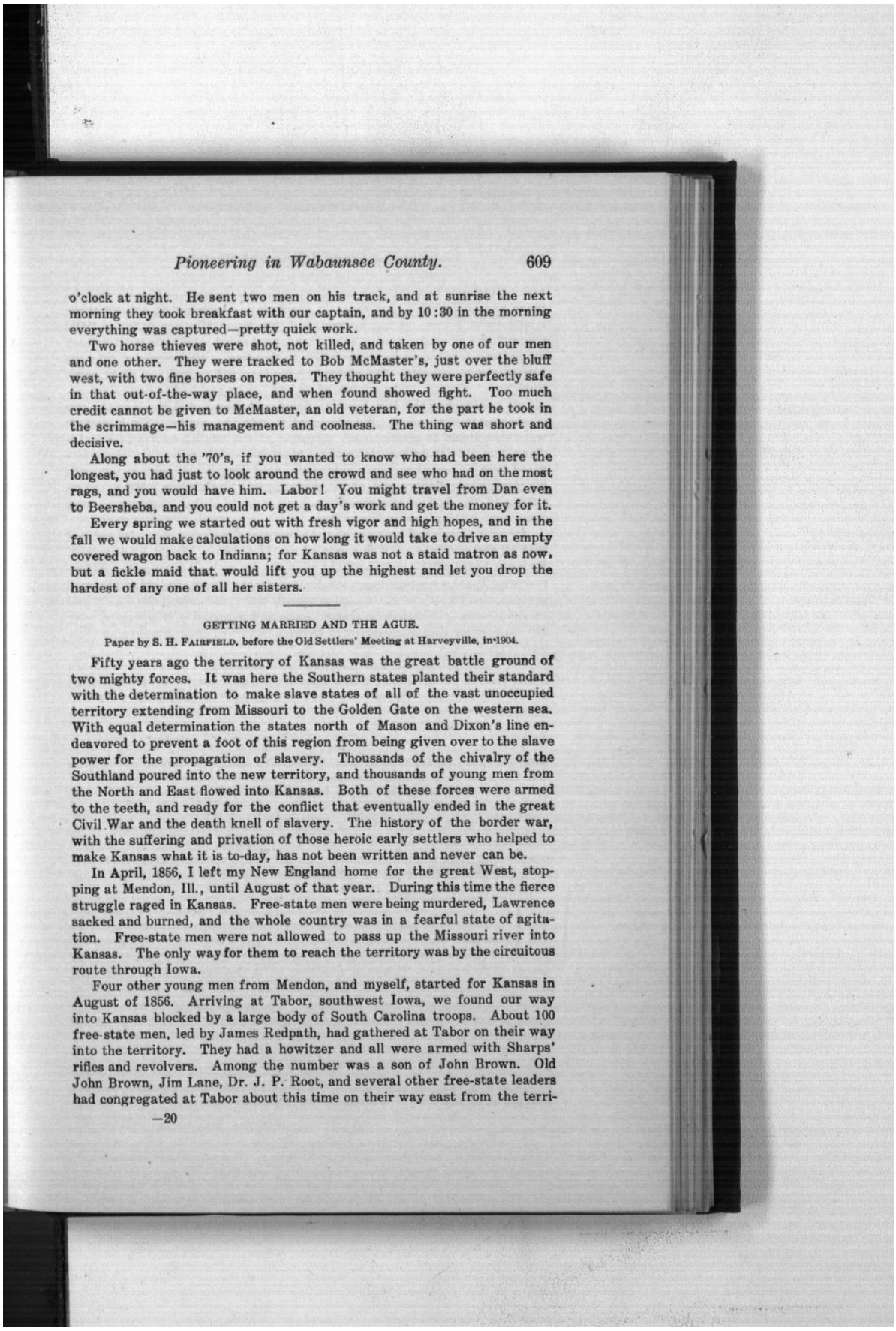
And there was another winter feature quite different from the present. Where has the old-time blizzard gone to? It was as much as a man's life was worth to get caught out in one, with nothing but the wind to guide him; but I never knew but one man to absolutely freeze, although many have come near it. We were told you could raise only corn and sorghum, but we tried spring wheat and oats and did fairly well, but had no grist mills nearer than Lawrence. We were also told that fruit of all kinds was no good. If you wanted apples, go to Missouri. Those who could spare time and money would do so.

I have been here forty-two years and no white man has been killed, but there have been three suicides. The Texas cattle used to be driven through here some parts of the season, contrary to law. A man living at the station on the old Council Grove trail carried mail from Topeka to Council Grove, also electricity in packages (not made of paper) for the weary ones. I will not tell his name, but you old-timers all know him. Besides, he got to be a good law-abiding citizen. He once piloted a herd of 3000 cattle down onto the headwaters of the creek. In those days nothing escaped the eye of the settler. The herd was seen coming through the "gap" and down the slope, and was met by a dozen or so not very fierce looking men who proposed to see the law obeyed and were well prepared for peace or war. Meeting them the pilot lit out, and because he had only a second-class critter under him he had to come back and settle with the squire.

Speaking of Indians, a friend of mine went over on Kuenzli creek to transact some business with one, and after a good deal of delay found him after dark at a big pow-wow. All were dancing around a fire, with what he supposed was a jug sitting by it. When his Indian saw him, he caught up that jug to show him, and presto—it was an Indian's head, from some tribe with whom they were at war.

A man not so very far from here saw some one around his stable at night, and filled him full of shot. The next morning his victim was still there, sitting up against a stack. He sent word to the Pottawatomies to come and get him, supposing he was one of that tribe. When a dozen arrived and saw him, they set up a yell and the victim sung his death song. They made a lariat fast around his neck and tied the other end to a pony's tail. But the white man would not let them drag the poor fellow off alive. So they indulged in some blood letting, and then went off a-whooping with the dead body.

We had a vigilance committee in those days, and no strange rig could pass any member without getting one good searching look, sufficient to report everything about that outfit down to the very minutest detail. Vigilantes were organized so as to be in quick communication with each other. A horse was stolen in Captain Buckman's district near Topeka about eight



o'clock at night. He sent two men on his track, and at sunrise the next morning they took breakfast with our captain, and by 10:30 in the morning everything was captured—pretty quick work.

Two horse thieves were shot, not killed, and taken by one of our men and one other. They were tracked to Bob McMaster's, just over the bluff west, with two fine horses on ropes. They thought they were perfectly safe in that out-of-the-way place, and when found showed fight. Too much credit cannot be given to McMaster, an old veteran, for the part he took in the scrimmage—his management and coolness. The thing was short and decisive.

Along about the '70's, if you wanted to know who had been here the longest, you had just to look around the crowd and see who had on the most rags, and you would have him. Labor! You might travel from Dan even to Beersheba, and you could not get a day's work and get the money for it.

Every spring we started out with fresh vigor and high hopes, and in the fall we would make calculations on how long it would take to drive an empty covered wagon back to Indiana; for Kansas was not a staid matron as now, but a fickle maid that would lift you up the highest and let you drop the hardest of any one of all her sisters.

