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Article Summary: Rosa Hudspeth (1864-1911) was a newspaper writer and reporter and then an editor of the *Stuart Ledger* [Nebraska] from 1901-1907. Her brief career at the *Ledger* is illustrative of the difficulties women faced in managing small businesses and dealing with employees, the public, and local politicians.

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Photographs / Images: Line drawing of Rosa Hudspeth from Omaha-World Herald, February 20, 1907; Early view of Stuart, Holt County; Dennis H Cronin; Barrett Scott; Railroad Depot in Atkinson, Holt County, about 1914

# Rosa Hudspeth and the *Stuart Ledger* 1901-1907

By Patricia C. Gaster

Rosa Hudspeth experienced during her short lifetime (1864-1911) many aspects of turn-of-the-century midwestern journalism, first as a newspaper writer and reporter in the 1890s, and then as editor of the *Stuart (Nebraska) Ledger* from 1901 to 1907. Hudspeth was also the author of several novels as well as short pieces written for magazines and newspapers. Her brief career on the *Ledger* is particularly illustrative of the difficulties women faced not only in entering new occupations, but in managing small businesses and dealing with employees, the public, and local politicians.

Born in 1864 in Fulton County, Illinois, Rosa Hudspeth by 1888 had relocated with her family to Iowa and then to Newport, Holt County, Nebraska, on the eastern edge of the Sand Hills. Newport, which then derived most of its income from shipping hay, probably offered only limited employment for a single woman. Frontier conditions, drought, and economic depression further discouraged local job seekers. In 1889 at the age of twenty-five, Hudspeth returned to Iowa to pursue a career in journalism.<sup>1</sup>

Rosa's early career included a stint on the *Des Moines Capital* under Lafayette Young, later U.S. senator from Iowa. She was also during this period the author of a novel and some short magazine pieces. Her greatest success prior to 1900 was undoubtedly her first novel, *The Juggernaut of the Moderns*, published in 1896. A subsequent novel,



Line drawing of Rosa Hudspeth from *Omaha World-Herald*, February 20, 1907.

In *the Market Places, A Few Chapters Concerning Carolyn Anselm's Journalistic Career*, which she had published in Omaha in 1900, was less well received. Both reflect Hudspeth's struggle to earn her own living and make her own way in the world through writing and newspaper work.<sup>2</sup>

In *Juggernaut*, the protagonist, Catherine Huntley, during the late 1880s obtains an office job in the fictional town of Buffalo City, Dakota, with a firm of attorneys. An example of the new woman supposedly able to earn her own living and make her own way, Huntley overcomes masculine objections to the sight of a woman's face behind a typewriter only to fall in love with her married employer. After prom-

ising to leave town with her, he abandons Huntley and returns to his wife. Although heavy-handed and didactic by modern standards, it illustrated the difficult choices faced by women who did not have the financial support of a husband or a wealthy family. A contemporary review described it as "no fancy novel; it is reality; and the author has been so busily and desperately at work scraping off the paint of conventionality and hypocrisy that society appears quite shocking."<sup>3</sup>

In a subsequent novel, *Market Places*, young working women of the 1890s are snubbed and exploited while living in a "Christian Home for Self-Supporting Women," administered as a charitable project by society matrons. The protagonist, Carolyn Anselm, finds that her meager newspaper writing salary of four dollars per week forces her to live at the home. Anselm describes the substandard food and furnishings as well as her demoralized fellow boarders and reports the hopelessness of

those women who have no settled income or permanent employment, no home and friends, and who drift from place to place . . . waiting to be caught in the market and sold for what their good looks will bring.<sup>4</sup>

*Market Places* included the same pointed criticisms of social class distinctions, especially among women, but lacked the tighter and more skillfully crafted plot of *Juggernaut*.

By the spring of 1897 Hudspeth was back in Holt County teaching school in Harrison Precinct. Throughout her life, school teaching provided a suitably middle-class occupation and some income whenever more challenging work

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was unavailable. She returned to Des Moines for a brief visit after the close of the school term in May of 1898, and taught in the Spragg area north of Newport that fall. In September 1899 she took over the primary department of the Newport school. During these teaching years, she must have continued writing; *Market Places* was published in Omaha in 1900.<sup>5</sup>

Hudspeth may have been contemplating a permanent move to Omaha in the summer of 1900. Mary Fairbrother, editor of the pro-suffrage *Woman's Weekly* of Omaha, noted in July that Hudspeth had come to Omaha to live and announced the publication of *Market Places* as her third book. (The missing book may be *Old Man Deems*, listed in *Market Places* as a previous work by the same author.)

