Kansas as Depicted in Literature From the Beginning to 1886.

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KANSAS AS DEPICTED IN LITERATURE
FROM THE BEGINNING TO 1886

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by

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B.S., Emporia State Teachers College, 1931
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This study traces the story of Kansas as depicted in literature from the coming of Francisco Vasquez Coronado in 1542 onto the central plains which later became Kansas, to the end of the first quarter century of statehood—1886. Sketches, short stories, novels, dramas, and poetry were used primarily to furnish the narrative. Selection of materials was based on suitability in the study, local color, portrayal of character, and, to some extent, literary value.

The study reveals:

(1) Sketches are a well-developed medium, in which writers have presented characters, atmosphere, and geographic, historical, and political aspects of the State. Numerous authors have presented worthwhile sketches, a few of which were originally published before 1900. Writers of sketches include Henry Ware Allen, Myra Carr, William F. Cody, Carrie De Voc, Roswell Martin Field, George Forsyth, Horace Greeley, Arthur Hertzler, Emerson Hough, Elmer House, John James Ingalls, Henry Inman, John Ise, Henry King, Meridel Lesueur, T. A. McNeal, Kirke Meche, Victor Murdock, Jennie Small Owen, Francis Parkman, Noble L. Prentis, James W. Steele, and William Allen White.

(2) The Kansas short story was a product of the period of peace and construction following the struggle against slavery and with the Indians on the west. Writers of short stories on Kansas include William Carey Campbell, Muriel Culp, Lulu R. Fuhr, Grace Galloway, Henry
The first novels about Kansas were written by participants in the events of the 1850's and 60's when uncertain squatter life and border warfare gave impetus to a thrilling firsthand account. With the exception of Edgar Watson Howe's *The Story of a Country Town*, the early novels by Emerson Bennett, Henri Emile Chevalier, Camille de Cendrey, Edgar Watson Howe, Mary A. Humphrey, Mary E. Jackson, and F. Pharon, are not widely read. Most of the novels on Kansas have been written since 1900. Among the more widely read novelists who have used the Kansas background and characters are Emerson Hough, Edgar Watson Howe, Margaret Hill McCarter, George W. Ogden, and William Allen White.

Kansas novels usually deal with at least one of four themes: the westward migrations, the struggle against slavery, the cattle trade, and the settlers' triumph.

Few dramas on Kansas subjects have been written, but John Brown has provided a dramatic theme for Kirke Mechem and Mrs. J. C. Swayne and the Jayhawker of the 60's a type of character for the Lewises.

One of the early poets who wrote about the State was Richard Realf, who came to Kansas during the territorial days and wrote in behalf of the Free-State struggle. John G. Whittier also wrote on several Kansas subjects of the early days. Many volumes of verses on Kansas have since been printed, some of which are doggerel. Some Kansans have written poems which have attained well-earned distinction, such as Esther Clark Hill's "The Call of the Prairie," Walt Mason's
"Morning in Kansas," Sol Miller's "The Homes of Kansas," and Eugene Fitch Ware's "Quivira." Some other well-known writers of verse about Kansas are Ellen P. Allerton, Frederick Atwood, Ed Blair, Jesse Applegate Eble, Carleton Everett Knox, James Horace Marcy, and Albert Bigelow Paine. A number of cowboy ballads belong to Kansas literature.

(6) Kansas literary works are not sophisticated; they use much local color. Although they fall short of high literary expression, they picture, both romantically and realistically, the sod house, the drought, the cyclone, the flood, and the beauty of Kansas prairie and plains. The language of the Kansan is the speech of the wide-open spaced, influenced by the refined background of an intelligent citizenry which migrated from New England and the Ohio and upper Mississippi valleys.
INTRODUCTION

This study traces the story of Kansas as depicted in literature from the coming of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1542 onto the central plains which later became Kansas to the end of the first quarter of statehood—1886. Diaries, sketches, short stories, novels, drama, and poetry were used primarily to furnish the narrative. Book-length biographies were read but were not used directly in building the study. Dramas on Kansas life of the years under consideration are not sufficient to make this genre important in telling the story of Kansas.

In the main, the development is chronological. Selection of materials was based on suitability in the study, local color, portrayal of character, and, to some extent, literary value.

Previous studies which have been made on Kansas literature, especially on fiction and poetry, have proved helpful in locating books about Kansas and by Kansans:

(1) In 1915 E. F. Long completed his treatise "Kansas Literature: A Historical Sketch to 1875" (Master's thesis, Lawrence, 1915).

The Kansas novel and the Kansas short story have been considered.

(2) Mae Raerdon Henry wrote "A Glance at the Kansas Novel" (Master's thesis, Lawrence, 1916), which includes all novels the author could find written by Kansans before 1915. (3) Maynard Fox continued the

(6) Mary Tharsilla Carl's A Survey of Kansas Poetry (Seneca, 1933), gives a history of Kansas poetry and places some poems about Kansas under specific categories which she treated.

(7) Elizabeth B. Culver made "A Collection of Writings by Kansas Authors with Brief Biographical Articles on the Authors and an Extensive Bibliography of Writings Dealing with Kansas or by Kansas Authors" (Master's thesis, Lawrence, 1937).

This study, "Kansas as Depicted in Literature," is not a history of Kansas literature. It is the story of the land and people who made the Territory and State of Kansas, as recorded in the literature by Kansans and a few other writers.
FROM QUIVIRA TO THE GREAT AMERICAN DESERT

Upon the western acclivity of the [American plains] basin, where its synclinal axis is intersected by its greater diameter, lies the State of Kansas—"Smoky Waters"; so called from the blue and pensive haze which in autumn dims the recesses of the forests, the hollows of the hills, and broods above the placid streams like a covenant of peace.¹

Ellen P. Allerton, a Kansas poet, has written of the Queen State of the Prairies:

In the heart of the country we love so well,
Two mighty oceans midway between,
On grassy plain and on billowy swell,
Sits in her beauty the Prairie Queen.

Her soil is deep and her winds blow free;
There are belts of timber and quiet creeks;
And rivers at brow, at breast, and knee,
Fed by the snows on western peaks.²

The name Kansas is derived from the name of the dominant tribe of Indians³ found in the territory when it was first visited by white men.


²Ellen P. Allerton, "Kansas, the Prairie Queen," Walls of Corn and Other Poems (Hiawatha, 1894), 37.

³In this study the Kansas or Kaw tribe is called the Kaw Indians.
The Indians were variously spoken of by early explorers as Kanza,
Kansas, Kanza, Kanza, Kansas, Canzas, canoe, Okanie, Kanvas, Canza, all
the names having a similar phonetic expression. Edward Everett Hale,
who published on August 21, 1854, the first book dealing specifically
with the territory, spelled the name Kanza instead of Kansas in
preference "to the more fashionable spelling of a few weeks past."
He added: "There is no doubt that the s best expresses the sound,
that it has been almost universally used till lately, and that it is
still used by those most familiar with the tribe and the river which
have, time immemorial, borne this name." The French contraction Kau
or Kaw was accepted and used "in designating the tribe and the river
which still flows through its ancient domain. It has never been
adopted as designating the Territory or State. Kansas is said to
signify, in the language of the Kansas [Kaw] tribe, 'smoky,' and the
South Fork of the Kansas [Kaw] is still known as Smoky Hill River."

Midway between the oceans and midway between the Gulf of Mexico

4A. T. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, Containing a
Full Account of Its Growth from an Uninhabited Territory to a Healthy
and Important State; of Its Early Settlements; Its Rapid Increase in
Population and the Marvelous Development of Its Great Natural Resources
(Chicago, 1883), 33.

5In this study the Kansas or Kaw River is called the Kaw River.

6Edward Everett Hale, Kansas and Nebraska: The History, Geo-
graphical and Physical Characteristics, and Political Position of Those
Territories; An Account of the Emigrant Aid Companies, and Directions
to Emigrants (New York, 1854), v.

7Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, 33. For further
notes on the spelling and origin of the name, see Robert Hay, "Kaw and
Kansas: A Monograph on the Name of the State," Kansas State Historical
Society Transactions, IX (1906), 521-26. Kansas State Historical
Society Transactions are hereafter cited as Transactions.
and the Great Lakes, the prehistoric highways of wild animals and savage tribes were often traffic-laden in what later became the State, as a Kansas writer, John James Ingalls, has observed:

Mysterious colonizations of strange races of men... whose genesis is unknown, appeared upon the fertile plains and perished leaving no traces of their wars and their religions, save the rude weapons that the plough exhumes from their ruined fortifications, and the broken idols that irreverent science discovers in their sacrificial mounds.  

For centuries a rich archaeological field was being laid—a field that has not been sufficiently explored, although from the aborigines some antiquities have been collected, such as spear and arrow points, tomahawks, knives, fleshers, and effigies of animals found in the Kaw Valley, Mud Creek, Mill Creek, Humboldt Creek, and near Lindsborg. Indian pipes of catlinite have been dug up near Oswego, near Russell, and in Lane County. One of the most interesting pieces of pottery is a restored Pawnee vase or jar, found in May, 1934, about eight miles southeast of Barnes on Coon Creek. It holds fifteen quarts and is of sand and gypsum tempered. Another thought-provoking artifact is a stone nodule, about fourteen inches in diameter, with Indian inscriptions on the face of it, found in Rush County by Henry Inman, a well-known participant in, and writer about, Kansas pioneer days. In several sections of Kansas are evidences of the work of the mound builders of an


9These are now in the Kansas State Historical Society Museum, Topeka, Kansas, and in the Brower Archaeological Collection, Topeka, Kansas.

10In the Kansas State Historical Society Museum.

11Ibid.
early day. Obviously, the flint hills of Kansas were natural treasure houses for the war-eager tribes, who made oft-needed weapons from pieces of gray and brown quartz imbedded in the soil.

Pushing back the curtains of the intervening ages, we behold, shimmering in the bright sun of the sixteenth century, the central plains, occupied in summer by bands of Indians living a crude nomadic life in grass huts and tepees. These red men took their necessities and luxuries from the wild buffalo which roamed in vast numbers over the plains except in winter when, lashed by cruel blizzards, all plains life, even the packs of howling gray wolves, was driven to the east and south.

The first Europeans, dark-visaged and greedy, came upon the plains mounted and in search of the yellow metal. Gold has not been too hard to find on the Kansas plains, if sought in buffalo hides, in salt mines, in black oil, in smutty coal, in the black loam that has yielded bumper corn crops, or in the shining sandy loam that has produced waving golden heads of wheat. But the Spaniards found no yellow metal. They found only a wild and grassy Quivira.¹²

Eugene Fitch Ware has written a poem that has pictured for many Kansans the Kingdom of Quivira:

In that half-forgotten era,
With the avarice of old,
Seeking cities he was told
Had been paved with yellow gold,
In the kingdom of Quivera—

¹²Quivira is possibly a Spanish corruption of Kirikwius, or Kirikurus, the Wichitas' name for themselves, or of Kirikuruks, the Pawnee name for the Wichitas. Frederick W. Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (Washington, 1907-10), II, 346. Parts of Wichita, Kansas, are possibly located where the Wichitas had their lodges when Coronado visited Quivira.
Came the restless Coronado
To the open Kansas plain
With his knights from sunny Spain;
In an effort that, though vain,
Thrilled with boldness and bravado.  

There seems to have existed no real knowledge or clear conception as to the location of Quivira before Coronado's expedition. From Indians near the Mexican provinces reports were probably circulated that the land of the Quiviras lay to the eastward—a land of grass-covered prairies watered and drained by fair rivers, over which roamed wild cattle and on which a red people dwelt.

Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca may never have visited the central plains; nevertheless, he was the first European to give us a report from the cow country, having brought to New Spain in the spring of 1536 information that

Inland are many deer, birds, and beasts other than those I have spoken of. Cattle [buffalo] come as far as here [Northern Mexico]. Three times I have seen them and eaten of their meat. I think they are about the size of those in Spain. They have small horns like the cows of Morocco; the hair is very long and flocky like the merino's. Some are tawny, others black. To my judgment the flesh is finer and fatter than that of this country. Of the skins of those not full grown the Indians make blankets, and of the larger they make shoes and bucklers. They come as far as the sea-coast of Florida, from a northerly direction, ranging through a tract of more than four hundred leagues; and throughout the whole region over

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13 Eugene Fitch Ware, "Quivera—Kansas. 1541-1891," Some of the Rhymes of Ironquill (New York, 1885), 61.

14 Cabeza de Vaca means "skull of a cow," and is said to have been bestowed upon Alvar Nunez for leading an army through a pass which he had marked with the skull of a native cow. Spanish Explorers in the Southern United States. 1528-1543, in J. Franklin Jameson (ed.), Original Narratives of Early American History (New York, 1907), 3.
which they run, the people who inhabit near, descend and live upon them, distributing a vast many hides into the interior country.\textsuperscript{15}

It is reported that later Friar Marcos de Niza made an expedition into the central plains, returning to the Mexican settlements prior to becoming commander of the expedition of Francisco Vasquez Coronado.\textsuperscript{16}

Ingalls has written of this episode:

> The dawn of modern history broke upon Kansas three and a half centuries ago, when Marcos de Niza, a Franciscan friar, returning from a missionary tour among the Pueblos, brought rumors of populous cities and mines richer than Golconda and Potosi in the undiscovered country beyond the Sierra Madre.\textsuperscript{17}

Having more or less direct intelligence of the plains, Coronado made plans in 1540 to visit this inner country while he was among the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest.

Coronado must have been exceedingly credulous, and swallowed with avidity all the strange things he had heard, for he gathered a few of his most intimate friends and to them alone disclosed what the old Friar had reported. He added to the story himself greatly, and exacted the strictest secrecy in relation to the wealth of the alleged famous "Seven Cities."\textsuperscript{18}

During the following spring Coronado's entire army started the march to the northeast, hoping to gather golden nuggets in Cibola.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{17}Ingalls, "Kansas: 1541-1891," \textit{loc. cit.}, 445.

\textsuperscript{18}Henry Inman, "The March of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado," \textit{Stories of the Old Santa Fe Trail} (Kansas City, Missouri, 1881), 17.

\textsuperscript{19}Cibola, or Cibola is the name by which the Mexicans designate the buffalo or bison.

"At all events Cibola or Civola meant the buffalo country, and it is quite possible that the place now known as Quivira was the true quivira of the Indians at the time of Coronado's march." \textit{Ibid.}
as numerous and proportionately as large as the buffalo. "The Turk," a Pawnee Indian, was their guide for a while, but he greatly deceived the Spaniards in the hope of their becoming lost on the vast prairie ocean. As a result, he was put in chains on the Rio Colorado in what is now Texas, and the unwieldy main army was sent back to Mexico while thirty picked horsemen proceeded northward for thirty days. This band reached the Arkansas River in June, 1541, and spent the summer exploring Quivira's treasures.  

Quivira broke on the world with a radiant flash as a recompense to Coronado for Cibola and the pueblos of the Rio Grande—the mummy villages of the dead deserts. While she was not appreciated and was left to her "brutish people" and her rolling herds of wild oxen for some centuries, it is a source of satisfaction to know that the Kansas plains were ridden over by mailed knights generations before Jamestown and Plymouth Rock were planted on our eastern shores. Vague Old Quivira plants the feet of lusty young Kansas in the dim and misty fastnesses of the past to give dignity and beget pride in the history of a state. Hazy and distant Quivira is hoary with antiquity, but in the young and buxom Kansas she becomes the beacon of modern energy to light up the ways of the world. Touched with the magic fire of Kansas, Old Quivira has become a flame that burns across the heavens—an inspiration, an ideal far superior in value to the crops or herds or mines embraced in all her borders.  

The Edson brothers, Kansas poets, have written of the search for fabled treasure on the central plains:  

Out of the dust of Kansas,  
In old, primeval days;  
Out of the shroud of a drifting cloud  
Across its grassy ways—  
Flaunting the flag of the prairie dust,  
The shaggy bison graze  
Over a landscape red with rust  
The herds emerge from the Kansas dust.  

---  

Treading the dust of Kansas,
Before she knew her name;
Standing aghast at the vernal vast,
The spying Spaniard came.
And his armor scales in the grassy vales
Gleaned out like an oriflamme,
As he sought for that fabled city, thrust
Afar in the phantom desert's dust.22

Of the country of the Quiviras, Castenada, historian of the Coronado expedition, remarked:

The country is well settled. Judging from what was seen on the borders of it, this country is very similar to that of Spain in the varieties of vegetables and fruits. There are plums like those of Castile, grapes, nuts, mulberries, oats, pennyroyal, wild marjoram, and large quantities of flax, ... 23

The historian took note of the round straw houses without a wall, which "have one story like a loft, under the roof, where they [the natives of Quivira] sleep and keep their belongings." He also spoke of the plains to the south, of Indian travel by dog travois, their ways of eating raw flesh, drinking blood, skinning buffalo, and curing meat; and he told of how wolf packs accompanied the herds of buffalo.24

The "Relacion del Suceso," which Coronado wrote as a report to the king of Spain, indicated that the explorer could not stress too strongly that this "very brutish people" grew corn, beans, and melons, but no cotton or fowls. Their bread was cooked "under ashes." In judging the plains culture of the Indians, the Spaniards were none too well impressed.25

24 Ibid., 527-28.
25 Ibid., 577.
Margaret Hill McCarter, a modern Kansas writer who has woven the background of Kansas life into her novels, has pictured, perhaps more truly than have the bare Spanish accounts, the happy life of the Wichitas, dwelling in their grass villages dotting Quivira:

They digged in its soil and planted the seeds of pumpkin and beans and maize. They made snug lodges of strong poles tied together with limber willow withes, and overlaid with heavy sod. They had warm furs for clothing and blankets. They ate the juiciest venison and buffalo meats. They had Indian pudding, dried plums and grapes, and the kernels of wild nuts that had sweetened in the sun and frost of long rare autumn days. They were brave and free, and strong and faithful; and Coronado... left them as he found them, unharmed by the evil touch of a corrupt civilization.26

In the "purple distance lay the level floor of the short-grass country over which, wandering eastward," came these Spanish knights and Father Padilla:

The summer of 1541 dragged out its hours. Day by day Coronado's company found itself weaker, farther from home and supplies, and facing ever a wider and more desolate plain—a never-ending monotony of weariness and starvation...27

Just how far Coronado's expedition advanced into Kansas is difficult to determine, but it seems certain that it reached out east of the great bend of the Arkansas River, possibly to Lindsborg or to Junction City.28 What is known as the Coronado Sword29 was found in 1886 about thirty miles north and a little west of Cimarron. Engraved

26 Margaret Hill McCarter, *In Old Quivira* (Topeka, 1912), 91-92.
29 in the Kansas State Historical Society Museum.
on the handle is the name of its former knight possessor, Gallego,
and the admonition:

No me saques sin razon;
No me embaines sin honor.30

In spite of the actual spot on which Coronado turned westward, the
conjecture of the novelist is interesting, that the explorer and
his company

passed to the top of a low divide between two northward-
flowing streams that emptied into the great river. Its slopes
were soft with grass, but on the crest was a stunted herbage.
A few rectangular blocks of stone were here, and many a pink
boulder brought hither by the old glacier of a bygone era of
time. Beyond the farther slope the river stretched like a
spread of molten steel toward the vanishing east.31

As the Spaniards probably followed the trail made by the buffalo,
they found a more direct path for their return, touched the stream of
the Arkansas at the Great Bend and came to Pawnee Rock:

The camp-fires that night burned at the base of a huge
rock cliff whose perpendicular face stood out boldly above
the river that wound around its edges. On the opposite side
it sloped steeply down into the plain.32

History concedes that Coronado led his knights via what was to
become the Santa Fe Trail back to Mexico in 1542, leaving behind the
missionary, Padilla, who returned to the people of Quivira. He was
murdered by the Wichitas, who resented his leaving them to minister
to a hostile tribe, possibly the Kaws.33

30 Draw me not without reason;
Sheathe me not without honor.
31 McCarter, In Old Quivira, I11.
32 Ibid., 79.
33 Winship, "The Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542," loc. cit.,
In story verse, Lincoln Phifer has assumed of Padilla's trip to the central plains:

Frey Juan de Padilla, who had made
The march with Coronado, the next spring
With a small company retraced his steps,
Driving a few sheep as they trudged along.
Until they came to the Quiveran people
And reached their capital. He set a mission
And taught the Indians for several years.
Then, against the wishes of his followers,
He westward pushed to bear his well-loved gospel
Into Harahay. On the road he met
A band of savages, and sent his men
Back with the horses while he stopped to greet them,
Kneeling. Pierced by a score of arrows, fell
Kansas' first martyr; and his dusky slayers
Heaped over him a pile of stones.

Thus came the first of that "new race of people, conversing in a different tongue," seen prophetically by Bluebonnet and Falda, Indian captives of another tribe on the plains. The captives helped Coronado and his men find water; Old Bluebonnet received a horse in return; the fair young Falda became the wife of a young Spanish knight.

The next fifty years found band after band of Spanish explorers in the land, striving to reach from the lower Rockies to the Ozark Mountains and from the lower Rio Grande River to the Platte. Sometimes they became lean and hungry men, sometimes desperate for water. Among these Spanish plains explorers were Francisco de Bonilla (1594), Antonio Gutierrez de Humana (1595), Juan de Onate (1601), and perhaps Don Diego Penalosa (1662). But the results of their laborious expedi-

34 The land of the Kew Indians.
35 Lincoln Phifer, "Quivira," The Dramas of Kansas (Girard, 1915), 21.
tions and onerous undertakings were small so far as our knowledge of the plains is concerned. 37

Kansas was not claimed by the Spaniards. These people, notably successful elsewhere as explorers, were never interested enough in the land to get entirely across the plains. They were satisfied simply to let their heavily armed forces fold around the plains—gaining a rather meager success in their understanding of the new land. It may be concluded that the Villazur expedition of 1721 was thrown back from Northern Kansas by the Pawnees and a French expedition. 38

It remained for the French to rediscover the Missouri Valley and to skirt the plains. French trappers and traders had traversed parts of this valley for decades, and Father Jacques Marquette mentioned the Kaw tribe of Indians on his map of the West, which is still preserved at St. Mary's College, Montreal, Canada. 39 The tribal name may have been added to the map as a result of hearsay, for Marquette and Joliet probably gained many facts by this means since they naturally must have plied the tribes of the Mississippi's tributaries for information about the country beyond the river in the early 1670's.

It is not conceded that LaSalle did any exploratory work on the plains, but in the first quarter of the eighteenth century came Claude Charles du Tisne from the Illinois country and Etienne Vengard Sieur de Bourgmont from the south. In July, 1724, Bourgmont left Fort Orleans,

38 Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 50-52.
which he had established the year before, and came up into the land of the Paducahs, probably the Kiowas, going as far north as the Pawnee range in Nebraska that spring. Taken ill, he went back to Fort Orleans in August, but made a return even during the autumn months to visit the Indian village in present Doniphan County. He journeyed west to a small river where the water was "briny"—possibly the Saline River. This Frenchman's peace with the Indians was made in the hope that his countrymen might trade with the Indians and also with the Spaniards in Mexico.  

Captain Bourgmont,  
Accompanied by his very charming mistress,  
. . .  
Pushed to the Little Blue, and then crossed over,  
Entering the land that now is known as Kansas.  
Through love's persuasion on a woman's lips  
The Kansa [Kaw] and Osages smoked with him  
The calumet. Through stretching prairies, full  
Of Indians and buffaloes he passed, and made  
Treaties with many tribes.  

The French established trading posts in the Missouri Valley and traded up and down the extent of it until 1763. After the French and Indian war ended in 1759, France found that she needed to dispose of both the territory west of the Mississippi River and the Island of Orleans, and she ceded them to Spain by the treaty of November 3, 1762.  

Thus Quivira was forsaken;  
And the world forgot the place  
Through the lapse of time and space.  
Then the blue-eyed Saxon race  
Came and bade the desert waken.  

40 Connelley, History of Kansas, II, 1012.  
41 Lincoln Phifer, "A Forgotten Tragedy," The Drama of Kansas,  
26.  
42 Ware, "Quivira—Kansas. 1541-1891," loc. cit., 62.
In 1800 Napoleon acquired the Louisiana Territory from Spain by the Treaty of Ildefonso. This cession worked "most sorely on the United States," according to President Thomas Jefferson, and through the efforts of Robert Livingstone and James Monroe, plus the overtures of France's Talleyrand, the Isle of Orleans and all French territory west of the Mississippi River were sold to the United States for 80,000,000 francs, a fourth of this price to be settled by the United States' claims against France.

One of the Americans to go into Kansas at this time was James Purcell, who in 1802 left St. Louis to hunt among the Osage Indians. When about to leave the plains for New Orleans via the Arkansas River, he was robbed of his pelts by some Kaw Indians. He recovered the furs through strategy, and then tried to make his way to St. Louis; but he lost the furs in the Missouri River near the mouth of the Kaw.43

Thus the Americans opened in 1802 another era of exploration and the expansion of American civilization into the West. In 1800 the Mississippi and Ohio valleys constituted the American frontier. Then, the region west of the Mississippi River had only a few hundred aborigines, most of whom were in the late Stone Age. Eighty years later, the land from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean was occupied by more than eleven million citizens of the United States.44

The new nation was feeling an inner burst of growth. In 1811 the Cumberland Road was begun. During that year Nicholas J. Roosevelt sent the first steamboat down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh to New Orleans.

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Then the War of 1812 brought a greater sense of national unity, and in 1820 a new land system was inaugurated which reduced the price of government holdings from $2.00 to $1.25 an acre. At this time, John Marshall was strengthening the Supreme Court, while William Cullen Bryant and Washington Irving were speaking in more descriptive language of the American scene. All eyes were turned westward.

The famed Lewis and Clark expedition was announced to the Spaniards as an "innocent literary journey," but it was really an official excursion to extend the "external commerce of the States." Its object was to explore the Missouri River and its valley with great care. Trade, or the desire to open trade in the future, was the stimulus which sent this expedition and similar ones into the wilds.

The Lewis and Clark expedition was a well-formed band. It included the commanders, nine young men from Kentucky, fourteen hunter-soldiers from the United States Army, two French water men, one interpreter and hunter, Captain Clark's Negro servant, York, and a group of soldiers who were going as far as the country of the Mandans, a tribe of Indians who were living at this time in the upper Missouri Valley. The commanders, Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark, were officers of the United States Army. Lewis had been a private secretary for President Jefferson, and Clark was a brother of George Rogers Clark, the saviour of the Northwest Territory in Revolutionary days. Their party was well supplied with protective weapons and means of sustenance, besides being furnished with a keel boat over fifty feet long (drawing three feet of water, having twenty-two oars, and a square sail), and pirogues. Horses were used along the banks of rivers
by riders assigned to scouting and game duty.45

The Lewis and Clark tour was fully organized some time before the
close of 1803 and wintered at the mouth of Wood River in Illinois. On
May 14, 1804, it proceeded up the Missouri River, along which the
Osages were preparing for their spring activities. Canoes and rafts
were passed, descending the river with furs and buffalo tallow from
distant points on the Missouri, Kaw, and Platte rivers. When the ex­
pedition reached the Kaw on June 26, it had some difficulty with the
current. Here, too, the need for repairs kept the explorers on the
banks at the mouth of the river for two days, allowing them to make
observations. Then on June 29 the band left its encampment on Kansas
soil and reached Kickapoo Island on July 2. On the Kansas side of the
Missouri River was an old Kaw Indian village, and back of it stood the
remnant of a deserted French fort. Two days later the Americans cele­
brated Independence Day by naming Independence Creek, a stream which
they found flowing from the west into the Missouri River. At this
celebration each man in the expedition was given an additional gill of
whisky, and a large gun was fired.46

In verse the day is described thus:

45 Archibald M'Vicker (ed.), History of the Expedition Under
the Command of Captains Lewis and Clarke, to the Sources of the Mis­
souri; Thence Across the Rocky Mountains, and Down the River Columbia

to the Pacific Ocean: Performed During the Years 1804, 1805, 1806,
by Order of the Government of the United States (New York, 1900), I,
53-54.

46 Ibid., 53-60.
When Meriwether Lewis sought the coast
By pushing forward on the Oregon trail,
On July 4th he ran the stars and stripes
Over Kansas territory, and gave name
To Independence Creek.47

On the next day, when they scouted south of Independence Creek, the explorers found the remains of a large town of the Indians. They also located grapes, berries, wild roses, a few deer, and numerous tracks of elk. By July 12 the expedition had passed above the present State line on the north. This report of fifteen days spent along the Kansas bank of the Missouri River is the first reliable record about the territory that was to be Kansas.48

The next well-known exploration of the western country occurred in 1806. The year before, Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike had been sent by General James Wilkinson on a voyage of discovery and exploration up the Mississippi River from St. Louis. Having returned the last of April, 1806, Pike was ordered by the general to explore the District of Louisians by way of the Great Plains.49 The Pike expedition from the Missouri River to the Spanish frontier was of great immediate benefit to the United States, although as an enterprise it was inferior to the expedition of Lewis and Clark. While the ultimate knowledge gained did not equal that which was gathered by the tracing

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47 Lincoln Phifer, "Romance of the Roads," The Dramas of Kansas, 31. Noah Brooks, First Across the Continent (New York, 1901), is said to give a romantic account of the expedition, but this book has not been located for the present study.


49 Elliott Coues (ed.), The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, to Headwaters of the Mississippi River, Through Louisiana Territory, and in New Spain, During the Years 1805-6-7 (New York, 1895), I, passim, 273.
of the Missouri River to its source and then finding a passage to the Pacific Ocean, accounts of Pike's itinerary reached the people of the East long before news from Lewis and Clark appeared; hence trade and settlement profited immediately from Pike's trip.50

Pike was accompanied by General Wilkinson, three noncommissioned officers, sixteen private soldiers, and two civilians, one of whom served as surgeon and the other as interpreter. With Pike was a band of fifty-one Indians who were returning from captivity among the Pottawatomies to their friends, the Osages and Pawnees. Pike's band left Belle Fontaine, a military outpost of St. Louis, on July 15, 1806. He went by boat to the Osage towns in what is now Vernon County, Missouri, where these boats were abandoned and the expedition continued on pack animals.51

Pike first entered what is now Kansas at a point near the northeast corner of Bourbon County. His party reached Allen County and camped on the head of Ela Creek near the present town of LaHarpe on September 6. He called the Neosho River by the name of the White and crossed it somewhere between Iola and Neosho Falls. He saw Eagle Creek near the east line of Lyon County and killed six buffalo on the upper Cottonwood River. Although the party encountered antelope, deer, turkey, and large herds of buffalo in Marion County, the men killed only for food.52

About the middle of September the expedition crossed the land

50 Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 66.
51 Coues (ed.), The Expedition of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, II, 357-86.
52 Ibid., 357-99.
divide to the waters of the Smoky Hill River in Saline County near Bridgeport. Encamped in the vicinity of Minneapolis, where they recuperated for a few days, they read the Bible, perused Pope's essays, and did tattooing. Then the group proceeded on into what is Cloud and Republic counties to the village of the Republican Pawnees, where on September 29 Pike held a council with that tribe and had the Spanish flag hauled down and the Stars and Stripes hoisted for the first time over what is now Kansas.53

The flag-raising incident has been recorded in Robert Ames Bennett's account of the expedition, A Volunteer with Pike. As Pike pointed to the Spanish flag floating over the Pawnee nation, he asked:

"Men of the Pawnee nation, how comes that flag here?" . . . "Is that the flag of your father in Washington from whose people you receive in barter all your guns and powder and lead, your shrouding and beads? No! . . . it is the flag of a far-off chief, who lives beyond your deadly foes, the Ietans. This land is no longer under his hand; that flag has no right to float over these prairies. . . ."

. . . he unrolled the glorious Stars and Stripes which he held in his hand. "Chiefs and men of the Pawnee Republic, this is the flag of your great father. I command you to hand over that flag of Spain to me and raise instead the banner of my chief!"54

Pike then turned southwest, traversing the present counties of Jewell, Mitchell, Lincoln, Ellsworth, and Barton, until he struck the Arkansas River. This he followed to what is now the Kansas-Colorado line. On October 29, somewhere near the western State line, the group caught their first glimpse of wild horses.55

53 Ibid., 399-416.
54 Robert Ames Bennett, A Volunteer with Pike. The True Narrative of One Dr. John Robinson and of His Love for the Fair Senorita Valois (Chicago, 1909), 188.
Zebulon Pike and sixteen soldiers set
For the first exploration of the land
Determined on as Indian territory.
They passed the prairies of the eastern border
And reached the Smoky Hill and Saline rivers,
On to the Pawnee village. On the Arkansas
Pike and his party, in canoes of skins,
Launched for a journey to the Mississippi,
But, hindered by the rigors of the winter,
They westward turned again, to climb the slopes
Up to the Rockies. On the plains they passed
Herds of wild horses; and at last a cloud,
Set in the blue of heaven, stayed and grew,
Until they saw the outlines of a mountain.56

Pike has been credited with giving cartographers cause for the
appellation, "the Great American Desert," which became tenaciously
fastened to the Great Plains. This was a great injustice to the fer­
tile plains area of which Pike said:

But here a barren soil, parched and dried up for eight months
in the year, presents neither moisture nor nutrition suffic­
ient to nourish timber. These vast plains of the western
hemisphere may become in time as celebrated as the sandy
deserts of Africa; for I saw in my route, in various places,
tracts of many leagues where the wind had thrown up the sand
in all the fanciful forms of the ocean's rolling waves, and
on which not a speck of vegetable matter existed.57

In 1839, Thomas J. Farnham called the Indian Country near Elm
Grove "the beautiful and dreadful wilderness."58 Another observer—
and this was after the middle of the nineteenth century—pronounced
the country around Dodge City to be "as wild as the plains of Africa."59

57 Coues (ed.), The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, II,
525.
58 Thomas J. Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, the
Anahmac and Rocky Mountains, and in the Oregon Territory, in Heuben Gold
Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, 1748-1846 (Cleveland, 1904-1906),
XXVIII, 55.
59 Robert W. Wright, Dodge City, The Cowboy Capital, and the Great
Southwest (Wichita, 1913), 17.
Such reports were exaggerated unfairly to the State, and many Easterners ignorantly and indifferently concluded that all of Kansas, in fact, all of the country west of the Mississippi River, might well enough be left to the Indians.

Another excursion to the West, the Astoria land expedition under Wilson Price Hunt, skirted the northeastern corner of Kansas. Recruited partly in Canada and partly at St. Louis, his expedition left the latter frontier outpost on October 21, 1810, and arrived 450 miles upstream on the Missouri about the middle of November. The explorers encamped on the east side at the confluence of the Nodaway and the Missouri rivers, where, amid abundant game, including deer and turkey, they spent the winter. No mention was made of their crossing the river into what was then Indian Country and is now Kansas, but such a journey may have been taken.60

In August, 1819, Stephen H. Long, at the head of a scientific expedition set out by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, left Fort Osage in Missouri and entered what is Kansas at the fork of the Kaw and Missouri rivers. Long was a major in the United States Engineers and commanded a band of twenty scientists, hunters, and helpers.61 While his main party ascended the Missouri River, a subdivision of the group


61 Edwin James, Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, Performed in the Years, 1819, 1820, Compiled from the Notes of Major Long, Mr. T. Say, and Other Gentlemen of the Party by Edwin James, Botanist and Geologist to the Expedition, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XIV, passim.
under Dr. Thomas Say ascended the Kaw River to the village of the Kaw Indians. After spending some time on the Big Blue River with the Kaws, where the overland party tasted corn stew, leyed corn (hominy), boiled pumpkin, muskmelon, and greenish watermelons, they left the hospitality of the friendly tribe and strove to continue by a short land route to the Pawnee towns on the Platte River. To a band of pillaging Pawnees Dr. Say's men lost their horses and baggage; but, having been refitted by Kaw Indians, the explorers tried to return to the steamboat Western Engineer, which had been tied up for repairs at the Isle au Vache. The boat had departed before the arrival of the land contingent which caught up with the main group at the mouth of the Wolf River in September.