GETTING MARRIED AND THE AGUE.

Paper by S. H. FAIRFIELD, before the Old Settlers' Meeting at Harveyville, in 1904.

Fifty years ago the territory of Kansas was the great battle ground of two mighty forces. It was here the Southern states planted their standard with the determination to make slave states of all of the vast unoccupied territory extending from Missouri to the Golden Gate on the western sea. With equal determination the states north of Mason and Dixon's line endeavored to prevent a foot of this region from being given over to the slave power for the propagation of slavery. Thousands of the chivalry of the Southland poured into the new territory, and thousands of young men from the North and East flowed into Kansas. Both of these forces were armed to the teeth, and ready for the conflict that eventually ended in the great Civil War and the death knell of slavery. The history of the border war, with the suffering and privation of those heroic early settlers who helped to make Kansas what it is to-day, has not been written and never can be.

In April, 1856, I left my New England home for the great West, stopping at Mendon, Ill., until August of that year. During this time the fierce struggle raged in Kansas. Free-state men were being murdered, Lawrence sacked and burned, and the whole country was in a fearful state of agitation. Free-state men were not allowed to pass up the Missouri river into Kansas. The only way for them to reach the territory was by the circuitous route through Iowa.

Four other young men from Mendon, and myself, started for Kansas in August of 1856. Arriving at Tabor, southwest Iowa, we found our way into Kansas blocked by a large body of South Carolina troops. About 100 free-state men, led by James Redpath, had gathered at Tabor on their way into the territory. They had a howitzer and all were armed with Sharps' rifles and revolvers. Among the number was a son of John Brown. Old John Brown, Jim Lane, Dr. J. P. Root, and several other free-state leaders had congregated at Tabor about this time on their way east from the terri-

tory. Redpath thought that his party was able to go into Kansas and remove any obstruction that came in their way. Arriving at the northern boundary of Kansas he had his men fall into line. He then unfurled "Old Glory," the company fired a salute, and we passed over into the territory which was forever to be consecrated to freedom. We proceeded into the territory with caution. On our march we kept out scouts; at night camp guards and pickets. Some dozen of us had horses and had to act as scouts. As we approached the Big Nemaha firing was heard, and through the spy glasses tents were seen. We supposed it was the enemy. Six horsemen were sent ahead to reconnoiter. Arriving at the timber we found only Indians, and did not go back to report. Redpath, still hearing the firing, supposed that his scouts had been captured. Corralling his wagons, he deployed his men as skirmishers and came charging into the timber. He found us sitting in the bed of the creek cracking walnuts. The language he used came near setting the timber on fire.

John W. Geary had been appointed governor of the territory. He ordered that all armed bodies of men coming into the territory should be disarmed. Redpath heard of the order and hid his howitzer under a haystack. Before reaching Topeka his party met the United States troops, and were disarmed and escorted into Topeka. Redpath himself was "hid among the stuff" and escaped arrest. The troops started back and arrested a company of over 200 men under Eldridge, disarmed them, and turned them loose to go their own way.

Our little Mendon crowd came on to Wabaunsee. There were Enoch Platt, Everts Platt, Luther Platt, Sam Weed and myself. Only Sam Weed and myself remain. The others have passed over the "river." At Wabaunsee we found the New England colony, commonly known as the Beecher Bible and Rifle Company, composed mostly of young men, the best blood of New England. The "Prairie Guards," a military company of the colony, had just returned from Lawrence, where they had been summoned by General Lane to help defend the free-state men from the border ruffians of Missouri. From what we had read in the New York and Chicago papers we were expecting to find Wabaunsee a pretty New England village. We had first taken up our abode with a couple of the colony boys in a log cabin some three miles up Antelope creek. The next day, in a two-wheeled cart drawn by a yoke of Missouri steers, we set out to see our pretty village. A rope tied around the horns of the near steer kept them from running away. Crossing the branch east of town we came into the village. It was composed of three tents, a bark house, and a small log cabin. The post office was kept in a shake cabin two miles west of the village on Emmons creek. The postmaster was the home missionary, Rev. Harvey Jones. This was the first post office in the county, and the only one at the time, unless there was one at Wilmington. (It was a question until the year 1861 whether that little burg was in Wabaunsee county or not.) Our mail was brought on horseback once a week from Tecumseh. The colony numbered some eighty persons. They spread themselves all over that part of the country. When a man drove a stake on a quarter section of land that held it. One fellow came up from Missouri and "wanted to be shown." He built a cabin on a staked claim, and was "shown" by the boys. One dark night some thirty of the colony came upon him, tied him to two logs pinned together, and set him afloat on the Kaw. We had a rope attached to the logs so as to pull

him in when he was sufficiently "shown." When pulled ashore he took an oath to leave the country and never return. He was marched to Mitchell Hill by two of the boys with Sharps' rifles, and told to leave. We were never again troubled by men who wanted to be "shown." We burned his cabin. It was on the farm now owned by Geo. S. Burt, sr. Wabaunsee and Mission Creek were stations on the underground railway, and many a slave was taken through on this line to Canada.

Most of the members of the colony had never farmed. They came up the Missouri river and landed at Kansas City in April, 1856, and purchased their outfit in Missouri. And such an outfit! The cows were not Jerseys, Shorthorns or Durhams, but a scrub breed. The hogs were not Poland Chinas, Berkshire or Chester White, but were razorback pure and simple. I saw one of the boys milking his cow. He had her head tied up to a post, her hind leg tied up to another; one of her fore legs was tied up, a chain was tied over her back to keep her from holding up her milk, and then with his head in her flank he proceeded to milk.

The hogs! I tried to make my speck from those razorbacks. Another fellow and I had eighty of them. It was in 1860—the dry year. We fed them all the corn that we had raised in 1859; then we fed them on weeds. Finally it got so dry that weeds would not grow, and there was no corn in the country. The hogs got so thin that it took two of them to make a shadow. Finally we concluded to kill them. I pickled my share and smoked the meat. When we undertook to cook it we found it only rind, bone and gristle, and my wife declared that there was not enough grease in the hogs to make soap. This is a pretty big story, but it is true, all the same. Remember it was in 1860, the noted dry year in Kansas.

The settlers hauled all their stores from Kansas City and Leavenworth by ox team. In December, 1856, two of us started to Kansas City for provisions with two yoke of oxen. A fearful snowstorm came on, and covered the ground with three feet of snow on a level. All the ravines were full. It took us three weeks to make the trip. We came all of the way home on the crust of the deep snow. It had rained a little, and the top had frozen over. We arrived home none too soon as the boys were living on short rations.

