Tales of an Old Timer

Section 7, Pages 181 - 210

Tales of an Old Timer, containing early reminiscences, stories and sketches of Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas by John Calvin McCoy and compiled by W. W. Harris, Jr.

Creator: McCoy, John Calvin, 1811-1889

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trans-continental highway were the chief topics discussed.
This was many years before California, New Mexico and Arizona had been acquired, when the western/of Missouri and Arkansas was by act of congress, and many Indian treaties, the apparently fixed limit and barrier to any farther advance of white settlements westward.

Whilst some professed a half way uncertain assent in his glowing and far reaching theories and predictions, there were more who regarded them as the improbable dreams of an enthusiast. Time has proven the truth of his dreams, and the marvelous method of his madness. Not only one, but four trans-continental high ways span the continent, his lines of steamers, to China, to Japan, to the Sandwich and other islands of the Pacific, and to the Central and South American ports are accomplished facts, and his imaginary centropolis is now an admitted certainty, booming away on the full tide of successful experience toward Big Blue, and his assumed central point at his unpretentious log house, midway between Independence and the river.

About 1845 he got me to lay off a small portion of his land near his home into blocks and lots and afterward secured a civil engineer from the East, Mr. Pynchon, who laid out the entire country from the river to, and including Independence, into a city of grand proportions. He had a large lithograph map constructed of the city, which was named "Centropolis." A heavy black circle was drawn around the assumed center at his house, defining the probable limits thereof, and it will probably add to the confidence of the advocates of a wide extension of the limits of Centropolis No.2 (generally known as Kansas City or Kaw's mouth) to state that most, if not all, of the territory of said No.2 lies within the charmed circle of Centropolis No.1 - as indicated forty years ago.

In two points only were his calculations at fault, neither of them, however, of much consequence. One was in fixing the central point of the city about six miles too near the Atlantic and too far from the Pacific, and the other was in not waiting to hear the snort of the iron horse to clear the way westward, before exhausting his little fortune in the premature effort to hurry on the course of events. Aye it was no baseless fabric or dream of a visionary enthusiast, that he so graphically, eloquently and correctly described, but coming events cast their shadows before, read, pondered and worked out logically by an intellect more learned and gifted and far seeing than its fellows. Col. Gilpin was a younger brother of Hon. Henry D. Gilpin, attorney general under President Van Buren, and graduated with high honors at West Point in 1840. He was a protege of United States Senator Benton, (old Bullion) who at that period was political dictator of Missouri and its legislature. At the special request of the attorney general, that he would do so, Col. Benton brought the young man out to Missouri and secured his election as clerk of the house, or senate, of Missouri. He afterwards located permanently as a lawyer at Independence, then in the zenith of her prosperity, bought a considerable tract of land north of the city, and was, for nearly a score of years, an honored and useful citizen of the county, actively identified in all the enterprises looking to the advancement and general welfare of the country. He was a lieutenant colonel of a regiment

operating in New Mexico, and colonel commanding of a regiment of rangers that scoured the plains during the first year after peace with Mexico, and an unsuccessful candidate for congress with Woodson and Reid about 1848. He will, if he still lives and should chance to see this imperfect sketch, I am sure, pardon my inaccuracy as to facts arising from defective memory, when he calls to mind our eventful sojourn all night at the Indian Konkapot mansion and our long ride the next day.

I am not sure that history records the fact that the first railroad ever constructed and operated west of the Mississippi was from Independence to Wayne City, at the river. It was built in 1851 and operated with mule power, only a short time, and was the last expiring effort of Independence to hold her supremacy in the overland trade westward, but the project was a failure, and the large two story brick depot long since used as a livery stable, is now the only evidence remaining of the grand aspirations once entertained by the once powerful rival of Kansas City.

And now having bored you with this reminiscence of the East side, I will take the liberty of shifting the point of attack toward the West, the region where the first feeble kicks and struggles were made by the puny infant now grown and growing into such huge proportions as to be able to gobble the whole township at one gulp.

There are a good many queer features connected with the history of old Kawsmouth. If one were now blindfolded and set down at most anywhere in the old town between Second street and the river and were to suddenly open his eyes toward the river to note his surrounding the deep gashes and slashes and holes bored into nature's ancient bulwarks those precipitous, primeval hills that once towered so defiantly all along the river front; note the dilapidated old houses, some of them perched on pinnacles as if waiting for a friendly cyclone to take passage to a better land. And lastly, look away toward dismal old Harlem, disconsolately seated amidst - duck ponds - he would never suspect that he was at the very fountain head, the core, so to speak of one of the grandest cities that is to be on this continent of the globe, but rather in a region where old Jupiter had been practicing with his artillery of lightning, cyclones and dynamite against nature's old ramparts. As a matter of fact an army of sappers and miners have been operating against them during the last forty years, and the result seems to be even yet in doubt - a sort of drawn battle.

Scattered among these chaotic hills are many old familiar landmarks to the old timer. Old weather-beaten houses which look like they were haunted, and no doubt many of them are by spirits of the lowest and most villainous type. Between Second street and the river, from Main to Grand avenue was, at the beginning of the town, the favorite residence quarter. The first person who settled in the town after it was projected, was Col. Wm. M. Chick, who built a large residence upon this hill in 1844, two years before the first regular sale of lots, and also a large commission warehouse near the river. He was one of the original purchasers of the land, and contributed more toward giving the town a start than all the other proprietors combined. It was at that historic old mansion, but recently torn down, that Col. Fremont, accompanied by his wife and his father-in-law, Col.

Benton, made his headquarters whilst preparing for his explorations to the far West. Upon him alone devolved the responsibility of receiving with proper honors and hospitality all the visitors of distinction, and nobly and generously he performed the task. He was an old Virginia gentleman in the fullest sense; portly, handsome in feature, with polished address, generous to a fault and with a nature overflowing with the milk of human kindness.

It is right that history should record the fact, that the first actual settler in the town, now grown to a great city, that will figure largely in the world's future history, was Col. William M.Chick.

There are a number of other old houses scattered over that hill, each with its record of interest - the old Choutean mansion, the Steele, Jarboe, the Gregory, and the Riddlesbarger houses - each with its historic record, and last, but to the writer not least in interest,is the first brick house ever built in Kansas City, in I845,by the writer. It now stands on the verge of a precipice, perhaps a hundred feet high, opposite the Grand Avenue Pacific depot. That old, unsightly monument of the long ago is a very treasure house of interesting and cherished memories, and a volume of tender absorbing interest is written all over and around its crumbling walls. But my old eyes are not yet too dim to read nor so dry as not to drop a tear over some of its inscriptions. It tells of the young, vigorous, hopeful spring-time of life. But it is autumn with us now, old house, the tempests of near half a century have beaten around us, but the end is near. A villainous railroad has sliced off the whole frontage of the original hills, and trains now unceasingly rumble and puff and scream away below the foundations of the venerable old relic.

I have very recently explored that once favorite portion of the old town in order to revive old recollections and note the changes, and the result was a sad confirmation of the truth of the wise man's declaration, that all is vanity.

Those who struggled the hardest to build up a town have profited the least, and those who really did nothing but sat still and waited have become millionaires. I often think of the strange mutations of fortune that have taken place here; of one who in I839 sold whiskey by the tin cupful in a log shanty on the river front, afterward bought eighty acres of land at about $4 an acre in the center of the present city, and many years afterward tried to sell for $I5 an acre, who neither, nor traded until riches were thrust upon him and died very rich. And then of one other who came with a modest fortune and was foremost in all commercial enterprises in the up building of the town, temperate and honest, who died in the poor house.

And of still another individual over whose history charity compels us to draw a curtain,who, penniless at the beginning, never bought, sold or traded, but who died leaving an estate of several hundred thousands and a righ legacy to the city, besides a bonanza of litigation for lawyers and claimants,who died among strangers and was buried without a coffin in the potter's field, with nothing to mark the place of burial. And thus passeth the glories of earth.