Fairbrother's front-page review in the September 8, 1900, issue of the *Weekly* was not entirely favorable: She clearly wished to encourage Hudspeth and praise her effort but disapproved of the

author's critical view of club women, who were portrayed as "seeking cheap notoriety and position and [criticized] for a vanity which makes them gloat over the impossible gulf which is fixed between the millionaire's wife and his stenographer." Fairbrother in fact dedicated her own 1901 book, *People and Perplexities*, to members of her Department of English Literature of the Omaha Woman's Club.<sup>6</sup>

Hudspeth did not settle in Omaha. *Market Places* had not been as successful as her first book and probably yielded less income than she had hoped.<sup>7</sup> She decided to stay in Holt County, and in May of 1901 leased the struggling *Stuart Ledger* from Roswell A. Haskin, intending to edit the paper herself.

The *Ledger*, established in 1883, was in serious financial difficulty, which had recently caused a rapid change of owners and editors. On December 10, 1898, proprietor and editor Fred E. Whitney (who had assumed his duties with the

*Ledger* in June of that year) wrote frankly that the paper did not pay expenses. There was a brief suspension in publication between Whitney's subsequent departure and the resurrection of the *Ledger* by A. M. Church in March of 1899. Church, who left the paper the next year, was succeeded by A. H. Backhaus and then by Haskin, each of whom guided the *Ledger* for less than six months.<sup>8</sup>

Early in 1901 Rosa left teaching, reportedly because of ill health. After she leased the paper from Haskin in May, she tried to calm local suspicion of her change of occupation from teacher to editor by early informing *Ledger* readers: "A woman can edit a newspaper without being a freak. Running a newspaper is teaching a public school on a large scale." Hudspeth identified herself to *Ledger* readers as a "western woman whose home is in Nebraska, who likes the western people and who does not intend to get a few dollars out of the



Early view of Stuart, Holt County. NSHS-H578:7-5

## Rosa Hudspeth

paper and make a hasty exit to the east."<sup>9</sup> She maintained its Republican political orientation, sharing local readership with the Populist *Stuart Herald*, founded shortly before.

Republican Dennis H. Cronin, editor of *The Frontier* at O'Neill and president of the Nebraska Press Association in 1901, noted that Hudspeth was the only woman editor in Holt County and recalled her career in Iowa, remarking, "For the first time in many months the *Ledger* has a readable editorial page and as the new management is a newspaper woman of experience, *Ledger* readers may look for a good paper."<sup>10</sup>

The move must have seemed to Rosa Hudspeth a real opportunity to leave teaching and return to journalism and writing on her own terms. However, she had probably never before been responsible for the overall operation of a newspaper. She did most of the news gathering and writing herself, relying on correspondents to send news items from surrounding rural areas. Hudspeth tried to hire men to take care of the mechanical and heavy work around the newspaper office. Fortunately, she had several nearby male relatives who assisted her in the beginning operation of the *Ledger*: a father and several brothers with newspaper experience. Family support was as important to the initial success of Hudspeth's venture as paid employees.

Since their earliest days in Newport, the Hudspeths had been involved in the newspaper field, chiefly to support their other financial interests. This was a pattern common on the frontier, where a land agent or real estate developer might see a newspaper as an ideal vehicle for advertising and promoting his business. Royal Hudspeth, Rosa's father, had founded the *Newport Advocate* in 1886 and edited the early Rock County paper while working as a land locator, an activity he had earlier carried on in western Iowa. It may have been with his help that she later acquired two quarter sections of land near Dustin in northwest Holt County.<sup>11</sup> A brother, Willis, had an extensive career in Nebraska journalism—

work on the *Advocate*, in Omaha on several labor papers, and on the *Nebraska State Journal*—before relocating in Los Angeles.<sup>12</sup> At least one other brother, Winfred, helped Hudspeth with typesetting duties and other newspaper chores during her career with the *Ledger* in Stuart and later in Atkinson.