Wabaunsee was planned for a great city, the New Haven of the West. Archie Williams declared that when any of the boys died, if they had been real good, they would go to New Haven, Conn. The town was laid out on 320 acres of land, with a river front and a levee on the river. The river was supposed to be navigable. Two steamboats came up from Kansas City in 1857, and unloaded freight on the levee at Wabaunsee. The captain of one of the steamers kept so continually drunk that he could not steer clear of the sand bars in the river, and he declared the stream unnavigable. Town companies were organized by some of the men of the colony. A town was laid out on the opposite side of the river from Wabaunsee, and named Webster City. In the inundation of 1903 it was buried in the sand. Three other towns were laid out on the Pottawatomie reservation, and the Indians hired to hold them; one was at the mouth of Wells creek, another at the mouth of Mill creek, and the the third at the falls of Mill creek, south of Maplehill. The Union Pacific railroad was built on the north side of the river, and the beautiful town sites on the south side, so carefully selected and laid out, are now productive farms.

The people who settled in the territory in the years 1856, '57 and '58 had, along with the suffering and privation incident to pioneer life, the fever and ague, the latter called "shakes" by the early settlers. Oh, how they did shake! Not a person coming into the country escaped. Whole families—father, mother and children—were down at the same time, and all stretched out on hay floors or improvised beds. Every day, or every other day, for months, they would have chills, shakes and fever, and a terrible headache; and then came the awful sweat. Just think of it! Whole communities were in this condition. I asked one of the aborigines of the country if he considered it a healthful climate. He said, "Yes, perfectly healthful." I asked him what it was that made the people so yellow. He answered, "That's nothing; we only have the ager." Where did the shakes come from and where did they go? They are not here now.

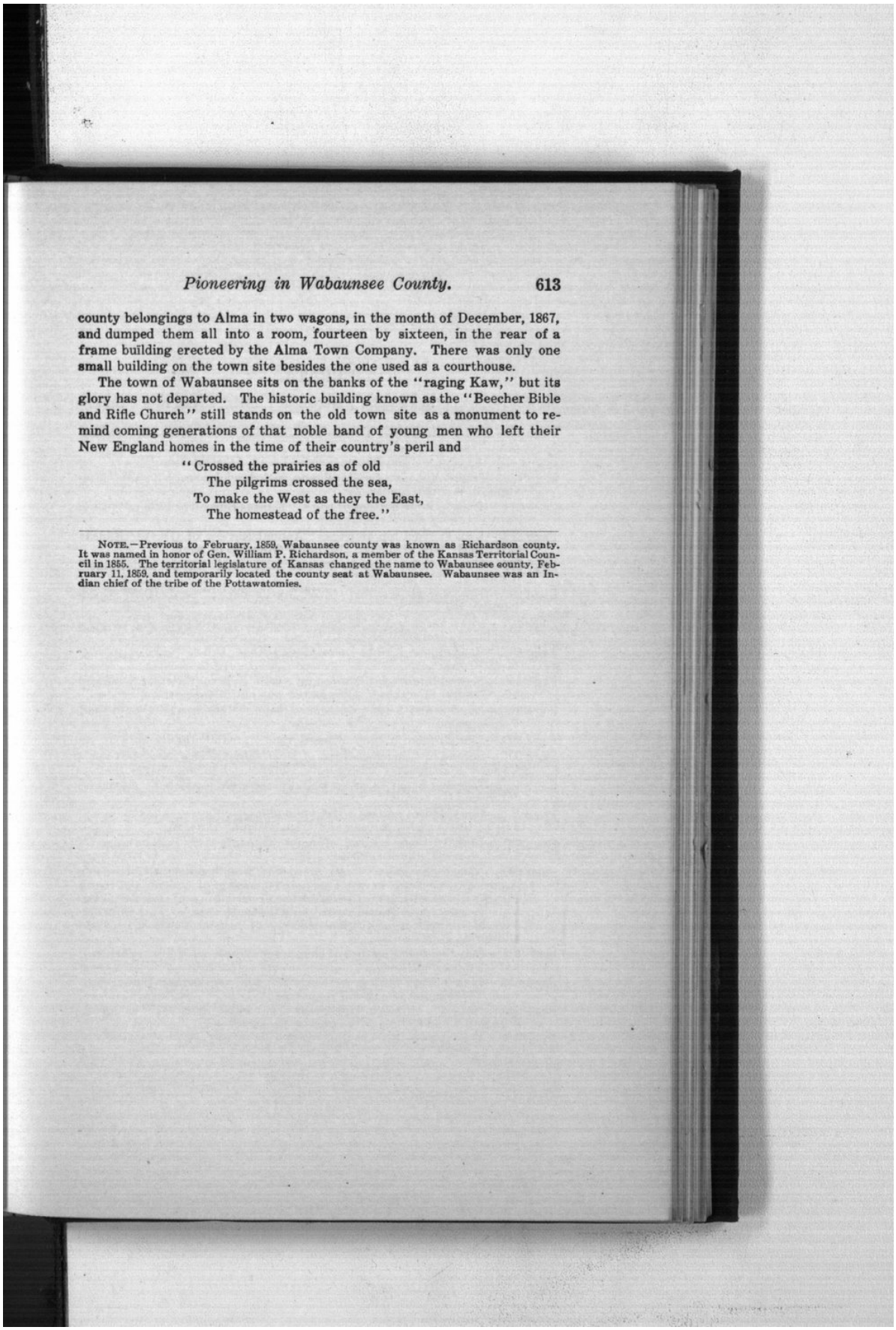
Whether it was the privations of a new country or "The Girl I Left Behind Me" that took most of the young men of the colony back to their ancestral homes in Connecticut, I cannot say. I suspect, however, that it was the "girls." The noble fellows had accomplished the main object which had brought them to the territory of Kansas, and the vast regions to the west of us were safe to freedom.

The young men of this generation do not realize what it cost a young man in Kansas, fifty years ago, to get a partner for life. They ought to know, so that they may appreciate the advantages which they have over the Kansas young men of half a century ago. Only a very few young women had come to the territory at that early day, and the young man had to leave the settlement to find one. A young man started from Wabaunsee in February, 1856, on foot, with only $4.50 in his pocket, for Mendon, Ill. He did chores where he stopped nights for his lodging, supper and breakfast. A part of the time the thermometer stood at twenty degrees below zero. When he arrived at Mendon he had twelve and one-half cents in his pocket. He came back in the spring with a breaking team of two yoke of oxen, and a young wife. They both did noble work for Kansas and Oklahoma. He was for many years a professor of the Kansas State Agricultural College.

Another young man from Wabaunsee left in December, 1859, for a wife. He footed it 100 miles to Leavenworth. He had several shinplasters, or state bank bills, in his pocket. That was the only kind of paper money we had in those days, and it was liable not to be good over night. The bank which issued the bills the young man had collapsed during his walk to Leavenworth. He borrowed some money of a merchant, took a boat up the river to St. Joseph, and then staged it 100 miles into Iowa. He found the girl he went after, was married, and came back to western Missouri. He found the river breaking up and had to be taken across the stream on hand sleds to Fort Leavenworth. An ox team was waiting there to take him and his wife to Wabaunsee to live in a log cabin; and the next year, 1860, to subsist on buffalo meat and "Pomeroy" beans.

