

## Bypaths of Kansas History

### THE GRASSHOPPER SONG

From the Junction City *Weekly Union*, July 27, 1867.

EDITORS MISSOURI DEMOCRAT:—I see by your issue of the 18th inst., that you give a line of plaintive melody, commencing "The grasshopper sat on a sweet potato vine," &c., and then stop short. Why do you not give the public the whole of the song? Why "hide your light under a bushel?"—The song goes thus by:

*Air*—Bowery Ghals.

A grasshopper sat on a sweet potato vine,  
On a sweet potato vine  
On a sweet potato vine.  
When an old turkey gobbler walk-ed up behind  
He walk-ed up behind  
He walk-ed up behind.  
And he *yanked* him off the *sweet* potato vine  
Off the sweet potato vine  
Off the sweet potato vine,  
And he yanked him off the sweet potato vine.

There are 355 verses, all alike except the first and last, and they are like the rest.

The song originated in this way: A grasshopper was calmly reposing on a sweet potato vine, one beautiful morning in June, meditating upon the beauties of the scene about him (it is supposed), in sublime unconsciousness of the melancholy fate awaiting him, when he was suddenly "yanked off" by an enormous turkey-gobbler (one of those tragical Kansas kusses,) and his days were ended.

A KANSAS RED LEG.

STATE LINE, July 19, '67.

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### EARLY ROME AND HAYS, ELLIS COUNTY

Extracts from a letter published in *The Weekly Free Press*, Atchison, November 2, 1867.

DODGE, Oct. 19, 1867.

EDITOR FREE PRESS:— . . .

As I promised . . . I will give now a brief description of New Town [Hays] and Rome, near Fort Hays, on the U. P. R. R., E. D.:

New Town is by far the most enterprising of the two. It promises to be the largest and most popular town on the line of the road. Its age now does not exceed six months, and it excels all the towns on the line from Salina to Fort Hays, for business enterprise, and everything which tends to make a place worthy of note. Houses go up as if by magic, and are tenanted almost as magically. The town is situated on a bluff, or rising ground, from which you can see the country for miles around. Fort Hays is plainly visible, with its tents of snowy canvas, which look, in the distance, almost as romantic as a

fairy land. Occasionally the eye is greeted by a herd of buffalo on the distant hills, which tends to make a visitor think himself indeed where game is plenty, and where nature has most graciously lavished her charms. The town is laid out into lots, which range from one to two hundred dollars each, in price.

Rome, on the contrary, is not such an enterprising place. It is rather going down hill. It is situated on the north side of Timber creek, which separates the two towns. It comprises about a dozen dilapidated houses, the majority of which are saloons, where the proprietors deal out liquid lightning in quantities almost too incredibly enormous to mention, to the railroad men, who seem to possess an affection for the article that can only be appeased by huge draughts, which they are not loth to indulge in. This place defies all competition for wickedness. Julesburg or Ellsworth is not a patch on it. There is not a day passes but what a murder or theft is committed; which does not speak well for the morality of the community. The first night I passed in it, I was called on to arrest a murderer by the name of McCarty, who shot one Murphy who was in bed sleeping.

Dr. Lull, of Salina, is the most enterprising and gentlemanly inhabitant of the place. He is the main stay. He is respected by all who have occasion to deal with him. If there were a few more such men as Dr. Lull in Rome, the condition of that place would soon be improved.

E. T.

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#### FUN IN THE LEGISLATURE

From the Lawrence *Daily Journal*, March 2, 1881.

The young people of Topeka held a ball in the senate chamber on Friday evening, Feb. 25th. The ball was a nice affair, and a large number of the members of the legislature were present. At the time, on the other side of the building the house was in session. But here we will let [Noble L.] Prentiss, in the Atchison *Champion*, describe the last recorded freak of the house:

"While senators were attending this scene of 'revelry by night,' and their soft eyes were looking love to some extent to eyes which spoke again, as it were, the house was in session and considering sidewalks in cities of the first class, and kindred subjects and other momentous questions. In course of time the house discovered that this was growing monotonous, and that several of its members were absent, indulging in the light fantastic toe, instead of employing their brains in the service of the state. The sergeant-at-arms was directed to bring in the absentees, and soon, with a ferocious air, advanced to the bar with Mr. [James F.] Keeney of Trego. The apparition of a gentleman in full evening dress, and with a bouquet in his button-hole, was as startling as if the Sultan of Turkey had advanced down the centre aisle to converse with Mr. [John] Schott. Mr. Keeney was put through a great variety of 'motions.' He was referred to all the committees; he was made the special order; his enacting clause was stricken out; he was laid on the table, and he was, greatly to his relief, finally discharged. Thus the wise virgins of the house kept their lamps trimmed and burning while the foolish senate maidens gave themselves away."