But what does it matter to those who have fallen or those who still plod their weary way along the down grade whether they have much or little of earthly dross, seeing the decree of the universal leveler is fixed that

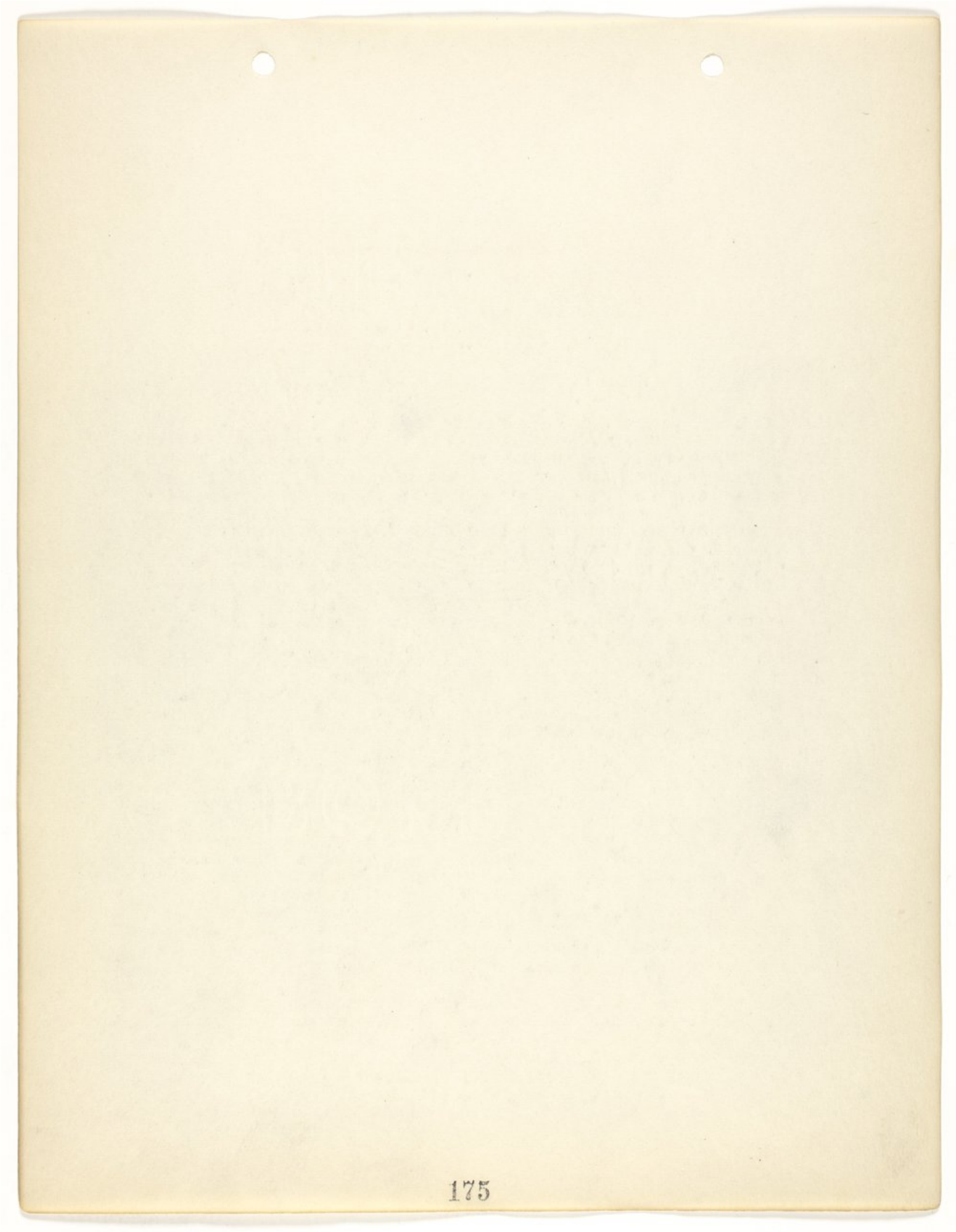
"The tall, the grave, the reverent head,
Must lie as low as ours."

The last of the original fourteen proprietors of the old town, except the writer, died several years ago. A mere remnant of those who entered these Western wilds with him are left; and in revisiting the once familiar, but now neglected quarter, he may well

"Feel like one who treads alone,
'Mid ancient homes, deserted,
Whose lights are fled, the inmates dead,
And all but he departed."

But what interest has this lugubrious theme with the busy, bustling throng hard by? None whatever, I ween.

J.C.M.



GRAVEYARD HISTORY.

Old Timer Gives A History of the Graveyard Now Known as Shelley Park - How the Abode of the Dead Was Transformed - Distribution of Bones.

(Published in the Kansas City Journal, Monday, August ?

There is a square of ground in the old part of Kansas City known now as "Shelley Park", but, in early periods of the city as the "graveyard"; a suit is pending in the courts and has been for several years instituted by heirs and assigns of the old town proprietors to obtain possession of the same against the city, which has possession and control thereof.

They allege that the land referred to was never donated or dedicated by the old town company for a graveyard or any other purpose by any act written or otherwise, but was simply left undivided with a few other pieces of ground at the date of their final settlement and dissolution of partnership, September 30,1847. That this square known as land No. 21, and a portion of a tract of sixteen acres lying along the south bank of the Missouri river, in said city, alone remains unsold or undivided. That at the date of their final partition of assets and dissolution as a town company, the owners of the land comprising 257 acres were fourteen in number when the land was purchased at a public sale, November 15, 1838. That in 1846, when a small portion was laid off into town lots and sold, the number of owners had been reduced to seven persons with interests as follows:

Wm. B. Evans, one share; Henry Jobe, one share; Jacob Ragan, one share; Fry P. McGee, two shares; John C. McCoy, two shares; William Gillies, three shares; Robert Campbell, four shares.

That about a year after this first sale of town lots, viz., in June, 1847, an addition to the former, comprising about 150 lots, was laid off and sold, and that the residue of the original tract, comprising two-thirds thereof, was soon afterward (viz., September 30, 1847) laid off into thirty separate tracts of land and divided with other assets by lot, and proper conveyances made to each proprietor excepting the two tracts already named as still remaining undivided. That the seven owners aforesaid never had a charter, by-laws or even an article of agreement, but merely met from time to time and decided all questions by a majority vote.

J. C. McCoy was made secretary and surveyor at the outset and continued in that capacity until the company dissolved, September 30, 1847. That a record was kept by him in a book of all the acts and doings of said town company, which original record book, unmutilated and unchanged, may be examined by anyone who choses,showing no disposition of the tracts above named. At the date of dissolution as a company, September 30, 1847, there were a small number of graves on the tract of "land No. 21, but for

the reason that family relatives were buried upon it of one of the proprietors, who strenuously opposed its being included in the partition of assets although nearly, if not all, the other owners were in favor of its being included. This particular tract was not then, nor has it ever yet been distributed to its legitimate owners. That the member of said town company who objected to such distribution constructed a large map or plat of the entire 257 acres of the town company's land, showing the town proper, as laid in out 1846, the addition of 150 lots made in 1847, and lastly, of all the residue of said tract as divided into land squares without streets, and to whom these latter were partitioned and deeded, with the name of the allottee on each.

Upon the square in controversy he marked "Land No. 31, donated for graveyard."

That said plat was never acknowledged, filed or recorded, as is shown by the absence of any certificate of the recorder upon the same and by direct testimony of the recorder that the facts in regard to that matter established by uncontradicted proof corroborated by a memorandum in the handwriting of the then recorder, was that the words "donated for a graveyard" marked upon the plat of the ground in controversy were not only not sanctioned by the other proprietors, but that it constituted the only cause why they refused to sanction or acknowledge the said plat. From 1847 to 1857 the ground continued to be used by any who desired as a burial ground, no control or care being exercised by the city over the same. In the latter year the city council passed an ordinance forbidding further burials thereon and providing severe penalties for its violation. Meanwhile the city had extended and built up all around the old grave yard and the question often discussed in the city council, and especially with those having real estate in its near vicinity, was how to rid themselves of the unsightly and uncared for grave yard in their midst. The latter class and the ones who are and have always been contesting this suit for the city had another motive which was not only to remove and obliterate every vestige that would remind one of a grave-yard, but to transform it into an attractive public park that would greatly enhance the value of their surrounding property as it is now and has been since 1879.

There are perhaps not more than one in a thousand of the present population of the city who know anything of the true facts and merits of the controversy or indeed feel any interest in it whatever.

From 1857 until 1878 when the square was levelled off, much of it to a depth of fifteen to seventeen feet, and the last of the remains were either removed to other graveyards or dumped with the earth to make fills and crossings in the ravines and the pond near by. Eighteen ordinances and resolutions in all were enacted and adopted, all having reference to these two settled purposes, viz., to remove and obliterate the old graveyard and make on its site a public park. The title of some of the ordinances are as follows.

ResOlution May 14, 1855: To purchase ground in the Union cemetery for burial purposes.

Resolution July 9, 1857: Report of special committee on purchase and in favor of vacating the old graveyard.

Resolution July 5, 1867: City attorney to inquire into title and as to propriety of removing all graves to the new cemetery.

Ordinance May 5, 1868: Condemning a portion of Land 21 for public uses as an alley.

Resolution May 16, 1868: Allowing occupants living on Land 21 to remain forty days longer and then to be put off.

Resolution September 26, 1870: City marshal to gather and rebury human bones exposed by grading streets through the old grave yard.

Resolution October 18, 1870: City marshal to remove a family living on Land 21 in ten days, if necessary by force.

Resolution: Grading contract with Grant & Hunt confirmed, city to be in no wise responsible for pay (on four sides of square).

Resolution December 30, 1872: City engineer to make arrangements for disinterring and reinterring remains.

Resolution May 12, 1872: Report of City Engineer Marvin on same. Contracts with Undertaker Welden to remove remains to Union cemetery referred to.

Resolution of June 13, 1877: Instructs city engineer to have the old graveyard square levelled off by the work house force for the purpose of depositing rock on same, to be broken by workhouse gang for street paving.

Resolution of June 16, 1877: City engineer to employ workhouse force to grade the old graveyard and get it in shape for a public park.

Resolution of June 16, 1878: City engineer to make contract for necessary dirt to complete levelling and grading the old graveyard square.