The brave, patriotic women who came to Kansas in those days and endured all the privations, sufferings and dangers incident to a pioneer life on the frontier of civilization will never be forgotten. They did their part nobly, and helped make Kansas the great and glorious state she is to-day.

Wabaunsee was the county seat of the county until 1867, when the German got away with the Yankee and moved the county seat to Alma. George Burt, sr., of Wabaunsee, moved the county offices, books, safe, and all the

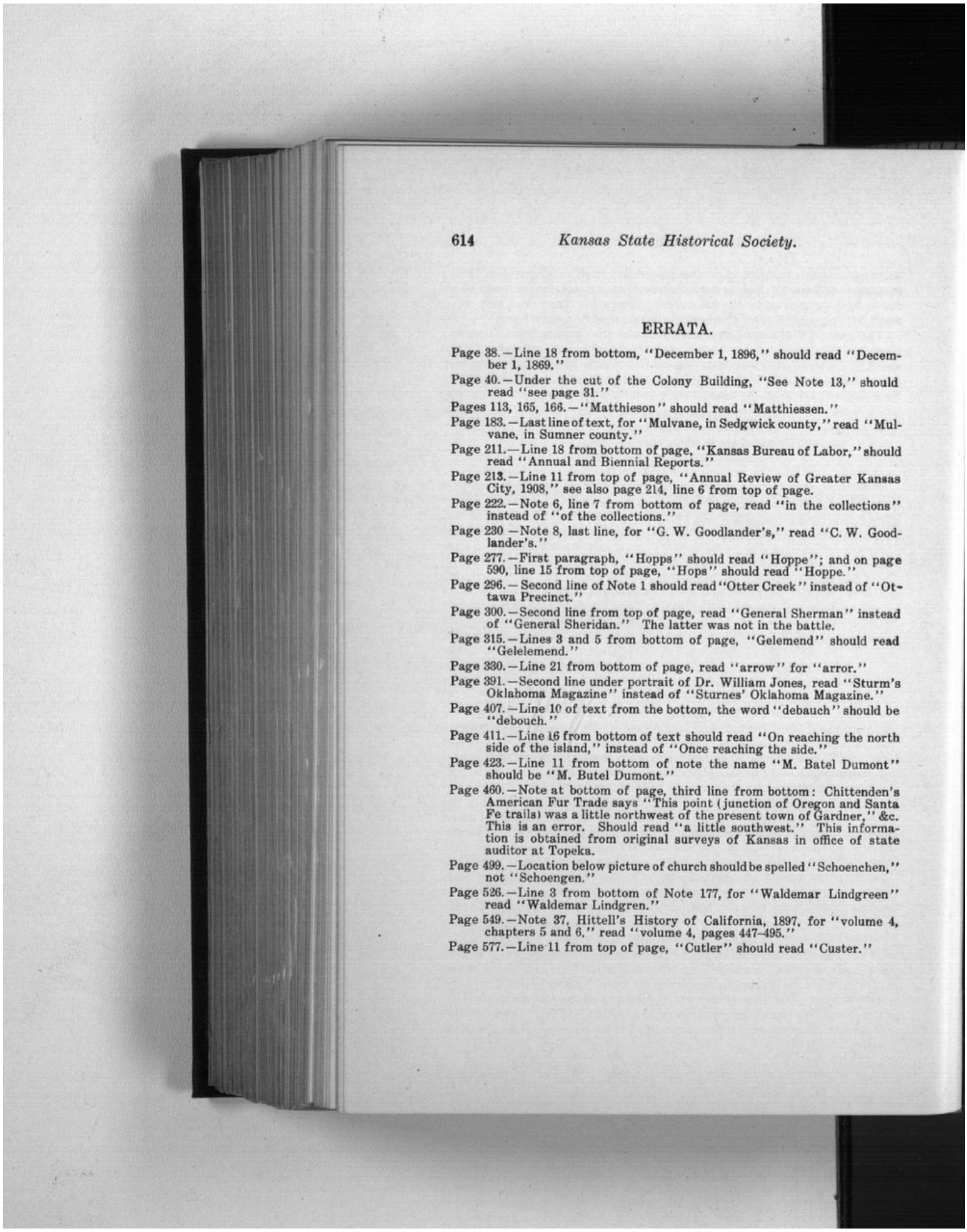


county belongings to Alma in two wagons, in the month of December, 1867, and dumped them all into a room, fourteen by sixteen, in the rear of a frame building erected by the Alma Town Company. There was only one small building on the town site besides the one used as a courthouse.

The town of Wabaunsee sits on the banks of the "raging Kaw," but its glory has not departed. The historic building known as the "Beecher Bible and Rifle Church" still stands on the old town site as a monument to remind coming generations of that noble band of young men who left their New England homes in the time of their country's peril and

"Crossed the prairies as of old
The pilgrims crossed the sea,
To make the West as they the East,
The homestead of the free."

NOTE.—Previous to February, 1859, Wabaunsee county was known as Richardson county. It was named in honor of Gen. William P. Richardson, a member of the Kansas Territorial Council in 1855. The territorial legislature of Kansas changed the name to Wabaunsee county, February 11, 1859, and temporarily located the county seat at Wabaunsee. Wabaunsee was an Indian chief of the tribe of the Pottawatomies.



ERRATA.

Page 38.—Line 18 from bottom, "December 1, 1896," should read "December 1, 1869."

Page 40.—Under the cut of the Colony Building, "See Note 13," should read "see page 31."

Pages 113, 165, 166.—"Matthieson" should read "Matthiessen."

Page 183.—Last line of text, for "Mulvane, in Sedgwick county," read "Mulvane, in Sumner county."

Page 211.—Line 18 from bottom of page, "Kansas Bureau of Labor," should read "Annual and Biennial Reports."

Page 213.—Line 11 from top of page, "Annual Review of Greater Kansas City, 1908," see also page 214, line 6 from top of page.

Page 222.—Note 6, line 7 from bottom of page, read "in the collections" instead of "of the collections."

Page 230 —Note 8, last line, for "G. W. Goodlander's," read "C. W. Goodlander's."

Page 277.—First paragraph, "Hopps" should read "Hoppe"; and on page 590, line 15 from top of page, "Hops" should read "Hoppe."

Page 296.—Second line of Note 1 should read "Otter Creek" instead of "Ottawa Precinct."

Page 300.—Second line from top of page, read "General Sherman" instead of "General Sheridan." The latter was not in the battle.

Page 315.—Lines 3 and 5 from bottom of page, "Gelemend" should read "Gelelemend."

Page 330.—Line 21 from bottom of page, read "arrow" for "arror."

Page 391.—Second line under portrait of Dr. William Jones, read "Sturm's Oklahoma Magazine" instead of "Sturnes' Oklahoma Magazine."

Page 407.—Line 10 of text from the bottom, the word "debauch" should be "debouch."

