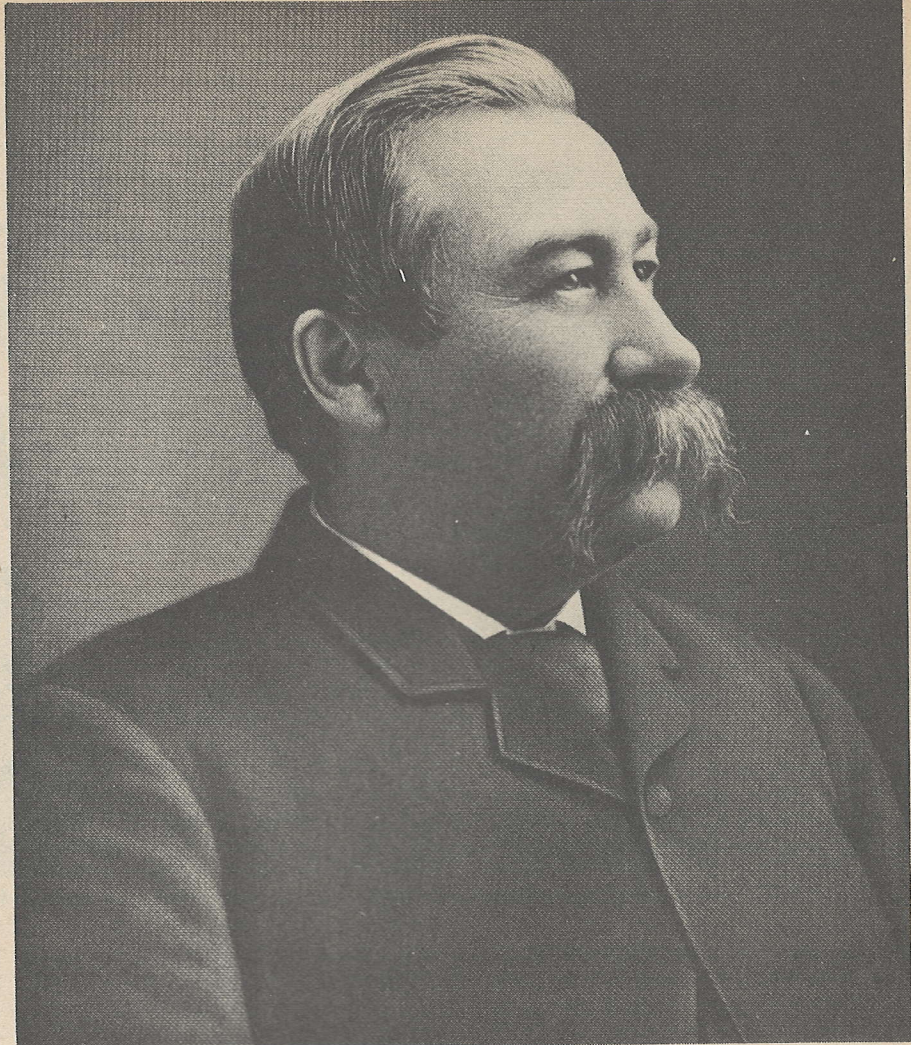


Steel derrick of type used to search for more oil for industry.

daro, Kansas. Quindaro, just south of Kansas City, where Jake's father intended to open a store and trading post.

Almost immediately after their arrival they found themselves falling pellmell into the middle border's struggle over the right or wrong of slavery. Although four years would pass before the Civil War officially erupted, Missouri and Kansas were already in the heat of a battle over abolition. Kansas Jayhawkers—men who believed in the free soil philosophy—were waging relentless war against Missouri slave holders. And the Missourians returned the fire with fury. No man to resist fighting for what he believed in, Joseph Bartles plunged head-first into the struggle. He established a hostelry—the Six Mile House—near Quindaro and there provided Jayhawkers refuge. Here, between raids, General Jim Lane's men came to rest up and receive medical attention.

Thus were some of the hardest and most ruthless of men guests in Jake Bartles' boyhood home. Every Saturday night they gathered around the whiskey barrel and boasted of their exploits. The tales they told fired the spirits for adventure



J.H. (Jake) Bartles; he liked to do things first—and did!

that seethed deep within both Jacob and Theodore. Both listened with wide eyes—and longed to join the battle-tested adventurers.

Theodore, three years Jake's senior, finally became bold enough to offer his services. Lane studied the youth critically—and then agreed to witness an exhibition of his marksmanship. If good enough with either six-gun or rifle, the Grim Liberator would take him on. Otherwise . . .

A few minutes later young Bartles gave a demonstration that very nearly knocked the Jayhawkers' eyes out. After placing a nickle against an oak tree, he walked off the distance of thirty paces. His audience expected him then to pick up a Winchester repeating rifle, but not Bartles. Instead he whirled, slapped his two Colt revolvers from his hips, and squeezed off two shots in rapid succession.

"Now," he said to Lane, "examine the coin."

Lane did, and found two evenly spaced holes bored through. He shook his head in disbelief, and then added Theodore Bartles' name to the roll of his irregular Red Leg Regiment.

(Many expert marksmen of today would consider this feat impossible. Yet

credible witnesses, including William Elsey Connelley, the late secretary of the Kansas Historical Society, many times over saw Theodore Bartles perform it. Theodore was without doubt the most adept of the many expert marksmen who fought with Jim Lane. He more than once bested Wild Bill Hickok, later to become a famous crack shot marshal, with both sixgun and rifle.)

Jake himself, a few days after the smoke cleared off Fort Sumter, enlisted in the Union Army. Serving as a captain in the Kansas 6th Cavalry, he took part in some of the stormiest battles of the Southwest campaign, which included the action at Big Blue, Lone Jack, Dragwood, Lincoln, West Point, Morrystown, Osceola, and Eutonia.

Shortly after the end of the war Jake Bartles pulled his buckboard wagon to a halt before Crystal Lake at the northeastern corner of the Cherokee Strip. His cargo included an Indian bride and supplies for opening a trading post. Only recently married to Nannie Journeycake, a princess of the Delaware tribe, he had been granted special permission to live and trade in the Indian Nations. He picked a prize location on the lake shore—