Resolution of December 12, 1878: Senators and representatives in legislature requested to present bill authorizing city to condemn for uses of a public park the land known as block 21, of town of Kansas.

Resolution of March 24, 1879: To fence this much needed park.

Explanatory of the resolution of September 26, 1870, it may be stated that the old graveyard extended outside of the square, across Oak street west and Missouri avenue north, the streets consequently running through the graveyard. The eastern half or more, where families lived, toward the ravine, never had graves upon it.

About 1864 one of the largest claimants of the ground seeing the city, by ordinance and otherwise, had forbidden its use and had entirely vacated and abandoned it as a graveyard, took possession of the square by putting thereon three families of tenants upon the eastern portion of the square, where there were no graves, and who built houses, stables, etc,, and occupied the same for a period of more than three years. But the city council, by resolution adopted October 18, 1870, ordered the marshal to remove them and tear down their houses, which was done.

Nearly all the graves were upon a high ridge running north and south parallel with Oak street, the summit of which was about forty feet east of Oak, and few, if any, were as far east as the middle of the

square, but many were in Oak street and Missouri avenue. This ridge has been graded off to a depth of from 8-1/2 feet to the south and 17 feet at the north, an average of about 11 feet, necessitating, of course, the removal of all remains. The removal of earth from the square aforesaid was begun about 1868, and the entire surface was leveled off in 1878.

The work of excavating and leveling was done from first to last almost entirely by the prisoners of the city work house, in charge of a guard, chiefly at first to make fills and crossings of ravines near by, and for several years at intervals of weeks and months apart. The manner of excavating, especially where nearly all the graves were situated, on the west side, and where the cut was from eight to seventeen feet, by undermining at the desired level, and falls that often included half a dozen graves, mixing promiscuously bones and earth, rendered it impossible to save any except the larger bones, and only the larger ones were gathered and put in small, cheap, rough boxes, costing 37 cents each, and taken to the Union cemetery by Undertaker Welden, who had a contract with the city, which lasted two years, at so much a body, and who testified that each box contained an average of five skulls. His contract only required him to transfer the boxes of remains to the Union cemetery, as they were filled, and rebury them there in the ground belonging to the city.

The smaller bones were shoveled with the earth into wagons and dumped into the ravines and the pond on the east side. For instance, the witness who had charge of the work house gang that finished the grading, testified that during his work he exhumed, or rather took down (for the original surface was more than ten feet above grade), the remains of nineteen graves, and that eight of these were shoveled with the earth and dumped into the pond on the east side, and the larger bones of eleven were put into the boxes. As the falls of earth containing human bones often remained for days and sometimes weeks before removal, it was notorious that dogs sometimes carried away bones, and one witness testified that he saw them in the act. Human bones and skulls were a familiar sight for years to those having occasion to pass over or by the old graveyard during its reconstruction into a park.

From 1857 to 1878, when the old grave yard was completely obliterated, leveled off and turned into a public park, it remained simply an open common for stock, with wagon roads across it uncared for by the city authorities, or any one except in places by persons who had buried relatives or friends, whose sleeping dust they tried as best they could to protect from the wholesale desecration going on under the city's direction. For years the eastern part was used as a dump for garbage, and the western part right where the graves most abounded, for depositories of large rock piles to be broken into McAdam, by the chain gang for city street paving. In 1866 a public notice was published in the Kansas City Journal, the then official paper of the city under the head of council proceedings, notifying all persons having friends buried there to remove their remains, the city authorities having decided upon the removal of all human remains therefrom.

To the only one of the old town company who kept the ground from becoming private property, and had friends buried in it, this notice

was an order to remove their remains off, in order that a few interested schemers might enhance the value of their surrounding property by turning it into a public park at the city's expense.

Large numbers, perhaps all who saw the notice at home or abroad, complied with its requirement. Some, however, were unable to find the remains of friends, the marks of locality being entirely obliterated by wagons, the rock piles and roaming stock.

In 1878 and 1879 the work of leveling off the square to its present shape was completed and the last reminder or moments of the old, unsightly graveyard disappeared from view and the various ordinances and resolutions of the city council vacating it as a graveyard and ordering it to be converted into a public park were carried out to the letter by Mayor Shelley. It was sown in grass, planted in trees with broad diagonal walks fifteen feet wide from the four corners, intersecting at the center, where a basin was excavated fifty feet in diameter and about eight feet deep, where was to be a fountain. Bear caves, and other attractive features suitable for a park and a pleasant place of public resort, were also nearly completed, in large part paid for with his own means, when, becoming disgusted with the criticisms of certain newspapers, he ordered the central excavation filled and the whole square leveled to its present shape. No blame attaches to him at least for the desecration of graves, for but few, if any, were left when he assumed control. He it was who settled the long pending vexed question and very appropriately by common consent the square has since been known only as Shelley park, although an attempt was made to steal his well earned thunder by some one who on the - June erected over each of the four entrance gates a painted sign board reading as follows: "Any person or persons found lounging or playing on the grass in the 'cemetery square' will be arrested and fined." In view of the fact that a band stand was soon after its completion erected near the center, where for more than a year nightly strains of music, the reverse of funeral, delighted throngs of hundreds of pleasure seekers, and for seven years this square had been the delight and home of the loafer and the small boy. This sudden change from gay to grave was unaccountable until it was remembered that the time set for the trial of the case involving the question of ownership was only ten days off, when it would be necessary to not only call the square a grave yard, but prove it as well to the satisfaction of a jury.

No name was signed to the notice and no damage resulted except to the purse of the colonel who conceived the bright idea and paid the man who painted and put up the sign boards. Mark Twain, weeping over the tomb of his great ancestor, Adam, was a scene not more ludicrous than this late effort at the lugubrious over a locality where neither a bone or a speck of human dust in all probability lay within two miles of the spot. Undertaker Welden declared that in compliance with his contract with the city the remains of every grave on the square were removed under his direction and reinterred at the Union cemetery, and that if any box or boxes of human bones were re-interred upon the square it was done surreptitiously, and in violation of his contract and the citynordinance.

It is alleged by defendant in the suit that there are such

boxes still there. If so, perhaps a portion of the testimony of ex-Alderman Campbell may give some light in that connection, which was that he accompanied Alderman Weston, chairman of the council committee on internal improvements, to examine and report on the grading work of the square, when complete, that when arriving on the grounds he saw a few small boxes near the finishing place and asked the boss of the shovellers what they were for, and receiving no answer, Alderman Weston plucked him aside by the sleeve, and in undertone said, "We are going to bury some bones to hold the square for the city." This, it will be remembered, was in the spring of 1879, when the work of leveling off the square was about finished, and about ten years after the first inroads were made on it. What was done with the remains of graves during the many intervening years is clearly proven by many witnesses, particularly by that of Undertaker Welden and his employees. They were removed at the city's expense to Union cemetery, in cheap boxes furnished by Mr. Lovejoy, costing the city 37 cents each, and reburied in ground bought for that purpose by the city. It can be safely asserted that since 1879 the entire undisturbed remains of not one of the many graves made in the old graveyard can be found upon that square of land, No. 21. A large number of persons complied with the official notice published in the Journal of 1866,and removed the remains of friends and relatives from the square. The others were either removed to Union cemetery or dumped with the earth by the work house prisoners, to make fills in ravines, and to level up the east side.

It is not disputed that the title to the land rests in the plaintiff claimants. In a suit brought by Grantz against the city in 1874 for grading adjoining streets,the city counselor in his answer to the petition of plaintiff, avers that the ground having been abandoned and vacated as a grave-yard, and the city having no claim of ownership or title thereto, was not responsible to pay for said grading.

The complaint of the plaintiffs is not now, nor has it ever been, that the city forbade further burials on the ground or provided for and caused the removal of the remains to the Union cemetery; but in the arbitrary and infamous manner the work of desecration was carried out and having accomplished this the city authorities prevent the plaintiffs from taking possession of property, their title to which is not even disputed. Since the last remains were exhumed, eight years ago, not a solitary vestige or monument has been visible to indicate what it once was. The removal of the surface earth from more than half of the square on the western part, from a maximum of seventeen feet with a maximum fill of ten feet on the east side, completely leveling it off, has entirely changed its topography and general aspect. There is no dispute as to whether it looks better now than formerly- the only controversy is as to who has the right of possession. There have been two trials of this case- the first was dismissed by plaintiffs after trial and before judgement; in the second the jury disagreed, standing five for the city and seven for the claimants; and a third trial will be had at the October term of court Warrensburg where it was sent on

plaintiff's motion for a change of venue. No better reason for asking the change need be given than may be unmistakably inferred from the unguarded sentiment expressed by a gentleman having large property interests not far from Shelley Park. When the jury, after being out for hours, reported their inability to agree, he and an individual whose interests were on the side of the claimants and the sheriff were about 10 o'clock at night waiting in the latter's office for the verdict. On learning the result he indignantly exclaimed " Oh! they done wrong; they ought to have made up a big purse and employed the most eminent counsel to be had; seen the newspapers manufactured public-opinion so as to carry the case right through." It was merely the dictate of prudence to have the case tried where personal interests and big purses would have no weight in the scales of justice. It is claimed that the facts as now stated are true, and as proven by the witnesses in the case and as taken down by the stenographer. Any one who doubts or discredits this can easily verify their correctness or falsity by the record.