Page 411.—Line 16 from bottom of text should read "On reaching the north side of the island," instead of "Once reaching the side."

Page 423.—Line 11 from bottom of note the name "M. Batel Dumont" should be "M. Butel Dumont."

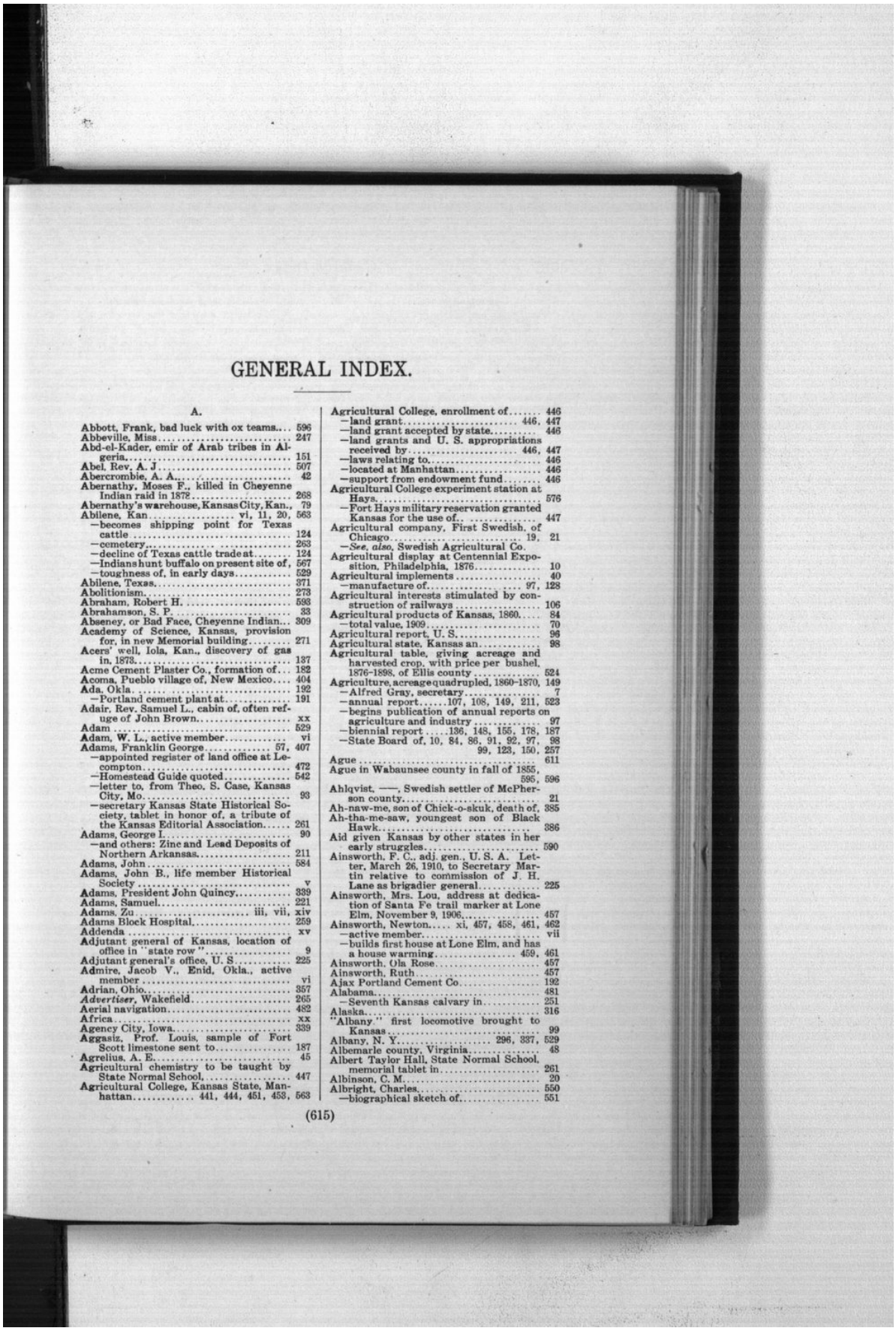
Page 460.—Note at bottom of page, third line from bottom: Chittenden's American Fur Trade says "This point (junction of Oregon and Santa Fe trails) was a little northwest of the present town of Gardner," &c. This is an error. Should read "a little southwest." This information is obtained from original surveys of Kansas in office of state auditor at Topeka.

Page 499.—Location below picture of church should be spelled "Schoenchen," not "Schoengen."

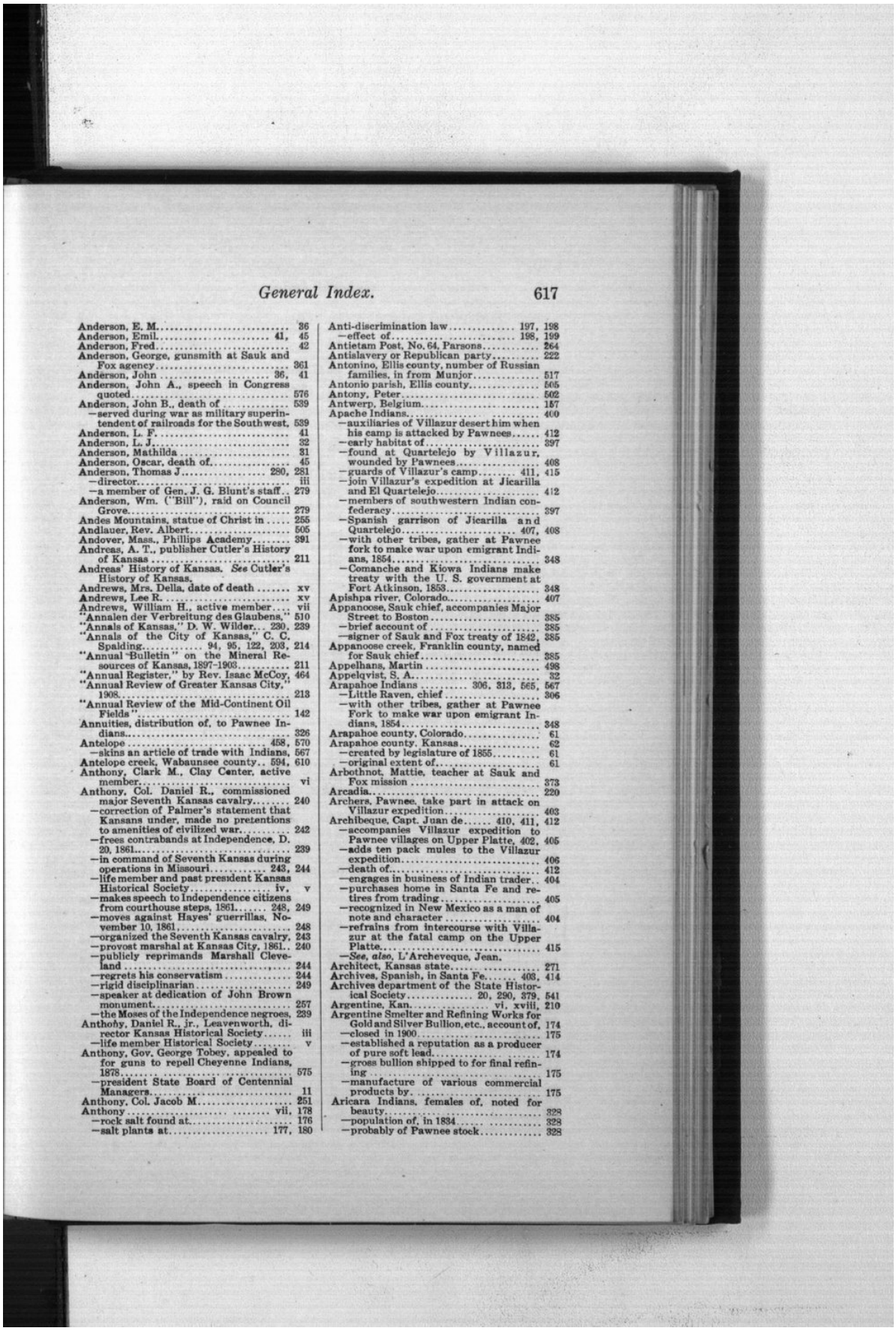
Page 526.—Line 3 from bottom of Note 177, for "Waldemar Lindgreen" read "Waldemar Lindgren."

