

he moved right over, house and all, and started a real estate office on Broadway, one block south of the Grand Pacific Hotel, which was Ike's and my house. Sam was a hustler if there ever was one, and he had n't been a citizen more than half an hour until he announced that Jupiter City could now support a saloon, and that he was going to see that the town got its deserts before he was a week older. And sure enough, Sam rode down to Butte, Nebr., and came back in less than a week with one of the most talented thirst does, you ever saw. In another week the Imperial Cafe was ready for business, and when we got her all cleaned up and painted a stylish blue with red stripes and a sign on the front as big as any I ever saw in Chicago, Ike and I almost burst with pride. We had a right to burst, too. Just two weeks before we had been setting in front of our dugout with nothing but a sunset and a deed to a bum section for company. And now we were the pioneers and leading citizens of as neat a little town as you could find in four days' ride, with a real estate office, hotel, laundry, only saloon in the county, and all modern conveniences. The only thing that marred our joy was the Thunder Creek fellows. You never saw such a sarcastic and superior bunch. They had to patronize our new saloon, but they were mighty nasty about it.

"NICE spot here," says Pel Gardner, "but you ought to plant a tree so 's people can find it."

"That's right," says Andy Samuelson, "my horse came near stepping on it."

"Say, do you take your town in nights?" asks Link Stevens, the mayor. "I had a town like this once when I was a boy, and dam if I did n't forget where I put it one night. You gotta be careful leaving things like this around."

"Want to double your population?" asks Len Edwards, the eating house man. "I got a couple of hunting dogs I'll sell you cheap."

Jealous as women they all was and we had a dozen fights that night. They had a right to be jealous, too, for Jupiter City kept a humping right along. The next week it got three more citizens. Sander Swanson, who made a specialty of waiting for the hunting season to open, took a lot on Broadway and put up a nice tent with a fly front, and Pete Smith, who had kind of soured on Butte, brought up a friend and a few decks of common cards, and 'lowed they'd stay with us until the town got too crowded for comfort. Counting in the cow, we had eleven citizens, and when things were going nice and friendly at night you could hear Jupiter City hum for half a mile. It was too big a town to run along all by itself, so we elected a mayor. We did it while Ike and Sam were off hunting, and me, being the oldest inhabitant and familiar with the town, I was chosen. Sam and Ike were pretty cool about it for a few days after they came back; but I appointed Sam city clerk, and Ike marshal, and they got over their mads after a while.

When Jupiter City was two months old and had fourteen bona fide citizens and was cramped like thunder for house-room, lumber being spot cash in those regions, Ike happened over to Ozone City, twenty miles west, one day, and discovered a rich deposit of empty houses. Ozone City had been founded by a lot of scientists who had figured out just where the new railroad was going, and had calculated on getting right in the middle of the right of way, where it would have to collide with a number of \$1,000 city lots. They missed their guess about ten miles and the population dried up and blew away between seasons. But the houses was left. There was about twenty-five of them, in tolerable condition, including a postoffice, a store building, and a livery barn big enough for four thin horses and a buckboard, and not a soul about to claim them.

When Ike brought the news back, we gave a loud yell of pleasure and went after those houses. It was a stiff two weeks' work, but when it was done, Jupiter City was so big we had to get off a quarter of a mile to do her justice looking at her. She had thirty houses, tastefully arranged, and when we began to offer a house and lot to each new citizen, the rush began. Inside of a week, we had taken four people away from Thunder Creek and the next week one of the stores came over with Sim Atwell, the proprietor, setting on the porch driving the team and selling goods with one hand before he'd even yelled "whoa" inside the city limits. We gave him a lot in the financial district across from the saloon, and there was n't a citizen who did n't go on his books the first day. He was one of us and we meant to stand by him till death. Ike and me near killed ourselves eating ham that next week. It was such a relief to step across the street and buy it of a friend who had faith

to sit around and think, and think, and count noses, and cuss softly and jubilant. Thunder Creek was the county seat because she'd grew up in the county first. But what was to prevent Jupiter City from rising up and taking said court house away from her? Nothing but a darned small majority, and what was a majority to a band of loyal, determined patriots?