In the former trial of this case the court decided that the title to the square rests in the claimants. No conveyance or other authenticated instruments of writing exists whereby they relinquish or transfer or dedicate their rights in the property to the city or the public. The attorneys for the city disclaim any rights of ownership or title for the city, but say the land was given to the public for a graveyard, and that it is still a graveyard. If this be true, why do the officials refuse, as they do, permission to anyone who once had friends buried there to probe with an iron rod at the locality where their remains once lay in order to establish the truth or falsity of the matter? Would they permit Mr. L., Mr.R., Mr. K. and others (who testified that they were unable to find the graves of friends when the official notice to remove them was published) to erect grave stones at the locality? How would they like to have the broad, beautiful diagonal walks of Shelley park obstructed with grave stones? If there are human remains still buried in that square by what right are the friends of such, whether with or without title debarred from bestowing such care for them as they deem proper? If the claim set up by the attorneys who represent the city in this suit, is correct, then these questions are pertinent. If their position is not tenable in law, or sustained by facts, then it may be safely left for the courts and the public to decide the fate of "Shelley park".

J. C. McCoy

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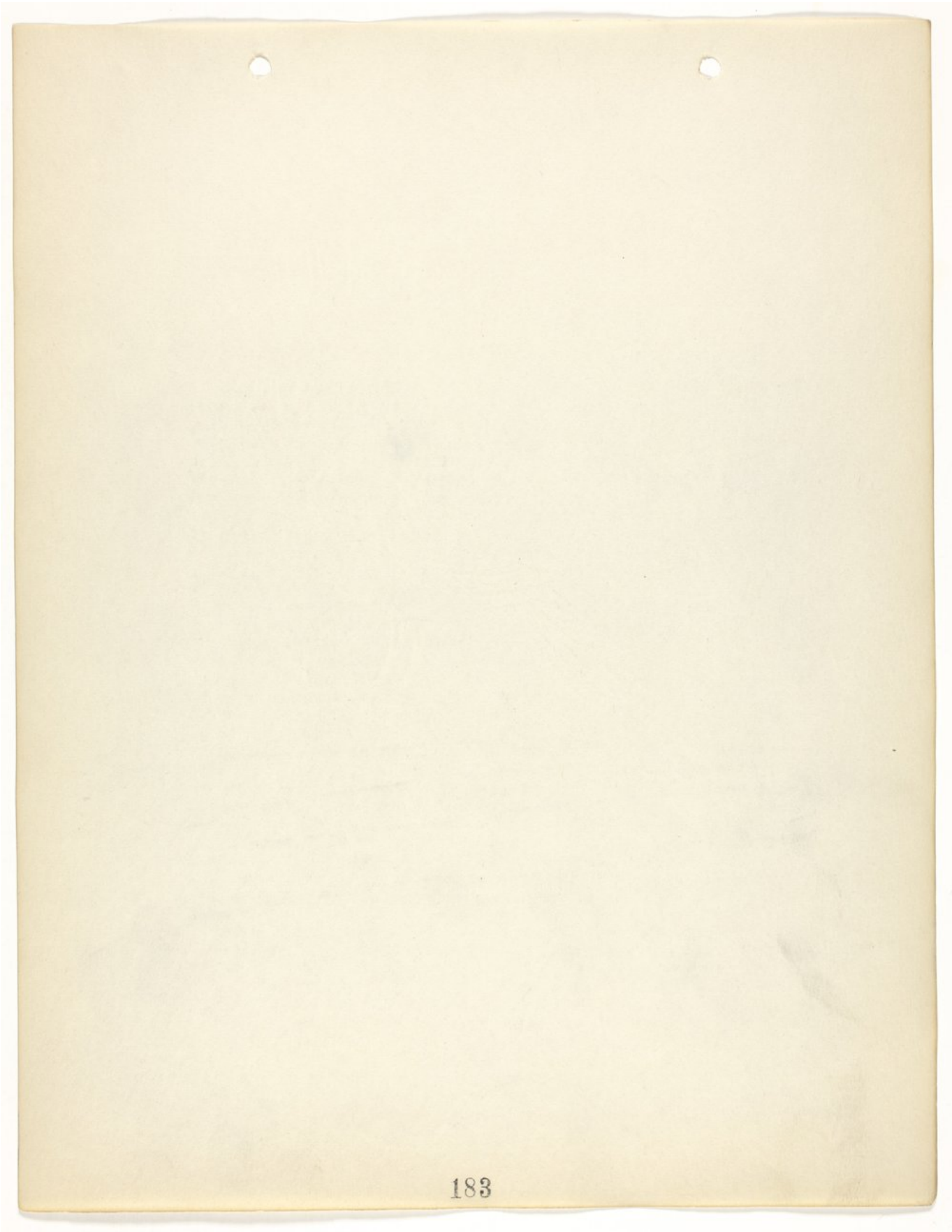


A SHORT CHAPTER ON NAMES.

"PORT FONDA" vs. KANSAS CITY.

(Published in the Kansas City Times,)

Sir: Why was Kansas City adopted as a name for this place? is a question which has been asked a thousand times by strangers, residents, and almost everybody. At the present time, with its geographical surroundings, it would seem that a more inappropriate name for our city could not have been found in our language. It has an exceedingly one-horse and insignificant sound to a stranger, suggestive only of some cross-roads locality - consisting of a tavern, meeting-house and whipping-post. All over the continent and beyond, where the fame of our marvelous growth toward metropolitan greatness has spread, a great subject of wonder no doubt has been, as to how any city could grow up rapidly, flourish and be healthy, afflicted with such a name. I am not one of those who subscribe to the fallacy that "A rose would smell as sweet by any other name." No publisher could, I imagine, be induced to undertake to print the poetic effusions of Nancy Muggins or Peter Nincompoop. Under the guidance of such names "Pegasus" would refuse to rise above the commonest doggerel.

Our admiration and respect for the great city of the lakes - Chicago - would be greatly weakened were it known to the world only by the name of "Skunktown" or "Onionville". And yet it is an indisputable fact that the great city bears those unsavory names in the Pottawatamie Indian language. It is situated in the former country of that people, and was known time out of mind by them and other surrounding tribes as "Chicago-i-nok," correctly translated into English, "The place of Skunks", or "Onions", both of the names being similar in sound - "Chi-ca-gok" is the plural, "Chi-cahk," or "Chi-cahg," being the singular. From 1823 to 1827 I lived on St. Joseph river, about ninety miles distant, and there was at that time only the old Fort - and a small trading village in existance - at which lived the "Kinzies," the "Beanbiens," "Dr. Wolcot," and a few other families.

But I have wandered from my objective point "Kansas City" - the how - the why - and the wherefore it was thus named - with a full knowledge of all the facts I propose to unravel the mystery, partly to vindicate the truth of history, but chiefly to relieve the god-fathers who named the bantling, from undeserved anathemas and reproach.

The reader will please recollect that in the year 1839 the western line of Missouri and Arkansas, was the "ultima thule" of civilization, the whole region of country lying westward toward the mountains, having been set apart in 1830 by act of Congress, as a permanent "Indian Territory", where all the scattered tribes were to be collected and secured in the peaceful enjoyments of a home forever, to make a long halt in their migratory wanderings and quiet rest for the soles of their moccasins. Congress by its solemn act aforesaid had made and promulgated its decree, notifying the world at large and adventurous

pioneers and bee-hunters in particular, that right here a barrier was erected which they could not overcap with impunity, and to the westward rolling tide of civilization was the command given that "hitherto shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Do you ask whether any one, even at that day, was fool enough to believe any such nonsense? I tell you yes, nearly every intelligent, law-abiding man believed and endorsed it. The provisions made in the act guaranteed to the Indian eternal possession, shows that Congress believed it, and in 1853, when the idea was first broached in Congress, to remove this barrier, to organize a new Territory and admit white settlers, a majority of the people of Western Missouri opposed the measure, and the Hon.D.R.Atchison, of Platte county, acting U. S. vice-President, stumped the State making speeches in opposition to the project.