The secretary of the expedition reported later that "On account of the want of wood and water, the settlements will be for a long time confined to the immediate valleys of the Missouri, the Kanzas [Kaw], and the larger rivers; but it is probable, forests will hereafter be cultivated in those waste woodless regions, which now form so great a proportion of the country; ..." By an act of Congress on March 26, 1804, the great Louisiana Territory was divided into French Louisiana and Upper Louisiana, of which latter Kansas was a part. For judicial purposes Upper Louisiana was attached to the Territory of Indiana and came under the executive power

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62 Ibid., 172.
63 Ibid., 190-91.
64 Ibid., 215.
65 Ibid., 213-14.
of Governor William Henry Harrison. In March, 1805, this district received improved government and General Wilkinson as its governor. He was succeeded by Meriwether Lewis, then returned from his expedition to the Pacific Ocean.

In June, 1812, the upper section became the Territory of Missouri under the governorship of General William Clark. The legislative council for this territory was composed of an upper house of nine members appointed by the President of the United States, and a lower house to which was elected one member for each five hundred free white male inhabitants. This was the first local representative body with jurisdiction over the soil of Kansas. At this time the territory was connected with representative government and American customs.

Thus came to an end the period—almost three centuries—in which Kansas passed from a prospective "Golden Quivira" to the Great American Desert, and in which little progress was made by the white man in the knowledge of the plains environment and the problems thereof. True, the Spaniards had tried to enter from the southwest in search of treasure; the French had skirted the eastern edge in their trapping enterprises, and the Americans had acquired the territory and had avoided it in general, only occasionally getting a side view of sections as they journeyed farther west; but the fact that the region was called the Great American Desert and the Indian Country lays bare almost as much as was generally thought about the central plains—that it was a section unfit for anyone but Indians and buffalo.

Naturally, this distant period has most often been given a romantic

66 Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 64.
treatment, for few facts were known by which a writer could be held to an uncolored narrative. Moreover, the Spanish character called for a more glamorous backdrop than did Anglo-Saxon characters. Accounts have also been given of exploration by the French.

Hodge's and Winship's scholarship places their sketches in another field than that of pure literature, although the narrative of Cabeza de Vaca and Castaneda's "Relacion del Succeso" may properly be classed as early writings about Kansas. The journals, sketches, and notes by early Western travelers are literature in the sense of being narratives about the country. Andreas and Connelley are properly historians, but Connelley has occasionally risen to the heights of literature. Ingalls evidenced an interest in what to him were "the earlier days," since he came to the State in the 1850's, but the years of the Territory and early statehood are described more often in his writings. Inman also is more colorful and free when writing of his own days.

Stories, novels, and verse have also been used to picture these three centuries. Price's Coronado Comes is fittingly romantic. McCarter's In Old Quivira is perhaps the most widely known novel about Kansas in the days when the Spaniards found her dotted with the Indians' grassy huts. The trek of Lewis and Clark to the Pacific Ocean is dealt with in First Across the Continent by Brooks, while Pike's expedition is treated in Bennet's novel, A Volunteer with Pike. Allerton, the Edsons, Phifer, and Ware have written lyrics on different phases of the years between 1540 and 1820. Ware's "Quivira-Kansas, 1541-1891" has often been quoted to stir the imagination about "that half-forgotten era."
II
THE PLAINS ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

Between 1820 and 1854 the Kansas prairies changed from the red man's Elysium to the white man's crossroads of the continent. Although the Indians continued to hunt buffalo, deer, and antelope, to steal horses from each other and from their grazing places, and to transport their baggage by dog and horse travois, the whites through crafty treaties with the Indians were taking more and more of their land, and with loaded caravans and emigrant trains were transporting wealth and people across the territory preparatory to claiming it for settlement.

In 1820 the Kansas plains were still a part of the Missouri Territory; and, after Missouri's admission to the Union as a State in 1821, there was a period of more than three decades when no local government held jurisdiction over the Kansas country and no name was attached thereto. On June 31, 1834, Congress gathered into the Indian Country all territory west of Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana, and attached it to Missouri for judicial purposes. So remained the status of what is now Kansas until 1854.2

2Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 64-65.
Missouri held the frontier outposts for three decades during which the makers of maps called the country from the Texas Gulf Plain north to the Great Lakes region and from the Missouri line west to the Rockies by the misnomer, the Great American Desert. The agricultural and Indian frontiers stood conterminous at a line running north and south practically at the Kansas bend of the Missouri River. Few were interested in settling on the dry plains immediately west of the ninety-fifth meridian, in what was then called the Indian Country; but many traversed this section. River valleys still influenced the distribution of population, and it was considered easier to trudge a couple of thousand miles up the Platte River and work down the Snake into the Columbia and to fair green valleys than to strike out a hundred miles across the dry timberless plains to found a home. Teamsters who went overland to Santa Fe, Mexico, went for barter and gold.

What was the appearance of this country? The general slope of Kansas was from west to east, with a slight decline toward the south. Thus the land received the heat rays from the blazing sun with great directness. This, in connection with the fact that, except along the river bottoms, the land was prairie and a practically treeless plain, gave it a temperature above that of other states in the same latitude. It is interesting to note that early settlers on the prairie, and even those who came in the 1880's, have repeatedly mentioned the fact that the tree and brush growth of their times was largely absent when settlers were sparse. Tree, shrub, and plant growth have been and are a result of the white man's civilization.3

In reality, Kansas was one-third prairie and two-thirds plain. The eastern third of the State was the western fringe of a prairie rolling east along the Missouri Valley, and had a rainfall that put it above the subhumid plains in moisture. It was a pleasant country, well watered, grass-clad, and fertile. Along the streams were oak, hickory, walnut, hackberry, cottonwood, and willow trees. The middle area of the State gradually blended into the plains proper, the western section of the State, which was a treeless level surface with a subhumid climate. The plains, according to Josiah Gregg, extended from Council Grove, which is about a hundred miles west of Kansas City, to the Rocky Mountains—a country of frayed out and disappearing streams with little or no timber—excepting the very narrow fringes along the borders of streams.

Up to the time of conclusive white settlement, stretches of drifting sand were found here and there, but Kansas was no desert in

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5 From 1868 to 1880 inclusive, Professor Frank H. Snow, Lawrence, Kansas, recorded 34.83 inches as the average rainfall per annum in this section. Andreas, *History of the State of Kansas*, 43.

6 From 1868 to 1880 inclusive, Professor Snow recorded 24.95 inches as the average rainfall per annum in this section. Ibid.


8 Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies. The Journal of a Santa Fe Trader, During Light Expeditions Across the Great Western Prairies, and a Residence of Nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico* (New York, 1844), I, 54.
the true sense. The plains country was almost all covered with nutritious buffalo grass—an inch or two in height and as thick, almost, as the wool on the buffalo itself. Along larger streams were found other grasses, most of them coarse and rank. In the high country drained by the Arkansas River there were often diminutive oaks—Shin-oaks they were called—which because of wind action lay almost prone upon the earth. These oaks bore acorns abundantly. There were scrubby sand plums, or buffalo plums, also, and they were often loaded with fruit, according to Coronado's historian. They still remain as a part of the plains economy. The Great Plains were the pastures par excellence of the buffalo; and the antelope, wild horse, deer, wolf, coyote, rabbit, and numerous birds made the plains their favorite spring and summer playgrounds.

For the whole State the strongest winds in summer were from the southwest, while for most of the year they were from a southerly direction.

A hint about the Kansas wind has been indicated in H. Rea Woodman's poem, "In Kansas":

Out in Kansas a man's a man,
And does the best he knows and can;
He doesn't brag on his ancestry
To make his folks out better'n they be;
He says his say, then he ups and goes,
And out on the plain the free wind blows.

He doesn't bark up your family tree
Nor sit back on your ancestry;
What are you, and what can you do?
And his keen eyes bore you clean, clean through;
Personal power, that's all that goes,
And out on the plain the free wind blows.

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Envoy
In the East and the South
They blow with their mouth;
In Kansas we let the winds blow.10

Kate Stephens said that the "winds blow ever—and through a God's mouth."11 Another writer has epitomized Kansas as "the home of surging, ceaseless wind."12 Clara Catherine White hailed the return of the south wind in spring:

The blue of the turquoise is back in the sky
And purs of the willows again I spy,
While over the hill with the flush of dawn
Comes the touch of the south wind, gone so long.13

A Kansan who had gone from the windy plains uttered this wish:

Oh, for a breeze from Kansas,
Where the south wind skips and dances
So light o'er the grass as she tarries to pass
With a smile and merriest of glances.14

Crossing the Missouri River just west of Independence, Missouri, where many pack and wagon trains were accustomed to prepare for the tour west, travelers in the years between 1820 and 1854 went out onto a rolling prairie covered with tall prairie grass—bluestem, bunch, nettle or wheat—and with streams and woods fringing its water courses. An author of this early day, a young Englishman who was visiting the plains, asked:


12 Frederick Atwood, "Kansas," Kansas Rhymes and Other Lyrics (Topeka, 1902), 10.

13 Clara Catherine White, "Spring in Kansas," in Helen Rhode Hoopes, Contemporary Kansas Poetry (Lawrence, 1927), 127.

14 "Oh, for a Breeze from Kansas," in Thomas F. Herringshaw (ed.), Poets and Poetry of Kansas (Chicago, 1894), 107.
Have you gazed over the prairies during the Indian summer, joyed in that one vast verdure, enameled with bright odoriferous wild flowers, whole brilliant beauty has few other witnesses than the azure firmament? . . . The creeks are small streams of water running through the prairies, and on the banks of such streams a belt of trees is always to be found. 15

Adjacent to the headwaters of the Neosho River lay the celebrated Council Grove. This contained several varieties of timber which were of great importance to the caravans, and at this point every wagon headed for Santa Fe took on wood which might be needed for repairs during the remaining 650-mile journey. 16

Of the Cottonwood River, a tributary of the Neosho, someone has written playfully:

The grand, majestic Cottonwood
Is neither slow nor swift;
Its banks are lined with rotten wood
And other kinds of drift. 17

Along the Kaw River 18 and along parts of its tributaries—the Blue, Republican, Solomon, Saline, and Smoky Hill rivers—were valleys and trees and beautiful land. The Blue meandered through rich timber country. The valleys of the Republican and the lower Solomon lay smooth and green in season, and the stream named Smoky Hill roamed through a rolling land dotted with copses.

15 W. E. Youngman, Gleanings from Western Prairies (Cambridge, 1882), 2-3.
16 Chittenden, The American Fur Trade, II, 793.
17 Clyde Brion Davis, The Arkansas (New York, 1940), 11.
18 For a recent treatment of the Kaw Valley, see Floyd Benjamin Streeter, The Kaw. The Heart of a Nation (New York, 1941), in the Rivers of America Series.
Sophie Molk has pictured the autumn days of this section of the State:

Oh, the balmy, golden days
Of our Kansas fall!
The trees, in red and gold sprays,
With beauty all life enthrall.

All day long the sun shines down
On this prairie's wide expanse.
Through the fields of golden brown
Wild creatures gaily prance.

Flocks of wild geese line the skies
On their southward flight.
From lake and pond come tumultuous cries,
As feathered friends join in delight.19

The Arkansas River20 was a different kind of stream in a different kind of country—a typical aggrading plains stream that started its gay rush down the mountain sides only to become choked and sinuous along most of its sandy length, fed by a comparatively small drainage area. The soil of that country was a combination of sand, clay and gravel.21 Vegetation consisted of "the short furzy grass, several kinds of prickly pear, a stunted growth of sun-flower, and a few decrepid [sic] cotton-wood trees on the margin of the stream."22 The Cimarron River, usually dry, was refreshed at places by two or three permanent springs, but the country roundabout was plainsy and parched.

Although the Saline and Smoky Hill valleys were not treeless

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20 See Davis, The Arkansas.
21 Chittenden, The American Fur Trade, II, 793.
22 Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXVIII, 102.
after they had wound eastward to the ninety-ninth meridian, certainly
the land through which the rivers ran was prairie, and travel west­
ward toward their sources brought one into the plains country. The
farther west one got, the more one saw that the plains grasses were
short and that the common trees on the prairies were giving way to the
lone cottonwood, which did not appear more than occasionally on the
open plains. All this has been accounted for by the fact that the
Great Plains surface was an apron of debris built up by the overflows
of water coming from the Rockies toward the Mississippi and the Gulf. 23

Beyond the ninety-eighth meridian, which has been designated the
dividing line between the western prairies and the plains, were buffalo
to the heart's desire, jack rabbits, buffalo grass, and rattlesnakes.
Some of the early settlers called the Little Arkansas River the divid­
ing line between the limestone formations with their black, heavy,
waxy soil and the sandy, loamy soil to the west. At any rate, this
stream was the western limit of oak trees in this part of the State,
the fine oak timber on the wooded bends close to the mouth of the Little
Arkansas being the western fringe for Middle and Southern Kansas. 24
Western Kansas had definitely the plains environment—a treeless level
surface of great extent with subhumid climate. Those characteristics
conditioned all life—plant, animal, human—as well as the institutions
which sprang up in the land.

Atwood has apostrophized the western part of the State in his
poem "Kansas":

The land of vast and undulating plains
That like the mighty ocean stretch away
Boundless, save for the curtain, azure blue,
Which from our eye conceals the Infinite:
A treeless waste, o'er which tumultuous flames
Were wont to leap like panic-stricken steeds
Urged on by ships of hissing scorpions:
But yesterday the bison's wide domain;
The realm of coyotes, antelope, and deer;
The hunting-ground of wild and savage men.25

A look into the plains herbarium of the early days is revealing.
The chief plains grasses were gramma, bunch, and buffalo, the latter
two being good food for beasts when green or brown, although they
were most succulent when green. The grasses were among the most im-
portant vegetable productions of the plains, and Chittenden has added:
"... no country in the world can excel the Western plains as a
grazing country."26

Without parallel in Kansas literature is the essay on grass,
written by Ingalls:

Grass is the forgiveness of Nature—her constant bene-
diction. Fields trampled with battle, saturated with blood,
torn with the ruts of cannon, grow green again with grass,
and carnage is forgotten. Streets abandoned by traffic be-
come grass-grown like rural lanes, and are obliterated. For-
est decay, harvests perish, flowers vanish, but grass is im-
mortal. Besieged by the sullen hosts of winter, it
withdraws into the impregnable fortress of its subterranean
vitality, and emerges upon the first solicitation of spring.
Sown by the winds, by wandering birds, propagated by the
subtle horticulture of the elements which are its ministers
and servants, it softens the rude outline of the world. Its
tenacious fibres hold the earth in its place, and prevent its
soluble components from washing into the wasting sea... . . .
It bears no blazonry of bloom to charm the senses with fra-
grance or splendor, but its homely hue is more enchanting


26 Chittenden, The American Fur Trade, II, 796.
than the lily or the rose. It yields no fruit in earth or
air, and yet should its harvest fail for a single year
famine would depopulate the world.27

William Allen White, the perfect Kansan, has used the prairie
setting in his novel, In the Heart of a Fool:

Sunshine and prairie grass—well in the foreground. . . . In
the blue sky a meadow lark's love song, and in the grass the
boom of the prairie chicken's wings are the only sounds that
break the primeval silence, excepting the lisping of the wind
which dimples the broad acres of tall grass—thousand upon
thousand of acres—that stretch northward for miles. To the
left the prairie grass rises upon a low hill, belted with
limestone and finally merges into the mirage on the knife
edge of the green foliage above a sluggish stream that writhes
and twists and turns through the prairie, which rises above
the stream and meets another limestone belt upon which the
waving ripples of the unmoved grass wash southward to the
eye's reach.28

After some months in California, Esther Mary Clark Hill, a
native Kansan, wrote reminiscently "The Call of Kansas."

Sweeter to me than the salt sea spray, the fragrance of summer rains;
Nearer my heart than the mighty hills are the wind-swept Kansas plains,
Dearer the sight of a shy wild rose by the roadside's dusty way,
Than all the splendor of poppy-fields, ablaze in the sun of May,
Gay as the bold poinsettia is, and the burden of pepper trees,
The sunflower, tawny and gold and brown, is richer to me than these
And rising ever above the song of the hoarse insistent sea,
The voice of the prairie, calling,
Calling me.29

A character in The Price of the Prairie indicated how the
vast stretches of rolling land had become a part of the dweller of
the prairie:

27. John James Ingalls, "Blue Grass," A Collection of the Writ-
ings of John James Ingalls, 102.

28. William Allen White, In the Heart of a Fool (New York,
1913), 1.

29. Esther Mary Clark Hill, "The Call of Kansas," The Call
of Kansas and Other Verses (Chanute, n.d.). The poem was written at
The prairies are in the red corpuscles of my blood. Up and down their rippling billows my memory runs. For always I see them,—green and blossom-starred in the Springtime; or drenched with the driving summer deluge that made each draw a brimming torrent; or golden, purple, and silver-rimmed in the glorious Autumn. I have seen them gray in the twilight, still and tenderly verdant at noonday, and cold and frost-wreathed under the white star-beams. I have seen them yield up their rich yellow sheaves of grain, and I have looked upon their dreary wastes marked with the dull black of cold human blood.

Close to the plains region vestiges of willow growth decorated the margins of the streams, for in Kansas *Salix rostrata* was common. But the willow tree was useless for building or repairing to those crossing the otherwise treeless plain. Nevertheless, the willows had value. They made good temporary bedding on which wagons could cross quagmires in rainy seasons, and they were used in shallow, sandy creeks into which heavy wagons might otherwise have sunk rapidly without footing. The willows afforded good browsing for animals also.

The cottonwood trees of the prairies were used in the early days on the plains for a variety of purposes but chiefly for lumber. As a tree the cottonwood afforded good shelter in winter and summer. Big Timbers, on the north bank of the Arkansas River near Bent's Fort, in what was Kansas and is now Colorado, afforded the second great tree grove on the Santa Fe Trail, for the original trail went west to that point before dropping south.

A few lone trees and several copses of cottonwoods stood here and there in Western Kansas. With the wood of this tree dugouts were re-

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30 Margaret Hill McCarter, *The Price of the Prairie* (Chicago, 1910), Proem.


32 Until 1861 the western boundary of the Territory of Kansas was the Rocky Mountains.
infected; huts and palisades erected. While the trunks and branches
supplied travelers with fuel for warmth and cooking, its small boughs—
"juicy, soft, and brittle"—and bark afforded nutritious food for
horses and mules. The journal of Lewis and Clark revealed that horses
preferred this bark to meal bran.33

Many logs of cottonwood from Council Grove and Big Timbers were
fitted under traders' wagons and were carried to Santa Fe in case the
wood might be needed en route as axles or yokes. On summer days the
"cotton" from these trees blew far on the hot dry winds, and in the
evenings the leaves whispered and chattered in the breeze.

The lone cottonwood of the plains has been honored in McCarter's
The Cottonwood's Story; in this story the cottonwood spoke of its
plains setting:

A wind-swept prairie that rippled away into the purple
distance. Shallow streams lying like thin ribbons flung care-
lessly across the landscape. Shifting gold and green and
crimson, and the steel-blue line of the stone outcrop coloring
the earth. A brazen, cloudless sky, with a wonderful tinting
of pink along its sunset rim.—These were what I saw when I
first peeped over the brow of that slope. The gossipy breezes
told of coyotes and wolves and westward-moving lines of Indi-
ans, but I never caught a glimpse of them; nor did I grow sad
at the sighing loneliness of the winds moaning for the glory
and power lost when they came eastward. The big, bulgy-headed
tumbleweeds took them seriously, and rolled helplessly down to
that long draw away below my feet, where the October prairie-
fires always found them.

But I ever loved this place, and, sheltered from the
north by that swell of ground, my head above the slope so that
all the wide plain was before me, my feet deep in the earth
where the unfailing cisterns are,—trust a cottonwood to find
their secretest hiding-places,—I flung my bare young branches
and caught the light and warm sweet air.34

33 Kirk Vicker (ed.), History of the Expedition Under the Command
of Captains Lewis and Clarke, I, 122, 159.

34 Margaret Hill McCarter, The Cottonwood's Story (Topeka,
1914), 5-6.
In extreme Western Kansas, cottonwoods were few and far between. Even close by the curving streams they were sometimes dwarfed and worn from the rubbing of buffalo against them. And yet, Farnham mentioned the immediate country around Pawnee fork as a "picture of beauty." "The stream winds silently," he said, "among bluffs covered with woods, while from an occasional ravine, long groves stretch out at right angles with its main course onto the bosom of the plains." The next day "not a shrub was seen."  

An early settler in the environs of Fort Dodge reported that in the middle 1860's fifteen hundred cords of wood, mainly hackberry, were cut from a creek just north of the fort. Some of the creeks feeding the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers were cooled by hackberry, ash, box elder, and elm trees, but much of this wood soon fell under the frontiersmen's axes. Homes dug out of bluffs and sand hills were evidence of a shortage of building timber at some points along the streams.

Among other vegetation were the straggling sand plums which grew from eleven inches to four feet in height, scrub choke cherries, soapweed, cactus, and flowers. From April to the end of June, flowering grasses and other perennials blossomed, making a carpet of splashed color overspread with vast blue sky during the day and a gorgeous Kansas sunset at evening time. Indian paint brush, drying sunflower stalks, and hazy horizons added to autumn's attractions.

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35 Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in Thwaites Early Western Travels, XXVIII, 93.

36 Wright, Dodge City, 73, 75.
Soothing and gentle as when laden with spicy fragrance, ... [the warm breezes] here shower the whole land with sunbeams. Earth no longer seems a heavy, inert mass, but floats in that smoky, fleecy atmosphere. ... All nature appears quickened. The inhabitants of the air have commenced their southern pilgrimage, and the oldest and leading ganders may be heard croaking, day-time and night-time, to their wedge-shaped flocks their narrative of summer experiences at the Arctic circle, and their commands for the present journey.37

Charles King has given a picture of Indian summer as it was found close to the Big Bend of the Arkansas:

When the Indian summer haze is hovering over the bluffs along the Pawnee in these dreamy, sunshiny afternoons of late November there is a languorous spell even in soldier life, and the troopers love to loll about the wide porches of the barracks during their brief leisure moments, or while waiting the trumpet call for stables. There is scarcely a breath of air astir. The broad, fertile valley under the bluffs, forest-fringed along the stream, gives forth a faint, pungent, smoky odor, and the eye wanders across its self undulations, its vistas of alternate glade, grove, and shadowy pool, and sees it all as through some filmy, intangible veil. The sharp outlines so characteristic of the frontier at other seasons, giving to the ridge to the northwest that razor-back guise that inspired the original explorers, Kentuckians and Missourians, to refer to the range as "Hawg Buttes," are molowed into softer curves.38

The common sunflower (Helianthus annuus), State flower and hardy representative of the floral kingdom, early welcomed the settler coming southwestward down the trail. "Along either side of it was a string of spindling sunflower stalks, with their blooms of gold marking two gleaming threads across the plains far toward the misty nothingness of the western horizon."

Van E. Butler has written the "Legend of the Sunflower":


When angels scattered the flowers,
When butter-cups and golden-rod
Were placed in leafy bowers;
That plant the sunflower was cast aside
To wither, fade and lie
Upon a sandy, desert plain
Where all things else would die.
And the angels cursed the rugged plant
As worthless, wanton weed—
As a thorny tare by the wayside grew,
That touched the hand to bleed.
But the bruised and broken flower stalk,
'Midst heat and drouth and cold,
Put forth its rootlets strong and deep
And the plain grew bright as gold.39

Another poet has written of the impelling attraction of the
Kansas plains when the sunflowers bloom:

I've bin off on a journey; I jes' got home today;
I traveled east, an' north, an' south, an' every other way;
I seen a heap of country, an' cities on the booz,
But I want to be in Kansas when the
Sun-
Flowers
Bloom.40

The Russian thistle or tumbleweed was a plains plant "with am­
bitions." Over the plains great masses of these feathery weeds rolled
with the sand before the autumn winds and finally ended in a gulch
where they were burned in the October prairie fires. In Hal G.
Evarts' novel of cow days in Southern Kansas, the tumbleweed declared:

"I'm a wild free blade of the open,
The spirit of all unrest.
I may end up in some worse place
But I'm going to make the test.

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39Van E. Butler, "Legend of the Sunflower," Kansas Poetry
Scrap-Book, V, 51.

40Albert Bigelow Paine, "When the Sunflowers Bloom," in William
Allen White and Albert Bigelow Paine, Rhymes by Two Friends (Fort Scott,
1893), 54.
"Oh, I'm a rolling rambler
Said the speeding tumbleweed.
The prairies are my race track,
The wild wind is my steed.

. . . . . . .
"I never cease my roaming;
I'm always hard to catch
But the pumpkin stays forever
In the same old garden patch.

"But I'd rather be a wild, wild weed
Than a sluggish yellow squash."

"All tumbleweeds hail from nowhere,
Their favorite residence;
But all are bound for the same graveyard—
Hung up in a barb-wire fence."

Of this lawless vagabond, H. Rea Woodman said:

. . . at your feet they lie,
Laughing, tumbling, go rolling by;
Over the blue-bound prairies leap,
No faith, no love, no tryst they keep;
Free and wild is the will they boast,
This tossing, fringed, homeless host,—
Vagrants always,
The Tumbleweed.42

Another poet, drawing from his own experience, reminisced:

There was a state called Kansas, it's a place I used to know,
And I'd like right well to see if I knew which way to go;
Its prairies they were level and as far as eye could see
There wasn't any house but ours, and not a fence or tree.
We had a field of second sod where tumbleweeds would grow
And in the fall when they were dry I liked to watch them blow.43

In Kansas the first killing frost usually came after the middle
of September. During late October, any day might bring blizzard
weather—a drop in temperature from 74 degrees above to 20 degrees

41 Hal G. Evarts, Tumbleweeds (Boston, 1923), 8, 107, 135.
below zero in as little as eight hours. No wonder the wise traveler made what haste he could to get to the mountains and back to timber country before winter set in!

Nature appeared gorgeous in Kansas, but she was harsh; she looked magnificent, but she was cruel; she spread an open and frank countenance, but deception was in her heart. The flora, except grass, gave little help to the white man in his conquest of the plains. In fact, as little Lucy Ferrier queried about the northern plains, one might ask of the central plains: "Say, did God make this country? ... He made the country down in Illinois, and He made the Missouri,... I guess somebody else made the country in these parts. It's not nearly so well done."

In Western Kansas and in the corresponding sections due north and south were stretches of country which were mile upon mile of level grassland containing under and above it the denizens of the country. This was no desert, for animal life was bountiful. Turkey, quail, and prairie plover moved in great droves and alighted in the grass and trees along the streams. Countless other wild fowl—ducks, geese, swan, brants, pelicans, and crane—followed the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers through Kansas. Grey wolves and coyotes numbered in the thousands, prairie dogs in the millions, while rabbits, swifts, and foxes were on the plains in great profusion. Amphibious animals, such as

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44 Wright, Dodge City, 34; O. P. Byers, "Personal Recollections of the Terrible Blizzard of 1886," Kansas State Historical Society Collections, XI (1912), 99-100. Kansas State Historical Society Collections are hereafter cited as Collections.

otter, beaver, muskrat, weasel, and mink also haunted the streams.
And Black and cinnamon bears, mountain lions, panthers, and cats-
mounts appeared on the Kansas plains in search of game. A panther
was seen in Riley County in 1854—"a very large one," according to
the report of a pioneer woman. Inman's story, "The Tragedy of Twin
Mounds," set not far from Salina, made use of a she-panther and her
three cubs as they followed the heavy growth of timber of the southern
elevation on the Saline-Elkhorn divide, and menaced the homeseekers of
the 1860's.

Time spent in vagabond hunting southeast of Fort Dodge in 1872
proved satisfactory to Richard Irving Dodge and his colleagues:

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>154</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>137</td>
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<tr>
<td>grouse</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>84</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>hawks</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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46 For a description of the animals of the north central plains
see George Catlin, North American Indians, Being Letters and Notes on
Their Manners, Customs, and Conditions, Written During Eight Years'
Travel Amongst the Wildest Tribes of Indians in North America, 1832-
1839 (Edinburgh, 1926), I, II, passim. For animals of the south central
plains see Wright, Dodge City, 70-75; Richard Irving Dodge, The Plains
of the Great West and Their Inhabitants, Being a Description of the
Plains, Game, Indians, &c. of the Great North American Desert (New York,
1877), passim.

47 Mrs. S. B. White, "My First Days in Kansas," Collections, XI
(1910), 552.

48 Based upon facts.

49 Henry Inman, "The Tragedy of Twin Mounds," Tales of the Trail.
Short Stories of Western Life (Topeka, 1917), 112-22.
38 butter-ducks. 3 owls.
3 shell-drakes. 2 badgers.
17 herons. 7 raccoons.
143 meadow larks, doves, robins, &c. 11 rattlesnakes.
1 blue bird, for his sweet heart's hat. Total bagged, 1262.50

In the early days, turkeys were abundant. Among the wooded hills and winding streams of Western Missouri and Eastern Kansas, turkeys were caught in traps. Julia Wood Gregory said of her girlhood days in the late 1850's:

In my girlhood days, Wild Deer & Turkeys was Plentiful One of my Favorite Stories Is The Turkey Traps that My Father Built & the result he obtained. It was made in a pen. So turkeys could not get out at top & sides & a trench dug down under Neath & baited with corn. He caught 13 at one time. We were sure excited & had a time getting them. Dressed taken some of our neighbors two & others one. We salted them down in a barrel had Turkey to eat when we wanted them.51

In a further description of these traps, Ruth Rolls Fisher recounted that a visit to the traps resulted in all that the horses could carry.

The turkey traps... were covered rail pens, built out in the woods where wild turkeys were plentiful. Trenches, leading into the pens were dug & corn sprinkled along in them. The turkeys, following the lure of the corn, soon found themselves inside the pen. Since... a turkey never looks down, always up, they were unable to find their way out.52

Even in the late 1860's and the early 70's flocks of wild turkey were so immense and noisy in Western Kansas that hunters several times took the birds for large herds of buffalo and saddled their horses and

50 Dodge, The Plains of the Great West, 118.
prepared to make a run on them.\textsuperscript{53} Another writer said that in the 70's the turkeys clustered on their roosts in creek timber "like apples left in the fall on a leafless tree."\textsuperscript{54}

Probably the best story about these magnificent bronze-feathered creatures of the prairie was Inman's "Sheridan's Roost," set near the Southern Kansas line. Here Sheridan's and Custer's troops were in the celebrated winter campaign of 1868-69 against the allied hostile tribes of the central and southwestern plains. The soldiers were without a ration except what the plains supplied.

There is a large body of timber on the North Fork of the Canadian river in the Indian Territory, about sixty miles directly south of the Kansas line, known as "Sheridan's Roost"--so marked on the maps. It was there that General Sheridan with Custer bagged an almost incredible number of wild turkeys while camping on the now historic spot.\textsuperscript{55}

Having found in the afternoon where the coveted birds were in the habit of congregating, a group of officers and soldiers went to the roosts at twilight.

Arriving at the very center of the vast sleeping-place, at the suggestion of General Custer each gentleman took a position on the ground, separated from each other some distance, to watch from their individual vantage-point until the moment should come for the birds to seek their accustomed resting-place.

They did not have to wait long. Before it had grown fairly dark, two or three flocks containing at least two hundred of the bronzed beauties came walking stealthily down the sheltered ravines leading out into the broad bottom where the great trees stood in aggregated clumps, . . . At the head of each flock . . . strutted a magnificent male bird in all the arrogance of his leadership, and on whose bronzed plumage the soft full moon which had just risen, glinted like a calcium light as its golden rays sifted through the interstices of the bare limbs of the winter-garbed forest.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{53}Wright, \textit{Dodge City}, 71-72.
\textsuperscript{54}W. E. Webb, \textit{Buffalo Land}, 204.
\textsuperscript{55}Henry Inman, "Sheridan's Roost," \textit{Tales of the Trail}, 172.
\textsuperscript{56}\textit{Ibid.}, 173-74.
A sharp shrill whistle was the signal from the leader that everything was all right. It was followed by "a tremendous fluttering of wings," as the turkeys moved upward and "alighted in the loftiest branches of the tallest trees." The birds had settled for slumber. Sheridan gave the word for the slaughter, and the birds "fell like leaves in October." Thus the plains furnished a good meal to the half-famished soldiers of the famous Seventh United States Cavalry and the gallant boys of the Kansas Regiment.\textsuperscript{57}

Prairie plover, common to nearly all the North American prairies, were similar to the English grouse or heath hens in size, color, and habits. In late July they made their appearance on the plains and prairies and stayed about three months, having come from higher altitudes, where they had gone earlier in the summer to raise their broods.\textsuperscript{58} Plover were declared to be beautiful game birds, superior to quail in flavor and juiciness, and were much hunted by distinguished sportsmen and others anxious to taste the easy fruits of the West. The birds rose singly when the hunter approached within forty or fifty yards and sailed gently away. Before the sportsman could reach his first bird, he often had shot down three or four more of them. In season it was easy enough to kill from one to two hundred and be back to Dodge City again in four hours.\textsuperscript{59} George Catlin told of killing five or six of these birds in one shot as they alighted in a solitary tree after fleeing before a prairie fire just out of Fort Leavenworth. Army men were enthusiastic hunters of the prairie plover, but the in-

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., 174-78.
\textsuperscript{59}Wright, \textit{Dodge City}, 72.
roads made by civilization soon sounded the death knell for this
bird. 60

C. P. Slane has written of the prairie chicken's morning call
along the old Military Road, which ran into Salt Creek Valley from
Government Hill:

When the prairie chicken waked you with his far-off "Whoop-a-choogoo!"
It was the airly days of Kansas and you'd plenty of work to do.
The sun was jest a-lightin' up the far-off spread-out plain,
Where the burnt and blackened prairie had been bleached by the rain,
And the airly springtime grasses was a-showin'a shade of green,—
- The furder on the greener, where a feller hasn't seen,
And the rosom-weed in the stubble was just a-pokin' through,
When the prairie chicken waked you with his far-off "Whoop-a-choo-
goo!" 61

Underground, the many prairie dog villages afforded homes for
owls, frogs, and rattlesnakes. The owls lacked trees for lodges, and
the frogs were without ponds, and the snakes had no better food sup-
ply than was found at hand in the prairie pups, which fattened them
to "an immense magnitude." 62 Because they found the prairie dog,
really a squirrel, an interesting little animal, many a traveler
stopped in those days to watch the little burrowers build their towns.
Some members of the Lewis and Clark expedition poured into one of the
holes leading to a prairie dog's subterranean home five barrels of
water, but they did not fill the hole. The prairie dog was soaked
out of his home, however. 63

60Catlin, North American Indians, II, 43.
61C. P. Slane, "When the Prairie Chicken Waked You," Flash-
lights and Territorial Reminiscences of Kansas in Verse (Cincinnati,
1900), 30.
62George Wilkins Kendall, Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Ex-
pedition (New York, 1844), I, 92.
63M'Vicker (ed.), History of the Expedition Under the Command
 of Captains Lewis and Clarke, I, 40.
In *The Border Rover*, set along the Santa Fe Trail, Emerson Bennett, who wrote many popular novels about the West of the middle nineteenth century, made some interesting observations about prairie dogs.