Dennis H. Cronin. NSHS-L514-537

One of the most vexing and embarrassing difficulties affecting the new editor was the *Ledger's* poor typography. Hudspeth had no experience in setting type, running a press, or managing the mechanical aspects of getting out a newspaper. She delayed running the traditional "Salutatory" greeting readers until the second issue of May 17, 1901, because she was ashamed of the appearance of the first issue on May 10. She further announced in the second issue that she had hired T. R. Geddis, an experienced printer and newspaperman, formerly of the *Bassett Eagle*, to take charge of the typesetting and printing. Geddis must not have remained long with the *Ledger*, for the poor appearance of the newspaper was an ongoing problem. In November of 1902 Hudspeth was still without the aid of a

male printer, having just fired a Council Bluffs native whose personal life did not meet her standards.<sup>13</sup>

A campaign to "clean up" was soon underway at the new *Ledger*. The newspaper office received new doors, wallpaper, and paint, and a new sign was put up when Hudspeth assumed control of the paper. She heightened this early feminine impression by assuring readers, "Everybody knows how a newspaper should be run. Don't be sparing of recipes." Editor Cronin of O'Neill scoffed at Hudspeth's removal of backyard debris and tin cans into the Sand Hills and surmised that moral crusades were brewing in the *Ledger* offices. His suspicions were correct. Hudspeth criticized local men for unnecessary staring and unwanted attention to women on Stuart streets. She opposed gambling and urged traveling theatrical groups to clean up their acts.<sup>14</sup>

Hudspeth realized that local news was important to local readers and featured these items (along with local advertising) on the *Ledger's* front page. However, she also believed many outside Stuart and Holt County would read well-written editorials, and soon initiated a regular editorial column entitled "Notes From the Mouth Organ." Its widely quoted humor entertained readers around the state. The monthly trade publications *Western Publisher* and *The Printers Auxiliary* commented on Hudspeth's editorial topics and reported her other interests and activities. Even the crustiest of her editorial opponents, A. M. Church, acknowledged the "sly digs" from the "Mouth Organist," who made sure that any compliments paid her or the *Ledger* appeared in another editorial column, "From Other Pens." Several pages of preprinted material filled out each issue.<sup>15</sup>

Church, a former editor of the *Ledger*, may have been envious of Hudspeth's initial success in Stuart. That he resented women in the newspaper field is clear from his 1899 *Ledger* article on the woman editor of the *Fairfax* (South Dakota) *Review* (who had reportedly

“roasted” the town of Stuart in the *Review*). As late as 1902 and early 1903, Church and two other area newspapermen were engaging in wordy editorial battles with Hudspeth, apparently trying to determine the keenest wit and to attract new readers. The *Holt County Independent* of O’Neill judged Rosa Hudspeth the winner in the unequal contest and noted that “as a sharpshooter Miss Hudspeth is winning laurels.” When Church left Atkinson in 1904 and dropped out of sight for several months, Rosa took the opportunity to vent her anger at him in the columns of the *Ledger*.<sup>16</sup>

A noted feature of Hudspeth’s editorial observations concerned the overabundance of bachelors which (she claimed) inhabited the village of Stuart. The May 10, 1901, edition of the *Ledger*, the first to appear with Hudspeth’s name, carried her observation that Stuart had more wealthy bachelors than any town of comparable size in the state. Hudspeth considered bachelors to be antisocial creatures who refused to assume their natural masculine roles as husbands, thus robbing women of the opportunity to fulfill themselves as wives, mothers, and society leaders. Her early editorial in the *Stuart Ledger*, July 5, 1901, denounced “men who . . . refuse to offer their name and home to women who would gladly lay down their pen or the scalpel” in an attempt to earn their own livings; and proposed the taxing of Nebraska bachelors to encourage more men to marry.<sup>17</sup>

Hudspeth’s antibachelor campaign was not the only service she rendered women readers of the *Ledger*. She reprinted news of other women journalists such as Mary Fairbrother, editor of *The Woman’s Weekly* of Omaha. During what has been called the “doldrum years” of woman suffrage in Nebraska, she repeatedly criticized *Nebraska State Journal* columnist A. L. “Doc” Bixby, for his opposition to woman suffrage and gave extensive editorial attention to a November 1901 debate at Lincoln between Bixby and suffragist Laura A. Gregg of Omaha (who later lectured in

Stuart).<sup>18</sup> Hudspeth strongly favored more education (with fewer distractions) for girls and noted:

Girls in school have no more business with fellows than they have with armed escorts. No brain is big enough to hold books and boys at the same time. Mathematics and the science of Cupid never did go well together.<sup>19</sup>

She believed that women belonged in any occupation or profession in which they could compete, remarking, “Operating a job press is no harder on a woman than running a washing machine.” She used the columns of the *Ledger* to boost local women like Agnes Henderson, briefly editor and manager of the *Naper News*, who she felt was a positive example of what a determined woman could accomplish in business.<sup>20</sup> But she also warned young women (as she had in *Juggernaut of the Moderns*) that paid office employment in the wrong environment could make them vulnerable to improper advances from male supervisors.<sup>21</sup>

Like other contemporary newspaper editors, Hudspeth supported the *Ledger* with other activities. She sold paperbound copies of *Juggernaut* from the *Ledger* office for twenty-five cents each (one-half their original cost), offering one free with each paid *Ledger* subscription, until she withdrew both *Juggernaut* and *Market Places* from the market in March 1902 in a fit of despondency. By 1905 she was sponsoring a line of millinery in the local Smith Brothers Store, operated by her sister Cornelia’s husband, Milton E. Smith, and his brother.<sup>22</sup> Assisting her extended family occasionally diverted her energies from the *Ledger*.