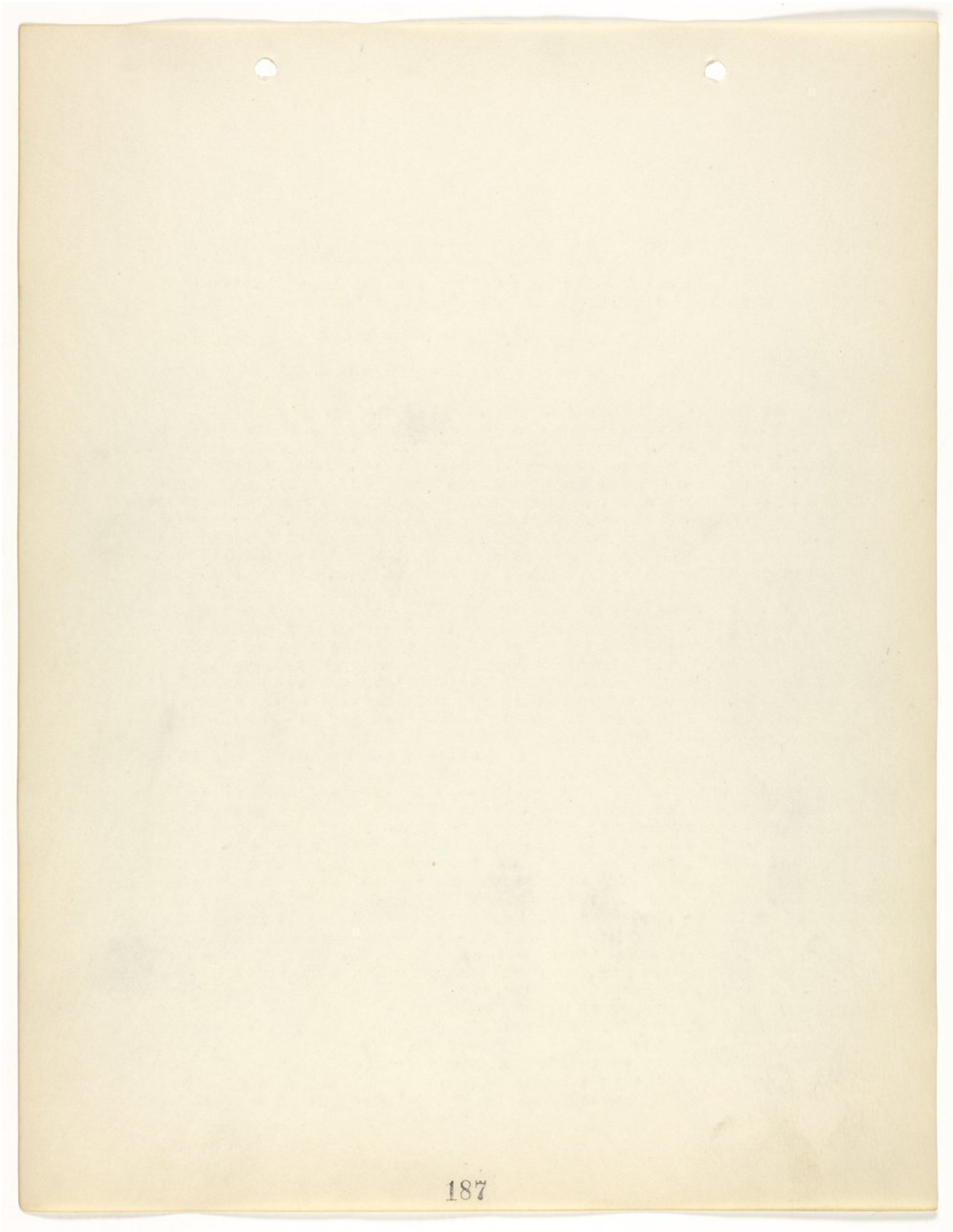
In 1839 six or eight of the purchasers of the original town site of 256 acres, met in a small log house on the river bank near the foot of Main street, for the purpose of taking action to lay the foundations of a town, which they fondly hoped would, in a few brief ages, number its inhabitants by hundreds if not thousands; their deliberations were held in this unpretending edifice of John Barley-corn, but an adjournment was moved and carried to the open air, where, among the wide spreading branches of a venerable oak, these wise men laid their heads together to devise plans and scratch out ideas which were destined to startle the natives, and among other grave questions discussed and decided was that of sellecting a proper name for the embryo city. Among the number of those there assembled was an old gentleman named Abraham Fonda, who had amassed a considerable fortune as a grocery merchant at Louisville, Ky. To him really belonged the honor of projecting the idea of making a town at this point, and when the land was sold at the commissioner's sale, he was one of the four-teen partners in the purchase; a previous sale had been made at which he and a Mr. Clark, were the only purchasers. This first sale was, however, set aside by the Court, and three new commissioners appointed to make another sale. Fonda had set his heart on naming the new town "Port Fonda", by the way a very original and proper name, but a majority of the /other proprietors did not like him very well, and for that reason alone refused to allow him to hand down his name to posterity and leave them out in the cold. Had he been versed in our modern ways of settling such matters he could have very easily adjusted this trifling difficulty by offering a QUID PRO QUO, neglecting which he exchanged immortality for oblivion, and soon afterwards sold out his interests in disgust, mentally ejaculating no doubt "sic transit gloria Fonda." The name Kansas City was then adopted, simply because none of the others could think of anything better or more appropriate, the town site being in view of the mouth of the Kansas river.
For one I am truly sorry that the name "Port Fonda" was not adopted, and suggest the propriety of petitioning the Legislature to change the name before our Kansas neighbors over the line perfect their plans to gobble up our fair city, which they seem determined to accomplish. Long railroads have been stolen, why not cities? One is forcibly reminded by this matter of a passage in Holy writ which reads thus,

"Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired thee that he may sift thee as wheat." Our city would no doubt be greatly benefited by a thorough sifting, but I am very much opposed to letting the contract to Satan to do the job. Well, having pretty well exhausted my ammunition on Kansas City I would like to give a few parting shots at a few other Western names - if this chapter is not already too long - if it is, the printer is at liberty to curtail it. First, then, "Mississippi" cannot be translated so as to mean "Father of Waters" in any language, aboriginal or civilized, but simply "large or big river". "Sippi," giving the letter "I" the French sound of "E" is the name for river in the Shawnee, Pottawattomie, Chippewa, and other Indian languages.

In the Shawnee "Msi-sipe" means literally "large river". In the Pottawattomie,etc.,it would be "Msha-sipe." Du Pratz , in his history of Louisiana, published more than a hundred years ago, gave that as the meaning of the word. The great Missouri river was called, or rather described to the first French explorers from Canada, as "Meah-cha-sipi," literally "big or large bad river". Doubtless various tribes had other names for these great rivers. But in making enquiries of the Aborigines whereby to construct a map of the new country, and being compelled to gather imformation without any knowledge of their language, they very often obtained a description or characteristic instead of the real name. Thus the word "Illinois" in the language of the tribes, living at that time on its waters,viz: "Miamis Piankeshaws;" and also in the Shawnee language means literally " a man." "Illini" translated into English is "man."

I suppose the origin of the name is this : The first explorers of the Mississippi and its waters were French Canadians, who penetrated the country by way of the lakes and thence down the Illinois river to the Mississippi. These explorers find a tribe of Indians, and by signs and diagrams seek imformation of the native. Desiring to ascertain the name of this tribe or people they point to a man, the Indian immediately says "Illini." Then he points to another and another and receives the same answer. And straightway they are set down in his vocabulary as a people calling themselves Illini, or Illinois. A rude map is made for the Indians, showing the country already explored by these travelers. And the Indian is asked to complete it to the unknown South and westward. He draws the course of the mighty Mississippi and says "Msi-si-pi," (big river), then draws the course of the Missouri and says "Meah-cha-sipi, (big bad river), and so on ad infinitum. But I have no time to pursue this subject any further, and will close by proposing the health of "Port Fonda."

J. C. M.



RECOLLECTIONS OF A FLOOD.

Personal Recollections of Floods in the Missouri and Kaw by "An Old Timer"- Perils of the Flood of 1844.

(Published in the Kansas City Journal-

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The subject of floods in the Missouri and Kansas river in the past, and the probabilities of their recurrence in the future is neither a pleasant or popular theme to talk or write about just now, and those who indulge in speculations or predictions of danger are looked upon as croakers and birds of evil omen, especially by those whose interests would be in jeopardy in the event of their fulfillment. This is very plainly shown by the way many persons interested in West Kansas City and the bottom lands of the river have received warnings and statements of the United States engineer as to the probable danger of a devastating flood in the Missouri river, and which appeared in the Journal a few days ago. His statements have, I think, provoked a good deal of unjust and unnecessary criticism and comment. He is a stranger to me, but holding the position of trust and responsibility he does in the engineer service of the government, we may safely conclude that he is at least theoretically competent and certainly possesses the most correct information obtainable to enable him to form a proper estimate of the danger to be apprehended. Not only this, but it is his especial business to study the situation. He is in possession of all the facts and facilities requisite to form a correct conclusion in the premises.

Now, granting that it is his deliberate judgement formed from these sources that the dire calamity of a devastating flood was likely to sweep over the West Kansas City bottoms, causing the loss of millions of dollars value in property and perhaps many lives, his failure to give timely warning would under the circumstances be looked upon as little short of murder; and then, if his predictions fail and the elements over which he has no control are propitious, why then he subjects himself to ungenerous flings and jeers. His situation in the premises is one of great responsibility and certainly by no means to be envied. Having some knowledge of facts connected with floods in the Missouri river, I will venture, disagreeable as the subject may be to many, to briefly state them. Physic albeit nauseating, is some times very beneficial to general health. We may sincerely hope the general health in this case is in no danger at present. The records of the past tell us of only three floods that may be regarded as devastating, viz: in 1782, 1826 and 1844. (One other in 1843 only partially so, and many others where the overflows caused little or no damage). According to my recollection the overflow of 1843, occuring the last of May and the 1st of June reached a height about six

feet lower than that of the succeeding year of June, 1844 and the damage was correspondingly less. The winter of 1842-3 was a long, hard one with much snow toward the mountains. In January there was a general thaw and break up with fine weather lasting nearly three weeks and the steamer "Ione" ascended the river to Kansas City. On the day of her arrival it turned suddenly cold, the river froze up again and so remained until near the 1st of May, during which time the boat remained near the foot of Grand avenue.