That was where affairs began to get full of dynamite. There aint nothing in those parts that will stir men's souls like a county seat fight. Men out there will get along like brothers, beating each other up a little now and then over little disagreements regarding card deals and land titles; but when a county seat comes up for debate, there aint enough peace left to fit out a funeral. Men get excited in a court house campaign, and do things that would be considered off-color in love or war, or even in national politics, and after a couple of towns have discussed the moving of the court house, pro and con and tooth and nail for a year or two, you can tell one of these arguments a long ways off by the thick cloud of dust, seasoned with teeth.

JUPITER CITY needed a county seat the worst way. People were a streaming in right along, and when they found that all the city offices had been gobbled up, they acted as grieved and nasty about it as if we'd done it on purpose. The county seat would give us plenty of offices for every one, and besides, it would boom the town, and Thunder Creek would have to help pay the bills. So Sam Linthiens, who knew more about law than any of us, he having had experience with it both ways, rode over to the railroad and went to Yankton, where he borrowed a book of the Statutes of South Dakota and a lawyer who was n't doing much any way, and brought them both back to help in the campaign. Horatio P. Simms, the lawyer's name was, and he certainly entered into the life of our beautiful little city with zest. It was five days before he was able to focus his mind on the court house question, and even then he was pretty nervous. But he was a good lawyer, and inside of two weeks he had got a petition signed up to locate the county seat at Jupiter City. He took it over to Thunder Creek and filed it, but the county clerk lost it. He said it beat all how he did it, but he kept his county papers in his pants pocket with his chewing tobacco, and accidents would happen. Took us another week to get up another petition, and we all went over this time to help file it. We filed it all right, but some of us did n't get well for



Organized government teetered on her hocks for a minute; but order finally prevailed

in Jupiter City and her pair of onselfish founders.

After the store came over, the real ill-feeling between our town and Thunder Creek began. They had n't paid much attention to us before, except to josh us about the difficulty of noticing our town as they passed through, but when Jupiter City bloomed out with thirty houses and one hundred and fifty people, according to the most reliable census figures we was able to announce, the Thunder Creekers woke up and began to treat us as a real rival. They humped themselves and started a saloon with real mirrors back of the bar. That did n't bother us any. We voted to pave Broadway as soon as we could afford to, and you should have seen the scornful looks we gave the old dirt trail they used for a business street. They laid out a boulevard four miles long over through the prairie, with lath sign posts to show where it was. We divided our town into two wards, started a public library with the Sioux City Journal and a set of books Sam Linthiens had, and inveigled Frank Allen of Butte to drive over to Jupiter City in the only automobile in those parts and get arrested by our new speed ordinance.

THAT last was a stroke of genius and it made Thunder Creek so mad that she raised one hundred dollars actual money and built a court house. And as soon as she did it, we Jupiter City men began

several days. I don't say there was any violence; but in a county seat fight, when both sides get into the same town, there's bound to be more or less shoving around.

We argued and threatened for a week or two more, and finally Thunder Creek give in and called a special election. They were willing to settle the thing fair any way, they said, having the most votes. So they called an election and divided the county into two precincts, one in Thunder Creek and one in Jupiter City. It came off the next month, and was wonderful close—really remarkable. There must have been some kind of mind-reading connected with it. We polled 4,532 votes, and Thunder Creek polled 4,601. We'd have polled more but we were careless and run clean out of paper about four o'clock in the afternoon.

As soon as the vote was announced Judge Simms raised an awful cry of fraud. He'd scented it all along, he claimed. Both towns were equally guilty. He'd pled with his own fellow citizens to respect the sanctity of the ballot, he declared, and he rose to protest against their actions. He yelled and pawed around and threatened to take the case to the State Supreme Court, and finally the Thunder Creek fellows gave in, mad as all get out, and called another election. They would put the ballot box squarely

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