The Kirkwood news and other items do not appear this week, because the editor is doing all the labor around the office, house, etc. which includes building fires, cooking, reporting, writing, attending to business, and taking care of Theodore Roosevelt Jr. [probably a child relative], who is prospering. If some of the worthless yahoos pretending to work on this paper, would take as many steps in a day, they would be suing the paper for damage and perhaps pasting plasters on their lazy backs.<sup>23</sup>

Hudspeth’s physical appearance and qualifications for marriage were a popular editorial subject in surrounding communities. The *Springview Herald* of November 27, 1901, called Hudspeth “one of the sweetest little ‘devils’ along the Elkhorn.” Editor A. M. Church, in his announcement of Hudspeth’s lease of the *Ledger*, expressed his hope that bachelor Lee Henry of the *Atkinson Plain Dealer* would woo the new editor in Stuart. (Henry married someone else that fall.) Rosa responded by treating the matter as a joke:

The editor of the Gregory county [South Dakota] News refers to the editor of this paper as pert, eccentric, young and Rosa lipped. An editor in the west of the state guesses the manager to be about sixty, judging from her writings. Another quill man says she possess an unusual amount of common sense. [A. M.] Church, who lives next door to the east [Atkinson], says the editor is so decrepit and mannish that all men, even from a rear view, start running the other way. . . . Happily all men do not see alike.<sup>24</sup>

Hudspeth’s answer to a reporter’s questions on her private life at the 1907 Nebraska Press Association convention revealed that she was considered a good matrimonial catch:

What? Disappointed in love? Now run along and sell your papers. I also want to deny that report that I came to Omaha to find a nice young man to help manage my paper and two quarter sections at Stuart.<sup>25</sup>

This NPA convention, held February 19–20, 1907, in Omaha, was undoubtedly the highlight of Hudspeth’s Nebraska career. By the opening of the first session in Creighton Hall, 135 had registered. Line drawings of her and of well-known male editors appeared in the February 20, 1907, morning issue of the *World-Herald*, which noted her recent achievements and a paper entitled “A Woman Editor’s Experience” that she was scheduled to deliver that afternoon. Hudspeth was one of only two women to appear on the convention program. (The other, Mrs. Isabel Richey of *The Twentieth Century Farmer*, read her annual poem.) However, both newspaper reports and NPA session proceedings in-

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dicating that Hudspeth's paper was delivered by Annie Vio Gates, then associate editor of the *Auburn Granger*.<sup>26</sup> No explanation was given for the last-minute switch, but it does not seem to have diminished Hudspeth's popularity. The *Bee* called her "one of the brightest lights at the meetings."<sup>27</sup>

The speech treated humorously the difficulties of a woman newspaper editor in small-town Nebraska—especially the problems of finding and managing competent employees; of relating socially to townspeople in a role unusual for a woman; of dealing with political bosses and issues; and working with editors on surrounding papers.

Of all problems, Hudspeth considered hiring and keeping competent printing help to be the most troublesome. Her masculine printers included an opium addict, several drunkards, a would-be suitor, and a failed actor; she tried a woman printer but found that unattached males in Stuart clustered around the newspaper office. Finally, Hudspeth became desperate and mastered enough typesetting to be able to manage without the help of a printer.<sup>28</sup>

Hudspeth also addressed another problem confronting the woman editor: Can she manage a business successfully and at the same time participate in the social life of her community? She believed the answer to be no. Hudspeth's efforts to circulate among the middle class women of Stuart were largely unsuccessful; she recalled being ejected from one women's social club because a *Ledger* article had offended its members, who then tried to organize a boycott of the newspaper.

