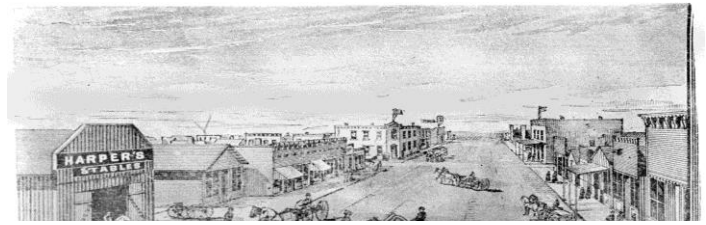


Ravanna, Finney County, Kansas 1887-1922

Bat Masterson Called in to Police "Indecent" Town

This is the story of Ravanna: its beginning, the rivalry that encompassed it and the end of the once prominent town. John Bull gets credit for the creation of what was to be known as Ravanna. Initially called Bulltown, the name changed to Cowland. Then it was changed again because the residents thought it sounded too "indecent." They finally settled on the name of Ravanna. The town was to be a new up and coming city of southwestern Kansas and it had the business to prove it. Ravanna in its heyday hosted a general store, cheese factory, bakery, livery barns, hotels, banks and a restaurant. So if a town has all of the amenities and businesses aforementioned, then shouldn't it be the political powerhouse for the area? The residents of Ravanna thought so and went about making their town the county seat.



An 1889 Lithograph of a busy Ravanna. Found at, www.kansasmemory.org

County seats drew people and people made towns grow. The officials of Ravanna knew this, and in the fall of 1887, an election was held to determine the location of the county seat for Garfield County, Ravanna or Eminence. The good folks of Eminence didn't trust Ravanna to hold the election honestly and hired renowned law man Bat Masterson and his deputies out of Dodge City to help keep the peace. Peace was kept: Ravanna came out over Eminence and was awarded the coveted prize. Yet, the story does not end there. It took a little less than two years, but the town of Eminence was able to wrest the political power from Ravanna, with the help from the Kansas Supreme Court, claiming Ravanna voters had stuffed the ballot boxes. Bat Masterson, what were you watching?

While it had the power, Ravanna had grown up to 700 people. Perhaps it was an embarrassment to the political leaders that their town no longer held power that lead to the next set of events. Still smarting over the loss, Ravanna officials called in a surveyor to recalibrate the landscape. It was found was that Garfield County was considered too small to be considered a standalone county, by two square miles. So it was annexed to Finney County. If Ravanna wasn't going to be in control, then no one was. As prairie towns go, Ravanna was never large, except for its two year period of political power; there had been anticipation of a railroad being laid down close to Ravanna but it never came to fruition. Finally the death knell was sounded with the closing of the post office in 1922 and Ravanna became a memory.



The Remains of Ravanna Kansas circa 1930. Found at <http://www.kansasmemory.org>

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