They select for the site of their village, or town, a large level of sandy soil; and their dwellings are made by throwing up the earth, in a conical shape, to a height of two or three feet, and having a hole in the apex, or summit, which descends vertically to the base, and thence obliquely, for a considerable distance, into the earth. These earthen houses are constructed with so much order and regularity as to give the spaces between them the appearance of streets, and not unfrequently they cover an area of several miles in extent. Owls and rattlesnakes are their companions—the former hopping about at twilight, and feeding on cameleons and lizards, and the latter not scruppling to fill their maws with the young, fat pups of their hospitable entertainers. On the approach of danger, the dogs run into their holes, and then thrust forth their heads, and set up a series of sharp squeaking barks. When the danger becomes imminent, they retire from sight altogether; but after waiting awhile in silence, they peep forth very cautiously; and as soon as they discover the coast to be clear, they come out chattering, and have a merry time of it. They have laws and regulations, which they strictly enforce; and a big dog, in the centre of the village, appears to be chief magistrate. 64

Another observer of prairie dogs, a young Englishman, spoke of the animals as building levees around their villages to keep out inundations, and of heaving up grass but not the flowers in their digging operations. 65 The timberland dwellers found the prairie animal eccentric indeed, since it went down to its home, not up—into a tree. Another oddity which the early settlers found about the gopher, as it was later called, was its earthpouch—an open sack, on either side of the gopher's head, used for carrying excavated dirt to the surface. 66

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William Becknell, who killed a dog to taste the flesh, found it "strong and unpalatable."  

Dodge, long an observer of plains habits, remarked that the prairie dog was put there to convert grass into flesh and thus furnish food for the carnivora of the plains—coyotes, foxes, and wolves.  

Their food is simply the grass in the immediate vicinity of their burrows, which is cut close to the ground by their flat shovel teeth; and, as they sometimes live twenty miles from any water, it is to be supposed that they get moisture enough from the dew on the grass, on which they feed chiefly at night, or that (as is generally supposed) they sink wells from their under-ground habitations, by which they descend low enough to get their supply. In the winter, they are for several months invisible, existing undoubtedly, in a torpid state, as they certainly lay by no food for that season—nor can they procure any.

Occasionally from behind a bunch of reddish brown grass a long-eared jack rabbit bounced forth "in a leap that would make a horse envious," as Mark Twain said, and then the rabbit stretched his long body over the prairie. This animal stuck close to the open country, for there was his freedom, or he crouched low under a clump of grass or hid in a sand plum thicket in the hope of losing his pursuer. When thoroughly frightened, as by a shot from a gun, the jack rabbit laid his long ears down on his back, straightened himself out "like a yard-stick" every spring he made, and scattered miles behind him with an indifference that was "enchanting."

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70 Mark Twain, Roughing It (Hartford, 1884), 32.
Rattlesnakes were proverbially abundant on the plains. Occasionally, the plainsman's horse dislodged a rattler surrounded by five or six little ones basking in the sun. Giving a rattle, the mother would open wide her mouth, which in an instant the entire brood had entered, to come forth from this living tomb only when all was safe.\(^7\)

These snakes were found along the great trails and in the grassland. They were harbored in sod houses, in frame houses, in the hay mows, under the potatoes in cellars, in woodpiles, and along dusty country roads.\(^7\) A preacher was reported to have killed forty-six rattlers in the Neosho Valley during the summer of 1856.\(^7\)

From a tuft of brown grass or the tangled vines of the prairie pea in the dog days of August jumped huge grasshoppers in a flurry of saltatory ecstasy. Although the plains Indians scorned eating insects, because they could get buffalo and venison, it was reported that some tribes—probably those of the desert—used grasshoppers in soups, baked them, and concocted other delicacies with this insect as the chief ingredient.\(^7\) A grasshopper hunt by means of which beaters, armed with long branches, rounded up enough insects to fill a hole

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\(^7\)Youngman, *Gleanings*, 18.


ten feet in diameter to the depth of four feet, might not cover more than three or four acres. For winter provision, the hoppers were crushed to a paste between large stones, flavored with herbs, and dried in the sun. The grasshopper later invaded the plains in vast hordes, but the white settlers were never as ingenious as the red men in putting the insects to culinary use; rather, it was the grasshopper who did the feasting, for it helped itself to the good things that white men had planted—ate its fill, laid its eggs, and flew away.

The chief outlaws of the plains were the coyote and the wolf. The coyote, he of the querulous night howlings, has been called "a long, slim, sick and sorry-looking skeleton, with a gray wolf-skin stretched over it, a tolerably bushy tail that forever sags down with a despairing expression of forsakenness and misery, a furtive and evil eye, and a long, sharp face, with slightly lifted lip and exposed teeth." Coyotes often traveled in bands of a hundred or so.

The American gray wolf crept around the edges of a stream or a gully in the misty morning or at twilight to pull down a struggling calf or a weary cow from a herd of bison or antelope. Wolves continually hung around buffalo herds, according to explorer John Fré-

75 Youngman, Gleanings, 183.

76 Twain, Roughing It, 48-49.

77 Wright, Dodge City, 70.

But even more preferable to them was a meal from the remains of a dead animal left by the Indians or by white hunters, whom wolves sometimes followed like dogs to pick up food left on the trail. Frequently wolves entered camps at night and stole what they could find that was edible without disturbing the sleeping men. Dodge called wolves cowardly; one alone did not possess the courage even to attack a sheep.

Novelists, however, have occasionally taken liberties in describing wolves to increase the dramatic effect of their work. In the novel, The Stormy Petrel, Henry Clayton, the hero, was attacked by wolves while he was riding near the Oregon Trail. Clayton got caught in a buffalo jam and in a storm at night. Having lost his trail he was beset by a pack of wolves and kept them at bay while protected on two sides by a ledge of rock and a steep river bank. In the light of a fire set to some driftwood, he watched the night out while the pack kept up the siege until dawn, with an occasional charge more desperate than before, when they would venture closer, to yell and snarl louder and snap their teeth.

During the night of horror, the flickering fire and flashes of lightning followed by deafening thunder, revealed the beseeching force, some sitting upon their haunches, some prowling round, but all fearfully near and on watch. With the dawn of morning, the disappointed pack slunk away to their dens.

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79 John C. Fremont, The Life of Col. John Charles Fremont and His Narrative of Explorations and Adventures, in Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon and California (New York, 1856), 90.
80 Bennett, The Border Rover, 357; Wright, Dodge City, passim.
William Kennedy Marshall in *The Entering Wedge* made use of the same license when Laura Bayard was harassed by a pack of big gray wolves.

Emerson Bennett recorded in one of his novels that Adele and Roland were able to carry off half of a buffalo calf, pulled down and being feasted on by a pack of wolves. Although the wolves howled and snarled for the meat, they made no attempt to attack the human beings. Gray wolves often traveled in groups of ten or fifteen.

The most efficient exterminator of wolves was poison.

To give some idea of the number of wolves on the prairie in the buffalo range, I will give an account of two men formerly conductors of the mail from Independence to Santa Fe. I think it was in 1854 or 1855 that they went to Walnut creek and built a small mud fort, and in summer they would sell what few knick-knacks they could to traders and other passing travelers, and in winter their business was to kill a buffalo and cut the meat in small pieces and scatter it about in all directions a half a mile or so from camp, and so bait the wolves for about two days. Meantime, all hands were preparing meat in pieces about two inches square, cutting a slit in the middle and opening it and putting a quantity of strychnine in the center and closing the parts upon it. When a sufficient amount was prepared, and the wolves were well baited, they would put out the poisoned meat. One morning after putting out the poison, they picked up sixty-four wolves, and one of them over a mile and a half from camp. The proceeds from that winter's hunt were over four thousand dollars.

On some occasions when wolves were poisoned on the plains, flocks of ravens which ate the flesh of the wolves died immediately.

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84 Bennett, *The Border Rover*, 356.
85 Wright, *Dodge City*, 70.
86 Ralph P. Bieber (ed.), *Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade, 1844-1847, by James Josiah Webb* (Glendale, 1931), 163-64.
87 Wright, *Dodge City*, 70.
Skunks were numerous in early days, and many people who slept outdoors were bitten by them. In 1865, ten people in the neighborhood of Fort Lodge died from bites of skunks affected with hydrophobia. Mad wolves also caused terror on the plains.\textsuperscript{38}

At the slightest scent of man, the leader of a herd of antelope (the pronghorn) looked up—his hearing and sight were keen, too—and signaled to his herd that danger was near by twitching the muscles under the white patch on his rump. At this sign, the antelope dashed off, swift as a shot in a flight that was purposely irregular, to give the herd a chance to keep their eyes on the pursuer while the animals sped to safety. These were among the fleetest animals on the plains.\textsuperscript{39}

Said a traveler as he viewed an antelope bounding along the plain near the stream, the Big Blue, it seemed "scarcely to touch the ground, so exceedingly light and agile" were its motions.\textsuperscript{40} One antelope with its foreleg broken by a rifle ball escaped after a long chase with a good horse.\textsuperscript{41}

Antelope were said to be great in numbers on the open range. Lewis and Clark recorded that the expedition saw three thousand antelope "at a single glance" on a ridge where green grass had sprung up after a summer fire. In the 1860's as many as two thousand in a single herd of antelope were storm driven close against the buildings at Fort

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., 70, 72; Ise, Sod and Stubble, 37.

\textsuperscript{39}E. E. Webb, Buffalo Land, 138.

\textsuperscript{40}John K. Townsend, Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River, . . . , in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, III, 156.

\textsuperscript{41}Kendall, Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition, I, 94.
Dodge.\(^\text{92}\)

In season, deer grazed on the plains. At the sight of man they lifted their heads high, gave the well-known warning whistle, and then gazed with mild eyes at the intruder, only to go on grazing with unconcern.\(^\text{93}\) Deer were reported in Cherokee County in 1867,\(^\text{94}\) and two deer wandered down from the Blue River to the vicinity of Louisville as late as 1873.\(^\text{95}\)

Elk were found in bands of fifty or more in their favorite resorts or coverts at river crossings, as at the Sawlog Creek, south fork of the Pawnee River.\(^\text{96}\) The Townsend party on the way to the Oregon country in the 1830's saw elk in a large band just north of Kansas, around the Platte River crossing.\(^\text{97}\) But elk disappeared soon after the white man came upon the plains.

In The Stormy Petrel, John Bowles gave a description of a fine elk up on the Republican fork, near what is now the northern boundary of the State.

While contemplating this beautiful panorama, every moment changing under the swaying breeze and the shadows of fleecy clouds that sailed over the sun, he [Frank Clayton] heard a

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\(^{92}\)M.Vickar (ed.), *History of the Expedition Under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clarke*, I, 93; Wright, *Dodge City*, 74.

\(^{93}\)Kendall, *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition*, I, 167.

\(^{94}\)Eugene F. Ware, "History of Sun-Gold Section," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, VI (1937), 305.

\(^{95}\)George A. Root, "Reminiscences of William Darneel," *Collections*, XVII (1928), 511.

\(^{96}\)Wright, *Dodge City*, 73.

\(^{97}\)Townsend, *Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains*, in Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXI, 159.
sharp whistle or hiss, like escaping steam under great pressure. His horse wheeled quickly round, and there standing but a hundred yards away was one of the most beautiful animals he had ever beheld. A large elk with full antlers had come up out of the valley and, seeing an intruder, had given this signal to warn him off the monarch's domain. His head erect, his muzzle protruding, his large eyes gazing scornfully, filled with wonder at such audacity, his form the very embodiment of grace, his chestnut coat of velvet with the sheen of satin in the morning sun, gave him the pose and almost the semblance of an imperious and queenly woman.

The culture of the plains was greatly influenced by the horse. Cabeza de Vaca, Coronado, and other Spaniards had loosed and lost blooded horses on the plains, and for these the Nueces country of Texas became a natural home. The ponies soon took over the hills, canyons, and valleys, and came down onto the plains for grazing and exercise. The horse, which had been brought to the New World by the white man, was quickly adapted to Indian culture. It enabled the Indian to strengthen his civilization; for, like the Bedouin, the Indian loved his horse. Besides companionship, it furnished him with better transportation, a wider hunting range, and a means for giving signals by maneuvering atop a hill. The Kiowa Indians and the Missouris were mounted by 1682; by 1784 horses were in common use all over the plains. The horse culture of the plains Indians lasted until the red men were driven onto reservations in the 1880's.

The speed and endurance of the hardy plains horses gave rise to legends among different tribes, such as the Kiowa legend about the Wild White Horse—the Ghost horse.100

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Although the doughty mustangs were seen often on the southern plains, where they bred, they also came out upon the central plains and were taken across this section by the Indians after their capture. Singly and in herds wild horses crossed Western Kansas to find better grazing; but the State was not a suitable place for their winter home, because of the terrible blizzards and the dearth of protective covering.

Thomas C. Hinkle has told the story of a wild horse, Black Storm, who spent a great part of his life in Kansas. Many of the episodes about Black Storm were based on the experiences of a real horse. After the horse broke free and went into the Far West,

It was known that he survived not only the savage winter in the wild, as . . . described, but others also, and there were scars on his hind legs, near the hamstrings, scars that those who saw them said could have been made by nothing but gray wolves; so it is most certain he battled and won in his battling with these beasts. 101

In explanation of the taming of Black Storm, the author said:

As soon as Black Storm had found a man he could trust he turned about from the wild outlaw he had been to the most tractable and teachable of horses, and withal, one of the most lovable. Joe's love for his horse made him extremely patient with him, and as soon as Black Storm knew what Joe wanted he did it instantly. 102

Pike's company first saw wild horses near what is now the Kansas–Colorado line. 103 When the Ottawa Indians came to Kansas from Ohio in December, 1836, the wild horses in the Marais des Cygnes Valley afforded many a thrilling chase for the young braves. This valley also teemed with deer, turkey, prairie chicken, and quail. And over in the

101 Thomas C. Hinkle, Black Storm. A Horse of the Kansas Hills (New York, 1929), x.
102 Ibid., 17.
valley of the Neosho River, buffalo and antelope were found. Wright mentioned the large herds of wild horses on the Southern Kansas plains in the 1860's, and Webb saw a small herd roaming the plains in the early 70's. But horse hunters and settlers soon captured and drove the remaining bands to the extreme West.

Up to a certain time the herds of horses had increased both naturally and from the escape of domestic horses which had been brought onto the plains. In the early 1840's Frémont lost several domestic horses to a band of wild ones prowling near his camp. Encamped upon the prairie near Wakerusa River, the Joel Palmer group, after considerable pursuit, abandoned some mules to a wild herd of horses in the spring of 1845.

Catlin averred that the wild horse was the fleetest animal on the prairies, and often a winter's campaign was necessary to effect the capture of a band of them. To corral and capture the mares, it became necessary sometimes to dispose of the stallions by shooting them.

For the Indian the buffalo furnished just about every necessity: their flesh was food; their blood and stomach juices furnished drink; their skins were converted into wigwams, robes, and beds; their hides made moccasins and upper clothing; their hair was twisted into ropes.

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104Wright, Dodge City, 70.
105W. E. Webb, Buffalo Land, 196.
107Joel Palmer, Journal of Travels over the Rocky Mountains, to the Mouth of the Columbia River; Made During the Years 1845 and 1846; . . ., in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXX, 35-36.
109Wright, Dodge City, 91-82.
and tool handles and was woven into cloth; their uncured hides assumed the shape of pots; their bones were fashioned into awls, shields, and needles; their hooves yielded glue; their sinews became threads and bowstrings; their horns supplied bows, cups, and spoons; their gall stones served as medicine; and their dry chips were used for fuel.

From April until October, travelers on the plains found vast herds which perceptibly were one herd of buffalo grazing along the swells and rises, in vales and on the level stretches of Kansas—the land appearing black and teeming with the shaggy monsters, some of which—the full grown bulls—weighed three thousand pounds. John B. Wyeth saw them "in frightful droves, as far as the eye could reach, appearing at a distance as if the ground itself were moving like the sea." Wright testified that he had traveled through buffaloes along the Arkansas river for two hundred miles, almost one continuous herd, as close together as it is customary to herd cattle. You might go north or south as far as you pleased and there would seem no diminution of their numbers. When they were suddenly frightened and stampeded they made a roar like thunder and the ground seemed to tremble. When after nightfall, they came to the river, particularly when it was in flood, their immense numbers, in their headlong plunge would make you think, by the thunderous noise, that they had dashed all the water from the river.

110Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXVIII, 39.

111John B. Wyeth, Oregon; or a Short History of a Long Journey from the Atlantic Ocean to the Region of the Pacific by Land, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXI, 51.

112Wright, Lodge City, 74.
Another writer recorded that "... when frightened, their prolonged bellowings, the tramp of their feet and the dust they raise resemble some grand tempest with its deep murmurings, its pealings of thunder, and strong gusts of wind carrying with it clouds of dust."

W. H. Ryus, a driver of the overland mail coach from Fort Larned to Fort Lyon on the Santa Fe Trail, said:

Sometimes the coach would travel for a hundred miles through the buffalo herds, never for a moment getting out of sight of them; often we saw fifty thousand to a hundred thousand on a single journey out or in. The Indians used to call them their cattle, and claimed to own them. They did not, like the white man, take out only the tongue, or hump, and leave all the rest to dry upon the prairie, but ate every last morsel, even to the intestines. They said the whites were welcome to all they could eat or haul away, but they did not like to see so much meat wasted as was our custom.

Another observer of buffalo on the Kansas plains during the early 1870's, "admiring the multitude of those creatures," tried to count the compact herds, some of which contained five hundred and others five thousand. He averaged the herds at two thousand each and counted sixty-three herds in sight. There were more animals on the horizon--"too far away to make any guess on."

Sometimes the herds, during the first half of the nineteenth century, touched the prairie sections, as they pushed eastward for the early prairie grass on their way north in the spring. Buffalo once ranged between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi River, but civilization had forced them westward, and their favorite range during the

113 Youngman, Gleanings, 178.
nineteenth century was the plains. 116

Spaniards, French, and Americans marveled at these monarchs of the plains. Many a time at high noon or at the end of the day they followed deep and well-trodden trails of the beasts to their water holes.

Here and there on the plains were found dug-up places, fifteen or twenty feet in diameter and two feet deep, round trampled spots with matted hunks of red and brown hair clinging to shrubs and high grasses. These were buffalo wallows, used by the beasts to brush off insects and to cool themselves in the mud. Each spring the wallows turned into fairy rings of pale green new grass and tiny flowers. 117 Millions of such rings were made on the level lowlands. Other rings were made where the herds bedded down at night and where the bulls trampled around the herds during the calving season to protect the cows and calves from wolves.118

In some places the salty alkali earth furnished tasty minerals for the buffalo. Here the animals pawed loose the grass and dirt in search of the palatable materials. Rocks or embankments of clay or gypsum were often used by the bulls for sharpening their horns or rubbing their haunches.119

Sometimes an old buffalo bull was found lagging behind the herd at one of these places, where ensued a battle for his life, such as the one described by Inman:

116Catlin, North American Indians, I, 279.
117Ibid., 281-82.
118Sright, Dodge City, 77.
119Ibid.
Rising suddenly to the top of a divide with a party of friends in 1866, we saw standing below us in the valley an old buffalo bull, the very picture of despair. Surrounding him were seven gray wolves in the act of challenging him to mortal combat. The poor beast, undoubtedly realizing the hopelessness of his situation, had determined to die game. His great shaggy head, filled with burrs, was lowered to the ground as he confronted his would-be executioners; his tongue, black and parched, lolled out of his mouth, and he gave utterance at intervals to a suppressed roar.

The wolves were sitting on their haunches in a semicircle immediately in front of the tortured beast, and every time that the fear-stricken buffalo gave vent to his hoarsely modulated groan, the wolves howled in concert in most mournful cadence.

After contemplating his antagonists for a few moments, the bull made a dash at the nearest wolf, tumbling him howling over the silent prairie; but while this diversion was going on in front, the remainder of the pack started for his hind legs to hamstring him. Upon this the poor beast turned to the point of attack, only to receive a repetition of it in the same vulnerable place by the wolves, who had as quickly turned also and fastened themselves on his heels again. His hind quarters now streamed with blood, and he began to show signs of great physical weakness. He did not dare to lie down; that would have been instantly fatal. By this time he had killed three of the wolves, or so maimed them that they were entirely out of the fight.

At this juncture the suffering animal was mercifully shot, and the wolves allowed to batten on his thin and tough carcass.

In April, May, or early June the buffalo calves were born, normally with tawny or red coats that turned dark during the late summer.

"So far as early settlers know, only one white buffalo has been known," said a man who was long a resident of the plains. The white robe sold for a thousand dollars. In grown buffalo, the color of their coats varied as the season changed from warm to cold; they turned quite light in early spring because of winter exposure; the new coat of hair was almost jet black.

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121 Wright, Dodge City, 197.
November saw some of these beasts migrating into the sunny winter ranges of Texas while others remained in sheltered nooks on the prairie.\textsuperscript{122}

The flesh of the buffalo was the chief staple of the plains Indian, although elk, antelope, bear, and small game were occasionally used with maize, wild rice, other seeds, wild roots, and plains fruits in the domestic economy. Nevertheless, the destruction of the American bison helped end the red man's civilization.\textsuperscript{123}

Thus, amid the rigors of the plains had developed hardy native fauna, all of which, save the coyote and wolf, were grass-eaters. All could exist with little or no actual water supply. The antelope showed great ingenuity in finding water; and the buffalo often went without water as long as two days in summer, longer in winter.\textsuperscript{124} Snakes, jack rabbits, and prairie dogs seemed to live without a visible water supply. All the prairie denizens were shy and possessed great vitality, as the white man soon learned. The antelope was said to be able to carry more lead than any other animal its size.\textsuperscript{125} Buffalo, although known to have taken many a shot elsewhere, were vulnerable to bullets near the heart.\textsuperscript{126} One hunter recorded an instance of shooting a buffalo calf dead, as he thought, after which an accompanying soldier cut out its tongue. A moment later the calf got up and ran over the

\textsuperscript{123}Ibid., 278.
\textsuperscript{124}Bodge, \textit{Dodge City}, 74.
\textsuperscript{125}Dodge, \textit{The Hunting Grounds of the Great West}, 301.
The pushing of the railroad westward through Kansas foretold the passing of the buffalo. Inman has written of the countless herds:

I saw a herd delay a railroad train from 9 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Countless millions, divided by its leaders and captains like an immense army! How many millions there were, none could guess. On each side of us, and as far as we could see—our vision was limited only by the extended horizon of the flat prairie—the whole vast area was black with the surging mass of affrighted animals, as they rushed onward to the south in a mad stampede.

At another time Gen. Sheridan, Custer, Sully, and myself rode through another and larger one, for three consecutive days. This was in the fall of 1868. It seems almost impossible to those who have seen them, as numerous apparently as the sand of the seashore, feeding on the illimitable natural pastureage of the Great Plains, that the buffalo should have become practically extinct.

A deer could stand "as firm on his pins as ever" after two shots had pierced him, and was known to bound away only slightly more spirited by the bullets. Coyotes, wolves, and swifts were readily susceptible to commercial poisoning, as was the raven. The beaver and otter found on the southwestern plains did not long endure the white man's civilization, but most of the typical plains animals were very hardy and held tenaciously to life. Such stamina was necessary in this environment.

To the white man, not the least distressing and harassing of the wild occupants of the plains were the savage tribes of plains Indians.

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127 Wright, Dodge City, 80.
129 Kendall, The Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition, I, 168.
130 Wright, Dodge City, 70-71.
131 For a concise treatment of the plains Indians see Clark Wissler, North American Indians of the Plains (New York, 1927); Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains; Connelley, History of Kansas, Chap. XI; Richard Irving Dodge, Our Wild Indians: Thirty-three Years' Personal Experience Among the Red Men of the Great West (Hartford, 1834).
who indulged in war dances from which they went forth to slaughter and carnage. Plains Indians seemed happiest when they were astride their ponies, barbing with arrows either palefaces, buffalo, or Indians of hostile tribes. Their exultations came from the hunt or warfare.

The coming of the superiorly organized white men spelled ruin for the Indian. The red men of the plains knew little suffering other than that which the white man brought to them—smallpox, cholera, debauchery caused by whisky, and the loss of Indian culture. They had been abundantly fed, clothed, and comfortably sheltered; they had possessed great numbers of horses and resources from which to replenish them whenever necessary; buffalo were usually abundant and gave more than was required for their existence; and in such liberal surroundings the Indians had grown large, strong, self-reliant, and brave. Then the white man came and forced upon them changed conditions. Catlin, long a friend of the Indian tribes of the plains and a student of their customs, declared that the North American Indian in his native state was "an honest, hospitable, faithful, brave, warlike, cruel, revengeful, relentless,—but honourable, contemplative and religious being."

There were many obstacles to the white man's progress across the Kansas plains, obstacles of far greater force against the timber civilisation of the paleface than against the plains culture of the Indians. This vast flat land gave many a stern rebuff before it yielded to the caressing hand of civilized men.

One of the harsh characteristics of the Kansas plains was its sub-

132 Percival G. Lowe, "Kansas As Seen in the Indian Territory," Transactions, IV (1890), 362.

humid climate. The poets have adequately written of dry weather.

Elizabeth Akers has aptly said:

The sun uprises, large and red,
The dawn is lost in a sultry glow;
Like a furnace roof is the heaven o'erhead,
Like tinder the thirsty earth below;
Hushed is the grateful voice of streams,
The famished fountains and brooks are dry;
And day by day do the burning beams
Pour from the pitiless sky.

All things languish and fade and pine;
Buds are withered before they bloom;
The blighted leaves of the window-vine
Chase each other about the room;
Vapors gather, then melt in light;
Rain-clouds promise, then burn away;
And all hearts faint as the sultry night
Follows the sultry day.

Sadly down the orchard lines
The apples shrivel and shrink and fall;
The scanty clusters among the vines
Wilt, half-ripe, on the scorching wall,
The peaches perish before their prime,
The trim espaliers are bare and lorn—
Dry and dead, as in winter time,
Stands the ranks of the curling corn.\(^{134}\)

Sophie Molk has spoken of

Untimely ripe the stinted wheat;
Sparse gold tassels sway in the heat.
Burning with fever rye and oats,
All nature has donned sickly costs.\(^{135}\)

The effect of the sizzling hot weather on other crops was pictured in Ellen P. Allerton's "The Fields of Corn":

Fierce is the breath of the July weather;
Tropic heats on the winds are borne;
The grass and the clover are dying together;
Yet brave and green stand the fields of corn.


\(^{135}\)Sophie Molk, "Drought," A Flame Still Burning, 15.
Still, while the grass and clover are dying
With strong roots deep in the prairies broad,
Plumed and tasseled with banners flying,
The tall corn tosses each lordly crest. 136

In a more playful vein, Carleton Everett Knox wrote "A Dry Weather Shower":

Did you ever live in Kansas along in summer time
When thermometers commenced to jump instead of slowly climb?
A cloud would show up in the south and cover half the sky;
We'd gamble it would surely rain, we'd think it was no lie.
We'd hustle in the new mown hay, we'd roll the rain barrel out,
And tubs we'd gather from the shed to place beneath the spout;
We'd gather in our new hatched chicks for fear that they might drown;
And when we'd finished we would wait to watch the rain come down.
The wind would come in fitful gusts, our windows then we'd close.
And we'd holler to the kids, "Come in, you'll wet your clothes."
And then we'd stand and wait for it to splash against the pane;
It was a regular Kansas shower—without one drop of rain. 137

A song from the Osage Indians spoke of the need for rain on the corn:

When the wind blows through the cornfield
The tall stalks whisper... whisper to one another
When the wind blows through the cornfield
I know the stalks are urging each other
To produce golden ears.
When the wind blows and the corn stalks whisper
I know they are praying for rain. 138

But occasionally floods also beat down upon the hard, baked flat country. Then, too, there were winds of high velocity at certain seasons: hot winds in summer which blew across the vegetation and seared it as with a blast from a hot furnace, followed often by drought and

piercing sandstorms; next, that malevolent grizzly of the plains—
the blizzard—which swept over them until they became stark and life-
less; then, the curse of hail and tornadoes, either one of which could
riddle a ripening crop in a few minutes. These elements were destruc-
tive of nearly everything but grass; but a prairie fire quickly
blackened the landscape and consumed every bit of vegetation above
the ground.

Dodge has aptly said:

The atmospheric phenomena of the plains are on the most
magnificent scale. Thunderstorms are rare on the high plains,
but when they do occur they excel all the elements of
grandeur and sublimity. Nowhere is the lightning-flash a more
vivid and blinding glare. Nowhere is the crash of the thunder
more stunning, nor its roll more deep and prolonged. Nowhere
does a man feel more intensely the nearness and power of the
Creator. For at least six months, from November to April, of
every twelve, "the wind is never weary on the high plains," and
wind-storms may occur at any season. The storms of each lo-
cality generally come from one particular direction, and, at
whatsoever season occurring, are often perfect tornadoes, over-
turning and destroying everything movable.

. . . . . . .

It is not necessary that the wind should blow particularly
strong to bring on... a sand storm, but that it have an in-
clination to the ground. . . one of these impinging winds
picks up everything—dust, sand, and pebbles of the size of a
pea—drives them through the air, rendering it most painful,
and even dangerous to open the eyes, and shutting out almost
entirely the light of day. . . . I have frequently watched
through a window the phenomena of these "sand-storms." Even
though the wind did not appear to blow hard, and the surface
passed over seemed to offer but little of dust or sand, the
cloud of flying particles was so thick, that at many times it
was impossible to see twenty feet ahead. No crevice is too
small for many of these particles, which penetrate into even
the most tightly closed room, and no end of anathemas and
feminine "bad words" had been levished on these "sand-storms"
by the fair followers of the drum.139

139Dodge, The Plains of the Great West, 43-44.
The only note of solace was that all these storms were "exceptional, the summer and fall weather of the high plains being as near perfect as it is possible to imagine."140

Hinkle gave a realistic description of one of these storms in Kansas and the reactions of a lame horse battling with the elements.

There was a reddish tinge in the air, and the sun, that had been brightly shining, had become dim and almost hidden in a strange darkened veil. The wind that blew almost constantly across the plains had ceased. Ground birds that had been flitting about over the prairie a short time before had now vanished, and not even a rabbit nor a prairie dog could be seen. . . . Black Storm saw, coming down from the north, a vast, swiftly moving, reddish-looking cloud—a cloud as far on either side as the eye could see—one of the worst dust storms in the history of Western Kansas was bearing down upon him.

. . . . . .

Before he had gone a dozen rods the dust storm struck him. Instinctively he shut his eyes and at the same time coughed, for in that instant the dust was in his nostrils, his throat, and he even felt the sting of it in his closed eyes.

Although the late evening sun had been still faintly shining through a veil, the day now suddenly went almost dark and there was a wild, incessant roaring about his ears. Like a thing alive it seized him, whipped him, jerked him, hissed and howled, the while driving sand and grit in his mouth, his nose, his eyes, his ears, and at times beating him so violently he was almost knocked from his feet. Blinking his eyes, coughing and half choking, weaving and battling to keep his feet, he rushed forward, going with the whirling, rushing wind and dust.

If it had not been for his wounded foot, Black Storm would have run with the seething storm and in all probability would have found a low ravine or a wood along a stream that would have given him some shelter.141

The horse drifted in the direction of the blowing sand until hailstones began to fall which dissolved into a cold rain. Finally, the weather cleared to fair and invigorating atmosphere.142

140Ibid., 44.
141Hinkle, Black Storm, 140-42.
142Ibid., 144-45. For a description of a blizzard see Randall Parrish, Molly McDonald, A Tale of the Old Frontier (Chicago, 1912), 264-73. The norther hit Southwest Kansas near Fort Dodge in May, 1868.
Otto Schrag in *The Locusts* described a Western Kansas storm as it descended on two pickers of buffalo bones in the 1870's:

The men growled inaudible words when the first real gust of sand struck. They felt a thousand pinpricks on the backs of their necks, above the line of the collar, and in their ears and against their chins. Then the wind ceased to blow from a single direction. It seemed to come from everywhere at once, and the sand was all around them. It was on their lips, in their mouths, in their eyes, their nostrils, and their ears. They spat it out. They dug it out of the corners of their eyes with sandy fingers. They sneezed. They ran their fingers under their collars. They drew their hats farther down over their eyes. But nothing helped, and the grains of sand began to itch in their hair and on their bodies.

They kept their eyes closed to slits. . . . Then the rain came, waves of it. It took the sand from the air; it cleaned their faces and washed the grains of sand deeper down under their collars. They began to shiver with cold, and they moved closer together. . . . When the storm abated for a moment, they heard the howl of a coyote. Then the sound stopped suddenly and there was silence except for the gurgling of the water flowing past them down the hill. Then came a terrible thunderclap; the sky seemed to descend on them.

"Hail!" George roared suddenly.

As suddenly as it had begun, the hail ceased. The wind died down and only the rain remained. 143

Many early settlers and numerous authors have taken up their pens to describe an actual prairie fire or to use it for dramatic effect.