Hudspeth confessed that she was disturbed by the reaction of some neighboring male editors to her and to her work on the *Ledger*:

Some were not satisfied to attribute the lowest motives. They spoke of the lady editor in the most vicious terms. One man said: "That female amazon who pushes the quill on the *Ledger* is said to be as ugly and ungainly as her writings are vicious and demoralizing. They say she weighs two hundred pounds and looks



Barrett Scott. NSHS-P853-4925

like the side of a house turned edgewise when she is walking."<sup>29</sup>

The entire text of "A Woman Editor's Experience" was published in the *Western Publisher*; excerpts appeared in Nebraska newspapers, including the *Bee*.<sup>30</sup> Although written to amuse, it reflects Hudspeth's almost painful efforts to blend with her social, occupational, and political surroundings. She did not move easily in small-town social circles in which a single, professional woman was rare, and finally gave up the attempt. Surrounding newspapermen (with the exception of family members and perhaps Dennis Cronin) tended to be distant, if not actively opposed. And Hudspeth was never strong enough politically to claim the Republican support to which she, as the editor of a Republican paper, was entitled.

Hudspeth edited the *Ledger* in Stuart until the end of March 1907. Barely a month after her heady experiences at the NPA convention in Omaha, she moved the newspaper to Atkinson, pub-

lishing from there with Winfred's help.<sup>31</sup> It seems certain that a chief cause of her departure from Stuart was political. A rival Republican newspaper had been established there in March of 1906 by the same Roswell A. Haskin who had preceded Hudspeth on the *Ledger* in early 1901.<sup>32</sup> The first issue of his *Stuart Advocate* was impressive: It boasted a magazine-style format with cover and a liberal amount of advertising.

*Ledger* files in Nebraska State Historical Society collections are missing after March 1903; and Hudspeth's editorial reaction to Haskin and the *Advocate* cannot be ascertained. However, a surprising development a few months later in the summer of 1906 was clearly related: Hudspeth and the *Ledger* left the Republican Party. Dennis Cronin's November 15, 1906, editorial in *The Frontier* refers cryptically to "letters still in existence which if published would explain why the *Ledger* editor dropped a pretended support of Republicans. Republicans refused to be worked by a female grafter."<sup>33</sup>

The nature of the "graft" charge (at least partly politically motivated) and the situation which caused Hudspeth to openly split with the Republicans were unclear. However, as early as October 1901 there were indications that she was out of step with local party leaders and that fallout from the Barrett Scott embezzlement case and murder six years before still pervaded local politics. Scott, a former Holt County treasurer accused of loaning public money to Republican friends, was kidnapped by vigilantes near O'Neill on New Year's Day in 1895. After an intensive search his body was found almost three weeks later in the Niobrara River with a rope around the neck. The sensational nature of the crime prompted newspapers around the country to focus attention on Holt County, Nebraska.<sup>34</sup>

After Hudspeth tried to defend Republicans accused of complicity in Scott's financial default, she was advised by the Populist *Stuart Herald* never to print such defenses without consulting higher-ups in her own party, who

may have been involved.<sup>35</sup> The *Herald* lambasted not only Scott and his suspected Republican accomplices, but Rosa and the *Ledger*, charging that the paper's original founder, J. W. Wertz, had used Holt County public funds borrowed through Scott to support the *Ledger*. However, Wertz a week later denied in a letter to the *Ledger* that he had ever used any public money to support it; Hudspeth's accompanying article, entitled "Populist Spiders Caught in Their Own Web," indicated that at that time she still supported Wertz and other local Republicans.<sup>36</sup>

However, in her speech read at the 1907 convention, Hudspeth herself attributed her political change to principle:

I got tired of complimenting office seekers . . . So I determined to change my policy and criticise every man who came up for office, in or out of my party. I publicly stated that only a good and moral man would henceforth get the support of the Stuart Ledger. I dropped party lines and put everything upon the basis of right and wrong.<sup>37</sup>

She hoped for greater support from the Populists; their former newspaper in Stuart, the *Herald*, was by then defunct. But the fortunes of the *Ledger* instead

declined. Cronin dryly observed in *The Frontier* that Hudspeth's departure from the Republican Party was not welcomed by fusionists. Hudspeth herself complained in the 1907 speech, "The politicians combined to starve the paper that would dare to express an opinion without consulting the powers that be." When Hudspeth suddenly left Stuart in the spring of 1907, it was in some haste and disarray. Merchant William Krotter successfully sued her for violating a lease on his Stuart building which had housed her newspaper offices and printing plant.<sup>38</sup>



Railroad Depot in Atkinson, Holt County, about 1914. NSHS-H758:1-2

## Rosa Hudspeth

The *Ledger's* fate was not unusual when small-town political and newspaper interests collided. Larry Cebula has noted that "Western journalists were more often pawns than players in the politics of their communities," a characterization which aptly describes the circumstances of Hudspeth's departure from the Republican Party and from Stuart.<sup>39</sup>