The rise of water in 1843 was high enough to wash away some heavy new one story log houses standing near the river bank at the lower end of Harlem, which I had put up at the beginning of winter. I stood on the levee one day and witnessed their departure with sudden lurch and a graceful sweep of the upper end toward the river they mingled and melted away in the boiling flood. Have I told this story so often that I really believe it was an actual occurrence, and that rumors of the snowfields to the northwest caused me as soon as the ice was out of the river to varmose the imperiled ranch. Nay, even before that occurred that I pulled down one house and hauled the hewed logs across on the ice and put them up to live in near the foot of William street? Does any one doubt the correctness of this statement? And that this occurred in 1843, the year before the great flood. I hope not, for I am now going to say something of another flood that far exceeded this one in its desolating effects- that which occurred from the 13th to 16th of June 1844. The water rose to a height of six feet or more above that of the previous year. The Missouri river at about the 13th was only a few feet over the bottom lands, but the great volume of water that came down the Kansas river madly rushing against the mighty Missouri caused the seething waters to pile up at the vicinity of the mouth, no doubt several feet higher than they would have done had they met at the point of junction more obliquely.

On the morning of the 14th Col. Wm. M. Chick, who was temporarily occupying with his family a house he owned, which stood on the east side of Turkey creek, not far southeast of the State Line house, was surprised to find the water just rising above the banks of the creek. By 9 o'clock it had reached the door-step, and as the ground was lower toward the hills eastward, he deemed it advisable to seek a place of safety on higher ground, which they succeeded in doing with the aid of a canoe or small boat. His daughter, Mrs. Peery, went to the hills near Twelfth street on a horse, the water being then about mid-side to the horse near the hills. From thence she made her way to my house, two miles south of the city, and astonished me by her statement of facts. I galloped down to the ferry across the river, which I owned and ran at that time, and taking a skiff, with Col. John Polk, we made our way, with great difficulty and danger, up through the woods to the house, where we arrived by about 12 o'clock, and found the water about waist deep on the lower floor. We secured as many articles as our skiff would carry, placed the balance out of the reach of the water, and made our way back to the ferry, where I immediately secured a party of about ten persons

to take up the ferry flat to secure that which was left.

The seething, foaming flood of water was not only dashing madly onward in the river channel, but it swept across the heavily timbered bottom of West Kansas, from bluff to bluff, with a roar almost deafening- with the aid of twenty or more men in rounding the rocky headland above the bridge, we finally reached the building about 4 o'clock p.m., when we found the water had reached nearly to the upper floor. Placing the boat beside the house we tore off a portion of the roof, the eaves of which was probably five feet above the boat- the upper window being too small to pass out the furniture. Being now nearly dark we held a council, and decided to tie up for the night, deeming it unsafe to venture into the river in the dark. So we ran up to the smokehouse, built of heavy logs, in which about 5,000 pounds of bacon was floating about, and there spent the long, dreary hours of the night in roasting bacon and hams and telling marvelous tales of blood curdling scenes that never happened, probably.

In the morning we found that the depth of water under our boat was at least ten feet, and the water still rising.

Now, those who feel disposed to believe the above statement of facts can make their own estimate of the rapidity of the rise of water in twelve hours from the morning of June 14. I make it from eight to ten feet. Is this incredible? If so, ask Col. Polk, Allen McGee, William Mulkey, and others who spent the night with me in that flood of waters.

I will now mention only one other episode of that eventful day in West Kansas. During the night of the 15th, and the next morning, from time to time loud cries of distress were heard over at Wyandott, in the direction of the residence of Louis Tromley, who then lived near the Missouri south bank, just east of the state line. Those who listened to those cries knew full well that the old man was in deep trouble, as well as deep waters, but the impetuous Kaw forced its mad waters into the broad sea of the Missouri with a current so rapid that it was impossible to get the ferry flat across to the opposite woods (for there were no banks then) without cordeling the boat some distance up the Kaw, and before this could be done darkness had overspread the desolate scene. At early dawn brave hearts and strong arms were ready for the rescue. Isaiah Walker, Ethan Long, Russell Garret, David Froman, and Tall Charles, of Wyandott, soon made their way with the boat, cutting their way through the woods, to poor old Tromley, whom they found perched in a tree, and a few hundred yards farther on his wife in another tree, and a short distance further his boy sitting astraddle of the comb of the house which was just beginning to sway into the seething waters of the river.

Tromley had tried to make his way to Wyandott on a log, in order to procure a boat and help, but finding he would be inevitably swept into the Missouri, he desisted from his effort and betook himself to his perch in the tree, and thus passed the long vigils of that dreary, desolate night of these three hapless persons. Poor Tromley

meanwhile trying throughout its long watches to cheer and comfort his terrified wife and boy, who he was unable to reach. The rescuers took them to the hills, near Twelfth street, on their way, picking up some others as they went. Soon afterwards old Tromley's house, with his favorite dog perched upon its top, was seen by the hundreds gathered on the hillsides passing rapidly down in mid current and poor Tromley, who had just arrived, calling to his dog by name, who set up a mournful wail and the old man seemed disposed to dash in to its rescue. During this day, the 15th, the Wyandott rescuers, were busy saving persons and property in the West Kansas bottom until darkness closed their labors, theirs being the only boat that operated on that day, and after that none was needed for nothing was left to save of life or property. On the same day I went down with an old horse boat I had and brought up Mrs. Chouteau and her household goods from her homestead below East Kansas, to the high ground above.

Now, Mr. Editor, I have written these few incidents of the great flood of 1844 not as a sensation, for the facts are just as I have related them without any undue coloring. Neither have I done so to create any unnecessary alarm for I don't know that there are any grounds for any, but simply to communicate some facts that everyone having interests in the river bottoms ought to know. But smart people may laugh me to scorn, and so they would have done to old Tromley a day or two before he went to roost in that hackberry tree, had he been guilty of the same indiscretion. I have seen times when I would have felt supremely happy to be sitting astraddle of a good dry log with my nether extremities dangling in the waters beneath.

J. C. M.

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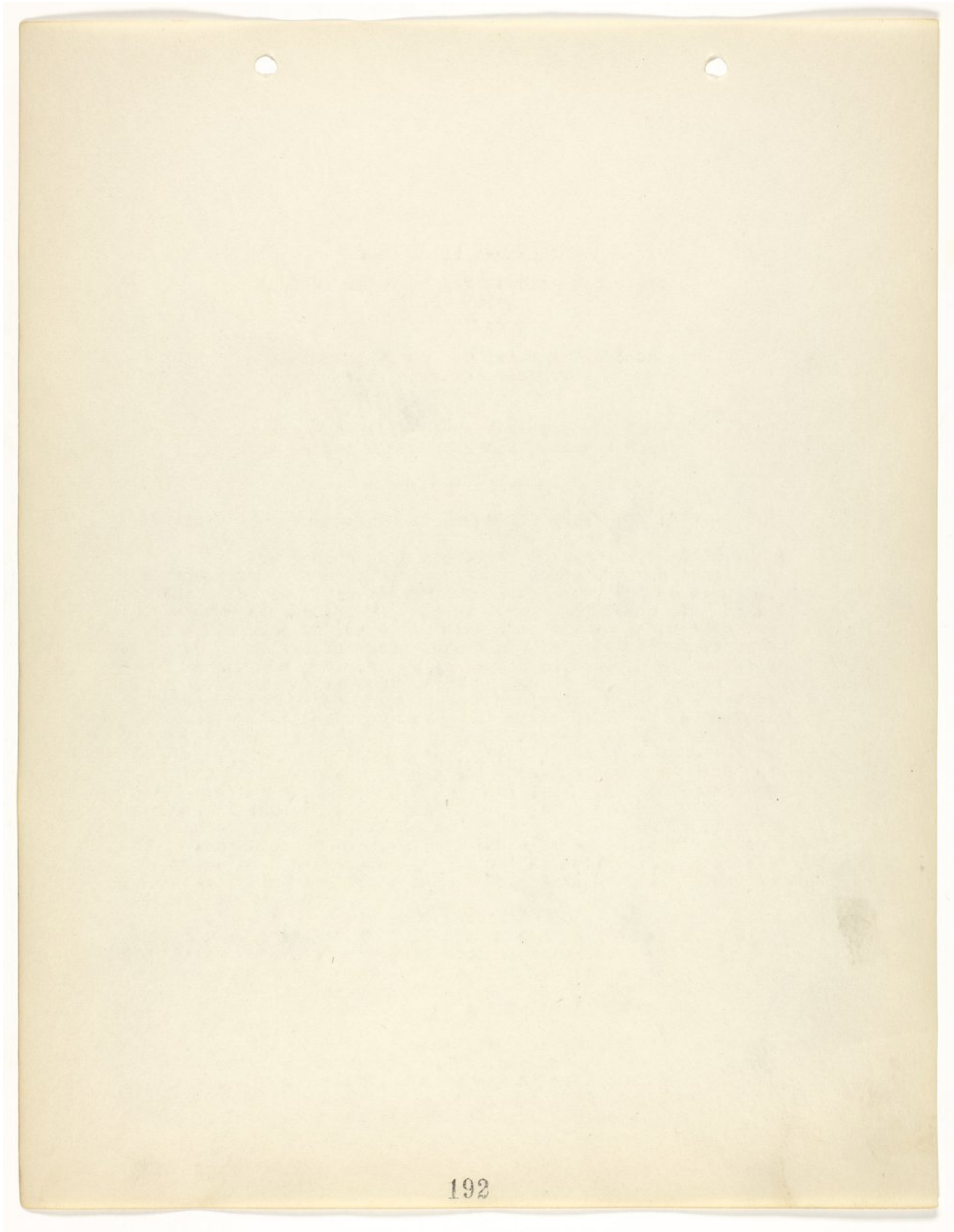

TALES OF AN OLD TIMER.