For instance:

When conditions were ripe for one of those fires—that is, when the growth of grass had been abundant, but had become dry, and when a brisk, dry wind was blowing, the phenomenon was one of marvelous beauty, if viewed from a point of safety, but of peril and terror when the beholder stood in its way. The speed of the fire over the prairies depended of course largely upon the wind and was therefore a very variable quantity; but that at times it exceeded that of the fleetest horses there is abundant evidence. Likewise the intensity of the fire varied greatly; when driven by a strong wind over areas of tall dry grass it was a veritable traveling furnace, and no

matter how great its speed nor how quickly past, it was death to whatever it touched. In other instances, with a mild wind and short grass, the line of flame could anywhere be crossed with impunity. The spectacle of a strong prairie fire at night was one of the most magnificent that nature affords. The long sweeping line of fire stretching from one part of the horizon to the other, the lambent flames soaring high into the air, the flitting forms of animals driven suddenly from cover, and the reflection of the brilliant light in the clouds, composed a scene of truly terrible sublimity.144

Although persons in danger of an approaching prairie fire were often too beset with fear to think clearly, the method usually followed was to backfire an area large enough to protect from flames those who were imperiled. Then the devastating flames would pass round the prepared island of refuge. Lewis and Clark recorded how the quick thinking of a plains mother saved her halfbreed child from encroaching flames. The child lay flat on the ground while over him the mother spread a green buffalo hide. Under this the child remained unharmed.145

The almost annual occurrence of great fires all over the prairie and plains, and the early renewal of grass thereafter, gave rise to Indian legends explaining these natural phenomena, as this one from the Pawnee storehouse of stories:

After the conflagration had subsided, one whose duty in the upper sphere had been to provide water, carried it in a basket; and as she walked, drop after drop fell through upon the parched region below, causing it to revive. Awakened Nature blossomed into new beauty, and all who had escaped the terrible fire fiend, returned to take possession of the country. The Water-Maiden still carries the basket; and its contents, which never grow less, still fall in gentle showers, to refresh the land.146

146 Carrie De Voe, The Legends of the Kaw. The Folklore of the Indians of the Kansas River Valley (Kansas City, Missouri, 1934), 21.
In "Kit Carson’s Pawnee Rock Story" a band of Indians, having failed to carry forward their attack by firearms, attempted to burn out several trappers who sought refuge on Pawnee Rock. One of the trappers said of the fire:

The spectacle for a short interval was indescribably grand. The sun was shining with all the powers of its rays on the huge clouds of smoke as they rolled down from the north, tinting them with a glorious crimson. I had barely time to get under shelter of a projecting point of the Rock when the wind and smoke swept down to the ground, and instantly we were enveloped in the darkness of midnight. We could not discern a single object, neither Indians, horses, the prairie, nor sun—and what a terrible wind! I have never experienced its equal in violence since. We stood breathless, and clinging to the projection of our little mass of rock did not realize that the fire was so near until we were struck in the face by the burning buffalo-chips that were carried toward us with the rapidity of the wind. I was really scared; it seemed as we must suffocate. But we were saved miraculously. The sheet of flame passed us twenty yards away, as the wind fortunately shifted the moment the fire reached the Rock.147

Two of the Indians and their horses were caught in the trap and perished. The game on the prairie was killed, too. Even the Arkansas River did not check the path of the fire, the flames of which had assumed such gigantic proportions and moved with such rapidity before the terrible wind.148

Adela E. Orpen, an early Kansas settler and writer has described a serious fire which occurred during the 1860’s and was averted by a thunderstorm:

with the advent of houses to the west arrived also our greatest danger—namely, prairie fires. No one ever met a person who did it; but the fires came regularly all the same each autumn as soon as the grass turned brown and dry. A

147 Henry Inman, "Kit Carson’s Pawnee Rock Story," Tales of the Trail, 158.
148 Ibid., 159-60.
prairie fire always takes one by surprise. My father had planned to make his farm safe by a fifty-foot belt of ploughed land all around, which the fire would not jump. I cannot say what prevented him having his safety belt ready, probably stress of harvest work. However, the fact remains, there was only the western side of our farm protected, and our first fire came unexpectedly from the north driven by a fierce gale, also unexpected so early in the fall—viz., late September.

My father took to his plough, and, with me riding Bess [the lead horse], started to run at least two or three furrows on the northern front of our quarter section a mile long; it was. The fire began late in the afternoon half an hour before sunset. The horses were already tired, but answered to my voice as they always did, and pulled their best... I have heard men say that turning the new prairie sod was the toughest ploughing horses were ever asked to do. My father did not dare to backfire with the gale that was blowing, for that meant sending the fire into our neighbour on the south side, who was none other than friend Weddell and his Indian corn was still uncut. So we drove and ploughed and urged the horses desperately on, not even noticing that the sun had set, the glare of the oncoming fire was so great. At length the horses stopped dead, and would not stir another foot. "Get them on, Doby, get them on!" he shouted to me, but no response came from me, though he could see me quite well perched on Bess, a little bundle, like a spider on a pumpkin. He left the plough, and came forward to speak to me. I was fast asleep with my head on Bess's vast neck and my hands twined up in her mane. Nor could he wake me. I was dead asleep. So he laid me on the grass, unharnessed the horses, and, leaving the tackling there on the ground, picked me up and carried me back to the house.

Auntie and a little negro maid were there, the latter very scared but not Auntie, who thought it beneath her ever to show fear. "What are we to do?" she inquired of my father... "Let me know when the fire enters the pasture, and I will carry the child into the middle of the garden. She will be safe there. It cannot pass into that ploughed land." So he lay there resting, and Auntie and the little negro watched at the door... Nothing Auntie could say would stop the little maid from shouting and screaming prayers and exhortations all mixed up, till she suddenly yelled, "Golly. Neddy, oh!" with such vigour that my father sprang up. We were all in pitch blackness from having been in a lurid glare. A thunderstorm had come up unnoticed in the general tumult, and with one bang and crash and deluge had put out the fire all over the prairie as far as the Big Sugar Creek... We lost nothing. The fire was put out just as it reached the corner of Nellie's pasture; not a fence-rail was burnt, nor
was the harness—which had been thrown down when the horses were turned loose—even scorched.149

Another settler wrote of the fires during the 1860's:

Prairie fire was perhaps the greatest fear of the pioneer settlement. To the southwest of the Lyon creek community was a sweep of prairie, with no large streams and no settlements of any size. A light low down on the horizon in that direction might mean danger, and always brought anxiety. Naturally it was in the evening that it would be noticed first, and the light would seem but a few rods long. By the second evening the reflection had mounted higher in the sky and the light was brighter and longer; and as night closed in, what appeared to be a string of gold beads would lie flashing on the rim of the horizon. It was watched apprehensively, and no one slept soundly, for if the wind shifted to the direction of the light it meant a swift drawing in of the string of beads until they became shooting tongues of flame.

The whole community turned out to fight the prairie fires. They drove in wagons, taking with them barrels of water, buckets and sacks. A beck fire was started usually, and the work of beating out the flames began—a long and wearisome business; many a man has dropped exhausted from it. A fire pushed forward by a favorable wind advanced as rapidly as a horse could gallop, the flames leaping high in the air; so men, women and children worked with tremendous energy, driven by fear. They were fighting to save their homes, and sometimes even life itself, for more than one person lost his life in these demoniacal fires.150

Celeste May described in verse a prairie fire seen in the fall of 1878:

Darker and darker grew the sky!
The roar and crackle soon were nigh,
The flames and smoke ascending high,
In spite of all their efforts.
Two great burning lines of flame—
One on either side the creek—
Swiftly, madly, onward came,
As if all things it would seek;
Crackling, roaring, wildly rushing,
Over tree and shrub, devouring
Every obstacle in its way—
Nothing could its fury stay.151

151 Celeste May, "The Prairie Fire. In the Fall of 1878," Sounds of the Prairie (Topeka, 1886), 16.
The danger of getting lost on the prairies was a hazard of long standing—until settlements grew up and landmarks were formed on this limitless ocean. Nannie G. Schultz reminisced: "I remember of trying to drive home from Abilene after dark, without any road. I got lost and lay out all night with the wolves all howling around me. I was mighty glad when day light came." 152

Among the most singular and at times most distressing phenomena of the plains was the mirage. A writer of Kansas stories said: "A mirage is when yeh see somethin' that haint thar." 153 Many a poor creature, deceived by the illusion of water off the beaten path, turned to wander farther and farther away from water until at last he dropped from thirst and exhaustion, his flesh to be eaten by wolves, his bleaching bones to be picked clean by coyotes and ravens and left to whiten in the sun. 154

The mirage required favorable conditions for it to deceive. Another writer has told of the background for the deception.

The sun is almost unendurable in its intensity; the ground is parched and dry; the grass withered and sparse; no tree or shrub relieves the landscape; no sign of water is visible anywhere; while the oppressive heat and the cravings of thirst tax . . . [the traveler's] endurance to the utmost. In the midst of his suffering comes a promise of relief. Several miles ahead of him in a gentle depression he distinctly sees a body of water; it may be a river, more probably a lake. Its surface gleams in the sun and here and there it is roughened by passing breezes. The shore line is distinct and is bordered with objects that look like trees. The sight inspires new life; . . . and the pace of the traveler is quickened with fresh energy . . . .


153 H. H. Donoho, Circle-Dot. A True Story of Cowboy Life Forty Years Ago (Topeka, 1907), 113.

154 Wright, Dodge City, 22, 70.
But as he nears it a change comes over the scene. The surface of the lake begins to show gaps and breaks that he never noticed on any other lake. These gaps increase as he approaches; the water surface diminishes; it begins to have a trembling, shimmering appearance; it finally vanishes from sight; and when the traveler reaches the spot he is still surrounded by the same cheerless landscape over which he has already traveled so far. With what tenfold power does his thirst now come back, enhanced by the bitter disappointment!  

Inman made effective use of the mirage in his story, "The Tragedy at Twin Mounds." While the scout Jack Hart and a she-panther were fighting at the edge of the precipice of the most southerly mound, Jack's colonel of the cavalry camp on the Saline River pointed to the two peaks on the divide separating the valley of the Saline from the Elkhorn—the Twin Mounds—"cutting the deep blue of the sky on clear days as sharply as a summer thunder-cloud."

... while all were gazing with enchantment on the strange phenomenon, far above the peaks, in the sky, but inverted, two moving figures appeared surrounded by that waving purple mist characteristic of the mirage on the Great Plains. One of the celestial apparitions was in the similitude of a man, the other of a beast. Both were gigantic and exaggerated in outline; both were grappling in a deadly struggle!

Every one intently watched the strange combat, filled with excitement at the novelty of the thing, until presently the figures appeared to fall over the immense precipice and vanish, although they seemed to disappear with an upward movement. Then there was nothing left but the inverted mounds, the woods and the prairie of the wonderful mirage; it, too, was all dispelled in a few moments more.  

Thus the Great Plains, in which was included Kansas, was a section with an environment which called for hardihood in all life. The elements of the plains were often fierce, dramatic, and destructive. Flora were sparse, with the exception of short nutritious grass and grasslike

perennials. In fact, grass was the great supporter of herbivorous life on the plains, while the cottonwood tree, ill-fitted as it was for lumber, furnished the major supply of native timber in this section. The plains teemed with an abundant supply of fowl and animals, but the king of the plains was the shaggy buffalo, the source of the major necessities and a few luxuries for the war-loving red men who were lingering in the late Stone Age of their civilization.

At this time, as the poet, Harry Kemp, said:

... Kansas glories in her days to be,
In her horizons limitless and vast,
Her plains that storm the senses like the sea;
She has no ruins grey that men revere—
Her Time is "Now," Her Heritage is "Here."157

The plains environment and culture have been amply delineated by prose writers, including Cabeza de Vaca, Castaneda, Catlin, Chitten­
den, Dodge, Farnham, Gregg, Ingalls, Inman, Orpen, Townsend, Twain, W. E. Webb, Walter Prescott Webb, Wright, Wyeth, Youngman, and others who braved the hazards of the Kansas plains.

Novelists like Bennett, Bowles, Donoho, Everts, Hinkle, McCarter, Marshall, Schrag, and White have pictured the changing plains from the coming of the white man to 1886. Inman's tales, based on experiences mainly of the years from 1850 to 1880, are significant contributions in short fiction.

The strange charm of the prairie and the stark beauty of the plains have been revealed in the poems of Allerton, Atwood, Butler, Hill, Kemp, May, Molk, Paine, Slane, Stephens, Stroud, Wattles, and Woodman.

III

CROSSROADS OF THE CONTINENT

The western boundary of the United States had jumped the Mississippi River in 1803. In 1845 the Texas country was annexed; in 1846 possession of the Oregon Territory was obtained through a cession from Great Britain; and then the United States rounded out her acquisitions with the Mexican cession at the end of the War with Mexico and the Gadsden Purchase in 1853. By midcentury, a great country under one government lay from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, its barriers yet to be conquered and its natural routes to be used by an eager people. Adventurous men were following the paths of wild animals and traders alike in pushing their way through to the West, and they were carrying goods and families with them. To the far corners of the land reached the Santa Fe Trail and the Oregon Trail with its off-shooting Salt Lake and California branches. The road to Santa Fe ran like a brown ribbon to the Arkansas River and became indistinct among sand dunes and rough country as it wound on to a commercially hungry Mexican town. The pathway to Oregon crept up the Platte Valley and over to the Snake River and down into the Columbia Valley; whereas the California route broke off near Fort Bridger or Fort Hall, wound over to Salt Lake and on to Sutter's Fort.
Trading posts and forts were established along the routes of travel and missionaries came to the Indians to preserve the Christian ideal among the transported eastern tribes and to convert others—the fierce and nomadic rovers on the plains—into a more settled, docile, and agricultural people. Success in Christianization was small and gradual, and the years to come after the missions had moved to Eastern Kansas saw much pillage and slaughter as settlers came westward across the plains to make homes, as traders pursued their commerce, as adventurers sought to wash out in a few months the fortunes of a lifetime, and even as men sought religious freedom in the Salt Lake Valley of the Great Basin.

For several reasons the western plains called insistently to men of all kinds. Some men loved the wilderness; some craved adventure; others were in quest of health, and having found it, spent years in zestful living on the plains and in the mountains; a certain class went only to make easy money; and not a few who migrated were criminals escaping fetters, confinement, and disgrace in narrower environment east of the Mississippi River.

A Kansas poet sang of the call of the open country:

The street is full of turmoil and loud discordant din,
Of greed and lust for power and the reeking stench of sin.
Come out to the quiet places,
To the land of the open sky,
Afar from the thronging faces,
Where sun-lit meadows lie.2

Josiah Gregg writes of eight expeditions across the western prairies and of nearly nine years' residence in Northern Mexico after May 15, 1831, the day he, an ill man, "launched upon the broad prairie" at Independence, Missouri. Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 38. See also Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXIII, 45.

Imri Zumwalt, The Call of the Open Fields (Bonner Springs, 1916).
The common way to see the Great Plains was to follow one of the history-making roads to its western destination—to Santa Fe, Oregon, or California. All passed through Kansas.

The history of the Santa Fe Trail goes back to the early twenties of the nineteenth century. In 1821-22 Captain William Becknell set out from Franklin, Missouri, with his expedition of carts and small stock of goods intended for trade with the Indians; but, falling in with a party of Mexican rangers, he reached Santa Fe that autumn in time to realize a good profit and to lay over until the next spring for a return to the States.¹

The year 1825 was an important one in the history of the trail. On August 10, 1825, under the Council Oak at Council Grove, a treaty was made between the Great and Little Osages and Benjamin H. Reeves, George C. Sibley, and Thomas Mathers, commissioners of the United States. The latter had been sent to the West for the purpose of receiving the peaceful right of way for a road from the western frontier in the State of Missouri to New Mexico.² From that year until 1827 a corps of United States Engineers under Joseph C. Brown surveyed, located, and mapped what gave indications of being the best and most direct route to the emporium in Northern Mexico. Previous to 1821, when pack animals were employed, the trail had run from Franklin, Independence, or Westport Landing to Council Grove; then, meeting the Arkansas River at its Great Bend, it had continued up the stream to

¹Becknell, "Journal of Two Expeditions from Boon's Lick to Santa Fe," loc. cit.

²Charles J. Kappler (comp.), Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties. Senate Document No. 452, 57th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, 1903-1904), II, 176-77; Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 44.
where Bent's Fort was later located, in what is now Colorado, finally swinging southwest to Taos and Santa Fe. But the commission surveyed the trail so that it ran to the Arkansas River on the usual route to about one hundred miles above the Great Bend; then the route forded the river at Cimarron Crossing and ran in a southwesterly direction to the Cimarron, which it followed to the limits of Kansas and on through rough country into Santa Fe.5

In the early summer of 1826, the Missouri Daily Republican made this remark:

> Between 80 and 100 persons have gone on the mercantile tour to Mexico, with wagons and carriages of every description. The amount of merchandise taken is considerable. It has the air of romance to see splendid pleasure carriages, with elegant horses, journeying to the Republic of Mexico; yet it is sober reality. In fact, the obstacles exist rather in the imagination than in reality. Nature has made a fine road the whole distance.6 Five years after the survey had been made, a large capital was invested in Santa Fe ventures and Council Grove afforded a more popular stopping place than ever before.7

The declaration of war by the United States against Mexico in 1846 brought a great and rapid change in the traffic along the trail. Many a young man from the frontier states became a bullwhacker and walked behind government supplies which were being delivered to the Mexican border for General Winfield Scott's army. Troops, traders, and wagons loaded with government supplies moved over the old highway. Hostilities began officially on May 12, 1846, and Stephen W. Kearny's

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5"Explanation of Map," Transactions, IX, 576.

6Missouri Daily Republican, June 15, 1826.

7Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, passim.
Army of the West was on route to Santa Fe by the end of June and Sterling Price's regulars and the Mormon battalion followed during the late summer. Many of the supplies used by the United States in the Mexican War, which was to bring greater freedom to what is now our Southwest, were shipped to Fort Leavenworth and then freighted to the border. Provisions arrived sooner than did the wagons, which came in the main from Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and a supplementary supply from anyone on the border who wanted to sell. When wagons became available, teamsters were needed, and so young men who had rushed to the frontier to join the Army of the West, finding the enlistment rolls closed, joined expeditions to the frontier as bullwhackers--caravan soldiers. Despite suffering from dry weather, lack of grass, Indian depredations, and hazardous winters, the experiences along the border during the 1840's and 50's strengthened the desire of men to live in the dusty West and to subdue it.

After the war ended, there came the hubbub of the 50's; but the whole overland traffic was blighted by the Civil War, only to be renewed in settler traffic after Appomattox. Overland freighting receded as the railroad advanced west of the Missouri border in the late 60's.

The activity on the trail during these years is indicated in Lincoln Phifer's "Romance of the Roads":

... when gold had been discovered
In California, and the Mexican war
Opened a greater west, the Anglo-Saxon
Made the old trail his road toward hope. The rill

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9 Ibid.
Quickly became a river. Someone called
the trail the only navigable stream
in Kansas. White sails were ever on it now.
Nightly the campfires flickered on the road.
Daily a stream of wagons and of men
Poured upward toward the mountains.
The landmarks on the route, from Council Grove,
The "last chance" to secure supplies forgotten
To Great Bend and the ford of Cimarron.
Along the Oregon trail the gravelly bed
Of Smoky Hill river served for road.
At Pawnee Rock full many a contest waged
Between the invading whites and Indians;
Still it is carved with many forgotten names.10

For more than eight hundred miles the Santa Fe Trail ran from
Weston's wagon shop in Independence, Missouri, to the Market Square
in Santa Fe, Mexico. There were four distinct stages in the journey.

The first extended to Council Grove where the caravans were
organized. It was in a well-watered prairie country, com­
paratively safe from Indian depredations, and was the pleas­
antest part of the route. The next division extended to the
ford of the Arkansas. It was near the beginning of this
stage that the country began to change geologically, botani­
cally, and climatically. It was the transition from the
humid prairies of eastern Kansas to the arid plains of the
West. . . .

The third division of the route was the most dangerous
and dreaded of all. It was the Cimarron Desert, and extended
from the Arkansas River to the source of the Cimarron. . . .
Within the distance of sixty-six miles from the Arkansas to
the lower springs of the Cimarron there is not one water
course of water pool to be depended upon during the dry sea­
son.

The fourth division of the journey lay between the
Cimarron Desert and Santa Fe. Although the road still ran
through a barren and worthless country, it was now in the
foothills of the mountains, where there were landmarks for
guidance and streams enough for camps. Traveling was there­
fore safe if proper precautions were taken against Indians.11

Established in 1827, the low-squatting Weston wagon shop housed
a forge, anvils, and implements of the Irish smith Samuel Weston and

his son Robert, who made yoke rings and lynch pins, fashioned log chains and hooked them to the yokes, made shoes for horses and oxen, and hammered into shape tires for wagon wheels. But within a few years much of the outfitting for Santa Fe shifted to Westport, where there was no delay on account of the swollen waters in the spring.

A limestone ledge at Westport Landing insured no losses, a real advantage over the ever-shifting Missouri River. To Lone Elm Camp Ground

The old trail ran where the barn stands now;
The trail was here long before the plow,
And we drove ox teams, with sometimes a cow
In the days that used to be.

Then it led over the Osage Narrows, which often gave the teams a hard pull during the spring on account of the mud in the valleys approaching the Osage-Kansas divide. William Becknell wrote of his party at this point: "All sick and much discouraged."

And on to Council Grove, which was a rude little trading post even in the 1850's. What is now Main Street was then the dusty road of the Santa Fe Trail, aswarm with activity. Oxen and mules filled the corral near the stately grove of cottonwoods and other trees;

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17 Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 41.
hobbled animals munched grass and chewed their cuds as they strayed close to the Neosho River. Not far from the road, men rolled in blankets slept beneath the shelter of prairie schooners and Dearborn carriages, while near the campfire a few yards beyond, others were busily engaged with kettles and frying pans, preparing the evening "grub." 19

In the novel The Price of the Prairie, Springvale represented Council Grove—the outpost on the trail in the 50's. Springvale by the Neosho was a favorite point for early settlers. It nestled under the sheltered bluff on the west. There were never-failing springs in the rocky outcrop. A magnificent grove of huge oak trees, most rare in the plains country, lined the river's banks and covered the fertile lowlands. It made a landmark of the spot, this beautiful natural forest, and gave it a place on the map as a meeting-ground for the wild tribes long before the days of civilized occupation.

Just where the little stream [Fingal's Creek] joins the bigger one [Neosho River] Springvale took root and flourished amazingly. It was an Indian village site and trading-point since tradition can remember. The old tepee rings show still up in the prairie cornfield where even the plough, that great weapon of civilization and obliteration, has not quite made a dead level of the landmarks of the past.

Here the Indians came with their furs and beaded garments to exchange for firearms and fire-water. People fastened their doors at night for a purpose. No curfew bell was needed to call in the children. The wooded Neosho Valley grew dark before the evening lights had left the prairies beyond the west bluff, and the waters that sang all day a song of cheer as they rippled over the rocky river bed seemed always after nightfall to gurgle murderously as they went their way down the black-shadowed valley. 20

At Council Grove a man could watch the world coming and going down the Santa Fe Trail.

19 Alice Strieby Smith, "Through the Eyes of My Father," Collections, XVII, 718.

In the dusk a call went forth and detached parties joined a
frightening caravan to participate in their grand council before em­
barking upon the prairie ocean. In the light of the flickering camp­
fires, after some electioneering, a boss was chosen for the 650-mile
trip. The proprietors of goods and wagons made up their list of men
and wagons. One captain harangued those under his leadership about
the vagaries of travel. Another, a silent captain, allowed the men
under his supervision to learn about the country as they traversed
it. His orders were sometimes ignored or regarded as mere requests;
nevertheless, he directed the order of travel by day, decided upon
the camp ground for the night, and exercised other prerogatives as a
director of a caravan.21

Sometimes full darkness fell before travelers in creaking ox-drawn
wagons came up the east ascent to the post and then over to a camp
under the big trees somewhere beyond. Up in the little village a
light or two gleamed feebly. From somewhere in the darkness came
sounds of a violin, mingled with loud talking and boisterous laughter
from a distant drinking den. Mexicans were distinguished by the soft
cadences of their talk; Indians, by their jabber.22 The Indians came
in with furs, game, and wild fruits, and were soon in possession of am­
munition, blankets, trinkets, and firewater, the last in spite of
government regulations. Council Grove was a rendezvous of all the
friendly tribes, the Kaws occupying a reservation thereabouts after 1843.23

21Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 45.
22Margaret Hill McCarter, Vanguards of the Plains. A Romance
of the Old Santa Fe Trail (New York, 1917), 57.
23Kappler, Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties, II, 383.
In another section of the grove, their wagons drawn up to form a circular corral, was another caravan tucked in for the night. It was well stocked with provisions; and all was in readiness for the journey west. The clang of iron on the anvil as mules were shod and wagons were repaired ceased only late at night sometimes, for sooty smiths often worked well after dark to get the last job finished for a caravan's trip next day.24

Just when the first white man came through Council Grove, history does not say; but the spot was mentioned as a stopping place as early as 1821,25 for the magnificent grove of trees and the plentiful supply of water early attracted travelers. Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike's round-about trip to Santa Fe in 1806, and his return to the States the next spring, brought the first real publicity about the commercial and political conditions in the Spanish province, and soon men were edging out to the margin of the timberlands beyond the Missouri Territory. His expedition undoubtedly incited traders to look to Santa Fe for profitable adventure.26

In the 1840's a party of soldiers cut down a big cottonwood tree that stood near the Neosho Ford and found in the stump an old-fashioned jack-screw. Doubtless and early exploring expedition, while doing a repair job, had leaned the jack against the tree and had gone off. The tree had grown until the jack was entirely encompassed, to be found only when the tree was cut near the base. During that decade, Big

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John Creek and Fremont's Ford were named for the Fremont surveying expedition, which stopped at the ford in the early 40's.27

By 1850 there were still few signs of civilized life at the trading post. Seth M. Hays had come in 1847 with a government license to trade with the Indians; soon thereafter Pierre and Cyprian Quatcuau arrived. The government also erected a building for the storage of military and government supplies and the mail company set up a couple of small log cabins. The feminine contingent of the town was Aunt Sally, an old Negro slave, brought by Hays from Missouri. Only a handful of white men stayed at the post.28

By 1855 the resident population was thirty-nine persons. Seventeen votes were cast at the first territorial election in March, 1855. Indians, traders, teamsters, caravans passed through the post regularly, but life varied little for the permanent inhabitants. Occasionally a traveling missionary would hold religious services at the Methodist mission school, for which a stone building was erected in 1850, but to which Indians would not go. On stormy nights the wind and rain raged down the valley and on moonlight nights coyotes howled. Council Grove was the end of civilization during the 50's. Only a few white settlers lived near by, while beyond was spread the wilderness in untamed lengths from which, once a journey was begun, there was no turning back. Such was the law of the plains.29

Last Chance Store was built in 1857. "What the trader failed to

28 Ibid., 709-10.
29 Ibid., 708-10.
get there he was doomed to do without until he stood inside the brown adobe walls of the old city of Santa Fe." In the store was also the Post Office.30 The postmaster’s salary was reported to be two dollars a year. At certain intervals of weeks a thud of hoofs sounded on the roadway outside of Last Chance Store. From out a great pall of dust the stage coach drawn by six horses would rush with a flourish to stop beneath the old Post Office Oak, which in earlier days had afforded a cache for messages to pilgrims who came long later. Poker tables and whisky glasses were left for the newspapers and other mail was dragged in from the coach. During dry weather the postmaster took the bag of mail from the driver and emptied it on the hard-packed pathway to give everyone a democratic western chance to lay claim to his own papers and letters. In winter when the mail arrived someone took it inside Last Chance Store and emptied it on the floor with the same free-for-all procedure.31

The merchant in the 50’s was kept busy dealing with people of all sorts—selling Bibles, casks of whisky, cambric needles, cathartic pills, revolvers, rifles, knives, spurs, hair lariats, and other provisions for man and beast. He probably bought some footsore oxen, come in from the Far West, for thirty dollars apiece. These he would sell to a freighter, some thirty or sixty days later, for more than one hundred dollars. Like as not the merchant, after bustling around all day with business, had to furnish sleeping quarters for some, along with a place to cook meals, and


31Seth M. Hays, "Historic Persons and Places Brought to Notice by the Home-Coming Celebration," Collections, XVI, 563-64.
during the busy summers, a pen to corral the stock.\textsuperscript{32}

When a shipment of whisky arrived, a frontier merchant checked to see if the loss was heavy "from the river." The freight boys in those days carried gimlets, and at convenient watering places on the road tapped the barrels and then replaced the liquor with fresh water from a spring or a creek before they caulked up the gimlet holes.\textsuperscript{33}

At the Old Pioneer Store, established near the town well in 1858, the Kaws and other Indians brought buffalo robes, deer and wolf skins, and other peltries for the coveted things of civilized life. Later, cowboys rode their ponies in through the wide open double doors, pranced up to the counters mounted, and made their purchases—much to the astonishment of "green" clerks behind the well-finished oak and polished black walnut counters.\textsuperscript{34}

As the world trekked through Council Grove it brought strange people, among them the Hermit Priest—El Solitario, as he was called. Inman has told the story "El Solitario" in Tales of the Trail:

There arrived one morning in the busy little hamlet of Council Grove, Morris county, Kansas, during the month of May, a strange, mysterious person. . . .

The stranger. . . , evidently a priest, talked but little; it was an exceedingly difficult task to engage him in conversation, so profoundly did he seem impressed with the idea of some impending danger. He acted like a startled deer, ever on the alert for an expected enemy, and weeks rolled by before two or three of the town's most reputable citizens could gain his confidence sufficiently to learn from him something of his varied and romantic history.

Matteo Boccalini, at the date of his appearance in Council

\textsuperscript{32} William F. Shamleffer, "Merchandising Sixty Years Ago," Collections, XVI, 567-69.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 568.

\textsuperscript{34} Hayes, "Historic Persons and Places Brought to Notice by the Home-Coming Celebration," loc. cit., 562; George P. Morehouse, "A Famous Old Crossing on the Santa Fe Trail," Transactions, VIII, 139.
Grove was about fifty-five years old. He possessed the eye of an artist, a head that was beautifully symmetrical, with a classically moulded face; and notwithstanding his age, his hair, of which he had a profusion, was long, black, and lustrous as a raven's wing. Yet the heart-sorrows he had experienced were indelibly impressed upon his benevolent countenance in deeply marked lines.  

Born in Capri, this studious and thoughtful youth went to Rome to finish his education. He became enamored of a fair devotee, was charged, prosecuted, and denounced. He was despoiled of his sacerdotal functions and compelled to flee. After campaigning with Garibaldi, he escaped to America, and wandered west as far as Council Grove.

He possessed one article of property—a rudely constructed mandolin to which he clung tenaciously, its exterior presenting a confused mass of scratches and dents, indicative of hard usage.

On the evenings of Kansas' incomparable Indian summer, during the early part of which season he was living in his cave near Council Grove, the "hermit priest," seated on a projecting ledge at the mouth of his rocky and isolated retreat, would sweep the strings of his treasured instrument with a touch...light, deft, and sorrowfully tender...  

The Hermit Priest brought solace to the sick and lonely, but lived apart. After he had left Council Grove he was found on the prairie with a poisoned dagger in his heart—killed by the man he had wronged. His cave long remained an object of interest at Council Grove.

George P. Morehouse has memorialized the Custer elm, one of the largest trees in Kansas at the time the poem was written in 1930, when the tree was estimated to be 250 years of age. General George A. Custer and his regiment camped near the tree in 1867 and afterwards Custer bought the land including it.

35Henry Inman, "El Solitario, the Hermit Priest of the Old Santa Fe Trail," Tales of the Trail, 29-30.
36Ibid., 36.
Among my giant forest friends
The Custer Elm stands;
When wintry winds have stripped its leaves,
Its branches look like hands,
Which beckon me to tell its tale
To ages yet to come;

The Custer Elm is a famous tree
Part of old Council Grove,
And sheltered red men from afar
Who from the plains would rove;
And pioneers of long ago,
Who now are bent with age,
Remember it before the cars
Retired the Concord stage;
They marvelled oft at its great girth
And ages since this tree had birth.37

Jesse Applegate Eble has written about the days of the bucking broncho on the Santa Fe Trail:

In a cloud of dust
There seems to sail,
Flying ahead,
On the dimming trail

A bucking broncho,
A figure of grace,
Merging into
Mirage of space.38

An old ballad told of travel along the trail:

Say, pard, have you sighted a schooner,
'Longside of the Santa Fe Trail?
They made it here Monday or sooner;
They had a water keg tied to their tail.
That was daddy and ma on the mule seat
And, somewhere along by the way
Was a tow-headed gal on a pinto
Just a-janglin' for old Santa Fe.39

Few travelers went as far as Council Grove without experiencing the desire to traverse the distance across the plains into the Spanish province; but perhaps at the same time a fear of this vast and limitless solitude of earth and sky arose within their hearts. Trade and adventure lured the newcomer on to the southwest plains and to the City of Holy Faith, which at the period of its most prosperous trade with the United States was a place of perhaps three thousand inhabitants.40

In the early hours of a late spring morning the captain and his caravan felt the approaching dawn and turned out for an early start from the edge of the prairie. A bustle set up in camp in the cooking of breakfast, the packing of last-minute camp utensils, the catching of hobbled horses or slow-moving oxen, and the hitching of these animals—each man hoping to be the first one ready. After a western breakfast of black coffee, salt meat, and fresh-cooked bread, came the captain's order, "Catch up," and through the woods and vales rang sounds of activity, of straining bands and creaking cold wagons; and soon there resounded a teamster's shout, "All set!" followed by the same call from many. By a sad misfortune an occasional teamster had to take his place near the end of the caravan because he had bought at the trading post a mule, supposedly as meek as a lamb but of the most stubborn stripe. At the captain's call "Stretch out!" the long line of wagons flowed in tandem order on the prairie.41

At the grove the final organization was made. The companies

40 Chittenden, The American Fur Trade, II, 484.
41 Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 51-52.
varied in size but it seems that a safe phalanx ranged from eighty
to over one hundred wagons. Each train was headed by a captain.
Each wagon was drawn by four span of mules or yokes of oxen; some-
times the company was made up of trains composed of half oxen and
half mule teams. There might be another half dozen of private out-
fits coming under the protection of the large body—men traveling
for their health or families going out to Santa Fe to live. The
merchandise of the train was sometimes valued at two hundred thou-
sand dollars. A dozen small vehicles or a score of swift horses were
also attached to the caravan to be used in emergency—for fighting off
Indians or to go ahead to announce the coming of the caravan in Santa
Fe. Josiah Gregg's company displayed two small cannon mounted on
carriages.

The ordinary supplies for each man during the journey consisted
of about 50 pounds of flour, at least that amount of bacon, 10 pounds
of coffee, 20 pounds of sugar, and a portion of salt. Beans, crackers,
and trifles were "comfortable appendages," but not necessities, ac-
cording to Gregg. The kitchen and table ware for three or four persons
consisted of a skillet, a frying pan, an iron camp kettle, a coffee pot,
and a butcher knife, each man having a cup for himself and sometimes a
tin plate.

42 Bennett, The Border Rover, 158; Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies,
I, 39; Wright, Dodge City, 17.
43 Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 48; Bennett, The Border
Rover, 131; Kate A. Aplington, Pilgrims of the Plains. A Romance of the
Santa Fe Trail (Chicago, 1913).
44 Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 46.
46 Ibid., 28-29.
As successful transportation depended on careful packing, a very careful stowing of goods was made for the rough trip to Mexico. At Council Grove changes were made in the location of goods to last for the rest of the trek, if possible:

Those who understand their business take every precaution so to stow away their packages that no jolting on the road can afterwards disturb the order in which they had been disposed. The ingenuity displayed on these occasions has frequently been such, that after a tedious journey of eight hundred miles, the goods have been found to have sustained much less injury, than they would have experienced on a turnpike road, or from ordinary handling of property upon our western steam-boats.47

When late starts were made from the grove, the first night's camp was made at Diamond Springs, about twenty miles distant; when caravans got off to an early start, before night fell they crossed the Cottonwood River. Their first day was not expected to show as much distance as the days that followed, when teams got adjusted to caravan travel and men fell into the easy swing of a long journey. Diamond Springs was a noted stopping place for caravans either going out or coming in, because here was a spring of clear, cool water, some three or four feet across.48 James Josiah Webb recorded that in 1844 a company passing Diamond Springs in midsummer "partook of mint juleps and passed a vote of thanks to the public benefactors who some years before had... set out some mint roots at the spring which by this time had increased to a bountiful supply for all trains passing."49 Some years later, along

47Ibid., 37.

48Ibid., 52; Bennett, The Border Rover, 211; George P. Morehouse, "Diamond Springs, 'Diamond of the Plains,'" Collections, XIV (1918), 797-98.

the valley below the spring was seen Kentucky blue grass, which was
from seed dropped by some passing wagon train years before. For
gears this was the farthest west blue grass could be found in Kansas.50

In the 1860's, at a spot near Diamond Springs, a deep gulch or
ravine filled with tons of bones was long a mystery marvel to white
settlers of that locality.