Cronin initially disapproved of Hudspeth's move to Atkinson. However, after she had done so, *The Frontier* commended the general appearance of the *Ledger*: "If the standard set by the initial number [in Atkinson] is kept up, the *Ledger* will be right in the forefront. It shows what the editor can do when she wants to." However, the remark indicated that Cronin was unaware of many of the difficulties under which Hudspeth had labored on the *Ledger*. His own combination of editorial and political activity gave him a distinguished career: four terms in the Nebraska House of Representatives (1911, 1913, 1915, 1917) and two in the Nebraska Senate (1919, 1921). He also served in the Unicameral in 1945 and during the special session of 1946.<sup>40</sup> He can scarcely be faulted for not understanding those in less favorable circumstances.

Hudspeth's failing health after 1907 prevented any further achievements in the literary or newspaper field. She also had continuing financial problems. *The Frontier* noted in August of 1907 that Hudspeth and the *Atkinson Ledger* were being "ignored in the distribution of [political] pap." Although the *Ledger* was still operating in September, only Winfred was noted by Cronin as being associated with the paper.<sup>41</sup> By late 1907 Hudspeth had taken up "kinkaiding" near Dustin, probably taking advantage of the seclusion and leisure to write rather than to engage in much physical labor. (An obituary mentions that at the time of her death she was revising her first novel, *Juggernaut*, and composing a new one.) Rescued from this lonely, exhausting life in January 1908 by sister Cornelia and her husband, she spent some months at

their home in Newport trying to recuperate and then visited relatives in Omaha and Council Bluffs. Hudspeth had no choice but to live the life of the single dependent woman she once satirized in the columns of the *Ledger* as sitting "at some relative's board, sniveling over a broken heart or making mischief."<sup>42</sup>

By 1909 she was back in the Sand Hills, taking teachers' examinations at Bassett in one more try at independence.<sup>43</sup> Sometime in 1910 or early 1911 she entered the final phase of a long bout with cancer. Cornelia and her family, now relocated in Lincoln, cared for her during the last weeks of her life. She died in Lincoln at the age of forty-six on February 26, 1911, and was buried there in Wyuka Cemetery.<sup>44</sup>

At the time of Hudspeth's death some dissension may have existed in her family. Three sisters and five brothers survived her but only one brother (Willis) and her parents, then living in Council Bluffs, attended her funeral at Cornelia's home in Lincoln. *The Frontier* reported on March 9, 1911, that Rosa had left her entire estate to a sister living at Bassett.<sup>45</sup>

Hudspeth's dilemma was that of many of her contemporaries: What should a woman do "if she is not attractive enough to beguile some man into proposing to her"? Her denunciation of bachelors during her days on the *Stuart Ledger* (which paralleled the onset of middle age and the declining likelihood of marriage) indicates that she would have exchanged at least the second phase of her career for marriage if the opportunity had been available. "No true woman," Hudspeth once editorialized, "from choice will go out into the world and battle for a mere career." Her ideal was Denver newspaperwoman Minnie J. Reynolds, a former country schoolteacher, who by 1901, when Hudspeth began with the *Ledger*, had her own house and was offering to share it with a suitable man.<sup>46</sup>

The broader world was attractive enough for Hudspeth to pursue a demanding and somewhat unconven-

tional career while she waited for a marriage that did not materialize. Her ego was not small, as indicated by her reprint of an article from the *Holt County Independent* in her own newspaper referring to herself as a shrewd businesswoman, a "novelist of more than ordinary merit," and the "queen of Holt County journalism." Dennis Cronin of *The Frontier* agreed, eulogizing her upon her death in 1911 as "one of the most vigorous and entertaining writers that was ever in the county."<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately, she did not have the health, financial support, or political connections to make a long-term success of the *Stuart Ledger*.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Stuart Advocate*, Mar. 2, 1911; A. Bower Sageser, "Attempted Economic Adjustments in Holt County During the 1890's," *Nebraska History* 40 (June 1959): 105-7.

<sup>2</sup> Rosa Hudspeth, *Juggernaut of the Moderns* (Boston: Arena Company, 1896); *In the Market Places: A Few Chapters Concerning Carolyn Anselm's Journalistic Career* (Omaha: Douglas Printing Company, 1900), microfilmed copies at Parson Library, NIU, De Kalb, Illinois, and at Arizona State University Libraries, Tempe, 489-90; *Inventory of the County Archives of Iowa, No. 77 Polk County* (Des Moines: WPA 1942), 27.