Another Batch of Interesting Facts From
J. C. McCoy.

Something About the Indians Who formerly Lived Hereabouts.

How the Price of Real Estate has Advanced Since Missouri Became a State.

(Published in the Kansas City Journal - March 23, 1879.-)

For reasons not necessary to mention, I have for a time suspended the monotonous task of unwinding the tangled threads of my old time yarns, for which providential circumstance the readers of the JOURNAL are no doubt very thankful. Indeed, I had about come to the conclusion that a suspension sine die would be in order, and more acceptable than any other service I could render the public. But it seems necessary and proper for me to again cut loose from my moorings. I am in receipt of several letters making inquiries and suggestions, several esteemed friends have been so kind or unkind as to say they had actually read my former effusions with some interest, as much as to say, let yourself out old fellow- and then I wish to make a few explanations and corrections of dates and facts heretofore mentioned. Few indeed are the mortals, great or small, who are innocent of the weakness of vanity in some degree, or proof against flattery. This is a characteristic of humanity almost, but not quite universal. I have known one or two good men who were so guileless, humble and unassuming that they seemed to be continually asking pardon of God and their fellow men for being in the world at all. That, however, I think, is too much.

LIKE THE INDIAN'S POLE,

which was so straight that it leaned over a little, or the Kentuckian's sweetheart, who was so highly accomplished and could sing so high that she some times went clean out of hearing.

This characteristic crops out in the urchin when he dons his first pair of trowsers, and forthwith feels on his lip for a sprouting moustache.

The sage and the savage, the Monarch and the mendicant, the wise and the unwise can all be tickled in some way by applying the proper way and means, and we may as well confess that even an old unsophisticated backwoodsman is but clay of plastic temper. Therefore I make no apology but proceed renovare dolorem.

Here and there in Missouri are still left a small number of the forlorn hope of men and women, who first pushed their way through the trackless wilderness westward and tramped down the nettles in this now favored land. Sudden and startling contracts have a wonderful attraction, and they can fully realize the original features in the picture of the past and the present. True, the development and the unfolding of the panorama during the first thirty years was slow and steady, giving no premonitions of its present brilliant attractive coloring, but then they are enabled to look upon and appreciate the amazing difference between the beginning and the present. In the vast area of country lying west of the Mississippi river between the Missouri River and the Arkansas, for at least six hundred miles,

THE ONLY INHABITANTS

that are known to have ever lived therein originally were about six thousand Osages, about two thousand Kanzans, a few hundred Quapaws, and a few hundred Missourians- not exceeding, probably, ten thousand souls in all. This vast fertile region had remained in a state of nature since the creation; and this is about the true history of the entire valley of the Mississippi. Archeologists have, no doubt, unearthed many interesting relics and evidences of past ages, and have written volumes of suppositions and fine spun theories, but none of them, I think, furnish any proof that this region was ever peopled by any other race than savages. By a treaty with the Osages, made at Fort Clark (afterward called Fort Osage, in the northeast corner of Jackson county), they sell the following country: "Beginning at Fort Clark, on the Missouri, five miles above Fire-Prairie creek, and running thence a due south course to the Arkansas and down the same to the Mississippi, hereby ceding and relinquishing forever to the United States all the lands which lie east of said line and North of the southwardly bank of said river Arkansas, and all lands situated northwardly of the Missouri river, " and "a tract of two leagues square, to embrace Fort Clark;" and also excepting a tract of twenty-five miles square in the southeastern portion of the State, granted by Spain in 1793 to some Delawares and Shawnees.

THIS LITTLE PRINCIPALITY

was to "the Great Osage nation merchandise to the amount or value of one thousand dollars, and to the Little Osage nation merchandise to the amount or value of five hundred dollars," and in addition thereto, "to the Great Osage nation the sum of eight hundred dollars, and to the Little Osage nation the sum of four hundred dollars," the total consideration being $2,700, about half the price of one corner lot in Leadville, and quite a speculation for Uncle Samuel. But then the price paid was about as good as the title he got. The arguments

in favor of their signing this treaty were very weighty with the Osages. The United States agreed to "establish this place (Fort Osage) and permanently continue at all seasons of the year a well assorted store of goods for the purpose of bartering with them on moderate terms for their peltries and furs; to build them a house or water mill, and to maintain a blacksmith shop."

Merriweather Lewis, the first governor of Louisiana territory, in his instructions to Peter Chouteau, the agent and commissioner, who

NEGOTIATED THE TREATY,

among others gave the following: "Those of the Great and Little Osages who refused to sanction this treaty can have no future hopes that their pretentions to those lands now claimed by them will ever be respected by the United States, for it is our unalterable determination that if they are to be considered our friends and allies they must sign that instrument, conform to its stipulations and establish their permanent villages near the Fort erected a little above Fire Prairie creek. Those who neglect to do so, either by themselves or by the head of their family, must not under any pretext whatever be supplied with merchandise, either from the factory or by individual traders, &c." The method of the old Dutch school masters was to instill learning into their pupils by paddling it into their bottoms- and about the same method on a larger scale seemed to be that adopted by our Uncle Sam to civilize his refractory children in the far West. Suaviter in modo if you will, but fortitur in re if you won't. Well, so far as those thieving Osages are concerned, I don't know but the method was a good one, My recollections of this branch of the noble red man are by no means pleasant. On several occasions my little surveying party was somewhat roughly handled by them, although we generally managed to come out of our shirmishes

WITH FLYING COLORS,

but on one occasion, with tattered garments. We were in 1836 returning from a long trip of several months to the Southwest, and our escort of dragoons had left us at the Arkansas. Arriving at old White Hair's village, seven miles below Osage Mission, the river being too full to ford, I bargained for the ferriage of our outfit in their skin boats. A skin boat is simply a large buffalo skin shorn of hair and dressed until somewhat pliable; the sharp corners cut off and holes cut around the edges, in which a raw hide tug is run. The articles to be transported are laid on the robe, the tug drawn tight, making a big bundle, and then pushed into the water. An old squaw or a buck takes one end of a tug in his teeth, whilst the other end is fastened to the bundle, and swims over to the opposite side. These will easily carry a large man, but it is necessary to have sticks crosswise to hold the sides out. Our chief cook, Tom, a colored man being unable

to swim, laid down on the robe,and was being placed in position by the old squaw who superintended the process. It is necessary to lay flat on the side, doubled up as much as possible and with head enclosed. Tom persisted in sticking his wooly head out- the old squaw persisted in pushing it down, and finally administered to him a vigorous box. Tom grabed the old lady by her long hair, and pulled himself loose from his encasing, and for a short time things werelively between them, but I interposed

BETWEEN THE BELLIGERENTS

and finally launched him out upon his perilous voyage. The men and horses were all safely over, and I was still on the western bank watching the last load when the men halloed over that the Indians were taking our things. I answered back directing them to hold the fort and I swam across at my best speed. As I went up to the pile of our goods, which was surrounded by my seven men and a swarm of naked Osages, I jerked one of our blankets off of a stalwart old fellow who immediately picked up a small sack containing about a gallon of flour, the last of that article left. I then gave him a persuasive with my fist which landed on his breast instead of his nose where I intended it. At his call two big bucks bounced down on me, then three of my men bounced down on the two bucks, then a few more Indians on them and then the reserve and rear guard of my men commenced playing a lively tattoo upstairs with clubs, butcher knives and fists. Meanwhile, the old wossash and I were pretty well

SQUEEZED INTO A JELLY

down in the soft mud left bythe receding waters wholly unable to exchange courtesies of any kind except to scratch and pull hair, in which exercise he had greatly the advantage, his head being bare as a pealed onion except the scalp lock. Suffice it to say that the victory was ours, but in such a plight as would have startled our mothers. I was modestly clad in a single garment when the exercises commenced, when they ended- well, I didn't take an inventory except of the soft mud which was lavishly laid on from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet.