Away back in the palmy days of Santa Fe trail traffic, a
freighting train, the motive power of which was over fifteen
hundred oxen, was returning late in the season from a suc-
cessful trip across the plains. Just as it had reached the
more protected and sheltered country of the Diamond valley
region, one of those terrific blizzards or storms of blinding
snow and intense cold swept down upon them just before they
had rounded up for camping. The oxen stampeded, and, driven
by the storm, fled before its fury to a gruesome destruction; for, coming to the sides of the precipitous gulch,
they piled into its trap of death, filling it full, and the
entire fifteen hundred perished. For years, the festering
mass of hair, hides and bones, even after the flesh had de-
composed, polluted the atmosphere for miles around, and it
became the trysting spot for myriads of carion birds
and droves of ghoulish wolves and other foul beasts and
birds of the plains.51

During the border and Civil War periods, the country around
Diamond Springs was harassed by guerrilla raids. During May, 1863,
Dick Yeager, one of Quantrell's men, made a raid from the Missouri
border to Diamond Springs, traversing part of the Santa Fe Trail,
pillaging, burning, and outraging the people.52

In the 1860's and 70's when emigrant travel flowed along the
trail,

it was customary to watch and interview the still numerous
passing travelers, who, on horseback or in the regulation
covered wagons, followed its well-worn way. The trail was

50 Morehouse, "Diamond Springs, 'Diamond of the Plains,'" loc.
cit., 301.
51 Ibid., 799.
52 Ibid.
still bare and grassless for rods in width, and to those of us whose homes were in the valley, a few miles southward, it afforded a friendly fire guard from the annual prairie conflagrations which often swept down from the north. In course of time the unused parts of the grassless trail grew up to sunflowers in great profusion, and in blossom time it presented a winding belt of golden beauty across the verdant plain—green and gold, as far as the eye could reach.\(^53\)

Usually the caravan pitched camp on the farther side of a stream. This was for at least two reasons: if it happened to rain during the night, the stream might become flooded and cause detention of the caravan; and the stream being fordable, the banks might be slippery from rain and thus present difficulties of ascent and descent. Then, too, teams rarely pulled as steadily and as heartily "in cold collars" as they did by midday or afternoon.\(^54\)

The first night was not likely to bring any unusual occurrence, unless it was a slight fright to the oxen from their herd bells or from a midnight shower. On the second day's journey from Council Grove—a few miles beyond Turkey Creek—the travelers might see, in good season, a small herd of buffalo grazing on the plain.\(^55\) And it was a rare horseman who was not off at once after a prize; even some of the wagoners left their teams and raced over the intervening prairie afoot with shotgun, rifle, or pistol in hand. That night, buffalo steaks provided a luxurious change from salt meat. All "ate like wolves, slept like dead things"—when not on guard—"and forgot what it meant to be tired."\(^56\) Muscles hardened and minds expanded; a

\(^{53}\)Ibid., 801.
\(^{54}\)Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 53.
\(^{55}\)Ibid., 54.
\(^{56}\)McCarter, Vanguards of the Plain, 49.
new world opened to the tenderfoot on the plains.

The insatiable appetite of the plains travelers was no more fastidious than that of the seafarer. Eating in the open air braced the appetite. In case of haste or lack of utensils, chunks of buffalo meat were spitted on sticks—if sticks could be found—and broiled. As the meat became tender it was consumed and the stick was reloaded with flesh. Thus pound after pound of meat was eaten, washed down with strong coffee. Ofttimes the caravan procedure was to broil the steaks on coals from buffalo chips or to fry other meat in the pan, bake bread in the iron kettle, and brew a huge pot of coffee. Then the three vessels were set upon the grassy turf, around which all took a seat on the ground, cracked their glesome jokes, while from their greasy hands they swallow[ed] their savory viands—... Sometimes, as in the spring of 1839, game was hard to find, elk being elusive and buffalo ranging farther west on the plains. Then rations were reduced to one-eighth of a pint of flour to each man until catfish were caught in the Little Arkansas River. Along the Big Arkansas, antelope and buffalo were in plenitude.

At other times the travelers fared sumptuously on quail, prairie plover, and other wild fowl, prepared as Kate A. Aplington has described plains cookery in her novel Pilgrims of the Plains, a chronicle of a trip from Galena, Illinois, to Santa Fe.

57 Bennett, The Border Rover, 359-60.

58 Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 56.

59 Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXVIII, 66, 72, 80.
The fowls are cooked Indian fashion, with the head and legs and feathers left on. They are carefully drawn, and stuffed with bread-crums [sic] and bacon and savory herbs, and then the bird is thickly plastered over with mud—just plain mud—and deposited in a "hot-pit" and covered over with ashes and coals and earth. In the morning the mud is baked to a hard crust, like brick, and when it is cracked and peeled off, the skin and feathers come with it, leaving only the juicy and tender flesh. It is cookery in perfection.

Naturally, after a hard day of travel, the camp procedure was practical.

Upon encamping the wagons are formed into a "hollow square" (each division to a side, constituting at once an enclosure (or corral) for the animals when needed, and a fortification against the Indians. . . . the campfires are all lighted outside of the wagons. Outside of the wagons, also, the travellers spread their beds, which consist, for the most part, of buffalo-rugs and blankets. Many content themselves with a single Mackinaw; but a pair constitutes the most regular pallet; and he that is provided with a buffalo-rug into the bargain, is deemed luxuriously supplied. In time of rain the traveller resorts to his wagon, which affords a shelter far more secure than a tent; . . . 61

In this part of the country a caravan going west on the trail met one of the Bents and his party with "ten waggons loaded with peltries," and two hundred Santa Fe sheep for the Missouri market. 62

Occasionally a train returned empty from Santa Fe to Missouri "to fetch back a sawmill to New Mexico." 63

If all went well, the fourth day out of Council Grove usually brought the caravan to the Little Arkansas River and the next day to Cow Creek, where wood was still more scarce. 64 During the spring

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60 Aplington, Pilgrims of the Plains, 187.
61 Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 62.
62 Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXVIII, 71.
63 Inman, The Old Santa Fe Trail, 287.
64 Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 57.
rainy season much time was spent in "digging, bridging, shouldering the wheels" to the accompaniment of whooping, swearing, and cracking of whips in order to get the heavily loaded wagons down the creek banks and up again. In such weather Farnham's party in 1839 spent fourteen days going from Independence to the Little Arkansas River.65

The Little Arkansas was in the buffalo country and the Indians' home ground, so a constant watch had to be kept for redskins. Here the caravan began to subsist mainly on buffalo, some of the chefs reveling in such delicacies as tongue. Most of the travelers marveled at the vastness of the herds. It was not uncommon for travelers to speculate on how many of these brutes were milling over the plains. The leisurely travelers who had tagged along, sitting inside their carriages on the first day out of the grove were often, by the third day, astride a horse, pursuing buffalo, eating heartily, standing guard, and hoping to live such a life forever.66

One writer chronicled the trip before reaching the Great Bend of the Arkansas thus:

Day after day we pushed into the unknown wilderness. No wagon-trains passed ours moving eastward... Out beyond the region of long-stemmed grasses, into the short-grass land, we pressed across a pathless field-of-the-cloth-of-green, gowned with myriads of bright blossoms—broad acres on acres that the young years of a coming century should change into great wheat-fields to help fill the granaries of the world.

... . . . . .

At last, we came to the Arkansas River—flat-banked and bottomed, wide, wandering, impossible thing—whose shallow waters follow aimlessly the line of least resistance, back and forth across its bed.67

65 Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXVIII, 52-72.
66 Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, passim.
67 McCarter, Vanguards of the Plains, 69-70.
Soon loomed the smooth-faced sandstone promontory to the height of twenty feet, decorated with Indian writing and paintings and—after the 1840's—with thousands of names of soldiers and "forty-niners."

This red sandstone landmark was Pawnee Rock, "the peak of perdition, the bottomless pit turned inside out." It had come to be, an old plainsman said,

a sort of rock of execution where romances end and they die happily ever afterward. The Indians get up there and, being able to read fine print with ease as far away as either sea-coast, they can watch any wagon-train from the time it leaves Council Grove over east to Bent's Fort on the Purgatoire Creek out west; and having counted the number of men and the number of bullets in each man's pouch, they slip down and jump on the train as it goes by. If the men can make it to beat them to the top of the rock, as they do sometimes, they can keep the critters off, unless the Indians are strong enough to keep them up there and sit around and wait till they starve for water, and have to come down. It's a grim old fortress, and never needs a garrison.\(^\text{68}\)

This old rock has been the scene of hundreds of fights. "Kit Carson's Pawnee Rock Story" told of old Jim Gibson and his pel t treed on the rock by some sixty Kiowas in a war party. Having killed ten of the redskins before the latter surrounded them, Givson and his partner, who had a couple of jack rabbits for food, along with plenty of powder and a pouchful of bullets each, were able to endure and at last to escape the trial by fire and the test of running the scalping knives.\(^\text{69}\)

Another Pawnee Rock story was told by an old trapper, Uncle John Smith, "a perfect encyclopedia of plains lore."

\(^{68}\text{Ibid., 72.}\)

\(^{69}\text{Inman, "Kit Carson's Pawnee Rock Story," loc. cit., 155-70.}\)
"Boys" said he, "I don't tech quail; I hain't teched one for more nor twenty years. One of the little cusses saved my life once, and I swore right then and there that I would starve first, and I've kept that oath though I've seen the time I could a killed 'em with my quilt, when all I had to chaw on for four days was the soles of a greasy old moccasin."

Returning in a party from the Yellowstone country to the Missouri border with their prizes from a winter's trapping, three hunters encamped near the Pawnee Bottom in June, 1847, when few buffalo had yet reached the Arkansas Valley.

"You see the buffalo was scarce right there then—it was the wrong time o' year. They generally don't get down onto the Arkansas till about September, and when ther'e scarce, the wolves and coyotes are mighty sassy, and will steal a piece of bacon rind right out of the pan, if you don't watch 'em. So we picketed out ponies a little closer, before we turned in and we all went to sleep except me, who sort o' keep watch on the stock."

"Airly in the morning" Uncle John was out of his blankets and had spotted several buffalo grazing on the creek bottom. Since leaving the Platte River the trappers had been eating jack rabbits, and so the other hunters were soon edging out toward the buffalo too.

"Just as I was running my eye along the bar'l a darned little quail flew right out from under my feet and lit exactly on my front sight and of course cut off my aim—we didn't shoot reckless in those days; every shot had to tell, or a man was the laughing stock for a month if he missed his game."

Meanwhile Uncle John's friends had shot the buffalo, and the Apaches killed his friends. The quail had kept Uncle John from firing and had saved his life.

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70 Henry Inman, "A Legend of Pawnee Rock; or, How the Life of an Old Trapper was Saved by a Bird," Stories of the Old Santa Fe Trail, 88-89.
71 Ibid., 90.
72 Ibid., 92.
The plain at the base of the rock was a popular camping ground although not a splinter of wood could be found and fires had to be made from buffalo chips. The country round about was dangerous and if a soapweed stirred in the wind it looked like the headdress of a Comanche or an Arapahoe brave, and a double guard was posted for the watch that night. Inman described this country in "Carson's 'First Indian.'"

That portion of the great central plains of Kansas which radiates from the Pawnee Fork as its center, including the bend of the Arkansas, where that river makes a sudden sweep to the southeast, and the beautiful valley of the Walnut,—in all an area of nearly a thousand square miles,—was from time immemorial a sort of debatable ground, occupied by none of the tribes, but claimed by all to hunt in, for it was a famous resort of the buffalo. None of the various bands of savages had the temerity to attempt its occupancy, for whenever they met there—which was of frequent occurrence—on their annual hunt for their winter's supply of meat, a bloody battle was sure to ensue. The region referred to has perhaps been the scene of more sanguinary conflicts than any other portion of the continent. Particularly was this the case when Pawnees, who claimed the country, met their hereditary enemies, the Cheyennes.\(^7\)

The evening following the defeat of some Pawnees on Walnut Creek, a caravan, in which young Kit Carson was on the midnight watch, encamped at the foot of Pawnee Rock to await the savages' second attack. The young scout, seeing a slight movement at the edge of the wagons, shot his own mule.\(^7\)

Inman told of a fight to the death between the Pawnees and the Cheyennes on this old battleground. The setting in the 1869's was typical:

It was a magnificent September day in the early part of that

\(^7\)Henry Inman, "Carson's 'First Indian,'" Tales of the Trail, 256-57.

\(^7\)Ibid., 265-67.
month of the year 1860. The amber mist of the glorious Indian summer hung in light clouds over the rippling Pawnee, and the sheen of the noon-day sun on the Arkansas, made that silent stream where it broadens out lake-like, toward the now thriving little village of Garfield, sparkle and scintillate until it was painful for the eyes to rest upon it. The low group of sand-hills loomed up white and silvery, like the chalk cliffs of Dover, for in those days—before the march of immigration had wrought its remarkable change in our climate—these sand-hills were bare, and for miles away the contour of the Arkansas could be traced by their conspicuous glare. The box elders and cottonwoods that fringed the tributaries to the river were rapidly donning their autumn dress of russet, and the mirage had already in the early morning commenced its weird and fantastic play with the landscape.75

Since crossing at the Pawnee fork was difficult, the road was usually repaired and the wagons were made ready for their plunge down the steep banks into the water. Both hind wheels of caravan wagons were often locked and a yoke of good wheelers was hitched to the hind axle while all available men assisted in holding the wagon from overturning. If there was a spill, "All hands took to the water and in two or three hours succeeded in getting dry goods and wagon to camp on the opposite bank." Two days might be spent in drying wet clothing, repacking and reloading goods while the hunters stocked up on meat and jerked it.76

Anywhere along the Arkansas River a train occasionally met an old hunter, going down stream, who explained that "one mo' r trip to the ha'nts of the fur-bearin' and it's good-by to the mountain trails and the river courses for me." Around the evening fire he entertained with


76 Bieber (ed.), Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade, 51-52.
At daybreak the next morning the train got off toward the southwest. On this part of the journey the wagons moved six abreast. Morning brought crisp invigorating hours, but at noon the sun bore down from the meridian upon hot burning flat country; and at evening the sun fell suddenly behind a distant horizon with only the leering promise of another day just as hot. The activities of the travelers were those of brawny, husky men—pitching and breaking camp, yoking oxen and harnessing mules, shooting buffalo, killing rattlesnakes, keeping watch, and breathing the sweet air of the prairies.

The Caches, five miles west of present Dodge City on the north bank of the Arkansas River, were markers beside the trail. Here in the spring of 1823, James Baird and a fellow trader by the name of Chambers were on the way to Santa Fe with merchandise. They found it necessary to dig pits, wherein they placed their wagons; they then proceeded on to Taos, where they secured mules and, having returned to the caches, took their goods on to Santa Fe. 78

The Cimarron Crossing was often used in fording the Arkansas River, which was flat and full of quicksands. A suitable wagonbed might be removed from the wheels and frame, caulked, and covered with raw buffalo skins to serve as a scow or ferry. Unloading and replacing packages in their wagons might mean a week or ten-day delay.79

77McCarter, Vanguard of the Plains, 189.
78Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 67.
79Ibid., 56.
Having crossed the river, travelers took the trail to the "water scrape," as the trip from the Arkansas to the Cimarron River was called. This journey required several days, and not a single landmark was "to be seen for more than forty miles—scarcely a visible eminence by which to direct one's course."\(^{30}\) Gregg advised the traveler that he have on each wagon a five-gallon cask of water for drinking, cooking, and emergencies.\(^{31}\) Webb indicated that it was a good idea to take a day off for readjusting and greasing the wagons before undertaking the jornada, as this dry trip was sometimes termed.\(^{32}\)

In the spring after a shower in this rough country, oxen were known to rush to a stream for water, and in doing so to upset their wagons, littering "about an acre of ground... with calicoes, and other domestic goods presenting altogether an interesting spectacle."\(^{33}\)

In this part of the country, to the source of the Cimarron, the caravan was likely to meet Indians. The water holes were hazards for the lone traveler, as was any sort of brush or arroyo. Jedediah Smith, beset by Comanches, lost his life while scouting for water on the Cimarron.\(^{34}\) Pawnees, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Sioux, and Comanches were sometimes met in this vicinity.\(^{35}\)

Hail and thunder storms also brought disaster to some of the loaded

\(^{30}\)Ibid., 70-71.

\(^{31}\)Ibid., 39.

\(^{32}\)Bieber (ed.), Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade, 56.

\(^{33}\)Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 40.

\(^{34}\)Ibid., 91-93.

\(^{35}\)Ibid., 73, 82, 94; Wright, Dodge City, 24.
caravans crossing the sandy plains. Hail larger than hen's eggs was not uncommon at certain seasons, and the wind often blew with hurricane-like violence.  

A yellow glare filled the sky, a half-illumined, evil glow, as if to hide what lay beyond it. One breathed in the fine sand, and tasted—the desert dust. Behind it, all copper-green, a broad lurid band swept up toward the zenith. Under its weird, unearthly light, the prairies, and everything upon them took on a ghastly hue. Then came the inky-black storm-cloud—long, funnel-shaped, pendulous—and in its deafening roar and the thick darkness that could be felt, and the awful sweep of its all-engulfing embrace, the senses failed and the very breath of life seemed beaten away. The floods fell in streams, hot, then suddenly cold. And then a fusillade of hail bombarded the flat prairies, defenseless beneath the munitions of the heavens. But in all the wild, mad blackness, in the shriek and crash of maniac winds, in the swirl of many waters, and chill and fury of the threshing hail, the law of the trail failed not: "Hold fast."  

After such an onslaught, the caravan often found it necessary to go into camp and to spend several days in recuperating, repairing, and making ready for the rest of the journey.  

Although the high plains usually had a sanative effect on the health of travelers, deaths sometimes occurred on the trail. If a man died "on the square" during his trip, the cross bar of the marker on his grave was fastened at right angles to the upright; however, if the fellow died "with his boots on" or suffered violence in departing this life, the crosspiece was placed in a slanting position to indicate his divergence.  

Sunday in the caravan was just like any other day to many, since

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86 Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 32.
87 McCarter, Vanguards of the Plains, 31. See also Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXVIII, 67, for a description of a storm.
until late in the nineteenth century it was commonly said, "There is no Sunday west of the Mississippi." One of the characters in Pilgrims of the Plains said, "It's a-takin' one's religious feelings too far West to be a—trying to keep Sunday out on the plains." Nevertheless, there must have been some, possibly more women than men, who kept the Sabbath by reading the Scriptures and meditating thereon.

Entertaining oneself after leaving the Missouri Territory was a different matter, for there were few friends to visit en route until after the 1850's. However, stories indicate that the violin, guitar, and other stringed instruments were favorites with the wandering minstrels of this continent. Singing, playing checkers and group games were ever a part of caravan life. Then there were routine duties to take up part of the time, and the fact that "The wide prairies were glorious" added zest to daily tasks. One could spend hour after hour musing upon the beauty of a country that had no name, although it was sometimes called the "prairie wilderness" or the "prairie ocean."

... when it comes to beauty
To a land that's wide and free,
The Sunkist plains of Kansas
Look mighty good to me.

New sights, varied acquaintances, and the possibility of meeting Indians kept anticipation high even when there was no activity at hand.

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89 Aplington, Pilgrims of the Plains, 143.

90 Inman, "El Solitario, the Hermit Priest of the Old Santa Fe Train," loc. cit., 36; Aplington, Pilgrims of the Plains, passim; John Dunloe Carteret, A Fortune Hunter; or, The Old Stone Corral. A Tale of the Santa Fe Trail (Cincinnati, 1888), passim.

91 Aplington, Pilgrims of the Plains, 130.

92 Carleton Everett Knox, "The Beauties of Kansas," Kansas Land from Day Dreams.
The joy of the buffalo chase made up for the days when there were

"No Indians! No buffalo! No nothing but prairie dogs to make the
landscape lively, and antelope so tame they almost come when you
whistled."93

Having crossed the Cimarron River, the party was on Mexican
soil; eventually the caravan reached the City of Holy Faith and shouts
of "Los Americanos, los carros, la entrada de la caravana."94

Today the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas is leveled off by fences,
cultivation, and highways, but not entirely so. Even in the 1920's
a Kansan observed the vestiges of this old road:

In many places for miles we can see where the grinding
wear of the huge wheels of the freight wagons and the steady
tread of thousands of oxen, mules and horses wore a broad,
deep and dusty scar, which the subsequent years of disuse has
failed to obliterate. In the present prairie landscape its
ruts and ridges are still plain—frozen, as it were, by the
firma sod of grassy pastures; and even the very marks of the
strong tires of the wagon wheels are visible, where the trail
passed over the crest of bluff slopes, grinding the outcropping
limestone ledges into powder and leaving wheel-chiseled
inscriptions forever.95

Not as old as the trail to Mexico, but as important in keeping
the peace of the Kansas prairies and more significant to the economics
of the red men of Eastern Kansas, were the Kaw Trail, leading from the
Indian reserve near Council Grove to the buffalo country on the Little
Arkansas River; the Osage Trail, running from the Neosho and Verdigris
valleys to the hunting ground also on the Little Arkansas; and the
Delaware Trail to the buffalo country west of Fort Riley.

\[93^Aplington, Pilgrims of the Plains, 130.\]
\[94^Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies, I, 110.\]
\[95^Morehouse, "Diamond Springs, 'The Diamond of the Plains,'"\]
The Kaws, who had lived for a long time in the Kaw Valley east of where Manhattan now is, were moved in 1847 to a reservation in the Neosho Valley, adjoining Council Grove. Their three villages were down the river and the Indian agency was near the mouth of Big John Creek, about four miles from the grove. Each year the Kaws went hunting among the royal herds of buffalo near the Little Arkansas River. From the mouth of Big John Creek they held their course a little southwest, as the crow flies, and arrived in the vicinity of Lyons, where they established their camp, dried their meat, and cured furs and robes. The trail, in some places a rod or two in width, was almost parallel with the Santa Fe Trail, but from three to six miles south of it and over a more broken and rough terrain. Although the Indians could have gone over the caravan trail, they preferred a road of their own. Moreover, they buried their people along this route, often on bluffs or high ground, and marked the spots with limestone slabs. Thus the trail became sacred.96

One reason for their going out to the buffalo-grass region was to winter their ponies, since the blue-stem prairie grass of Morris County was insubstantial pasture after frost; whereas the buffalo grass was nutritious even when brown and dry. Late in the fall some of the tribe returned with heavy packs of dried and fresh meat for those who had remained at home. Jerked meat was quite an article of commerce and, rolled up into parcels, it sometimes came into the hands of white men who relished it. The Indian hunters on their return from Cow Creek

and the Little Arkansas River were often glad to swap some of their meat products for flour and cornmeal. A red apple was the standard price of a muskrat skin, while a double handful of apples was bartered for a fine pair of beaded moccasins. On the return from the hunt, long lines of ponies in single file, dragging tepee poles and carrying squaws and papooses on top of loads of meat, were not an unusual sight as long as the Kaws remained in the State. This was until 1873, when they were moved to the Indian Territory in Oklahoma.

The braves always rode the best horses. On these trips west the Kaws often replenished their stock. Fine specimens of Cheyenne ponies were sometimes the booty of a raid.

The Kaws had few first-class firearms with which to hunt. Their rifles were single-barrel, muzzle-loading, and inferior, but these braves were able to return well laden with the spoils of the chase when armed with only their bows, arrows, and belt knives. Sometimes fresh buffalo humps were brought back unskinned to keep them clean. Venison steaks were often among the prizes of these semi-annual tours. On their hunts the Kaws secured large quantities of buffalo hides and other skins and furs. One trader was reported to have bought in one season more than a thousand buffalo hides from the tribe. A Kaw-dressed buffalo robe usually brought about half the price of a Cheyenne robe, which sold for as much as fifteen dollars.

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97 John Madden, "Along the Trail," Transactions, VIII, 70.
98 Ibid., 207-208.
99 Ibid., 207-208.
100 Ibid., 208.
The Indians, after their homecoming to the timber-sheltered banks of the Neosho River, held pow-wows and related experiences of the hunt. Young braves were awarded seats of prominence in the council circle and dances were held.\textsuperscript{101}

In later years white men sometimes went over the Kaw Trail to trade with the Indians and to get buffalo. Thus a wagon road was formed and finally a star mail route was laid over the trail between Council Grove and Marion. In the 1870's and 80's the Kaw Trail became the route for some of the cattle drives from the West, for this trail had better grass and water than the Santa Fe Trail.\textsuperscript{102}

After the Civil War it was not an uncommon thing to see among these Indians an occasional blue coat, indicating that the Kaw tribe had furnished a sharpshooter to the United States government during the war. Kaws who remained in Kansas did much to oppose the Missouri bushwhackers.\textsuperscript{103}

In 1868, when Little Robe and his band of Cheyennes made their terrible raid on the Kaws in Morris County, they also used the Kaw Trail. Many of the settlers fled from outlying farms to seek protection in towns where fortifications had been erected. The lone settler who stayed to protect his hearthstone and crop was seen, with gun in hand, walking back and forth before his cabin night after night. Finally, tired of the lonely vigil after a week of suspense, he sent down to his neighbors to find that they were returning to their cabins along

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 209.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 203.
\textsuperscript{103} Madden, "Along the Trail," loc. cit., 70.
From the Neosho and Verdigris rivers the great Osage Trail ran west. About six miles above the junction of the Little and Big Arkansas rivers was the western terminus of the trail—a route long in use from the evidence left by deep gullies washed on the slopes of the hills. Years later, hunters and traders followed this old road and came to the Little Arkansas River at the same gravel ford.\textsuperscript{105}

The Delaware Indians followed their tribal trail from their reservation, just west of the confluence of the Kansas and the Missouri rivers, to the buffalo grounds west of Fort Riley. One pioneer girl recalled that every spring and autumn for several years after her family became residents of Kansas "many hundreds of these Indians would go along this trail to the hunting grounds to secure their summer and winter supply of meat." One day when the Indians were returning east, they stopped at the well of the pioneer farmhouse and the white girl saw an Indian boy of twelve or fourteen years carrying a long pole from the end of which dangled an Indian scalp. The boy proudly displayed his trophy—the scalp of a Pawnee, whom he had slain while on the buffalo range.\textsuperscript{106}

The military roads leading from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Scott and to Fort Riley were significant as early roads in Kansas built by the white man and were important in keeping the peace of the frontier. The Fort Leavenworth—Fort Riley road was later extended to Fort Laramie.

\textsuperscript{104}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105}Mead, "The Little Arkansas," \textit{loc. cit.}, 9.
and dragoons acted as patrols along the royal highway of North America—the Oregon Trail.

The Oregon Trail was built without conscious effort; it was, like the other great trails, a natural pathway that evolved. There were many roads to Oregon, several feeders, and cutoffs; but the general pathway was pointed by Lewis and Clark when they traveled from St. Louis to the headwaters of the Missouri River, crossed the divide, and worked their way down the Columbia to where it spills into the Pacific. In 1810-11 the Astoria overland expedition went up the Missouri River and, to avoid the Blackfeet Indians, crossed the mountains south of Yellowstone Park. Their route was a further aid in establishing the Oregon Trail. Fur traders took a few of the kinds and twists out of the pathway and reduced the distance to approximately two thousand miles from Independence, Missouri. In 1824 Jedediah Smith and Thomas Fitzpatrick rediscovered South Pass, through which thousands of emigrants moved to the new lands. In reporting to Secretary of War John H. Eaton, three western explorers thus routed the trail to the mountains:

Our route from St. Louis was nearly due west to the western limits of the State, and thence along the Santa Fe trail about forty miles; from which the course was some degrees north of west, across the waters of the Kansas [Kaw], and up the Great Platte river, to the Rocky mountains, and to the head of Wind river, where it issues from the mountains.107

The usual track of the Oregon Trail in Kansas separated from the Santa Fe Trail near Gardner, crossed the Kaw River south of Rossville, and the Big Blue River at Marysville. Ascending the Little Blue River, emigrants met the stream of the Platte near the head of Grand Island.

Feeder trails led into the main trail: from the south through Kansas and Colorado; from the north through Iowa and Nebraska. The feeders saved some distance, although many people continued to go to St. Louis and up to Independence or some other frontier town along the trail.

Until 1832 the usual mode of transportation on the transinland expeditions was by pack animal, but Captain B. L. E. Bonneville departed from Fort Osage with wagons in that year and continued with these vehicles over the entire route. Bonneville expected to save the delay of packing every morning and the labor of unpacking each evening. Since fewer horses were required, less would be the risk of their straying or being taken by Indians. The wagons also were to serve as a fortification in case of attack on the prairie. But wagons did more: they opened the route of emigration for permanent settlers into the Northwest by affording a method of transporting families and their household necessities thousands of miles from their former homes. However, as late as 1852 emigrants to Oregon were using incongruous methods of transportation: five Irishmen left Independence with wheel barrows, three young men got as far as Northern Kansas with "their bread and dinner on their shoulders," and an old man was reported "traveling along..."

with a cow packed.\textsuperscript{109}

The Wyethes, Nathaniel J. and his nephew John, and John K. Townsend took notes on their trips to Oregon in the early 1830's and contributed knowledge about the early trail and wagon travel. The elder Wyeth spoke of the prairie as "generally dreary plains, void of water, and rendered more arid by the Indian custom of setting fire to the high grass once or twice a year to start the game that has taken shelter there, which occasions a hard crust unfavorable to any vegetable more substantial than grass."\textsuperscript{110}

In 1839 Thomas J. Farnham kept a record of his trip over the Santa Fe Trail from Independence to Fort Bent, north to the Oregon Trail at Ham's fork, and on to Astoria.\textsuperscript{111} Two years later, Father De Smet followed the trail to Walla Walla, giving those who were to come in the 1840's his Letters and Sketches, which added much information about the Indian tribes. De Smet left St. Louis the last of April with the annual expedition of the American Fur Company, which was still coining money in the Northwest, and arrived in seven days via steamboat at Westport, where the company outfitted. De Smet spent some time among the Kaws and Pawnees and visited other tribes northwestern.\textsuperscript{112}

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\textsuperscript{109}\textsuperscript{1}Catherine White (ed.), "An Overland Journey to California in 1852, The Journal of Richard Owen Hickman," State University of Montana, Historical Reprints, Sources of Northwest History, No. 6, pp. 5-6.
\textsuperscript{110}\textsuperscript{1}Wyeth, Oregon, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXI, 49.
\textsuperscript{111}\textsuperscript{1}Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXVIII.
\textsuperscript{112}\textsuperscript{1}P. J. De Smet, Letters and Sketches, with a Narrative of a Year's Residence Among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXVII, 136-211.
\end{flushright}
In 1841 a genuine emigrant train led by John Bidwell went over the trail to Fort Hall, where half of the train turned southwest to California. The next year 107 persons started with Dr. Elijah White to Oregon from the border of the States. On account of divergent mills and Indian warfare they had a stormy journey.\footnote{W. J. Ghent, The Road to Oregon. A Chronicle of the Great Emigrant Trail (New York, 1929), 50.}

Colonel John C. Frémont made five trips across Kansas from 1842 to 1848 for the purpose of exploring the country to the westward of the Missouri River. On his first trip he set one of the accepted routes through Kansas from the Missouri River to the Platte. Having outfitted at the trading post of Cyprian Chouteau in 1842, Frémont went up the Kaw River, which he crossed where Topeka now stands. The next year he took his company up the Kaw to Fort Riley and cut in a northwesterly direction so that he passed out of the State west of the ninety-ninth meridian. Two years elapsed before Frémont made another expedition west; on the return he crossed Kansas from west to east, following down the Smoky Hill River to a point in McPherson County, where he struck southeast to the Santa Fe Trail, which led him to Missouri. In 1843 Frémont ascended the Kaw from Westport and crossed to the upper Arkansas River, whence he continued on to his California estate. The last expedition was made westward from Westport in the fall of 1853 for the purpose of surveying a route for the Pacific railroad between the latitude of thirty-eight and thirty-nine degrees. Too ill to travel onward from Eastern Kansas, he sent the main part of the company ahead and remained for several days in Shawnee
In 1845 Joel Palmer, a genial Indiana farmer, helped escort a band to the West Coast. A member of the legislature in his home State, he decided in the spring to make a tour to Oregon before removing his family "to plough and plant the ground." Besides, it was customary for the man of the house to go ahead to test the wilderness before bringing out the family. On May 6, wrapped in a blanket under an oak tree in Independence, he came to the sudden realization that the big trip was begun. Upon seeing Northeast Kansas, he declared it was "alternate forest and prairies, presenting to the eye a truly splendid scene." The party encamped in sight of the Wakarusa and the Kaw rivers, which within a dozen years would see blood-letting to relieve the slavery pressure. On May 17 the emigrant band traveled eighteen miles and encamped on Vermilion Creek in the sight of the Kaw village, where the large company divided into three parties, each to take a turn in traveling in advance. On Blue Creek the pilot announced that this was the last opportunity to procure timber for wagon parts.

It must have been the last day of May that the emigrants, having traversed some two hundred miles in Kansas, drove across the State boundary of later years and went on to the Platte River with its buffalo, sand, and encampment for "washing" and other domestic duties before they

114Frémont, Life of Col. John Charles Frémont, passim.


116Ibid., 47.
should push on to the Far West. At camps on the Blue River and on the Platte emigrants usually did some scribbling, reading, singing, fishing, shooting, washing, and patching.

While encamped in the Blue River Valley for a slight rest, one party in the spring of 1852 feasted luxuriously on deer and the biggest wild turkey the hunter had ever seen. In the novel, The Prairie Flower, a party encamped "in a beautiful little grove of ash and hickory, on the margin of a creek that flowed into the Blue," where they took their rest and ate wild turkey. Having spent a few weeks on the trail, some emigrants found themselves overburdened with unnecessary things and so day by day disposed of them.

In the spring of 1846 a correspondent of the Missouri Daily Republican reported that he had seen on Market Street in St. Louis four large wagons followed by cows, calves, and horses—all en route to Oregon. The company was made up of Mississippian, women and children included, who had already spent three months on the way. Another month would be needed to bring them to Independence before the band made up for the ultimate destination.

That spring, when Francis Parkman and his companion were passing

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117 Ibid., 53.
119 Ibid.
120 Emerson Bennett, The Prairie Flower (Philadelphia, 1855), 96.
121 Frémont, Life of Col. John Charles Frémont, 91.
122 Missouri Daily Republican, May 2, 1846.
through Westport, he acclaimed it "full of Indians, whose little shaggy ponies were tied by the dozens along the houses and fences"—Sacs, Foxes, Shawnees, Delawares, Wyandots, and Kaws. Coming up the Missouri River on the Hadnor, Parkman noted on the upper deck of the boat the large wagons "of a peculiar form" for the Santa Fe trade and goods crammed in the hold. A group of Kaws was returning from a visit to St. Louis and Oregon emigrants were aboard.123

The sight of Oregon emigrants was so thrilling that members of the company—especially prominent men—journeyed ahead to look at the cavalcade from a rise on the plain as the procession swung out of Westport onto the Kansas prairies.124 It was not until Richard Owen Hickman got up on the stream of the Little Blue that he comprehended the magnitude of the traffic; there the California and Oregon emigrants were milling and pushing forward in a migration as momentous as that of the buffalo:

We are just coming into the crowd of emigration. As far as the eye can reach to the east and to the west, nothing is to be seen but large trains of wagon and stock. When I beheld it first I could not help asking myself where all this mass of human beings came from, but then the thought arose in my mind that if every county in the United States should send out as strong a delegation as old Sagamon, [Illinois], there would be a great many more on the plains than there were. . . . Traveled all day through dust so thick that it was with great difficulty that we could see our team at times, . . . .125

123Francis Parkman, The Oregon Trail; Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life (Boston, 1922), 7. Parkman's sketches first appeared in the Knickerbocker Magazine in 1847; they were published in book form in 1849.