<sup>3</sup> Edah Corvius, review of *The Juggernaut of the Moderns*, in *Arena*, 16 (Sept. 1896): 192.

<sup>4</sup> Hudspeth, *Market Places*, 14-15.

<sup>5</sup> *Stuart Advocate*, Mar. 2, 1911; *Newport Republican*, May 14, 1897; May 6, June 17, July 22, 1898; Aug. 25, 1899; *Stuart Ledger*, Apr. 14, 1899; Aug. 10, 1900.

<sup>6</sup> *Woman's Weekly* (Omaha), July 28, Sept. 8, 1900; Mary Fairbrother, *People and Perplexities* (Omaha: Omaha Engraving Co., 1901).

<sup>7</sup> *Stuart Ledger*, Apr. 14, 1899; *Newport Republican*, July 20, 1900; *Woman's Weekly*, July 28, 1900. Alice Marple in *Iowa Authors and Their Works* (Des Moines: Historical Department of Iowa, 1918) listed *Juggernaut* as Hudspeth's only novel.

<sup>8</sup> "Think It Over," *Stuart Ledger*, Dec. 10, 1898; Mar. 24, 1899; Nebraska Newspaper Inventories, Nebraska State Historical Society Library/Archives, Lincoln.

<sup>9</sup> *Newport Republican*, Mar. 8, 1901; *Stuart Ledger*, May 17, 1901.

<sup>10</sup> *The Frontier* (O'Neill), May 16, 1901; Henry A. Brainerd, *History of the Nebraska Press Association* (Lincoln: 1923), 46.



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<sup>11</sup> *The Frontier*, Jan. 16, 1903; *Newport Republican*, Apr. 19, 1901; *Compendium of History, Reminiscence, and Biography of Western Nebraska* (Chicago: Alden Publishing Company, 1909), 518–19; Cheryl Cox Bennion, *Equal to the Occasion, Women Editors of the Nineteenth-Century West* (Reno/Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1990), 27.

<sup>12</sup> *Newport Republican*, Nov. 22, 1901. Lincoln city directories show Willis Hudspeth worked on the *Nebraska State Journal* from 1916 to 1918. After A. L. "Doc" Bixby died in 1934, Hudspeth sent a memorial poem from Los Angeles (*Lincoln Star*, Dec. 22, 1934). Copies of his books of poems, *The Out-of-Doors* (Lincoln: The Claffin Printing Co., 1930) and *Sonnets of Scenery* (Omaha: 1932), are located in the NSHS Library/Archives.

<sup>13</sup> *Stuart Ledger*, May 17, 1901; "Sister Hudspeth's Troubles," *Rock County Leader* (Bassett), Nov. 14, 1902.

<sup>14</sup> *Stuart Ledger*, May 10, 1901; Feb. 20, 1903; *Naper News*, Apr. 24, 1903; *The Frontier*, Mar. 26, 1903.

<sup>15</sup> *Atkinson Graphic*, Mar. 14, 1902; *Western Publisher* 1 (April 1903): 51; 4 (March 1906): 43; 4 (June 1906): 46, 47; *The Printers Auxiliary* 19 (September 1901): 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Stuart Ledger*, Feb. 6, 1903 (reprint from *Holt County Independent*), Mar. 24, 1899; *The Frontier*, July 21, 1904. Cronin pretended surprise at the "personal animosity" Rosa displayed toward Church.

<sup>17</sup> *Newport Republican*, Feb. 21, 1902; *Omaha Daily Bee* (morning), Feb. 20, 1907; *Omaha World-Herald* (morning), Feb. 20, 1907; Scrapbook, Edwin Fry Collection, MS 213, NSHS. Fry, a veteran Nebraska-South Dakota newspaperman, preserved *Bee* clippings, a small amount of correspondence, and a convention program from the 1907 NPA meeting.

<sup>18</sup> *Stuart Ledger*, May 10, Oct. 25, 1901. "Dol-drums" quote from Thomas C. Colter, *A History of Woman Suffrage in Nebraska 1856–1920* (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1967), 115. See *Lincoln Journal*, Nov. 19, 1901, for reprints from

Plattsmouth, Norfolk, and Beatrice on the Bixby-Gregg debate.

<sup>19</sup> *Atkinson Plain Dealer*, Aug. 22, 1901.

<sup>20</sup> *Stuart Ledger*, Nov. 21, 1902; Oct. 31, 1902, supplement.

<sup>21</sup> *Western Publisher*, 3 (September 1904): 51.