The Indians got off with only one blanket. This was only one of many similar episodes that occured in our frequent meetings with that thievish people- and the recollection of whose unmitigated meanness has led me into this wide discussion. Having shown the original purchase money paid to the few roving aborigines therein for the forty or fifty millions of acres, more or less, lying between the Arkansas and Missouri rivers, as far West as Fort Osage, to be about $3,000, let us see how much the north half of the State of

MISSOURI COST OUR UNCLE.

The only aboriginal claimants to that portion were the Iowas, Sacs and Foxes, numbering no less than two thousand. (The main portion of the Sacs and Foxes lived in Illinois and Iowa.) These tribes, by treaty (Aug. 4, 1824) conveyed all their rights as far north as the northern boundary of the State, from the Mississippi river west to the western boundary of Missouri, the consideration being to the Iowas, cash or merchandise, $1,000, and $500 to be paid annually for ten years, and the latter $500 in cash or merchandise and $500 annually for ten years, the whole cash aggregating $12,500 for about two million acres- cheap enough, surely. It is no wonder that our Uncle Sam was rich enough to give us all a farm, at $2.00 per acre- the old price for government lands. We must confess, however, that he sometimes made some very bad bargains. For instance, he gave to the Delawares and Shawnees for the miserably poor country comprising their Spanish grant above named- to the Shawnees $ 25,000 and fifty miles square (1,500,000 acres) west of and adjoining the State line of Missouri, and to the Delawares an amount in money and land still larger and more valuable, on the North side of the Kansas river, besides many other valuable concessions.

The universal law among all Indian tribes is blood for blood, or a satisfactory ransom from the slayer or his friends to the relatives and friends of the slain. This law is inexorable, and no one, not even the chiefs in authority, have a right to interfere with its strict enforcement to the letter. If the negotiations are satisfactory, the payment is generally in horses and other valuables, the amount, kind, and indeed the question of receiving pay at all as satisfaction, being left entirely with the friends of the deceased. An Osage Indian had killed one of his people of some note. He was either unable or unwilling to compromise

THE DEED OF BLOOD,

and fled first to the Quapaws, on the Arkansas, but the avengers of blood were on his track; he then fled to the Kanzans, where they pursued him, and then to Fort Osage, where he told his story and affirmed that he was now done running. It was not long before the pursuers were seen rapidly approaching across the prairie south of the fort. Calmly and proudly the fugitive walked out of the stockade to the top of a small eminence, singing as he went his own funeral dirge, and when the avengers had approached to within about two hundred yards of him he threw aside his blanket, bared his naked bosom and continued his death-song while receiving the shower of bullets and arrows that rained upon him like hail; never for a moment flinching or turning from the foe until his spirit took its flight to the happy hunting-grounds.

This hastily written episode, every word true, with a judicious and liberal admixture of fiction, would make the foundation of a nice little story for the next edition of that invaluable record of heroes, statesmen, men of buckram and- soforths,called the

"Commonwealth of Missouri." And this hint is thrown out gratis, hoping it may catch the eye of the editor. "Verbum sap," which being interpreted means: "a wink is as good as a nod to a blind man."

But as usual I am sailing away out of my latitude and must get back to our mutton chops.

THE FACTORY SYSTEM

of conducting trade with the Indian tribes, which was adopted about the beginning of the present century, was discontinued about 1822, and the factor at the post of Fort Osage, Col. Geo. C. Sibley, left within a year or two afterwards, and the fort and village gradually went into dilapidation and decay. In 1825 Congress passed an act to lay out a road from the frontier settlements of Missouri to the confines of New Mexico. The commissioners appointed to lay out and make the road, Reeves, Sibley and Mather, commenced the same at Fort Osage, passing out by Blue Springs, New Santa Fe, near Olathe, etc., and on the 10th and 16th of Aug. 1825, held a big talk, made a big treaty and smoked up a big pile of Uncle Sam's tobacco at Council Grove with the Osage and Kaw Indians, from which circumstances that celebrated locality derived its name. Col. Joseph C. Brown, of St. Louis county, who surveyed the western boundary of the State, was the surveyor of the road. It was of no benefit whatever, as no work was done upon it, except to throw up some large mounds of earth, and the travelers never paid any attention to it, but selected their own route as best suited them.

Conscious of my incompetency to do justice to the theme I will make no attempt to describe the grand, living, moving panorama that has been unfolding in this favored land during the past half century, before my eyes. It would require a volume of no small size, and a pen more skilled, and qualifications far greater than I possess, to delineate the varied and striking details and features, the wonderful changes,

THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS,

and the astounding, stupendous results, that are now manifest.

These changes are not confined to the physical aspect of the land, but include the entire economy of civilized life, of the husbandman, the artisan, the navigator, the thousand manufactories and industries of the land.

Many of our old citizens are still living, and will remember listening to a speech delivered in the old brick church in Westport, about the year 1845 by Senator Thomas H. Benton, who had accompanied his son-in-law, Col. Fremont, and Lieut. Beale thus far on one of their expeditions to the still farther west. He described minutely all the details and purposes of the expedition and proposed route of the party in search of the shortest practicable route across the continent for a great national highway or railroad to the Pacific coast. He tried to demonstrate its feasibility and the grand re-

sults that would flow from its construction, and almost startled his listeners by the assertion of his firm belief that many were then present who would live to see the fulfillment of his predictions. If a prophet had risen in that assembly and announced that in the year 1878 these predictions would not only be verified in full, but they were but far short of the grand results that would then exist, and that are now certain to be developed during the nineteenth century, I imagine that grand

FAR SEEING STATESMAN

would himself have been somewhat startled and incredulous.

His predictions are not only realized in full, but in addition thereto more stupendous results have followed, involving the interests of millions of the human race, reaching to the far eastern cradles of christianity by way of the West. I need only allude to these great established facts that are known and read of by all men, the only features I need attempt to delineate in the wonderful panorama of the past and unfolded up to the present time are the faint outlines that were visible in its incipient and earlier stages.

That man of Lewis & Clark's exploring party, who on the 15th of August, 1806 killed the elk in the center of the site of Kansas City, if he were now living and could be suddenly set down at the very point, would be dumfounded beyond measure at his surroundings, and we doubt not the astonished throng would be no less amazed with the apparition of that uncouth specimen of humanity, clothed in skins and without a thread of woven fabric on his person, who had lived nearly one whole year on dog meat. This would be only one of the thousand lights and shadows that go to illustrate our panorama, I have a vivid and lasting recollection of the

BEWILDERING ASTONISHMENT

when a boy as I first rode down the crowded main street of Cincinnati in 1825, that great city of thirteen thousand inhabitants. I was certain that some great catastrophe had just happened to call out such a great number of people, albeit not half as many as may be seen at any hour on any of the thoroughfares of our city. And, by the way, while speaking of the great Porkopolis, I may as well mention a fact that occurs to me that may serve to give coloring to my end of the panorama, I remember seeing the shingles taken off of some old buildings (built probably by John Cleves Symmes, with whose sons I went to school), to be replaced by new ones. Those old shingles had been fastened on with wooden pegs before cut nails made by machinery were invented- all nails previously used since the flood being made

by the slow process of hammering out by hand. As to the process used by Tubal Cain I wouldn't venture to say. Not long after Kansas City was laid off, I sold to A.B. Conville the entire block of ten lots (60 feet front, bounded by Fourth and Fifth- Wyandotte and Central streets, upon which is now situated the Lindell Hotel- and three acres of ground fronting on Broadway) for $300. It is agreat comfort to me now to know that my respected uncle at that time was about as green as I was- our hind-sights good, but our fore-sights- oh, well, I will drop the subject.

From the year 1808, when the government established a trading post at Fort Osage until 1825, when the portion of the county lying west of that place was thrown

OPEN TO WHITE SETTLERS,

the incidents and matters of historical interest pertaining to Jackson county, which are very many, all cluster within and around the reservation of six miles square around that post, Several chapters of much interest might be written about the events that transpired and the persons who figured during that period, but it would require more time and research than I can now give to the subject. I will now briefly mention only one incident that occurs to me, told to me by Mr. Bright, a missionary of the old Harmony mission, near Pappinsville, on the Osage river, which was established by the Presbyterian B. C. F. M, in 1823, and who witnessed the scene at the Fort:

ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION.

A year or two afterwards I saw in a large upper room of Bruen's foundry in Lexington, Kentucky, a diminutive model of a railroad car, large enough to bear the weight of one large man or two ladies exhibited to the astonished citizens of that wealthy, enlightened modern Athens. This car with four wheels and a plain square body with one seat was pulled around on iron rails fastened to the floor by a small cotton twine, the object of the exhibition being to convince the people of the feasibility and utility of railroads there being at that time none west of the Allegheny mountains. Many a wise-acre shook his head in unbelief, but enough of them were convinced of the importance of the invention to form a company to test its practicability. Professor Matthews of Transylvania university, was engaged to make a preliminary survey for a road from Lexington to Frankfort, twenty-four miles- his entire corps consisted of students, and I have a vivid remembrance of the jolly good time enjoyed by that band of amateur civil engineers, where the doors of every mansion on the route stood wide open for their entertainment. After many delays and discouragements the road was completed with flat iron rails fastened to blocks of hewn stone and started by mule power, no wooden ties being used. Railroad men can estimate the length of time it required to jolt the life out of the railroad stock and the breath