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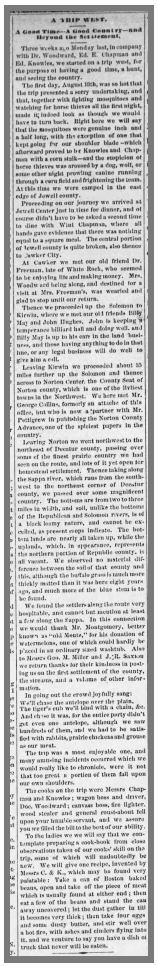

A TRIP WEST.

A Good Time—A Good Country—and Beyond the Settlement.

Three weeks ago Monday last, in company with Dr. Woodward, Ed. E. Chapman and Ed. Knowles, we started on a trip west, for the purpose of having a good time, a hunt, and seeing the country.

The first day, August 12th, was so hot that the trip presented a sorry undertaking, and that, together with fighting mosquitoes and watching for horse thieves all the first night, made it indeed look as though we would have to turn back. Right here we will say that the mosquitoes were genuine Indn and a half long, with the exception of one that kept going for our shoulder blade—which afterward proved to be Knowles and Chapman with a corn stalk—and the suspicion of horse thieves was aroused by a dog, wolf, or some other night prowling canine running through a corn field and frightening the team. At this time we were camped in the east edge of Jewell county.

Proceeding on our journey we arrived at Jewell Center just in time for dinner, and of course didn't have to be asked a second time to dine with Wint Chapman, where all hands gave evidence that there was nothing equal to a square meal. The central portion of Jewell county is quite broken, also thence to Jewell City.

At Cawker we met our old friend Dr. Freeman, late of White Rock, who seemed to be enjoying life and making money. Mrs. Waudle and lady along, and destined for a visit at Mrs. Freeman's. Was wearied and glad to stop until our return.

Thence we proceeded up the Solomon to Kirwin, where we met our old friends Billy May and John Hughes. John is keeping a temperance billiard hall and doing well, and Billy May is up to his ears in the land business, and those having anything to do in that line, or any legal business will do well to give him a call.

Leaving Kirwin we proceeded about 15 miles further up the Solomon and thence across to Norton Center, the County Seat of Norton county, which is one of the Prettiest towns in the Northwest. We here met Mr. George Collins, formerly an attache of this office, but who is now a partner with Mr. Pettigrew in publishing the Norton County Advance, one of the spiciest papers in the country.

Leaving Norton we went northwest to the northeast of Decatur county, passing over some of the finest prairie country we had seen on the route, and lots of it yet open for homestead settlement. Thence taking along the Sappa river, which runs from the southwest to the northeast corner of Decatur county, we passed over some magnificent country. The bottoms are from two to three miles in width, and rail, unlike the bottoms of the Republican and Solomon rivers, is of a black loamy nature, and cannot be excelled, as present crops indicate. The bottom lands are nearly all taken up, while the uplands, which, in appearance, represents the northern portion of Republic county, is all vacant. We observed no material difference between the soil of that county and this, although the buffalo grass is much more thickly matted than it was here eight years ago, and much more of the blue stem is to be found.

We found the settlers along the route very hospitable, and cannot but mention at least a few along the Sappa. In this connection we would thank Mr. Montgomery, better known as "old Nemo," for his donation of watermelons, one of which could hardly be placed in an ordinary sized washtub. Also to Messrs Gen. M. Miller and J. H. Sackett we return thanks for their kindness in posting us on the first settlement of the county, the streams, and a volume of other information.

In going out the crowd joyfully sang:

We'll chase the antelope over the plain,
The tiger's cub we'll bind with a chain, &c.

And chase it was, for the entire party didn't get even one antelope, although we saw hundreds of them, and we had to be satisfied with rabbits, prairie chickens and grouse as our meat.

The trip was a most enjoyable one, and many amusing incidents occurred which we would really like to chronicle, were it not that too great a portion of them fell upon our own shoulders.

The cooks on the trip were Messrs Chapman and Knowles; wagon boss and driver, Doc. Woodward; canvas boss, fire fighter, wood stealer and general roust-about fell upon your humble servant, and we assure you we filled the bill to the best of our ability.

To the ladies we we will say that we contemplate preparing a cook-book from close observations taken of our cooks' skill on the trip, some of which will undoubtedly be new. We will give one recipe, invented by Messrs C. & K., which may be found very palatable: Take a can of Boston baked beans, open and take off the piece of meat which is usually found at either end; then set a few of the beans and stand the can away uncovered; let the dust gather in till it becomes very thick; then take four eggs and some dusty butter, and stir well over a hot fire, with ashes and cinders flying into it, and we venture to say you have a dish of truck that never will be eaten.

1878-09-12 A Trip West, account of life in Jewell to Decatur Counties

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