124Townsend, Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXI, 141.

Emerson Hough in his novel, *The Covered Wagon*, pictured an Oregon emigrant train as it stretched out into Kansas in June, 1848:

It was a great picture, a stirring panorama of an earlier day, which now unfolded. Slow, swaying, stately, the ox teams came on, as though impelled by and not compelling the fleet of white canvas sails. The teams did not hasten, did not abate their speed, but moved in an unagitated advance that gave the massed column something irresistibly epochal in look.

The train, foreshortened to the watchers at the rendezvous, had a well-spaced formation—twenty wagons, thirty, forty, forty-seven—as Jesse Wingate mentally counted them. There were outriders; there were clumps of driven cattle. Along the flanks walked tall men who flung over the low-headed cattle an admonitory lash whose keen report presently could be heard, still faint and far off. A dull dust cloud arose, softening the outlines of the prairie ships. . . . it was properly a picture done on a vast canvas—. . . a picture of might, of inevitableness.\(^{126}\)

It was these emigrants—from New England, from Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri—who encountered fire, buffalo, quicksand, but sang heartily:

\[
\text{Oh, then Susannah,} \\
\text{Don't you cry for me!} \\
\text{I'm goin' out to Oregon,} \\
\text{With my banjo on my knee!}^{127}\]

Camille de Cendrey's *Le Trappeur du Kansas*,\(^{128}\) written in French, described a buffalo hunt on the plains and pictured a train on its way to Oregon.

The Kansas section of the Oregon Trail presented several hazards. Kansas mud, hub deep, frequently prevented rapid progress up the Kaw Valley and resulted in broken wagon poles and delays so that only fifty


\(^{127}\)Ibid., 16.

\(^{128}\)(Paris, n.d.).
miles could be accomplished in ten days.129

Delays occurred at streams where ferries were slow or inadequate, as at the Kaw River. Bluejacket's ferry over the Wakeuusa River in the 1850's carried a huge traffic from Westport across from the south side to the north bank.130 Emerson Hough mentioned that five days west of Independence the emigrant train arrived at "the swollen flood" of the Kaw, "at the crossing known as Papin's Ferry. Here the semi-civilized Indians and traders had a single rude ferryboat, a scow operated in part by setting poles, in part by the power of the stream against a cable."131

Crossing the Kansas rivers was a bigger problem where there were no ferries. On the Big Vermilion Creek, a party let the wagons down with ropes into the water and then navigated to the far bank. On Cross Creek they found a toll bridge.132

Cholera sometimes caused delays in Kansas for the recovery of patients or for burials. The disease, which in the early 1830's had come to the United States via Canada, broke out anew in 1848 and found its way with the migration westward along the stream of travel on the Missouri River. It was especially virulent on steamboats plying the river. Reported to have been brought into Clay County, Missouri, by


the Mormons, it was spreading to the natives of the West as early as the summer of 1834. Hickman recorded that he passed just west of St. Joseph a company of emigrants of whom sixteen had died from cholera in eight days. Four emigrants who were stricken one morning were buried in a common grave. Other companies had cholera patients that spring too.

Sometimes spring storms caused destruction. Near the Kaw River several days' journey west of Westport, Father Mengarini, on his way to help in the Oregon Missions, related:

... we saw a waterspout twirling swiftly along its surface of the river. Presently the trees on the river-bank swayed violently from side to side, numbers of them were torn from their roots, and a great mist, spreading rapidly over the river, discharged itself in a fall of hail. He dismounted until the shower was over, and then started forward again on our weary march.

After the storm, what appeared to be "a beautiful piece of quartz, oval in shape and about the size of a goose-egg," turned out to be a hailstone.

Another traveler, going west overland in 1852, spoke of the May rain as "descending in torrents," adding that he had "seen it rain in Illinois, but it was not worth talking about," for in less than a half hour a Kansas shower had him standing on the plain in water over his boot tops.
Kansas evidently maintained her attraction against great odds, as a Kansas poet explained in the soliloquy of an emigrant:

G'lang there, Jerry,  
Whoa haw, Buck,  
Bound for Kansas,  
Dern my luck.  
Hed three fortunes  
In my grip  
But I hed ter  
Take a trip.  
G'lang there, Jerry  
Whoa haw, Buck,  
Bound for Kansas,  
Dern my luck.  

In 1847 the Oregon Trail reached the peak in western emigration with an estimated 4,500. The Mormons helped swell the tide by their travel, following the general markings of the road, but keeping at a distance in order to avoid quarrels, keep secrets, and maintain their group intact. In Kansas one route used by the Mormons followed the Santa Fe Trail to One-Hundred-Ten-Mile Creek, went north to Fort Riley, crossed the Kaw River at Whiskey Point, and then held due north to the stream of the Platte. Leavenworth was a popular outfitting point for these people, just as Mormon Grove near Atchison was a favorite camping ground. The Mormon emigration in the 1850's used the California Road, or Holladay's overland stage road, from St. Joseph to the northeastern corner of Washington County, where it went north to the Platte River.


139 "Explanation of Map," *loc. cit.*, 576.
After 1860, people were still migrating from and through Kansas into the Northwest. An emigrant who came from Illinois to Kansas in 1860 settled near Fort Riley for the winter and then went up the Solomon Valley, but he soon left after a bad hail storm because he found life in Kansas "entirely too strenuous." He headed for the Puget Sound country. About 1868, emigrants came to Kansas from East Prussia, and later some of them traveled on up to Oregon.\(^{140}\)

James A. Garfield kept a diary of a trip he made to Montana in 1872. He related that they "took the cars at Leavenworth City westward on the Kansas Pacific Road" and at midnight reached Lawrence, where they took the sleeping cars. At Fort Harker in Ellsworth County the emigrants came upon the desolate plains of Kansas.

Buffalo skeletons are seen here and there along the road and the short buffalo grass covers the plains on all sides as far as the eye can reach. There seems to be a flavor of wildness in the Buffalo grass which like the wild nature of the Indian and buffalo refuses to be tamed. They tell me this grass disappears when the prairies are cultivated; that it seems to die out in the presence of our agriculture.\(^{141}\)

In May, 1877, another fellow who had recently arrived in Kansas left with his family for Washington Territory because he found the hoppers were making "more headway in Kansas than the farmers could ever hope to make."\(^{142}\)

Even before the discovery of gold in the tail race of a sawmill near Sutter’s Fort in January, 1848, a few emigrants preferred to turn southwest from the Oregon Trail at Fort Bridger or Fort Hall to

\(^{140}\) Told by Pioneers, Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Washington (n.p., 1938), II, 186-87, 23.

\(^{141}\) Oliver W. Holmes (ed.), "James A. Garfield’s Diary of a Trip to Montana in 1872," State University of Montana, Historical Reprints, Sources of Northwest History, No. 21, p. 5.

\(^{142}\) Told by Pioneers, II, 159.
seek their fortunes in what was to become California. It is said that 42,000 people went to California in 1848. Inhabited by a scant 5,000 in 1845, California had a population of 92,597 in 1850, when she entered the Union.

Many of the forty-niners used the overland routes that lay through Kansas—the California Road, the Oregon Trail, and the Santa Fe Trail—although others crossed to the south through Oklahoma, Texas, and Mexico, and still others journeyed through Nebraska to the gold mines. To follow one of the Platte River routes or one of the Santa Fe Trail itineraries, emigrants often congregated at Independence, Westport, or St. Joseph, or joined somewhere en route west of these points.

What was known as the California Road in Kansas started at St. Joseph, ran through Doniphan County, through the Kickapoo reserve in Brown County, across Nemaha and Marshall counties and up to the north-eastern part of Washington County; joining the general Platte River route the emigrants moved on to the West.

A few emigrants joined the Oregon Trail proper and after reaching the West Coast descended to California, but the usual northern route to California ran through Salt Lake City, since it was shorter, feed for horses was more plentiful, and snows did not fall as early in the autumn months. Some gold seekers, however, were forced to travel the Santa Fe Trail because they had started too late in the season to go.

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143 Palmer, Journal of Travels over the Rocky Mountains, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XXX, 87–89.

144 “Explanation of Map,” loc. cit., 577.
in safety via the Platte River.145

A well-defined trail that fed gold seekers from the Missouri border into the Santa Fe Trail ran from Fort Scott to Council Grove, where the emigrants probably joined a larger caravan for the trip west. A second feeder into the Santa Fe Trail brought emigrants from Fort Smith, Arkansas, up to the Kansas line about where Arkansas City now is, crossed to the Arkansas River about one hundred miles west of its southern departure from the State, and followed the Old Santa Fe Trail on to Bent's Fort or the new Santa Fe Trail via the Cimarron River to Mexico.146

Another route traveled by emigrants from Arkansas and the South was opened in the spring of 1849 and later became known as the Cherokee Trail. On April 20 over a hundred gold seekers left Fayetteville and went west into the Cherokee Indian country, where they were joined on the Neosho River by a band of Cherokee Indians from Tahlequah. At this point they organized into the Washington County Gold Mining Company and proceeded northward to the Verdigris River and to Turkey Creek, where they joined the Santa Fe trail early in May.147

All gold seekers traveling the Santa Fe route proceeded over a well-worn trail to the southwest, and after passing Council Grove and Fort Mann arrived at the crossing of the Arkansas, where the majority forded the river and journeyed to New Mexico over the Cimarron trail, while a few continued up its north bank to Pueblo via Bent's Fort. At Pueblo some turned to the northwest and followed various routes through Salt Lake City to the mines, while others turned south and traveled through

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145 Ralph P. Bieber, (ed.), Southern Trails to California in 1849 (Glendale, 1937), 51.
146 Ibid., passim.
147 Ibid., 48-49.
the village of Greenhorn, to the left of the Spanish Peaks, and over the Raton mountains to the vicinity of Santa Fe. After replenishing their supplies in New Mexico, the emigrants continued their journey to California over Cooke's wagon road, Kearny's trail, or the Old Spanish Trail.148

Along these trails en route to the gold fields, the emigrants sang around their campfires:

I came from _______
With my washbowl on my knee,
I'm going to California
The gold dust for to see.
It seemed all night the day I left,
The weather it was dry
The sun so hot I froze to death,
Oh, brothers, don't you cry.149

Along these trails lumbered great freighting caravans, fleets of "J. Murphy wagons," made at St. Louis especially for the plains business. Of them "Buffalo Bill" wrote:

They were very large and very strongly built, being capable of carrying seven thousand pounds of freight each. The wagon boxes were very commodious, being about as large as the rooms of an ordinary house, and were covered with two heavy canvas sheets to protect the merchandise from the rain. These wagons were generally sent out from Leavenworth, each loaded with six thousand pounds of freight, and each drawn by several yoke of oxen in charge of one driver. A train consisted of twenty-five wagons, all in charge of one man, who was known as the wagon master. The second man in command was the assistant wagon master. Then came the "extra hand," next the night herder, and lastly the caveyard driver, whose duty it was to drive the loose and lame cattle. The men did their own cooking, being divided into messes of seven. One man cooked, another brought wood and water, another stood guard, and so on, each having some duty to perform while getting meals. All were heavily armed with Colt's pistols and Mississippi yagers, and every one always had his weapons handy so as to be prepared for any emergency.150

148Ibid., 51.
149Frank Luther, Americans and Their Songs (New York, 1942), 119.
These three great trails crossing Kansas—the Santa Fe Trail, the Oregon Trail, and the California Road—led the way to the opening of other means and routes of travel: Pike's Peak express, Butterfield overland dispatch route, overland stage, and overland pony express.

In 1859 the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak express was a stage route established to meet the needs of a direct route to the new gold mines in what was then Western Kansas and is now Colorado. It ran over the old Fort Leavenworth-Fort Riley road and up to Junction City; thence it continued in a northwesterly direction along the divide between Chapman's Creek and the Republican River, through Dickinson, Clay, Cloud, Mitchell, Jewell counties and west on the northern tier of counties out of Kansas.151

The Butterfield overland dispatch route, extending from Atchison to Denver, ran along the Smoky Hill fork, a distance of 592 miles. It was operated by D. A. Butterfield in 1865–66. There were fifty stations on the route in Kansas.152

A frontier belted briefly told the story of a Smoky Hill stage driver whose luck failed him:

Bill Peters was a hustler
From Independence town;

Bill driv the stage from Independence
Up to the Smoky Hill;
And everybody knowed him thar
As Independence Bill—
Thar warn't no feller on the route
That driv with half the skill.

152Ibid., 577.
He driv that stage for many a year
Along the Smoky Hill,
And a pile o' wild Comanches
Did Bill Peters have to kill—
And I reckon if he'd had good luck
He'd been a-drivin' still. 153

Another ballad described some of the fare along the stage routes:

I loathe! Abhor! Detest! Despise!
Abominate dried-apple pies;
I like good bread; I like good meat,
Or anything that's good to eat;
But of all poor grub beneath the skies
The poorest is dried-apple pies.
Give me a toothache or sore eyes
In preference to such kind of pies.

The farmer takes his gnarliest fruit,
'Tis wormy, bitter, and hard, to boot;
They leave the hulls to make us cough,
And don't take half the peelings off;
Then on a dirty cord they're strung,
And from some chamber window hung;
And there they serve a roost for flies
Until they're ready to make pies.
Tread on my corns, or tell me lies,
But don't pass to me dried-apple pies. 154

The overland stage conveyed mail, passengers, and freight to the
West Coast. Before the establishment of the overland line to Cali-
fornia, several stage lines were in operation. Monthly stages ran on
the Santa Fe Trail from Independence to Santa Fe as early as 1849.
Later the service was increased to once a week; after a while to three
times a week until in the early 1860's daily stages were run from both
ends of this trail. 155 A semi-monthly line was operated by Holliday
and Liggett from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City, but it was
"poorly appointed" and took twenty-one days for the trip. In 1853

153 "Bill Peters, the Stage Driver," Lomax and Lomax (comps.),
Cowboy Songs, 391-93.
Russell and Jones had coaches that made daily departures and completed their trips from St. Joseph to Denver in six days.

In 1859 this company decided to open a line to Sacramento. They bought Kentucky mules and fine Concord coaches sufficient for a daily operation of the line each way. The original trail ran from Leavenworth up the Smoky Hill Valley but shortly changed to the Valley of the Platte—from Atchison to Fort Kearney, Fort Laramie, Fort Bridger, Salt Lake City, Carson City, Placerville, Folsom, and on to Sacramento. The nearly 2,000-mile journey was often made in fifteen days. The time specified in mail contracts was nineteen days, allowing for bad weather. At the end of about 250 miles of road an agent was stationed in charge of this division. He bought and distributed supplies, hired and paid blacksmiths, hostlers, and drivers. On the coaches, which were swung on thoroughbraces, not on springs, was a driver and a captain, who was in charge of the passengers, baggage, and mail. The rate of travel was from eight to ten miles an hour.156

The daring and dangerous life of a stage driver in the days when the West was "wild and woolly" is evidenced by such accounts as that of W. H. Ryus, who as a mere boy drove the mail route from Fort Larned to Fort Lyon and won the title "the Second William Penn" from passengers, settlers, and Indians on account of his justice and courage. His kindly treatment of the Indians, whom he often fed, made them his friends and not his foes.157


157 See W. H. Ryus, The Second William Penn. A true account of incidents that happened along the old Santa Fe Trail in the Sixties (Kansas City, Missouri, 1913).
In 1859 the firm Russell, Majors, and Waddell, who were operating a daily coach as far as Salt Lake City, took under consideration the opening of a pony express over the same route and to Sacramento. Thus far, the fastest time made on the Butterfield route up the Smoky Hill River was twenty-one days between New York City and San Francisco. The pony express was soon in operation and cut this at once to eleven days. This express carried letters or dispatches, which were written on fine tissue paper and weighed no more than half an ounce each. The charge for transporting a letter was five dollars. The first trip was made April 3, 1860, and continued weekly and, later, twice a week, for about eighteen months. With the completion of the transcontinental telegraph the pony express came to an end. The express transmitted President Buchanan’s last message late in 1860 from the Missouri River to Sacramento in eight days and a few hours. President Lincoln’s inaugural address of March 4, 1861, was sent over the same route in seven days and seventeen hours.158

The Missouri River was the main feeder to the three great trails. Since water courses were a common pathway for travel before 1800, the pioneers of the early nineteenth century supposed they would do as their fathers had done—follow the streams to their sources and then float downward to the Gulf of Mexico or to the Pacific Ocean. Soon they began to realize that on the plains other modes of travel must displace the use of streams.

However, the plains were affected by water travel. The French

158Inman and Cody, The Great Salt Lake Trail, 164-66. See also “Explanation of ‘Up’,” loc. cit., 576; Root and Connelley, The Overland Stage to California, 105-32.
had followed water courses and had used canoes, pirogues, and rafts in bringing their pelts and tallow down to a market on the Mississippi River. Lewis and Clark used a keel boat fifty feet long as their main supply base and the means of getting up the Missouri River. The boat had a square sail and twenty-two oars, which came into use when the wind was adverse. The Astoria overland expedition had three boats, propelled at least in part by oars. Canadian voyageurs "detested the heavy and languid drag" of these boats, which made an average of twenty-one miles a day on the Mississippi or Missouri rivers.

Besides the canoe and keel boat, the bull boat, made of bent willow poles tied together with rawhide and covered with squares of buffalo hide sewed together, was used where the current of the river was not too strong. The mackinaw, sawed from logs upstream where timber was available, was employed only to transport supplies downstream.

It is significant that the introduction of the steamboat marked the beginning of the period in which the white man conquered the country west of the Mississippi River. In 1819 the steam-powered Western Engineer carried the scientific party under the direction of Stephen H. Long up the Missouri River into the Kaw for about a mile, despite the difficult going on account of mud.

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162 Ibid., 94-96.
163 James, Account of an Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, in Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, XIV, 173.
In 1329 a packet made a regular run between St. Louis and Fort Leavenworth and continued this service for fifteen years. Since the government forbade the importation of liquor into the Indian Country, in the early days cargoes going upriver were inspected at Leavenworth; nevertheless, intoxicating spirits leaked through.  

In 1831, Pierre Chouteau, head of the American Fur Company at the time, built a boat called the Yellowstone and sent her from St. Louis in mid-April with Indian goods to Bad River in South Dakota by June 19. Having discharged her cargo she took on a load of furs and buffalo robes and reached St. Louis on July 15.  

In the Indian Country buffalo and other wild game were easily secured while the boat was being refueled by the crew cutting mulberry, ash, or cottonwood, and gathering dry driftwood. Passengers often stood on the hurricane or pilot deck and shot geese or ducks on the river. Occasionally a deer stirred in a thicket on the bank and caused excitement. In those days of heavy trapping traffic, the main fare on boats was pork, lye corn, and navy beans. Later the boats developed a cuisine, even on the Western water, as passenger travel increased and became more fastidious.  

The early steamboats were side-wheelers and drew some thirty inches of water when light, fifty when loaded. Since the muddy Missouri River

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was constantly shifting its channel, sandbars formed overnight and
snags caused by trees falling in with the caving banks were constant
hazards for the pilot. Huge spars were carried for the crew, by means
of which they could push the boat off of a sandbar or a snag. Snags
cau sed more than half of the steamboat wrecks on the Missouri River.168
Despite snags, the Oceana made the trip from St. Louis to Westport in
seven days in the spring of 1840.169

Besides being in a state of constant shift, the Missouri saw two
regular flood periods: late March or early April, when the snow melted
rapidly in the river valleys, and June, when snow streams from the
Rocky Mountains caused a more gradual rise.170 On the last day of
March, 1847, a soldier at Fort Leavenworth wrote that the breaking of
the ice in the Missouri "some weeks ago" had cleared and steamboats
were plying up and down daily.171

From 1819 until the middle 40's boats carried Indian goods up
the Missouri River and its tributaries; down river, pelts, hides, and
tallow. After 1825, when the government made treaties and moved Eastern
tribes into the plains country, agents took annuities to the red man.
There were more than 450 steamers with a total of 126,278 tons on the
Western waters in 1842; that year 26 steamboats were engaged in regular

168 Ibid., 112-13; Herbert Quick and Edward Quick, Mississippi
Steamboatin*, A History of Steamboating on the Mississippi and Its
Tributaries (New York, 1926), 140-41.

169 De Smet, Letters and Sketches, in Thwaites (ed.), Early
Western Travels, XXVII, 194.

170 Quick and Quick, Mississippi Steamboatin*, 175-41.

171 Ralph P. Bieber (ed.), Frontier Life in the Army, 1851-1861,
by Eugene Lande. (Glen da le, 1932), 115.
trade on the lower Missouri. By 1865 no less than 300 steam vessels were in commission on all the Western rivers.172

In the middle of the 40's passenger travel began a tremendous growth, for others than commercial travelers began to see the beauties and conveniences of steamboat travel. Santa Fe traffic was coming to the frontier via steamboat, as were Oregon and Mormon emigrants also. The Radnor, on which Francis Parkman traveled, had the hold crammed with supplies for Mexico and the decks stacked with huge wagons for trade with the Southwest.173

The next year brought the war with Mexico, and troops and supplies were concentrated along the border. Leavenworth became the chief depot for distribution to further parts, although the wharf in front of the warehouse of Northrup and Chick at Westport Landing was stacked with goods. In 1854 a traveler, depressed when he had his first view of Westport, then containing about five hundred inhabitants, said that all the business was done on the river front, where "the buildings were old and dilapidated, the sidewalks unpaved, and the streets muddy and cut up with ruts by the heavy freight wagons."174

Despite the conveniences and speed of steamboat travel, there were protests against the high freight rates on the Missouri River. In 1839, freight on groceries worth $225 shipped from St. Louis to Liberty


173Parkman, The Oregon Trail, 3-4.

was $44.70. Transportation for 360 miles, which was a trip of six
days, cost more than 20 per cent of the value of the articles.\textsuperscript{175}
The Lawrence Republican alleged in the summer of 1859 that freight
rates were excessive on the Kaw River; goods were taken from one
boat plying the Missouri River and were transferred to another on
the Kaw, where a local rate was charged. Thus shipping charges were
eighteen dollars in excess of what was legitimate.\textsuperscript{176} Freights on
the Eastern waters were more normal. What could be the reason for
exorbitant rates on the Missouri and Kaw when boats did not run at
night? The frontier must pay for civilized products brought to its
doors.

Business increased, nevertheless. The forty-niners had to get
to the West Coast as quickly as possible to arrive before those who
went by the sea route; moreover, river travel far outclassed overland
transportation in speed and comfort. Although ground was broken in
St. Louis for the Pacific railroad on July 4, 1851, that meant little
to the traveler. In 1854, when the Kansas and Nebraska territories
were opened for settlement, the river was loaded with traffic for the
territories. People came down the Ohio; they steamed up the Mississippi
River from the South; they chugged out of ice-clogged outposts of Minne-
sota for points west; they came from everywhere, and their paths con-
verged at the mouth of the Missouri River and ran in common until they
came to the Kansas ports on the west bank of the river, where many
disembarked for Kansas, Mexico, California, Utah, or Oregon.

\textsuperscript{175}Missouri Daily Republican, April 10, 1859.

\textsuperscript{176}Lawrence Daily Republican, June 21, 1859.
During the 1850's boats flocked to the Missouri River to indulge in the profitable emigrant and freight traffic there. By 1853 so numerous were boats on the lower Missouri that as many as five or six might lie at the landing of a city at one time during the boating season from March until November. River towns prospered, among them Leavenworth. In the palmy days of the 50's, among the finest and most popular steamers plying below Omaha and Leavenworth were the Kate Howard, David Tatum, F. X. Aubrey, Emigrant, Isabella, Minnaha, Spread Eagle, Twilight, and White Cloud. 177

Although the river was especially unpredictable in the spring, several boats attempted each year to be the first to reach Omaha after the ice on the river broke up. The side-wheeler named for that city had in her cabin a fine silver water set for being the first boat to put in at the Omaha wharf in the spring of 1856. 178 Another steamboat had a fine feature—"music on board [sic]." One who had heard the tunes explained, "The steam goes through organ pipes or something of the sort, and plays a number of national melodies which can be heard for miles." 179 Thus many travelers to Kansas tasted of the joys, luxuries, and dangers of steamboat travel.

Of the early days, particularly the 1850's, one pioneer recorded some interesting fishing facts about the part of the Missouri River forming the Kansas boundary.

179 Bieber (ed.), Frontier Life in the Army, 115.
Although but a small lad in 1851, I can distinctly remember the appearance of the river and many incidents connected with the flood of that year. A slough ran in front of my father's house, and when the water began to flow into it from below the fish came up in great numbers. They were mostly catfish and buffalo, for the German carp, now so numerous in the river, had not then made their appearance. We could see the fins of the buffalo and the ripples made by the catfish as they swam along in the backwater, for as there was no inlet to the slough from above the water was perfectly calm. It occurred to some one that by driving a row of piles across the mouth of the slough the fish might be caught. Fence rails were procured and a row of piles were soon driven, leaving a space for the water to flow, but not sufficient for the fish to get through. For miles around the people came to the fish-trap and supplied themselves with all they could carry away.

It is the consensus of opinion among all old-timers on the Missouri river that the fish were far more numerous fifty years ago than they are to-day, and that the catfish especially, the king of all the fishes in the river, grew to a much larger size. The largest fish I ever knew to be taken out of the Missouri river was caught by a boy twelve years old. It was during one of those spring freshets that have been described, when the river is covered with floating ice from some gorge that has broken loose high up the river. On such occasions the ice-floes are usually thick, perfectly clear, and as solid as rocks. They come down with such velocity and are so heavy that in older times they were a great menace to steamboats, and it was a custom when a steamboat in ascending the river encountered such a field of ice to run ashore, tie up and wait until the ice ran out.

My young friend procured a large hook, fastened it to a plow-line, baited it with a chunk of meat and tied it to a swinging limb, which overhung the bank of the creek. The water in the creek was high from the backwater of the river, and the limbs of the trees reached nearly to the water. The following morning, when the boy went to examine his hook, he saw the limb swinging violently and a great commotion in the water. He at once perceived that he had hung a fish of unusual size, one too large to be landed by himself alone. His father was plowing in a field near by and he called to him for assistance. He came, and hitching his horse to the fishing-line, the monster was drawn ashore. It was a catfish, and the big fellow measured over six feet and weighed 165 pounds. 130

A novel way of catching catfish, founded upon this fish's propensity...
for swallowing anything in the river from a gold watch to a spool of thread was by "juggling."

A party, having procured twenty or thirty jugs and a skiff, would tie hooks by short, stout lines, to the handles of the jugs, and then bait them with bacon, beef, liver, paws, frogs, or almost anything at hand. The jugs were then cast into the river to float with the current, and the skiff followed on behind. When a fish struck a hook it would swallow it, and usually become fastened. The jug would be carried out of sight, but, acting as a cork, would soon rise to the surface, to be again carried under. This process would continue until finally the fish would become exhausted, when he would be landed and taken into the boat.

A good story was told many years ago of a party that went juggling in the river. They concluded that a live bullfrog would make a tempting bait for a catfish, and, having laid in a supply, impaled them on their hooks, threw the jugs into the river, and started down-stream. After floating along for an hour or two without getting a single strike, they determined to examine their hooks and ascertain what was the matter. To their astonishment and chagrin they found that the frogs, which were still alive, had crawled up out of the water and were sitting perched on the jugs.

In 1856 Southern antipathy attempted to close the Missouri River to Free-State passenger travel and to leave commerce safe only for slave interests and nonpartisan western industry. The guerrilla bands took arms from the "abolitionists" and refused to let the emigrants go ashore when they had reached the Kansas border. Citizens along the river were in the main Southern sympathizers, and it is said that all the Missouri pilots but two were loyal to the Southern cause. Some of the captains even owned slaves; and occasionally there was a "bright little slave girl on board" one of the packet who came to the notice of Northern women; they inquired and found that the girl was "valued

181Ibid., 556.
182St. Louis Daily Intelligencer, June 28, 1856.
183Chittenden, Early Steamboating on the Missouri River, II, 249.
by her mistress at $500.\footnote{184}

The closing of the river led to the opening of James Lane's road during the summer of 1856. Starting from Iowa City and passing through Nebraska City southward, the road led on to Topeka. It was this thoroughfare that brought thousands of Free-State emigrants to Kansas after river travel became hazardous for northerners.\footnote{185} Trekking overland became patriotic to the antislavery cause although it was not as speedy as river travel.

By the spring of 1856 the Pike Pecksters were added to the emigrant rush on the river. Since approximately two hundred cords of wood were burned on a trip from St. Louis to Summer, Kansas Territory, flatboats loaded with wood were sometimes taken in tow and unloaded as the boats progressed. That spring the river was shifting so constantly that soundings had to be taken many times to determine the channel.\footnote{186}

With river traffic so pleasant and prosperous during the early 1850's no wonder attempts were made to navigate the Kaw River. Few steamers were built expressly for the Kaw river trade, but many small boats entered the stream when the water was up in the spring and early summer. In the spring of 1856 the flat-bottomed steamboat Leavenworth was built and passed up the Missouri and Kaw rivers loaded with passengers and freight. About a mile above the mouth of the Blue River she ran aground, there she lay for a month waiting for the river to rise. In the meantime, the crew discharged the cargo, among which was

\footnote{184Julie Louise Lovejoy, "Letters from Kansas," \textit{Kansa Historical Quarterly}, XI (1942), 32.}

\footnote{185Examination of Map, "Loc. Cit., 517.}

\footnote{186"Some Ingalls Letters," \textit{Collections}, XIV, 97.}
a consignment of Cincinnati houses, ready-cut structures sent to Manhattan City, and whisky which the crew sold to the Pottawatomie Indians. Later in 1855 the Hartford was burned as she lay aground just opposite St. Mary's Mission. Some of the crew refused to give tobacco to two Indians; within a short time some hay for the captain's cow was afire and soon the boat was consumer. One of the Hartford's boilers was sold to the New England Emigrant Aid Company for a sawmill at Lawrence.

The Emma Harmon had the honor of being the first steamboat to ascend the Kaw after white settlement began, going five days before the Hartford, while the Lightfoot was the first steamer built in Kansas. The Violet, which was built to aid the Kansas Free-State emigration, spent most of her life in Dixie, since navigation on the Kaw was good for only a short season. Other steamboats used on the Kaw between 1855 and 1866 were the Bee, New Lucy, Captain Perry, Far West, Kate Swinney, Morning Star, Adelia, Eureka, Izette, Emma, Hiram Hood, E. Hensley, and Alexander Majors.

Nevertheless, inconvenience sometimes attended passenger travel up the Kaw River. More than once, emigrants spent days or weeks on the west bank of the Great Muddy awaiting the rise of the Kaw from rain, and then finally they were required to buy oxen and journey overland. In the "awful summer" of 1860 the Kaw ceased to run at Topeka

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189 Ibid., 318-19, 330, 340-41.
during the daytime although a small rivulet emerged from the sand
during the night when evaporation was less. Such a puny stream was
not built for steamboat travel. However, the Kaw was no small fac-
tor in the early days for bringing flour, bacon, and other staples
into Kansas in river season and taking corn and other produce to
market. 190

Other streams in the State were not deep enough for a steamer.
However, in the spring of 1845 a remarkable event is recorded as oc-
curring in the Osage River in Kansas. A steamboat during flood sea-
son came to Jarieu's little establishment to bring goods and carry
away furs. The stern-wheeler caused much excitement en route, and
the inhabitants from the vicinity came out to see the steamer. 191

An attempt was made at commercial navigation of the Arkansas
River. After a successful trip from Little Rock to Arkansas City, a
locally built boat was loaded with seven hundred bushels of wheat and
sent downstream to a point where the boat as well as the cargo was
sold. Another boat was not so successful; and, since the season for
shipping was short, it was soon decided that the Arkansas channel
was not cut out for navigation by steamboats. 192

Railroad building put an end to the era of packet boats on the
rivers and eventually to ox and team travel overland. In 1860 the
railroad crossed the Missouri border into Kansas. 193 Ten years

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190 Ibid., 327, 351.
192 J. D. Graham, "The Kansas State Board of Agriculture: Some
High Lights of History," Collections, XVII, 797.
193 Richard L. Douglas, "A History of Manufactures in the Kan-
later, Kansas was traversed along the Smoky Hill route by a transcontinental railroad\(^{194}\) and in 1872 by another line\(^{195}\) that ran from Chicago to Atchison, Newton, Wichita, Dodge City, and westward. Thus Kansas remained—and still remains—the crossroads of the continent.\(^{196}\)

Among the narrative writers about the routes to and across Kansas are Beeknell, Chappell, Chittenden, De Smet, Farnham, Fremont, Greene, Inman and Cody, Irving, James, Merrick and Tibbals, Palmer, Parkman, Herbert and Edward Quick, Ross, and others. Recollections of pioneers form a type of literary expression which is important in this and subsequent periods of the Kansas scene. These are among the most vivid and thrilling of Kansas stories. Inman has contributed several stories collected firsthand along the Santa Fe Trail, while Applington, Bennett, and McCarter have written novels that picture the road to the City of Holy Faith. Hough’s *The Covered Wagon* has been widely read for its picture of the royal road to Oregon. Mention of the Oregon Trail is found in the French novel, *Le Trappeur du Kansas*. This novel by de Condrey and *Une Drame Esclavagiste* by Chevalier and Sharon—both published in Paris without date of publication on the title page—are significant in that they show the interest of French writers in former colonial possessions of France in America, sold by Napoleon as the Louisiana Purchase.

In poetry, besides the folk songs sung along the trails, and ballads about the West, Blair, Eble, Knox, Morehouse, Phifer, and Zumwalt

\(^{194}\)Union Pacific Railroad.

\(^{195}\)Santa Fe, Atchison and Topeka Railroad, often called the Santa Fe Railroad.

\(^{196}\)Myra Carr, "Life at the Crossroads," Kansas City *Daily Star*, May 14, 1944.
have written in verse of the happenings along the transcontinental routes to the Far West.
In 1830 the Missouri Compromise had settled the slavery question in Kansas "forever," but by an act of Congress of May 30, 1854, the Territory of Kansas was established and the question was reopened—to be concluded by the vote of the bona fide settlers upon admission to statehood.

The desire to control Kansas was strong in both the North and the South. David Atchison, United States senator from Missouri, acting Vice-President, and ardent proslavery propagandist, said in Platte City, Missouri: "If we cannot get Kansas by peaceful means, we must take it at the point of the bayonet, if necessary." The South had other militants like Albert T. Bledsoe, George D. Armstrong, and George Fitzhugh, who claimed that slavery was "the natural and normal condition of the laboring man, whether white or black." In June, 1854, Nathaniel P. Banks, speaking to his constituents in Massachusetts on questions of the day, said that the South was asking for too many concessions. After publishing the Liberator for

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1 Thomas H. Webb Scrapbooks, VI, 7, Kansas State Historical Society Library.
2 George Fitzhugh, Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters (Richmond, 1857), 61.
3 Boston Daily Evening Traveller, June 10, 1854, Thomas H. Webb Scrapbooks, I.
two decades, William Lloyd Garrison was not retreating "a single inch" in his uncompromising stand for the complete emancipation of the slave.