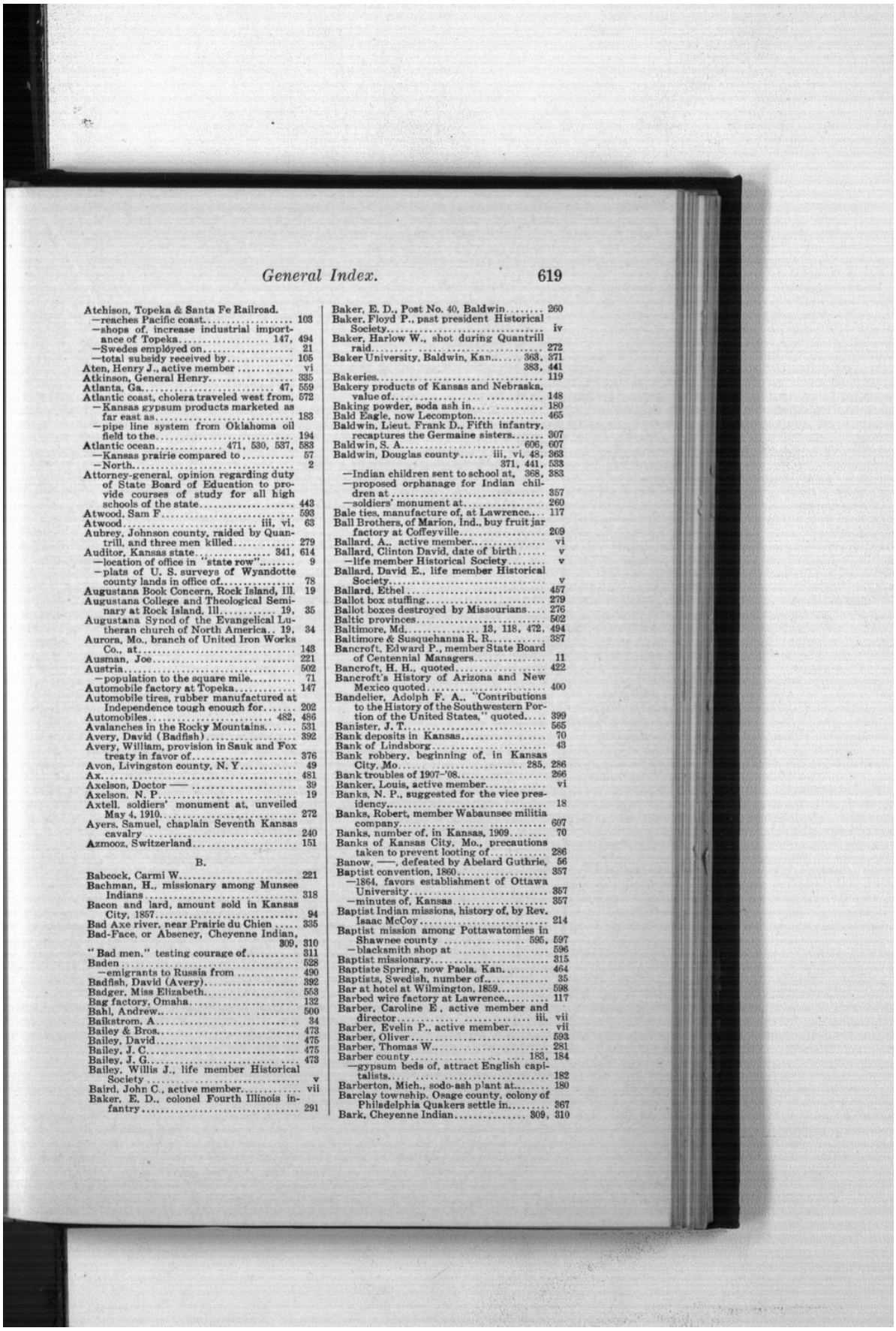
Page 549.—Note 37, Hittell's History of California, 1897, for "volume 4, chapters 5 and 6," read "volume 4, pages 447–495."