<sup>22</sup> *Stuart Ledger*, July 5, Aug. 9, 1901; *Atkinson Graphic*, Mar. 14, 1902. *Juggernaut* was originally offered paper bound for fifty cents each and hard bound for \$1.25 each. Corvinus, review of *Juggernaut*; *Newport Republican*, Nov. 3, 1905; *Compendium*, 519.

<sup>23</sup> *Newport Republican*, Dec. 18, 1903. The appropriate edition of the *Ledger* itself is missing from NSHS collections.

<sup>24</sup> *Stuart Ledger*, Feb. 20, 1903; *Naper News*, Sept. 6, 1901; *Atkinson Plain Dealer*, May 16, 1901.

<sup>25</sup> *Omaha Daily Bee* (morning), Feb. 20, 1907; scrapbook, Fry Collection.

<sup>26</sup> *Omaha World-Herald* (morning), Feb. 20, 1907; scrapbook, Fry Collection; *Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Session of the Nebraska Press Association* (Lincoln: The Western Newspaper Union, 1907), 25; *Omaha Daily Bee* (morning), Feb. 21, 1907; *Western Publisher* 5 (April 1907): 12–14; 7 (September 1908): 61.

<sup>27</sup> *The Omaha Daily Bee* (evening), Feb. 20, 1907 (reprinted *Crawford Tribune*, Feb. 22, 1907); *ibid.* (morning), Feb. 21, 1907; scrapbook, Fry Collection.

<sup>28</sup> *Omaha Daily Bee* (morning), Feb. 21, 1907; scrapbook, Fry Collection; *Western Publisher* 5 (April 1907): 12–14.

<sup>29</sup> *Western Publisher* 5 (April 1907): 12–14.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*; *Omaha Daily Bee* (morning), Feb. 21, 1907; scrapbook, Fry Collection.

<sup>31</sup> *The Frontier*, Apr. 4, Sept. 19, 1907; *Rock County Leader*, Mar. 9, 1911; *Newport Republican*, May 24, 1907.

<sup>32</sup> *Stuart Advocate*, Jan. 5, 1956.

<sup>33</sup> *The Frontier*, Mar. 8, Aug. 30, Nov. 15, 1906.

<sup>34</sup> *Atkinson Graphic*, Aug. 15, 1902.

<sup>35</sup> No copies of the *Herald* are extant, but *The People's Advocate* (Ewing), Oct. 18, 1901, reprinted the *Herald's* diatribe entitled "Poor Old Ledger."

<sup>36</sup> *The People's Advocate*, Oct. 18, 1901; *Stuart Ledger*, Oct. 25, 1901. See also related stories on page one of *Ledger* and editorials on page six.

<sup>37</sup> *Omaha Daily Bee* (morning), Feb. 21, 1907; scrapbook, Fry Collection.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*; *The Frontier*, May 30, 1907, Sept. 27, 1906.

<sup>39</sup> Larry Cebula, "For Want of the Actual Necessaries of Life," Survival Strategies of Small-Town Journalists in the Trans-Mississippi West," *Journal of the West* 36 (October 1997): 28.

<sup>40</sup> *The Frontier*, Mar. 28, 1907; Mar. 27, 1947. The second article includes Cronin's obituary and memorial resolutions praising his roles in Nebraska journalism and politics.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* Aug. 1, Sept. 19, 1907; Anderson, *Pilgrimage*, 30.

<sup>42</sup> *Stuart Advocate*, Mar. 2, 1911; *Newport Republican*, Jan. 10, Mar. 27, 1908; *Stuart Ledger*, July 5, 1901.

<sup>43</sup> *Newport Republican*, Feb. 26, 1909; *Rock County Leader*, Feb. 25, 1909.

<sup>44</sup> Obituaries: *Rock County Leader*, Mar. 9, 1911; *Atkinson Graphic*, Mar. 3, 1911, Supplement 1; *Newport Republican*, Mar. 8, 1911; *Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln), Feb. 27, 1911; *Lincoln Star*, Feb. 27, 1911; *The Frontier* (O'Neill), Mar. 9, 1911; *Stuart Advocate*, Mar. 2, 1911; *Ainsworth Star Journal*, Mar. 3, 1911; *Butte Gazette*, Mar. 10, 1911. Certificate of Death for Rose Hudspeth, No. 1156, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Lincoln.

<sup>45</sup> *Stuart Advocate*, Mar. 2, 1911; *The Frontier*, Mar. 9, 1911.

<sup>46</sup> *Stuart Ledger*, July 5, Aug. 9, 1901.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, July 5, 1901; *The Frontier*, Mar. 9, 1911.