Kansas was much in the news from early in the year when the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was being debated in the House until the bill passed the Senate on May 27. Then came the announcement that the treaties had set the Indians on reserved land and that parts of Kansas Territory were open for settlement. Local reports came from Nebraska and Kansas. One who had been there said: "On the Kansas [Kaw River] we found some beautiful spots, and fearing we could do no better we 'blazed out' a large claim for our whole settlement together."

The spring of 1854 saw the institution of slavery trying to push west of the Missouri boundary in spite of the lack of economic advantages of cotton. Human driftwood began to float over into East Kansas by the thousands and they marked the choice lands by blazing trees and staking out cabins with four sakes or poles—not only for themselves but for others who remained behind and who might never come to Kansas. A few newcomers were left to guard the illegitimate claims and the rest of the Missourians returned to their homes until voting time rolled round, when some 1,600 votes were cast in a neighborhood where not

4New York Daily Tribune, February 7-June 1, 1854.
5Ibid., June 21, 1854.
6Ibid., July 3, 1854.
more than half a dozen families lived. 8

The Fourth of July brought a report of the celebration—a big dinner—in Salt Creek Valley of Kansas. 9 In December news got back East of how popular sovereignty had not worked in the November 29 election. A correspondent reported that a grocery store in Westport had sold eighty gallons of whisky on election Monday as the tide of Missouri emigration went west into Kansas, there being scarcely enough men left in one Missouri town "to take care of the women and children." Men had journeyed from Boonville, Missouri, some two hundred miles down the river, to vote in Kansas. 10 In December the New York Daily Tribune took the St. Louis Pilot to task for exulting over Missouri success in the Territory, declaring that the Pikes were "not half through with their job yet." 11

Along the Western Missouri border were 80,000 whites who held 12,000 slaves, and native Missourians are accounted to have been either the well-to-do or the poor. 12 Sad to add, the latter were not only pecuniarily, but often mentally, dependent upon the men of means. Early in the spring, B. F. Stringfellow and other politically minded Missourians founded secret societies, called Blue Lodges, Friends.

9 New York Daily Tribune, July 4, 1854.
10 Ibid., December 12, 1854.
11 Ibid., December 30, 1854.
12 J. N. Holloway, History of Kansas: From the First Exploration of the Mississippi Valley to the Admission into the Union (Lafayette, 1868), 91.
Societies, the members of which swore to vote Kansas a slave State.  

Mary J. Kema reported that some mass meetings held in Missouri made resolutions to leave the pestiferous question with the "people who shall settle" the new land west of the line, but reports from early Kansas sources indicated that Missourians seemed anxious to extend their land and to vote the ticket as fabricated by Atchison and Stringfellow at the price of putting all "abolitionists," as Northerners were called, into the Missouri River. It is true that there was an element in Missouri utterly opposed to slavery; the Missourians who made the noise and fuss were in the main border "toughs"—men who were not taking permanent residence in Kansas and who had a low status on the frontier—the scum of the civilized world.  

The first comers who arrived in what is now Atchison County in June, 1854, were not settlers, and none erected houses until a month later. Leavenworth, adjoining the fort, saw the sale of lots in October to proslavers. On September 14, the Kansas Weekly Herald was issued in Leavenworth—108 days after the passage of the Organic Act, establishing the Territory.

The white inhabitants of Kansas Territory at the time of its organi-

16 Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 306.
17 Ibid., 324.
action consisted of some 700 soldiers and army attaches, who were not voters, and perhaps that many more civilians who were living at the missions and trading posts in the Territory. Fort Leavenworth had 2 companies of soldiers, 12 officers, and 158 men with about 70 hangers-on. Fort Riley, in the building, had 4 companies, 16 officers, and 228 men besides a number of laborers; at Walnut Creek Post Office were located the troops previously garrisoned at Fort Atkinson on the Kansas River—one company, 12 officers, and 75 men.

White settlers were found at Council Grove, where there were six trading establishments, with two blacksmith shops, and the Kansas Indian mission. It is estimated that there were altogether thirty white people at Council Grove.

Isaac Munday lived at the Delaware Crossing—where the military road between Fort Leavenworth and Fort Scott crossed the Kansas [Kaw] River. At that point there was a postoffice. Munday was the blacksmith for the Delaware Indians, and there were some ten or twelve white people around him.

Attached to the Missions of the various churches among the Indian tribes were numerous white people, as there were at the trading posts. In the Wyandot Nation in what is now Wyandotte County, there were a number of white men and women. Some of these were members of the tribe, and probably not citizens of the territory under a strict construction of the law. They numbered about fifty persons. In the Shawnee Mission and Labor School and the Quaker Shawnee Labor School there were possibly forty-five white people connected with these institutions.

About . . . [the Catholic missions among the Pottawatomies and the Osages] were some forty white persons. At the missions of the Iowa and Sac and Fox Indians in Doniphan County, and at the Indian Agency near, it is supposed there were forty or fifty white residents. The trading point of most importance was at Unioitown on the Kansas River. This was on the west line of what is now Shawnee County. Many of the Indians were paid their annuities there, and in 1854 there were probably twelve families living in that vicinity. There were other white people in the territory, some of whom lived at Fort Scott. There was a trading post on the Grasshopper and one on the Blue. At both of these there were white families. At posts on the Oregon Trail whites were to be found who were in the service of stage lines and freighting companies. This is true also of the Santa Fe Trail. There were always to be found in every Indian community some white men. All the white residents of the territory, when
the act for its erection was signed, numbered less that fifteen hundred, counting the military. 19

The Eastern press enthusiastically discussed the need for settlers and published letters from pioneers who had gone West, the New York Daily Herald deploring on December 26, 1854, that there had been too much talk and not enough action. However, emigrant aid to Kansas was in the process of organization before the threatening bill became a law on May 30. An act of February 21, 1854, incorporated the New England Emigrant Aid Company. 20 The Missourians, however, were not so enthusiastic about Northern emigration. John R. Cook reported that one Missouri gentleman said to two youthful Northern emigrants: "Boys, you are goin' into a peck of trouble... I'd turn around and go back to whar ye come frum." 21

Thus the year 1854 broke the frontier line which had hung at the western border of Missouri since 1830. Like a magnet Kansas was to draw emigrants along the dusty roadways and up the seething riverways to a land which was pictured as almost idyllic:

Trees are scattered her and there like old orchards, and cattle in large numbers are grazing upon the hillside, and in the valleys, giving to all the look of cultivation and home life. It is, indeed, difficult to realize that for thousands of years this country has been uncultivated and solitary, and that months only have elapsed since the white settler has sought here a home. 22

19 Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 304-305. Connelley made a thorough study of the number of people in the Territory in May, 1854.
20 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, II.
22 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 3.
Eli Thayer, of Worcester, Massachusetts, was the founder of the New England Emigrant Aid Company and a strong promoter of emigration from the North between 1854 and 1856. Incorporated in February, the company was soon directing emigration westward, and aiding and providing accommodations for the emigrants after arriving at their place of destination. An imposing array of talent stood behind this organization, although at first it was not widely known who was supporting the movement. Edward Everett Hale and Thayer did much work in setting the company afoot. Amos A. Lawrence was treasurer and one of the chief contributors to the group. Dr. Thomas H. Webb was secretary; John Carter Brown, president. Dr. Charles Robinson and Samuel C. Pomeroy were agents in Kansas.

Thayer hoped to see 20,000 people go to Kansas from New England during 1856. In July, he wrote letters and circularized clergymen throughout the East, asking them to become life members by contributing money to the cause; twenty dollars was the usual fee for life membership. A large sum was raised by this means, for there was a general feeling that "Kansas ought to be and must be saved, cost what it will." Churches also contributed to send men to Kansas. Women were quite enthusiastic about the venture. Thayer at one time had expressed a wish that some lime-burners from Rockland, Maine, go West as helpers and voters. They did not appear too anxious to mi-

23 Ibid., 11.
24 Eli Thayer Collection, Kansas State Historical Society Vault.
25 Circular of the Committee of Clergymen," Ibid.
26 "Reply from Thomas C. Upham," Eli Thayer Collection.
grate, but a young woman in the church replied: "If it were ladies to teach school in Kansas, that you needed, instead of voters, I should think I could have more influence in supplying you, as we have among us those who are competent and would like to be thus usefully employed; ..."27

The company was credited by Isaac T. Goodnow, a professor of natural sciences in Providence Seminary, Rhode Island, who helped establish Manhattan, as having kept Kansas from becoming a slave State.28

At one time, although the officials decided that the company as such should not dabble in business by buying rifles to help Northern settlers, they agreed to raise by subscription money with which to buy guns.29

During the spring of 1856 the company became so bold as to aid openly Free-State men sent East to arouse interest in Kansas. The company was wholeheartedly backing a free Kansas and now did not care who knew it.30

The site of the first Free-State town in Kansas was selected early in July, 1854, for the Emigrant Aid Company by Charles Branscomb. Having left Worcester, Massachusetts, on July 17, a supervised party arrived in Kansas City on July 28.31 Twenty-nine men settled on the hill which overlooked the prairies. This mound was given the name of Mount Oread from the Seminary in Worcester, founded by Thayer; the town

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29 Eli Thayer Collection.
30 Ibid.
31 New York Daily Tribune, July 20, 21, 1854.
was called Lawrence for Amos A. Lawrence. The latter also made donations for a Kansas College, which became the University of Kansas.32

Here on the edge of the prairies on a pre-eminence overlooking the Kaw and the Wakarusa rivers, these New Englanders laid their hands to the labor of erecting a Free-State town. There were no paths, no cisterns, no homes—just a vast horizon-to-horizon view with lush grass, various shades of green and natural boundaries lending grace to the picture. If that late July day was a typical summer day, over all was a beaming Kansas sun. But there was work for all. First came surveying the neighborhood, staking claims, hewing trees, and sawing them into rude lumber. Food, except for occasional wild game, had been brought along and must be prepared; water for drink and domestic uses must be secured. While there was the will to work, the desire for democratic equality, and the realization that ballots, not bullets, must finally decide the fate of Kansas.

The poet prophesied the fate of the town:

... Nestled in the lovely vale
Where now the Kansas gently flows
Serene, and where the lily grows,
Like drooping Love beside the rose,
And where the powers of Peace prevail,

There Lawrence stands, a lovely queen
Of May. Sweet Lawrence! Freedom's child!
Cradled in love, and taught the mild
And gentle ways of Truth, she smiled
In graceful beauty not unseen.

Lawrence, you yet shall drink the cup
Of gall and wear the weeds of woe;—
You yet shall feel the savage blow
And deadly shaft from Treason's bow,—
Yet go down and with Affliction sup.\(^{33}\)

The second party of sixty-seven persons arrived in Lawrence about September 9; ten women and twelve children came to turn the prairie tents and shag houses into homes. Four musicians from Hartford, Vermont, were in the group; and, before they left Boston, the emigrants assembled in one of the stations late in August and sang John Greenleaf Whittier's "The Kansas Emigrants."

We cross the prairie as of old
The pilgrims crossed the sea,
To make the West, as they the East,
The homestead of the free!

We go to rear a wall of men
On Freedom's southern line,
And plant beside the cotton-tree
The rugged Northern pine!

We're flowing from our native hills
As our free rivers flow:
The blessing of our Mother-land
Is on us as we go.

We go to plant her common schools
On distant prairie swells,
And give the Sabbaths of the wild
The music of her bells.

Upbearing, like the Ark of old,
The Bible in our van,
We go to test the truth of God
Against the fraud of man.

No pause, nor rest, save where the streams
That feed the Kansas 'Kaw' run,
Save where our Pilgrim gonfalon
Shall flout the setting sun!

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We'll tread the prairie as of old
Our fathers sailed the sea,
And seek the West, as they the East,
The homestead of the free!  

This song continued to cheer emigrants coming to "Freedom's southern line." To arouse interest in the movement, the Emigrant Aid Company offered a fifty-dollar prize for the best emigrant song; the prize was won by Lucy Larcom, who wrote challengingly:

Yeomen strong, hither throned!
Nature's honest men;
We will make the wilderness
Bud and bloom again.
Bring the sickle, speed the plow,
Turn the ready soil!
Freedom is the noblest pay
For the true men's toil.
Ho, brothers! come, brothers!
Hasten all with me;
We'll sing upon the Kansas plains
A song of liberty.

Although Whittier's song continued to be a favorite of emigrants to Kansas, both poems have passed into the literature of the State and nation.

Activities were going forward in Lawrence. On October 1 the first sermon was preached in the village in the Pioneer House, a part sod and part hay structure for community gatherings. It was equipped with a stove. A third contingent of emigrants arrived that month.  

35 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 11.  
Reeder entered upon his duties as governor during the autumn months. A hospitable welcome awaited the governor at Lawrence.*32 In November, Indianola was laid out. Sometime during the year, Ira Hadley settled on the Cottonwood River near where Emporia now stands.*33

There are records of others coming into the Territory singly and in groups in 1854. On December 30, a newcomer slept on a buffalo robe for a bed at Blue Jacket's chief of the Shawnee, and commented that, although he had not slept on a bedstead since he left New Brighton, Connecticut, he was really healthier than ever before. He commented on the mildness of the December weather that year, and recalled that Kansas Christmas temperature had been 60 degrees in the sun; but the mercury on January 28, 1855, registered one below zero.*40

The sawmill was started at the Lawrence settlement in January, and soon there were three presses in town. Like many others, this young man enjoyed pioneering.*41

A prospecting party of Friends went down into the Marais de Cygnes section in October and made plans for a Quaker settlement there in the spring.*42

A mass of colonists soon flowed in from the Ohio and Upper Mississippi valleys—from New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana,

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*32 Andrew H. Reeder, "Diary," Kansas State Historical Society Vault.


*41 Ibid.

Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa. Men came from Maine as late as November, and some emigrants listed their former homes as France and Germany. The people of the Middle West understood pioneer life and its crudities and could be counted on to know what to bring in order to subsist and to make a practical home within a few days, whether dwelling in a tent, a shag house, a thatched cottage, or a combination of these. However, even the Bostonians were quick to meet the situation with practicality and dignity.

During the fall of 1854 a colony from New York founded Osawatomie. A family with three children from Hamilton, Ohio—near Cincinnati—came to Three Mile Creek in Riley County as late as November and stayed while their neighbor who took and adjoining claim was so disgusted that he "packed bag and baggage and went back to Pennsylvania, whence he came."

From the North there were three ways to get to Kansas: by water all the way, once one had reached the Ohio River—down the Ohio and Mississippi to St. Louis and up the Missouri to Kansas; by land and water—by rail to Alton, Illinois, and by stage or steamboat to St. Louis, and then to Kansas by river in from four to eight days; and overland all the way in a wagon or cart. An overland journey was used by frontier families who had plenty of time and relatively little

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43 W. E. Miller, The Peopling of Kansas (Columbus, 1906), 60.
45 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 41.
money to spend in getting to their new home; it was not much used
until the Missourians closed the Missouri River approach and then James
Lane opened the Lane Trail from Iowa City, Iowa, to Topeka, Kansas.
The Emigrant Aid Company gave financial aid to travelers since getting
voters to Kansas before an election called for the speediest method
of travel.

The New York Daily Tribune claimed that the cheapest route was
by the Ohio and Mississippi rivers in cabins that were "dark, filthy,
il-ventilated holes," which afforded excellent conditions for cholera.
The Daily Tribune added that the Emigrant Aid Company was using this
route because it was cheaper than rail travel. The newspapers warned
against the discomforts, delays, and dangers of steamboat travel.\(^{43}\)

In relating her adventures, while en route to Kansas, in letters
published in the Independent Democrat of Concord, New Hampshire, Mrs.
Julie Louisa Lovejoy reported that her twenty-five cent breakfast at
Chicago was "refreshing." Her group journeyed with many a "jar and
whistle" to Alton, Illinois, and then down the Mississippi River to
St. Louis. Having rested there, the party secured passage on the Kate
Swinney to Kansas City for the meager charge of ten dollars each and
"superb fare, that would pamper the most fastidious epicure."\(^{49}\) Al-
though there were slaveholders on board—the captain himself being
one—no conflicting sentiments were advanced. On the one hand sat an
industrious Bay State lady, plying her knitting needles; near by an-
other woman put the finishing touches to a substantial pair of over-

\(^{43}\) New York Daily Tribune, July 17, 1854.

alls to make comfortable a husband who was tilling Kansas soil. Meanwhile, a pleasure-loving group sat at checkers or a musician thumped the keys of the piano or strings of a guitar while others "sang lustily the old-fashioned, soul-enlivening Methodist hymns." "Kansas Ho!" was the watchword of these wives and mothers who had "torn themselves away from dear New England homes... to follow the fortunes of that loved husband... to brave hardships of no ordinary character..." The journey to Kansas City was somewhat protracted on account of snags and sandbars, but this party reached the city on the Sabbath morn, March 18, 1855, "in season to attend divine worship."

William Coffin, going from Kansas to Indiana in September, 1860, recorded his interesting and hazardous trip downstream:

The third night out was cool, clear, and frosty, with a full moon, the river at a fine boating stage, and the steamer running at full head. A dance was in progress. It was near midnight. I had lain down with clothes on, except boots and coat. Suddenly we experienced a great shock, the steamer striking a sunken snag pointing up stream, knocking a great hole in her hold. She was heavily laden with bales of hemp, besides fifty mules and some 300 or 400 live hogs, and over 800 passengers. Immediately there was a rush of the deckhands and of the passengers for the top of the boat. I caught up a life-preserver, such as was placed in all staterooms, my coat and boots, and ran with the rest, the water coming into my stateroom before I could get out. I saw but one other person with a life-preserver. The boat settled to the bottom, across the current of the river, in about twenty feet of water, before the pilot could run ashore, ... Most of the mules were drowned, but a few had broken loose, and they and the hogs were swimming around, trying to climb on top of the boat, loath to leave it, greatly adding to the danger, and hard to keep off. Some of the men were cool and collected, and ready to act under the order of the captain. Most were demoralized. Many tried to pray, ... Some of the cancers—ladies—promised the Lord on their knees, if He would only save their lives this time and forgive them, they would never dance any more. The deck-hands, as they ran by the bar, had gathered bottles of whisky, and were too drunk to be of any use. As soon as possible, the yowl and

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life-boat were launched, by help of the passengers, and took many loads to shore. . . . finally all got safely to shore, except one or more caught in the steerage. A large fire was built in the woods. We were but a short distance from the mouth of the Missouri. Our steamer was a total wreck.51

In the East, persons were holding secular meetings in their churches on week nights and young men and women were listening to a tall slender man with a pleasant bearded face—Eli Thayer. He told how practical it was to go to Kansas; how heroic and high minded and adventurous it was to have a band in making this Territory a free State; how the Emigrant Aid was offering a practical plan, including the furnishing of a saw and grist mill and a newspaper to communities, and "large returns at no distant day" to individuals.52 Then toward the close of the meeting a letter from an enthusiastic resident of the Territory was read, as Margaret Lynn has pictured in her novel Free Soil:

I hope to tell you it was God's chance of a lark that sent me out here. . . . You couldn't dream of such a country unless you saw it. It's as different as if the Lord had changed His style between times. It rolls and rolls and the thick grass goes up hill and down. When the crops come the grass will go and that will be a pity, but they will be crops to console a nation. Tell everybody that wants good land and plenty of it and some excitement thrown in, to come out here. As soon as they begin to organize this territory there will be something to do. The slavery men intend to have something to say about it. They are lined up on the border three deep any day all ready for the word go. There is going to be a rumus out here that would make New England stand on her head and shake. Every body that didn't have fun enough in the forties better bring his gun and come on.53


52Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 312.

53Margaret Lynn, Free Soil (Boston, 1920), 5-6.
While immigration was being promoted in the East, squat­
meetings were being held in established Kansas communities to form
by-laws for the government of citizens holding claims and town lots.
During the summer and fall of 1854 local government was established
at Lawrence, Leavenworth, and Salt Creek.54

In Kansas things really began to happen on November 29, 1854,
when the election of a delegate to Congress was held and the first re­
corded homicide in the Territory about the slavery issue took place.

There was only one topic discussed in Kansas in those
days: Territorial settlement and the right to the balance of
power at the ballot box. Every month saw the incoming of new
settlers, whose opinions on this topic was the first census
taken in the Territory. Already invaders from across the
eastern border had come with mob violence to control political
elections. Three-fourths of all the ballots at these elections
had been cast by men who never intended to make a home nor
claim a citizenship in Kansas. They came only for the day to
vote. . . .55

The Investigating Committee found that in the November election
"a very large majority of the votes were cast by citizens of the State
of Missouri, in violation of the organic law of the Territory."56

Among the voters of the sixteenth district at Leavenworth were several
persons who held or had held high official positions in that State;
they claimed to be residents of Kansas Territory from the fact that
they were present and insisted upon the right to vote.57

A quarrel over a claim resulted in the slaying of Henry Davis, a

54Phillis, The Conquest of Kansas, 27; House Document No. 200,
950-56.
55Margaret Hill McCarter, A Well of Men (Chicago, 1912), 23.
56House Document No. 200, 8.
57Ibid., 7.
proslaver, by Lucius Kibbee, when he was attacked by Davis and J. W. Rollins of Missouri. The storm loomed more imminent, and black thunderheads and flashing lightning portended a prairie twister and destructive wind. Kansas was to be for a decade a land of disorder and lawlessness, ripped and shredded by drinking, cursing, stabbing Border Ruffians and retaliating, pillaging, strafing Jayhawkers.

Like ocean tides sweeping in from illimitable, water spaces which no man can measure, the bleak December winds swept the open Kansas plains. And although the uplands were colorless and the Vinland Valley was only a waste of dead grasses with a black tracery of leafless boughs along its sheltered waterways, the shining silvery heavens were never so glorious, nor did purple dawn and scarlet sunset lose one unit of their splendor...

Along the Old Santa Fe Trail a noisy crew came scurrying in disorder; drunken men, boasters, bullies, gathered from the mudbanks of the Missouri, all rushing to the rallying ground on the Wacaruse. They were heavily armed. They rode

58 Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 381.

59 In 1858 Horace Greeley is said to have fastened the name Border Ruffian on the Missourians who came over into Kansas to burn settlers' cabins and to stuff ballot boxes. Some time later the name Jayhawker was given to retaliating Kansans. Sinclair Lewis and Lloyd Lewis, Jayhawker. A Play in Three Acts (Garden City, 1935), ix.

In his essay on the mythical Jayhawk, Kirke Mechem said:

The name became common during the territorial troubles and was at first applied to both sides. Jennison's regiment of Free-state men, as well as Quantrill's raiders, were at one time called Jayhawkers. The name finally stuck to the anti-slavery side and eventually to all the people of Kansas.

As to the word Jayhawk, it has now sent several generations of Kansans to the ornithologies. Probably the belief that somewhere the bird had a real prototype will never die. The story of Pat Devlin has always encouraged this hope. Devlin was a native of Ireland, an early immigrant to Kansas. One day in 1856 he was returning home after some private plundering across the Missouri border. When asked what he had been up to, he replied, "You know, in Ireland we have a bird we call the Jayhawk, which makes its living off of other birds. I guess you might say I've been Jayhawking!" Kirke Mechem, The Mythical Jayhawk (Topeka, 1944), 2.
steeds of as nondescript variety as the class of beings to
which they themselves belonged. Their words were mingled
with oaths and coarse jests, and the one slogan and rallying
cry of this outlaw pack was "Death to the Yankees."60

In 1855 a wave of immigration to Kansas set in. People arrived
on Rock Creek, west of Topeka,61 and on the Upper Neosho River near
Fort Junction.62 Preaching was held in Dutch Henry's house in the
Marais des Cygnes district.63 More people were coming out around
Fort Riley because of the fertile country and the nearness of the fort
which had been established in 1853.64 Others were pushing beyond the
Republican River although there was no road.65 Settlements were being
made in the vicinity of Osawatomie;66 and Leavenworth had new settlers;67
whereas, approximately two hundred new settlers came to Lawrence in
March.68

Sara T. D. Robinson, wife of Dr. Charles Robinson, was in the
Emigrant Aid group which left Boston, March 13, 1855, under the doc­
tor's charge. Nearly two hundred men, women, and children were on their

60McCarter, A Wall of Men, 117.
62Flora Rosenquist Godsey, "The Early Settlement and Raid on
the Upper Neosho," Collections, XVI, 452.
65"George Montague," Transactions, X, 632.
66"Letters of John and Sarah Everett, 1854-1864," Kansas His­
torical Quarterly, VIII (1939), 8.
67Frank M. Gable, "Memoirs of a Pioneer in Kansas," Collections,
XVI, 576.
way to swell the Free-State holders at Lawrence. They arrived in Kansas City after twelve days en route, with trunks and carpet sacks well packed—anxious for the new adventure. Another boat landed the next day at Westport Landing with emigrés for the Territory. After outfitting sufficiently for a few weeks of life on the frontier, many set out for Lawrence at the "top of the morning" on March 26, just four days before the election.69

Governor Reeder had the census of the settled portions taken during January and February, and the number of inhabitants was found to be 3,601.70 The census taker of the seventh and eighth districts, which embraced all territory west of Fort Riley and south of the Kaw River and the Smoky Hill east to the Wabashia, reported that there were no roads and the best maps, though rough and with few details, were at the fort. The important question asked the census taker in the village One Hundred Ten was whether the young men was "sound on the goose."71 The proslavery men had drawn up a fraudulent list of voters and wished to turn in their prefabricated list, but the census taker was able to secure the correct names by persistent effort and returned to Shawnee Mission, where the Governor was awaiting the report.72

The same day that brought the census returns, the governor issued

69Ibid., 24-26.
70Ibid., 14; House Document No. 200, 72-190.
71A person was sound on the goose if he was in favor of establishing slavery in the Territory.
his proclamation for an election of "thirteen members of council and twenty-six members of the house of representatives to constitute the legislative assembly" to be held on March 30, 1855. This announcement meant action for Free-State men and the self-assumed constituency from Missouri.

The winter of 1854 had been rather mild and pleasant. Lemuel Knapp and his family pitched their tent on Christmas Day in a gully between the Kaw River and the high prairies; there they remained until the first of March, when their log cabin was ready for occupancy. During the heavy snow storm of January 20, 1855, the snow drifted into the gully covering the tent more than eight feet; nearly three days were required to clear the snow from the top and from around the tent.

Mrs. Robinson declares from what she had heard, "There was not a day that the people could not follow their outdoor employments, so with occasional lectures before the Athenaeum just formed, and a general prevalence of kind feeling, the pioneer passed a pleasant winter amid the uncouth arrangements of the new home."

Such good weather also encouraged the Missourians. The New York Daily Tribune recorded a March rally held in St. Joseph, which was made up of forces who were to go to Kansas and vote "at the point of the bowie knife and revolver." Eastern farmers and mechanics were

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74 "Selections from the Hyatt Manuscripts," Transactions, I-II (1881), 207.
75 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 14.
76 New York Daily Tribune, April 13, 1855.
leaving Easton, Pennsylvania, with the intent of reaching Kansas before the March voting. 77

Mrs. Robinson recorded:

A few days before the thirtieth of March crowds of men might be seen wending their way to some general rendezvous in the various counties of Ray, Howard, Carroll, Boone, Lafayette, Saline, Randolph and Cass, in Missouri. They had, however, one mark upon them, a white or blue ribbon, to distinguish them from the settlers. This was wholly unnecessary, no one ever mistaking one of these men for an intelligent, educated settler in the territory. . . . Their watchword was "Neither give nor take quarter." . . . on the morning of the thirtieth of March about one thousand men . . . came into Lawrence. They came in about one hundred and ten wagons, and upon horseback, with music, and banners flying. They were armed with guns, pistols, rifles and bowie-knives. They brought two cannon loaded with musket balls.

The crowd [of ruffians] was often so great around the log cabin [used for voting], that many of the voters, having voted, were hoisted on to the roof of the building, thus making room for others.

. . . . . . .

Many of the Missourians left for home as soon as they had voted, while others remained until morning. They entered freely the houses of the citizens, without ceremony or invitation, in some instances taking their meals with them Free-State families . . . . . .

The whole number of names on the poll [sic] lists was one thousand and thirty-four, of which eight hundred and two were non-residents and illegal voters. 78

Where 417 votes were cast, of those names on the poll books in the Fifteenth district, only 62 were on the census rolls. The judges required the voters to take an oath that they were actual residents. The intruders objected at first, "some saying they had a claim, or held a claim, or owned a claim, or 'I am here'; . . . One said he cut him some poles and laid them in the shape of a square, and that made him a claim. The Free-State men did not vote. . . ." They were deterred by

77 Ibid., February 28, 1855.

78 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 15-17.
threats thrown out by the Missourians, before and on the day of election, from putting up candidates; and none were run, for the reason that there was a credited rumor prevailing that the Missourians would control the election.79

The day after the election many Missourians were en route home. Out from Lawrence on the high ground overlooking the main road into the Territory from which one usually got "the most delightful view in the world," the settlers saw every sort of vehicle that had been requisitioned to convey these renegade voters into the Territory. "Now and then a carriage of more pretentions appeared, and was probably occupied by some leader of the gang. The horses, as well as the men, looked wearied out with their journey."80

Two weeks later the New York Daily Tribune was protesting against the fraud in Kansas from the invasion of the "Missouri bullies," for it cost less to send ten bullies across the border for several elections than it took to place one Boston emigrant in Kansas.81

The governor set aside the March election in districts where protests were made against fraud, and called for another vote on May 22. At the new election Free-State men were unanimously voted into office except at Leavenworth, where the Missourians came over and played their game.82 Missourians were reported to have taken "but little interest and left the people to do as they pleased about it."83

79 House Document No. 260, 27.
80 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 27.
81 New York Daily Tribune, April 13, 17, 19, 27, 29, 1855.
82 Holloway, History of Kansas, 53.
83 House Document No. 200, 524-46.
On July 2, at Pawnee, thirty-eight proslavery members and eleven antislavery legislators met and adjourned to Shawnee Mission, two or three miles from the Kansas-Missouri line, to accept the Constitution and statutes modeled after those of Missouri, which were of an "intolerant, Draconian character," according to Mrs. Robinson.84

How was pioneering coming along in the spring of 1855? The Virginia Sentinel of January 16, 1855, quoted the Kansas Herald on frontier living:

How few from the east understand anything of pioneer life. They come out here with soft hands, and too often soft heads expecting to find a country in which they can live without work, but then alas! how sadly they are deceived! Kansas is a good climate, but it is yet in a state of nature, and what it needs, is able and stout hearts to develop its boundless resources of wealth.85

Records left by 1855 arrivals in Kansas Territory indicated that Northern emigrants were a hardy lot in the main. Mrs. Julia Louisa Lovejoy of Vermont wrote from the mouth of the Big Blue River in August:

And it would occasion surprise, to hear any one exclaim, "Ah me, I have taken cold!"—men (and even ladies too) I'll whisper this parenthesis can ford (wade) creeks, rivers, sleep in the open air, on the prairies, in the ox-wagons, or wherever night overtakes them, will suffer no inconvenience. I mean delicate ladies, who have been bred to effeminacy, and accustomed to the luxuries of a home, where wealth abounded.86

A man one hundred and four years old came into Kansas City with an Indiana party and hoped to become a pioneer, while a recent resident of Maine in the last stages of consumption came to Kansas and re-

84 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 79.
85 Webb Scrapbooks, II.
covered so that he could labor constantly and sleep in winter on a buffalo robe. If a man with a two-month lease on life and a seal to recover could thrive on territorial living, what could not vital and buoyant manhood endure?

In May, despite snow on the Wolf River and Indians on the war path, Mrs. Robinson reported:

The roads for many days have been full of wagons—white-covered, emigrant wagons. We cannot look out of the windows without seeing a number, either upon the road through the prairie east of us, which comes in from Kansas City, where most emigrants leave the boats and buy wagons and provisions for the journey, or, going on the hill west, on their way to Topeka, or other settlements above.

The prairie, too, is alive with people, coming and going. Some are upon horseback, and others in carriages of eastern manufacture; while the busy teams, carrying stone for the hotel and other large buildings, give to the whole town an appearance of unprecedented thrift which renders the name of Yankee Town ... richly merited. At night we see the camp-fires all about us, on the prairies and in the ravines.

It was estimated that 6,000 emigrants with 3,000 wagons and 30,000 head of stock would get away from Atchison for Great Salt Lake Valley during the summer.

But some emigrants were going to the Kansas frontier, away from "any steam line of communication with the States." Some were going up to Rock Creek, where the timber was full of wild game—deer, turkeys, an occasional elk, besides wolves, opossums, ducks, geese, and rabbits.

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87 Ibid., 36, 39.
89 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 56.
91 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 56.
A newcomer, having passed along the route, described the Republican Valley:

The river-bottom land was from a half to a mile wide, covered with a luxuriant growth of bluestem grass and some other kinds, all of which made the very finest kind of hay; the banks were skirted with timber, mostly cottonwood, but where small creeks emptied into the river there were many kinds of good timber, such as oak; red and white elm, hackberry, locust, coffee-bean, mulberry, ash, hickory, sycamore, willow, and also wild plums and cherries. Wild game was abundant; in fact, this was surely a hunter's paradise, if there ever was one, for this was in the days when the buffalo roamed over the plains, and they were here in endless numbers; in fact I have seen the plains black with them as far as the eyes could reach, and from this source we supplied ourselves with meat for the winter for a number of years. . . . But the buffalo was not the only kind of game, for the deer ran in bands of ten or fifteen together, and antelope were seen in herds of as many as 500 together. Elk were not so plentiful, but the country swarmed with wild turkeys, and prairie-chickens were in great abundance, also bob-white quails, and plenty of squirrels, with wild geese and ducks and other water-fowl in their season. In the rivers there was an abundance of the finest fish I ever saw in my life, such as catfish from 10 to 100 pounds in weight, buffalo-fish weighing from 10 to 20 pounds, and many other varieties.92

Another pioneer said: "I have seen the creeks literally alive with wild ducks, and their quacking was something awful." In the absence of the man of the house, a boy shot a turkey or some other small game, having on trial the old shotgun; the next fall he was allowed to go on the buffalo hunt with his father.93

It was good that wild meat could be secured with comparative ease, for prices on provisions were enormously high in August on account of the freight rates from low water and occasional snags and sandbars: flour per hundred, $5.75; cornmeal, $1.50 and $1.75; butter per pound, 30 cents; ham, 11 and 12 cents; molasses per gallon, 75 cents; and

dried apples, 12 cents a pound. 94

Noah Brooks's *The Boy Settlers*, a story of early times in Kansas, related how several boys came with the men folks from Dixon, Illinois. Stirred by an antislavery newspaper editorial they went to "bleeding Kansas" to get a home ready for the women folks; the boys returned to their Illinois home for the winter when the crop of sod corn95 was destroyed by a herd of buffalo which came down the Republican Valley.

The party entered Kansas via Quindaro, a straggling but pretty little town among the groves of the west bank of the Missouri. Here the emigrants found a store or trading-post, well supplied with the goods they needed, staple articles of food and the heavier farming-tools being the first required. The boys looked curiously at the big breaking-plough that was to be of so much consequence to them in their new life and labors. . . . It had a long and massive beam, or body, and big, strong handles, suggestive of hard work to be done with it. "The nose," as Sandy called the point of the share, was long, flat, and as sharp as a knife. It was this thin and knife-like point that was to cut into the virgin turf of the prairie, and, as the sod was cut, the share was to turn it over, bottom side up, while the great heavy implement was drawn along by the oxen.96

The military road beginning at Fort Leavenworth ran through Fort Riley and on up the north side of the Republican fork to Fort Kearney, and still west to Fort Laramie. It was traveled chiefly by military men and emigrants to California.97

Manhattan was an active and promising town. A hotel, general stores, and a counselor-at-law were in business.