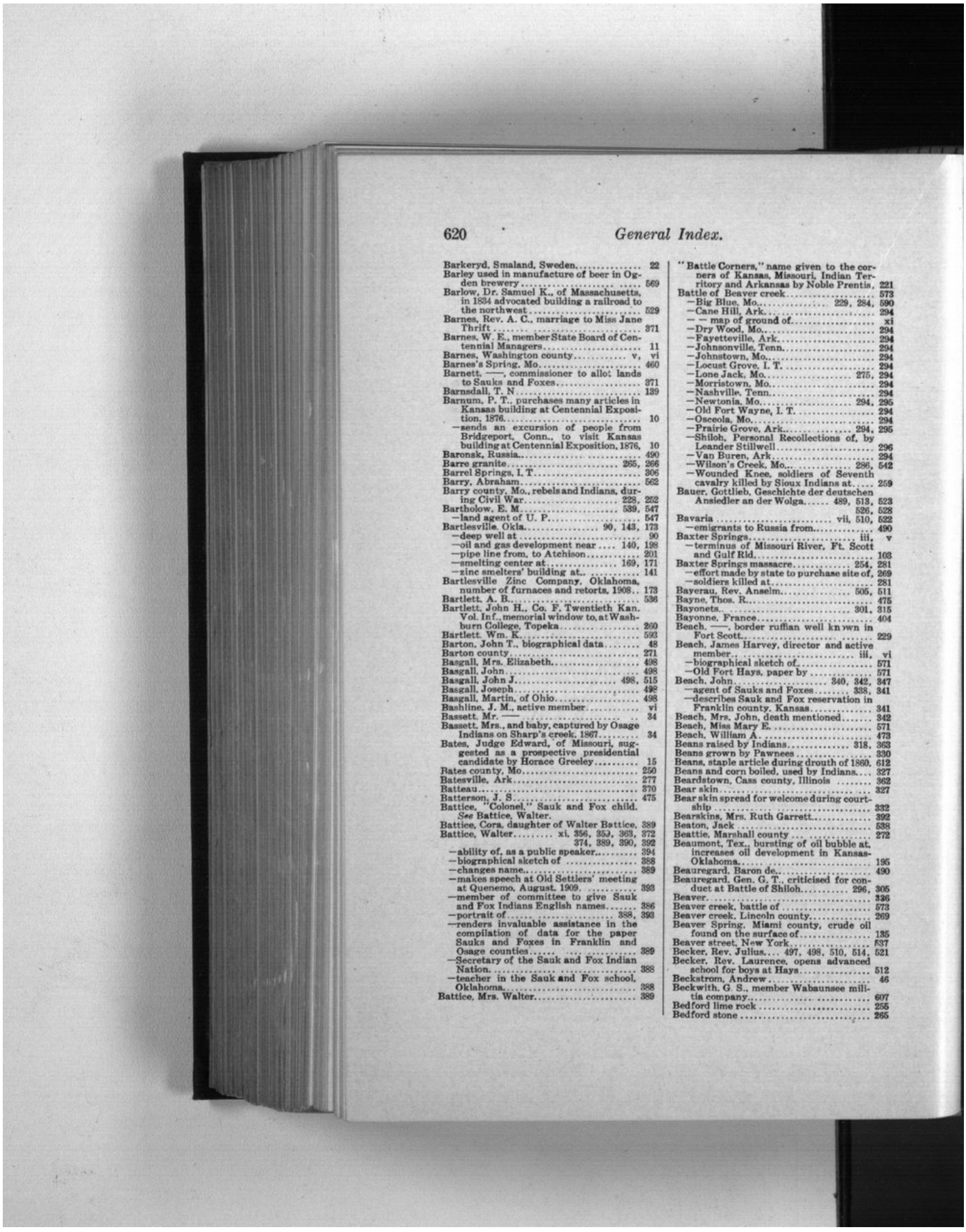
Page 577.—Line 11 from top of page, "Cutler" should read "Custer."

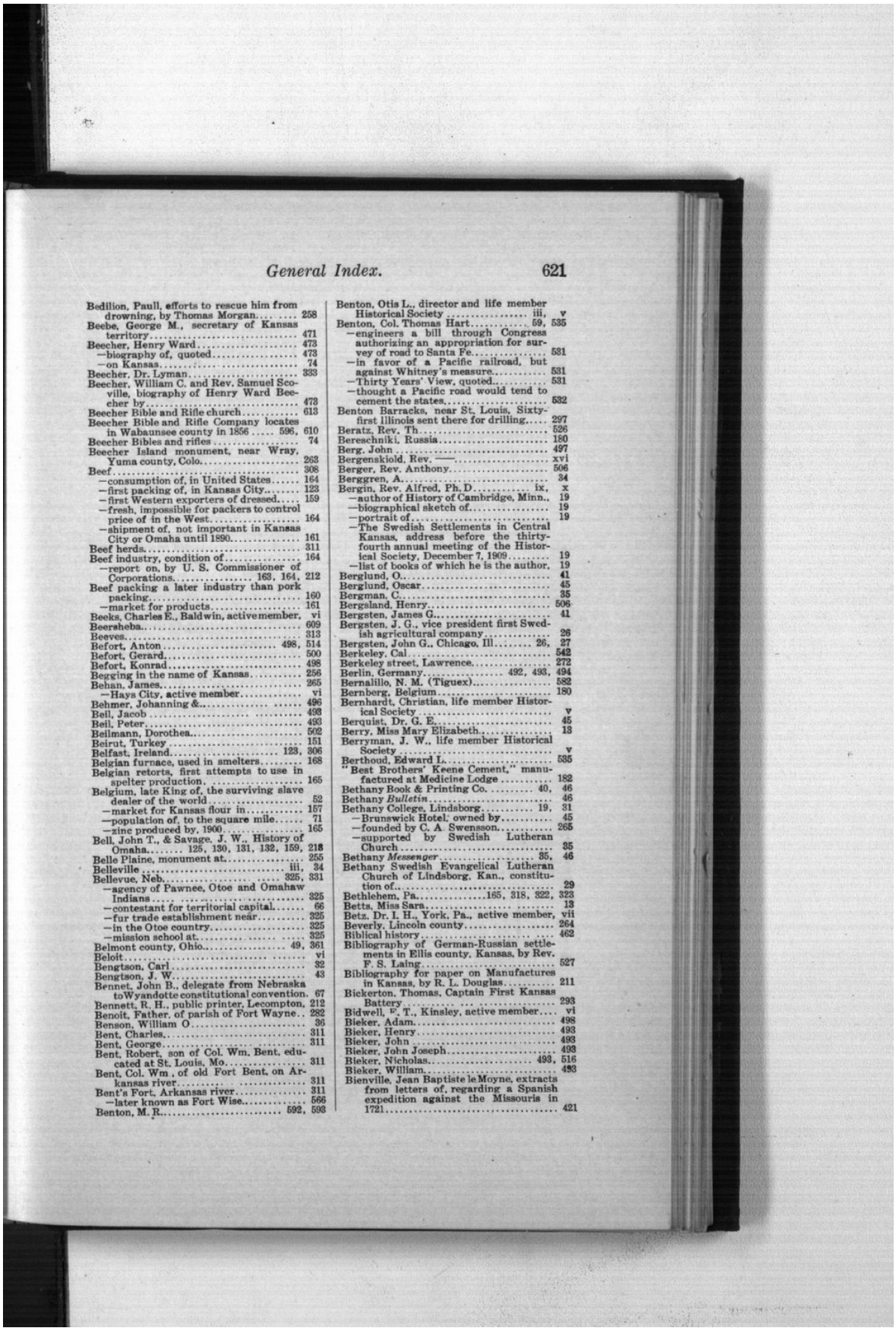


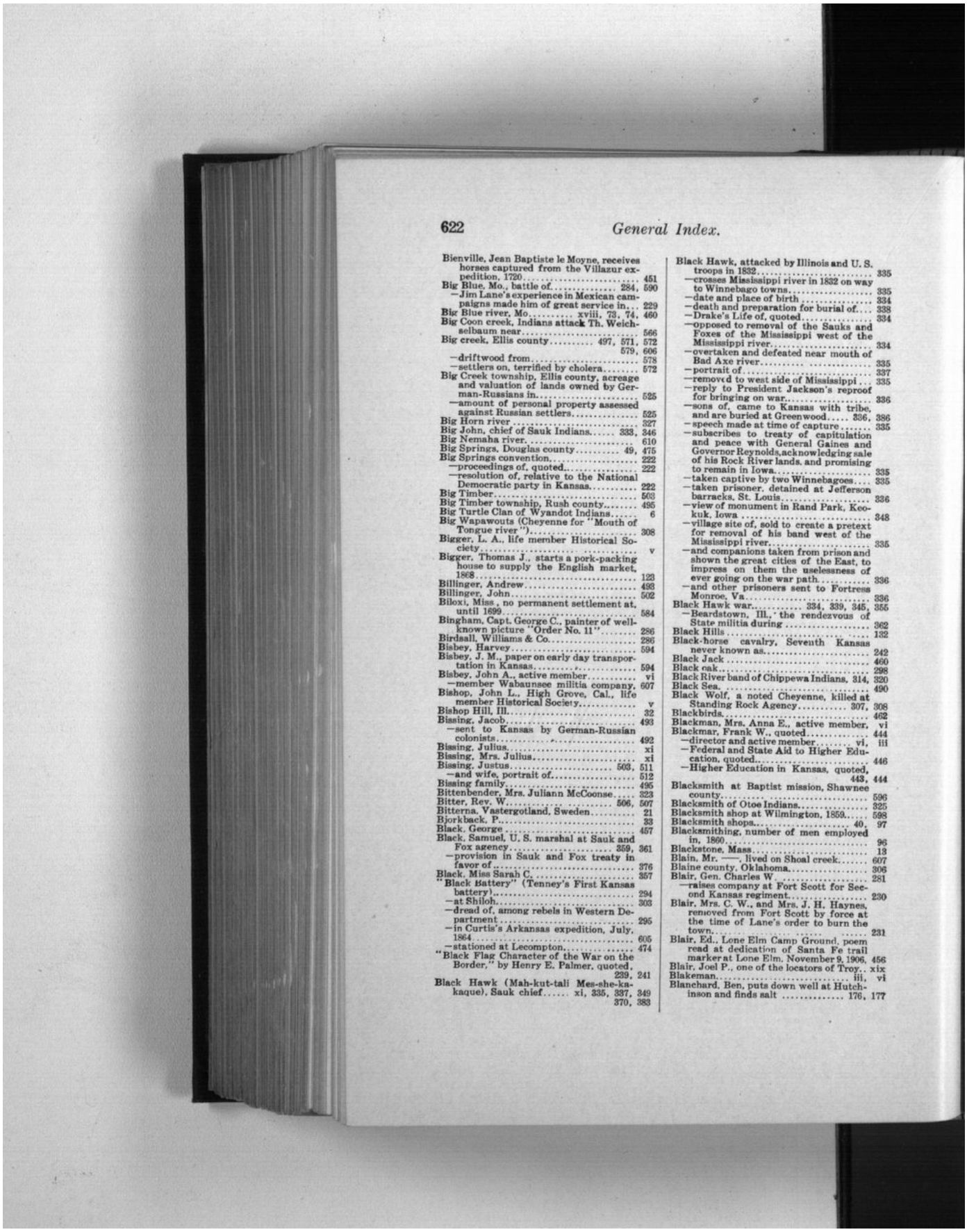
GENERAL INDEX.

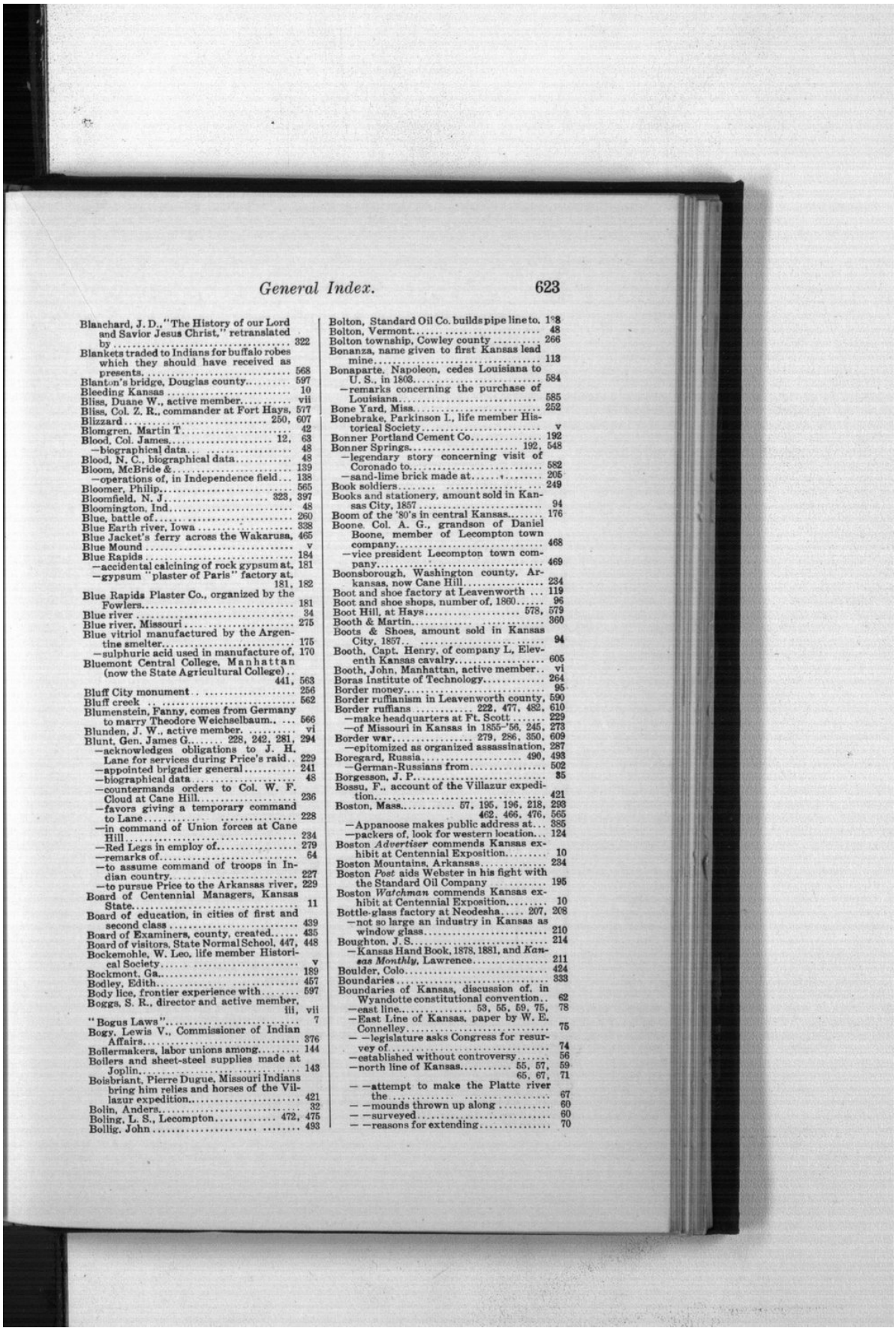












Kansas historical collections