95Sod corn was Indian corn grown after the first turning of the virgin prairie, called sod.
97Ibid., 72.
There was a big steam saw-mill hard by the town, and the chief industry of Manhattan seemed to be the buying and selling of lumber and hardware, and the surveying of land. Mounted men, carrying the tools and instruments of the surveyor, galloped about. Few wheeled vehicles except ox-carts of the emigrants were to be seen anywhere, and the general aspect of the place was that of feverish activity. Along the banks of the two streams were camped parties of the latest comers, many of whom had brought their wives and children with them.

The Dixon boys met Younkins, an Arkansas man who had established his claim, and from him they learned many things.

Now for the first time, the boys learned the use of some of the strange tools that they had brought with them. They had wondered over the frow, an iron instrument about fourteen inches long, for splitting logs. At right angles with the blade, and fixed in an eye at one end, was a handle of hardwood. A section of wood was stood up endwise on a firm foundation of some sort, and the thin end of the frow was hammered down into the grain of the wood, making a lengthwise split.

In the same way, the section of wood so riven was split again and again until each split was thin enough. The final result was called a "shake." Shakes were used for shingles, and even—when nailed on frames—for doors. Sawed lumber was very dear; and, except the sashes in the windows, every bit of the log-cabin must be got out of the primitive forest. 99

The boys found that what in the Eastern states was called a "beetle" was in the West a "maul." 100

William Kennedy Marshall in The Entering Wedge wrote a story of the years between 1854 and 1865 around Lawrence and on the Eastern Kansas border, "the memorable struggle for freedom in Kansas." Quaker, Yankee, and slaveholder were represented besides the Negroes, who sang of the coming "jubelum":

98Ibid., 73-74.
99Ibid., 127.
100Ibid., 128.
In Ruth Cowgill's *Over the Border*, a band of Quakers came to the newly opened Territory.

On the 29th of March, 1855, a clumsy "prairie schooner" was wending its cumbrous way into Kansas Territory, a slowly moving speck upon the sunny prairie. Stalwart oxen drew the heavy, canvas-covered wagon, and a dog dragged wearily beside it. A long tent-pole stuck out at the rear, at one side of which trudged a sturdy boy of twelve or thereabouts.

In front of the wagon, upon a seat made by a pile of household goods, sat three people—an old man, evidently a Friend by his dress, beneath whose plain broad hat the hair showed gray and silvery. . . . His companions were a rosy child, fast asleep against his arm, and a young girl whose face was almost hidden by the huge, gray Quaker bonnet, which she wore tied tightly down, probably for protection from the wind, which all day had been blowing lustily over the low hills.

On the journey from Westport to Lawrence the group slept at the Quaker Mission the first night, stayed over with an Indian and his squaw the next night, and spent the third night in a common sleeping room in Lawrence. A bit later, Southern sympathizers tried to tar and feather the Quaker after he had spoken his mind freely against slavery near Leavenworth.

"Hi, y'all!" they shouted at him, shaking their fists under his nose, brandishing clubs and ostentatiously displaying their firearms; one sportive youth knocked his hat off; another pelted him with potatoes from his own wagon, while some of the others quarreled over the few choice apples which he was taking home to the children.

He was rescued by a Southern sympathizer who was a neighbor and friend.

Women generally expressed approbation and even joy upon seeing the prairies. Mrs. Robinson commented that one had to get used to level

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103 Ibid.
country, but she noticed that the cross-country traveler who camped in Kansas under the noble trees by the bank of some swiftly flowing stream felt "strong desires for a home, where he could sit under his own vine and fig-tree, . . ." Mrs. Lovejoy exclaimed: "... we must pronounce this the most charming country our eyes ever beheld!"

She recorded of the Blue River country:

There is a sufficiency of wood for many years to come, and, limestone in plenty for fencing here, and for building purposes. There are living springs of pure sweet water on most of the claims in this vicinity, ... A fairer, more genial climate, we think, cannot be found on earth, though early in the spring we are told "high winds" and clouds of dust were a great annoy-ance. The air is so pure and clear that objects six or eight miles distant can be distinctly seen, as those in the East at one quarter of a mile, . . .

A Kansas poet wrote about finding a home on the prairie:

A "Prairie schooner," creeping slow;
A way-worn, jaded household band,
In eager voices speaking low—
Thus enter we the "Promised land,
Behind us now the river's tide,
Rolls dark and murk, deep and wide.

Home! With our roof the dripping sky.
Our floor the rainsoaked prairie's breast!
Through all the wastes that round us lie,
In wild, luxuriant verdure dressed,
No tree extends its friendly bough.

Only after much sweat and tears had been expended could the pioneer conclude the lay:


Our prairie home is sweet and dear;  
The deep rich soil holds honest wealth.¹⁰⁷

Although women often thought at first glance that Kansas was paradise and had no disadvantages,¹⁰⁸ many later realized, after days had run into weeks and weeks had dragged into months, that "One day here is like every other, . . ."¹⁰⁹ This was due to the anxiety and distress caused by border warfare, political frays, and poor crops, all of which characterized the years of the territorial period.

Some women were in the predicament of always moving, as was Melora Vilas in Stephen Vincent Benet's John Brown's Body:

Melora Vilas, rising by candlelight,  
Looked at herself in the bottom of the tin basin  
And wished that she had a mirror.

...  
She was seventeen. She had seen a lot of places,  
A lot of roads. Pop was always moving along.

...  
Next time they'd quit. Next stop they'd settle right down.  
Next year they'd have time to rub up the mahogany dresser.  
Next place, Mom could raise the flowers she wanted to raise.  
But it never began. They were always moving along.

She liked Kansas best. She wished they'd go back to Kansas.  
She liked the smell of the wind there.  
But Pop hadn't wanted to join with the Free-Soilers  
And then the slavery men had shot up the town  
And killed the best horse they had. That had settled Pop.  
He said something about a plague on both of your houses  
And moved along.¹¹⁰

One pioneer recalled that they had no vegetables during the fall of '⁵⁵ except one bushel of potatoes that were frozen as hard as "cobblestones,"

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 166.
¹⁰⁹Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 32.
for which he gave $2.50. However, at one of the stopping places between Kansas City and Fort Riley, where the traveler took charge of the smith shops, a landlady put some prairie chickens into a stew kettle and "set them in the corner of the big fireplace, where they cooked nearly all night. They were the best cooked chickens" the pioneer ever ate. So the pioneer fared richly on viands from the timber and prairie and lacked green vegetables of every kind until they could be grown in his own garden.

Mrs. Robinson remarked upon the abundance of wild fruits in the country: pawpaws, custard apples, gooseberries; and Mrs. Lovejoy related that the pawpaws were not plenty but there were "large blue plumbs, like New England garden plumbs, mulberries also, very fine, that grow on tall, slender trees and look almost precisely like an unripe blackberry—gooseberries, black raspberries, &c., but not a strawberry—in this part of the territory."

On July 4, the Isaac Goodnow family at Manhattan had pumpkin pies, a very early appearance of this Thanksgiving treat. The prairie grass, blue-stem, was over Mr. Goodnow's head while he sat upon his pony. In the fall Fort Riley prices were: corn, $1.25; eggs, 62½. Supplies like flour, bacon, beans, and sugar came upriver, more than 120 miles from the Missouri border; during the summer and winter a journey

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112 Ibid., 644-45.
113 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 4.
114 Lovejoy, "Letters from Kansas," loc. cit., 42.
by ox cart to get supplies took almost two weeks. Hence, that first winter some of the settlers dried their own corn in the oven and ground it in the coffee mill; it made a wholesome bread. But bringing the Emigrant Aid mill to Manhattan City from Lawrence was a great accomplishment since twenty yoke of oxen were needed to haul the mill to its new location.\textsuperscript{116}

Down south of Osawatomie lived John Robert Everett, his wife Sarah Marie Colegrove Everett, and their son Frank, age two and a half years. The Everetts migrated from New York in the spring of '55 after John had located the claim the preceding fall. John's father was a Welsh Congregational minister and leader in New York, and had published a Welsh translation of \textit{Uncle Tom's Cabin}. John had traveled in the East for some months selling this translation and other books among Welsh communities until he made the Kansas trip to prospect for a claim. Sarah was interested in the antislavery movement and wished to see Kansas enter the Union as a free State.\textsuperscript{117}

In October, 1854, John wrote to his wife from Kansas:

The face of the country is emphatically beautiful. Hardly a level spot but all the way fine sweeps of hill and dale. No high or sharp hills but the landscape is all made up of smooth waving lines. There are here and there patches of wood and scattering trees. It looks like a country that had been finely cultivated, and suddenly every habitation and man swept from it. The prairie grass was dead. When green it would add very much to the scenery. But there are very serious drawbacks to the country. Water is very scarce. There is not a tenth, perhaps not a fiftieth enough wood on it. We went 20 miles without being able to get a drink. There are very few springs.

\textsuperscript{116}\textit{Ibid.}, 251.

\textsuperscript{117}"Letters of John and Sarah Everett," \textit{loc. cit.}, 25-26, 147.
Nearly all the water courses now are perfectly dry. It looks like a country of floods and drouths.118

John returned to New York for the winter while a cabin was in the building on his staked land. He brought the family expectantly direct from Kansas City to the claim in late April, 1855--ready to move into the house and be comfortable. John's claim had been jumped,119 and the little Welsh-American family was "houseless." The claim was being held for illegal speculation and so the Everetts moved into another cabin, quickly erected, and reported three months after their arrival:

We feel tolerably comfortable (I more than Sarah) and happy (both I think) although we are 1½ miles from a neighbor and live in a cabin with a carpet for a door, mowed grass for a floor, a leaky roof, and no windows at all, but there are plenty of cracks where light comes in.120

Back East an amazed sister wrote to the rest of the relatives:

Their bedstead is made of round poles with the bark on. . . . Frank sleeps in Robert's large trunk filled with bed clothes, and this with the cover on and a cradle quilt spread over makes a fine Ottoman, so in Sarah's opinion they have not only what is necessary to comfort, but also some luxuries.

Sarah's clock adorns one side of the room, my picture another and shelves for books, made of split oak shingles on pegs driven into the logs, a third. The floor is mostly covered with a carpet.121

Nearly everyone who came to the Territory found an unfinished house, or perhaps no roof to cover the family's heads, or even no house at all, in spite of what preparations for shelter had been previously made. Such inconveniences were just a part of frontier life.

118 Ibid., 5.
119 The claim had been occupied by another emigrant during the absence of the first claimant. Possession was nine-tenths ownership.
120 Ibid., 13.
121 Ibid., 10.
In September, 1855, Hannah A. Ropes went to Kansas for six months and returned to Massachusetts in April, 1856. In her letters to her mother, she told how Northern emigrants took the cars to Alton, Illinois, a steamer on to St. Louis, and another to Kansas.

Her report of Eastern Kansas, where "There is not a tree anywhere to be seen," was not as encouraging as Mrs. Robinson's glowing account. She also spoke of "a pack of wolves surveying the city," of making a table from two wash tubs, of a lonely Thanksgiving spent with an invalid, of sleeping, ready for an attack from the Missourians, with firearms at hand during the last days of 1855 and the early part of 1856.122

When the 1855 emigrant reached Lawrence, he found few accommodations other than scant common sleeping and cooking privileges in the Pioneer Boarding House—a hay tent. Goodnow said it was a "caravansary," built with sod walls, cloth roof, and hay carpet, while a cook stove was furnished for communal cooking.123 Because housing facilities were lacking, many slept on the ground on buffalo robes or on blankets, or sought the better part of their unfinished cabin, as did the Robinsons, who laid boards over the second floor, put the mattresses on the floor, improvised a candlestick from a block of wood discarded by the carpenter, and nailed a buffalo robe at the door.124 It was not until October that the first and second floors of the Free State

122 Hannah Anderson Ropes, Six Months in Kansas (Boston, 1856), passim.
124 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 13, 36.
Hotel were finished sufficiently for use, with its black walnut doors and promises of comfort and luxury on the frontier. After the military festival of November 15, the hotel was turned into barracks and Free-State headquarters for the Wakarusa War. 125

Practically a month after Mrs. Robinson had arrived to occupy her unfinished house, she was "anticipating" the time when the carpenters could let her get into the second story. She surmised: "How our friends in the East would pity us, did they know just how we live; but I dare say there is not one in a hundred of them who enjoys the half we do." Of course the doctor's experience in California tided them over many a dilemma that required ingenuity; doughnuts were fried in a two-quart tin upon the top of the stove; eggs were boiled in a copper boiler. During the spring and summer there was seldom a meal when only the family was present; "the strangers number more than we." And more than once Mrs. Robinson gave up her own room to her friends and slept on buffalo robes and was awakened in the night, frightened at the possibility that a rattlesnake was near. 126

Amid these inconveniences, disappointed faces were not uncommon, for though Kansas was a good country, it had been too much praised. Moreover, a "regular bred farmer" was a rarity, most of the emigrants being "city men and mechanics." 127

However, anyone who exercised a little energy grew a crop upon the newly turned sod—when the rainfall was not too restricted. By

125 Ibbid., 119.
126 Ibbid., 39, 40, 48, 53, 59.
midsummer satisfactory reports were flying back East about the crop.

On July 20, John Everett wrote, "We have planted nearly 2 acres in corn, and about \frac{1}{2} acre of beans. A few tomatoes, peas, 3 kinds of squash, & 3 kinds of pumpkins completes the list of our growing crops. We have one cow and a calf. Our pasture is a very large one. Our meadow is equally large... the Pacific Ocean laves its western limits." 128

Three days later Mrs. Robinson reported from Lawrence: "Apples were brought into market here on the fourth of this month." A large pailful of grapes was sent in. They were smaller and not as sweet as those which ripened in October. By the last of the month Mrs. Robinson reported that melons, cantelopes, and tomatoes were finer than any she had ever seen elsewhere. 129

By the tenth of August she learned from visitors who had been west in Kansas about a hundred miles that the crops had a good appearance. "Corn near the river called the Big Blue" was "very high," some of the stalks measuring "eighteen feet and some inches." 130 Mrs. Lovejoy verified this report:

One of our neighbors, who came here last summer, has forty acres that bid fare [sic] to yield 50 bushels of shelled corn to the acre, and also a fine field of wheat. We had green corn to eat the first of July, not as early as some others. Grapes of a fine flavor, have been ripe a number of weeks—they are very abundant, and our good housekeepers are busy in making their jellies... 131

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128 Ibid., 11-12.
129 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 76-77.
130 Ibid., 84.
In Southern Kansas, corn planted in June was earing out in late August while melons and squash were producing and beans promised well. Tomatoes "will not be ripe until a fortnight."\textsuperscript{132}

In the meantime, frontier annoyances were becoming apparent. Some wished they could say with a man who had written from Eoonville, Missouri, in the spring of 1855:

\begin{quote}
... I am on my way home... To tell a long story in a few words, I have seen enough to convince me that Kansas is a humbug... I have no doubt but that the country was intended only as a residence of Indians and Negroes, with the wild animals that roam over it for company, not forgetting rattlesnakes which are plenty.\textsuperscript{133}
\end{quote}

One pioneer woman reported that the first thing the family encountered in Kansas was a big rattlesnake, which her husband killed with a stone. At another time the family dragged back a snake which they had killed, cut off the rattles, sixteen in number, and measured the snake. It was over five feet in length and as large around as a man's arm. At another time, a snake was behind the clock which stood on a rude shelf. It was not possible to strike the snake without injuring the clock; timepieces being scarce on the frontier, the lady of the house caught the snake by the tail and with a quick jerk dashed its head on the carpetless floor.\textsuperscript{134}

Mrs. Robinson, a bit apprehensive yet that first June, was awakened by a little tree toad on her pillow, found a mouse in the tub and a swallow in the kitchen. After breakfast one morning, a snake,

\textsuperscript{132}\textit{Letters of John and Sarah Everett,} loc. cit., 15.
\textsuperscript{133}\textit{Letter to Worcester, Massachusetts, National Aegis}, Thomas H. Webb Scrapbooks, IV.
\textsuperscript{134}\textit{White, "My First Days in Kansas,"} loc. cit., 551-54.
eighteen inches long and with four rattles, was brought in from the woodpile.\textsuperscript{135}

Other animals distressed the frontier woman. Not far from Fort Riley in the early 50's a large panther was seen—just once.

Wolves were still numerous and bold. One attacked a young calf at night and would have dispatched it, but its bawling awakened the husband, who seized an axe and stunned the wolf with a blow while the animal was intent on having veal for supper.\textsuperscript{136}

With food and grain not properly stored, mice multiplied—even in the house. One pioneer woman's experience was undoubtedly repeated many times on the frontier—at least certain phases of it:

I kept my best dresses hanging in the loft, where Mr. White said the rats or mice could not get at them. One day I went upstairs—by the way, our stairs were hollowed out pieces of wood nailed to the logs, not the hardest way of going upstairs by any means—to see if my dresses were all right. On looking them over I found the best one, a lovely silk and my wedding dress, had two breadths cut to tatters, and all were more or less injured. I put my hand in the pocket of one and felt something warm and soft. I got down the grand staircase in a hurry, and threw half a dozen young mice in the blazing fire with a vim that was vicious.\textsuperscript{137}

The loss of one's best dress meant that, if the preacher came along, an everyday dress must be worn to the meeting; but the frontier preacher was not particular about the clothing of his listeners.

Despite the healthy dry climate, diseases peculiar to new land and resulting from poor sanitation were prevalent en route to and on the frontier. In June, Mrs. Robinson reported that there had been a

\textsuperscript{135} Sarah T. D. Robinson, \textit{Kansas}, 65.

\textsuperscript{136} White, "My First Days in Kansas," \textit{loc. cit.}, 553.

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Ibid.}, 555.
good deal of choler, in the main among the Missourians, who lived in abject filth and drank of the stagnant Wakarusa water when it was low from lack of rain since October, 1854. Percival G. Lowe recalled some years later that mutiny had occurred at Fort Riley on account of the disease during the early 50's and that grave-diggers were put under a foreman to keep up with the victims falling each day.

In August, cholera was still raging at the fort, chiefly among the soldiers, who were in the habit of drinking large quantities of whisky. A pioneer reported that "Some forty-five or fifty persons died there last week."

A Kansas emigrant party which left Boston on April 10, 1855, was stuck on a sandbar in the Missouri River for two or three days with weather at ninety degrees. A lack of good water occurred. Stock perished. Cholera and death resulted. A number of would-be Kansas settlers turned toward Wisconsin and Iowa for homes. Cholera and summer heat stopped emigration into the Territory for a couple of months. The disease was near Lawrence by June 18; some smallpox was also evident.

In many sections, particularly in those inclined to be a bit low, fever, chills, and ague beset the settlers. At Osawatomie, set near

141 Boston Journal, May 12, 1855, Thomas H. Webb Scrapbooks, IV.
the junction of the Pottawatomie and Osage rivers, fever burned up
the blood of many.\textsuperscript{143} The turning of the prairies was credited with
bringing the "shakes" to the settlers up around the Big Blue.\textsuperscript{144} In
August and September the unacclimated newcomers began to feel the
ague. Sarah Everett signed her September 14 letter to the folks back
East "Your Shaking Sister," and on October 27 she said, "Today is
the first day in thirteen weeks that we have been free from the Chill
and Intermittent Fever—Last week & week before last we all three had
it every day. I got so run down that although I have not had a chill
since a week ago yesterday I have not been able to do any thing or sit
up much of the time till to day."\textsuperscript{145} Occasionally someone developed,
for a change, a case of rheumatism, or a toothache.\textsuperscript{146}

Nothing was more conducive to persuade the pioneer to write back
home than a mild spell of ague and fever or lack of money. In return,
great was the joy when the mail came in: "... in the office of a
friend near by the postoffice, we wait for its distribution. Letters
from home are a pleasant reward."\textsuperscript{147} Indeed, many of the letters to
Mrs. Robinson must have been vastly amusing, as the one in which Sis-
ter Sophy of Belchertown, Rhode Island, said in August, 1856, after
the Lawrence raid in May: "The summer is almost ended and you are still

\textsuperscript{143}Ibid., 99.
\textsuperscript{144}Isaac T. Goodnow, "Diary," 1314, 1894, Kansas State Histori-
cal Society Vault.
\textsuperscript{145}Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 15, 8.
\textsuperscript{146}Ise, Bod and Stubble, 206.
\textsuperscript{147}Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 53.
In a tent—I had hoped better things—Again in December a member of the family wrote from Providence, Rhode Island, on a letter paper that was "in most incongruous tints and ... with envelope warranted not to match." From the gay social whirl she described a wedding that took place in high society at which appeared the best brocades and diamonds of Providence and vicinity.  

In contrast, Thomas C. Wells told in his August 29 letter from Juniata, up near Manhattan, about a wedding held out of doors under the trees, "the knot" being "tied" at four o'clock in the afternoon.

Everything was prepared beforehand as well as could be done under the circumstances. A long table was set under the trees, loaded with cake of various kinds, tarts made from native grapes, which by the way are much smaller than the wild grapes of the east, custards, preserves, etc., while at a side table was roast pork, mutton and chicken in abundance. At about three o'clock the bridegroom and his friends with the "preacher" came a part in two large horse wagons and others on horse-back. The bridegroom was dressed in black coat and pants with white vest and the bride in pure white with a head dress also of white. At the appointed hour the relations and friends formed a semicircle; the bride and bridegroom stood up alone in front and the minister before them. After they had promised to love, respect, obey, etc., ... all the party were invited to partake of the refreshments prepared for them. ... After dinner all were invited to the "infare" or second wedding at the house of Mr. Dyer [the groom's father] on the morrow.  

At the infare, after a sumptuous supper, the time was spent in singing sacred songs and in eating watermelons.

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148 Sophy to Sara, August 17, 1856, Robinson File, Letters.
149 E. F. Leonard to Sara, December 18, 1856, Robinson File.
151 Ibid., 156.
Stamps were sometimes difficult to get on the outskirts of civilization. John Everett wrote thanks for those sent from back home, since locally they were out and could not buy any more in the vicinity. He added that the four "pretty little envelopes" sent by a young sister were "almost too tasty for pioneers. We have felt quite satisfied lately, if we could have an old envelope to turn and enclose a letter." Turning envelopes was a common practice on the frontier.

Sometimes letters held more than news—a pie plant root or such materials for making ink as nutgalls in a ½-ounce paper. And from Kansas went flowers that the wife or sweetheart had pressed for the folks back home.

On August 1, Mrs. Lovejoy threw abandon to the winds even though Monday was "suds and scrub day." "For lo! the mail has arrived bringing lots of papers and letters from the East (which have been delayed on the way long enough to have crossed the Atlantic twice) . . ." However, it took a man a day and a half "on a hard riding horse to get fifty-five miles out from Topeka." The trip was often made to get two or three letters from home.

A desire for contact with the cultural world led one pioneer to ask, three months after he had arrived in Kansas, that an occasional St. Louis Christian Advocate be sent from home and that the phrenol—

152 "Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 27.
153 Ibid., 28-29.
logical and water cure journals as well as the Utica Herald be forwarded to Kansas. On July 7 he ordered the New York Tribune, which came semiweekly for four months, and asked that Harper's be sent to him after the folks in the East had read it. The next spring he got up a club of twenty subscriptions for the Tribune, which was later increased to twenty-seven—a good supply of news from the East for Osawatomie.\(^{157}\) Mothers and other relatives sent the hometown paper to folks in Kansas.\(^{158}\)

On August 16, 1855, Governor Reeder was removed from office by the dissatisfied Democratic administration at Washington supported by the proslavery element on the border. September 5 saw the Big Springs Convention meet on a celebrated camping ground eleven miles east of Topeka on the California Road. A hundred delegates were present from every district and settlement in the Territory. The convention first repudiated the laws and officers of the Missouri elections and declared the bogus legislature illegal; it also nominated a candidate for delegate to Congress; and finally it made a call for a delegate congress to be held to set the Free-State movement into greater activity toward organizing Kansas into a State.\(^{159}\)

Two days after the convention met, Wilson Shannon became governor of the Territory and carried out the will of the Southern confederates at Washington for some time. In the meanwhile, Lawrence was threatened and the town was arming and digging in. John Brown came to Osawatomie

\(^{157}\)"Letters of John and Sarah Everett," \textit{loc. cit.}, 12, 14, 27, 144.


\(^{159}\)Phillips, \textit{The Conquest of Kansas}, 120.
that autumn bearing rifles. On November 21, Charles Dow, a young Free-State man from Ohio, was killed by a proslavery man at Hickory Point—the result of a claim dispute. The murderer fled to Missouri and the Border Ruffians captured Mr. Branson, Dow's friend, whom a small band of Free-State men released.\textsuperscript{160}

A mild winter marked the late months of 1855 until Christmas Day. The colonists from New England remembered that home folks as, they drew around their cheerful fires would "think of us as enjoying milder skies, and dream not of the dire visitation of the ruffianly horde gathering in our borders, and thirsting for our blood."\textsuperscript{161} Dark days were those for Kansas from late November, 1855, until the new year of 1857 dawned. There was murder, pillage, rapine. The Wakarusa War raged; Lawrence was destroyed in May, 1856. The Free-State settlers were beset by all sorts of insults, inquisitions, and barbarous deeds aimed to drive them from the land. The Missouri River was guarded and admission to Kansas was usually barred except through Nebraska.\textsuperscript{162}

G. Douglas Brewerton, who was sent in December, 1855, to Kansas Territory by James Gordon Bennett of the New York Herald, and William Phillips of the New York Tribune made appeals to "the great American brotherhood to right" the wrongs of the Free-State settlers, and to "go to the territory as conservative and law-abiding men," for Kansas "will . . . need them still more in the stormy times to come; for, let the citizens of the United States take it to heart, that this dis-

\textsuperscript{160} Sara T. D. Robinson, \textit{Kansas}, 104. 
\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Ibid.}, 119. 
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Ibid.}, 285; Phillips, \textit{The Conquest of Kansas}, 386-91.
turbance in Kansas means something."¹⁶³ Wrote Phillips: "There is, thank God, still a spirit and vitality in the American character which will rise above all these obstacles, and will yet write RESURGAM! on the tomb of Kansas Liberty."¹⁶⁴

In Mary A. Humphrey's The Squatter Sovereign, a strong contrast is drawn between the Northerners and the Southerners: the Delaneys are aristocrats from the South; the Aldens and Langtrys are of Puritan stock from Massachusetts; while the widow and Sile Hardicre are poor white trash washed up onto the Missouri frontier.

During the hard days of 1855,

... prudence required the Free State men to obtain arms, to form themselves into companies, and to drill, that they might defend their property and their lives. It was discovered that there was a sad lack of arms on the part of settlers from the North. Unaccustomed to decide difficulties or repulse insults by the quick, sharp flash which admits of no appeal from its decisions, they were totally unprepared in this respect to cope with the frontiersman, who bristled with weapons from his belt to his boots; and it was thought advisable to send a committee to the East to obtain arms in as large quantities and on as favorable terms as possible, many of the best and bravest being unable to pay for them, unless allowed time.¹⁶³

Late in '55, a big camp of Missourians at Franklin—a horde of ruffians—threw their pickets out around the city on Mount Oread and it was not safe for Free-State men to go out or come into the place. Ammunition stored in the vicinity was needed badly in Lawrence. Two women, Mrs. S. N. Wood and Mrs. George W. Brown, went out twelve miles south to Mud Springs for powder and rifle caps cached there. Armed

¹⁶³G. Douglas Brewerton, War in Kansas. A Rough Trip to the Border, Among New Homes and a Strange People (New York, 1856), 400.
¹⁶⁵Mary A. Humphrey, The Squatter Sovereign; or Kansas in the 50's; a Life Picture of the Early Settlement of the Debatable Ground (Chicago, 1883), 173.
with a work basket, knitting, and a medical book, the women went out for dinner at the Gleason farm, poured the powder into two pillow slips, and secured it around their persons under their outside dresses. From another farm they tucked caps, cartridges, bullet molds, and gun wipers into sleeves, pockets, and waists of their dresses, while bars of lead were stood up in their stockings. Placed in the buggy they reached Lawrence, although once they were stopped because the Missouri guard thought that they were men. Within Lawrence the ladies were received with joy and were lifted from the buggy. A twelve-year-old boy, driving an ox team to be used in plowing up earthworks around the city, brought the rest of the ammunition on the next day.

That night the wind and bitter weather knocked down the tents of the Missourians encamped round about and the intruders folded their tents and crept back to Missouri until spring came.

The Free-State people at Lawrence celebrated the departure of the Missourians and the truce between the warring factions with a party,

given in the partially completed Eldridge House, and no pains were spared in producing a real social function with every courtesy and token of good will and peace. Something, too, there was of glad reaction from the tension of the last three weeks, when anger and suffering and threatening peril possessed the land. The leading men of Lawrence were the hosts, and everybody of importance became guests. Pro-Slavery and Free-State men, rich and poor, cultured and commonplace, old and young,—there were no lines drawn.


168 McCarter, A Wall of Men, 182.
Jupe, a free Negro who was working in the household of the Merri-
fords in Lawrence, graphically described the number of good things to
eat which graced the table in the Eldridge House that night.

"Law, law, Mis' Merriford, . . . I'se done been totin' baskets
an' baskets of good things to the Eldridge house,—pie, an'
pound cake, an' fruit tarts, 'til my eyes even ain't got no
appetite no more. Everybody's gwine to be at that party to-
night, an' they shore do calculate to eat a lot."169

Margaret Lynn wrote a novel on the trials of pre-empting,170 The
Land of Promise and another on preserving the Free Soil for real
settlers. The Land of Promise had brought the Glasgows from Ohio.
The year 1855 was a hazardous one but it ended with the Glasgows re-
ceiving the pre-emption papers because Janet, the young daughter, rode
to Lawrence to pay the fees with money concealed in stiff paper and
pushed into the empty spaces of her slat sunbonnet.171

In Free Soil, a story of the Wakarusa War, Dow was murdered;
Branson was taken and rescued; constitutional conventions sprang up

169 Ibid., 130.

170 Settlers had several choices in securing land in the West:
to buy, to homestead, to pre-empt, and to file on a timber claim. Land
was sometimes bought outright from a railroad company or from a settler
who was leaving because the Kansas fever had worn off. To homestead, a
settler must live on and improve his claim, after filing at the land
office for not less than 30 acres and not more than 160 acres, for five
years, at the end of which actual residence he could "prove up" and get
a deed from the government. To pre-empt was to settle upon a piece of
public land with the first right of purchasing it. The settler filed on
unoccupied land for thirty months, at which time he had either to
buy the land at $1.25 an acre or to begin homesteading it. The timber
claim was usually made in addition to one of the other methods of ac-
quiring land and required that a man "break 10 acres the first year,
which he must plant with trees 12 feet apart the second year, besides
breaking an additional 10 acres. The third year he must plant these
10, and break 20, which must be planted the fourth year." Said one
pioneer, "It is a hard thing to live up to the law on a timber filing
because young trees are hard to get, and when you get them, the question
is whether they will grow." Rueda, Sod-House Days, 13.

171 Margaret Lynn, The Land of Promise (Boston, 1927), 244-50.
along the "daily path"; Lawrence was in an upheaval during the spring of 1856; Sheriff Jones was shot in Lawrence by a Missourian who had long cherished hatred for the sheriff; Jefferson Buford "grub-staked" the Southerners just before the raid on Lawrence; with the arrival of Governor Geary in September, 1856, came the dismissal of the Southern militia:

*I am now Governor of the territory and in command of any force called out in Kansas. When I call militia it will be made up of Kansas men and not of outsiders. You may send your militia, or lead them, back to their homes."172

Of the severe weather from December 24 to January 16, the New York Herald correspondent wrote: "Old Kansas settlers say that last year some people froze to death; and we can readily imagine it, for Siberia itself could hardly look more frigidly repulsive than these frozen, snow-drifted wastes of Eastern Kansas."173

Out in the open country it hammered mercilessly on the flat, resistless, grassy plains. It wrenched in wrath at every tree and shrub. It screamed in anger down every open draw and shaded ravine. It hurled its violent rage upon every human habitation, and the shelter built by human hands for dumb animals. Many a stable-shack lost its roof or door or tumbled in a heap about its occupants. While through unchinked walls and about flimsy doors and window casings of the cabin home it sent its swift swordlike tongues of bitter, penetrating chill.174

If Christmas "dwindled down into plain December the twenty-fifth"175 for the newspaperman visiting in the governor's chamber, how cheerful


173Brewerton, War in Kansas, 204.


175Ibid., 204.
was it for citizens who had to carry wood and water and shovel snow from the doorway? From a rather comfortable house in Osawatomie, Sarah Everett wrote:

Christmas week was intensely cold, we could not keep warm with both stoves, and what was worse John was hardly fit to be out at all, and I could not do anything. Wednesday morning the thermometer stood at 28 deg. below zero. Some families had to abandon their houses & go to their neighbors who were fortunate in having warmer ones—altogether it was one of the most "trying" times that I have suffered since we came into the Territory—A lady who called yesterday told me that two of her daughters during that week froze their feet so that they are now unable to walk a step, and said there were large running sores two thirds the size of the palm of her hand on them now. Two more women told John that they froze their feet sitting right by the stove.—Such are some of the hardships which Kansas settlers endure. 176

As the old year 1855 passed away cold and shivering, the new-born '56 came in "on a keen nipping air with the Ice King's banners waving gorgeously...",177 heralding a beautiful clear morning.178 The guide books had been proved wrong about the mild weather throughout the year in Kansas. Horses and cattle were lost. Citizens suffered great inconveniences.179 The snow remained some time during January and February; and Yankee ingenuity, "so much despised" by the Missourians, wrought odd-looking sleighs for convenience and pleasure. The enterprising youth cut two poles long enough for runners and shafts. A bit was shaved from the upper side so that the runners would bend easily. After a few cross pieces were added and two or three cross

177 Dreswerton, War in Kansas, 253.
178 Sara I. D. Robinson, Kansas, 163.
boards were placed on the runners with a box for the seat, the ve-
hicle was complete. A finer adaptation was a wagon-body on runners,
which was safer and yet light enough for speed.180

But not all of the day was spent in sleighing. "There were
plenty of books, too, that is to say, plenty for a new settlement,
books that were books, none of your gilt-edged, mean-nothing senti-
mentalities, but hard facts and standard fiction," and poetry.151

In Lawrence, wood fires glowed brightly, and apples, sweet potatoes,
squash, pumpkin, butter, milk, beef, venison, prairie chicken, tur-
keys, rabbits, and squirrels were plentiful for an abundant New Year's
dinner. Oysters were available too in sealed cans.182 While turkeys
were nineteen cents a pound in New York, they were the price of a
careful aim on the prairie.183 The Everetts in Osawatomie were
happy because they received five letters to compensate for having
received no regular mail during December.184

But the lone settler on the prairie was still exposed to attack
even though the cold weather had removed the greater part of the Mis-
sourians from the Kansas front. Some of the proslavery men from the
States were still at Franklin—in the log-cabin hotel or hanging
around the grocery, which the New York Daily Herald correspondent
visited and described:

181 Brewerton, War in Kansas, 257.
182 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 176.
... it was one-room affair, say ten feet by twelve—or, if anything smaller—with a counter—a row of rough board shelves garnished with a couple of dirty decanters, a batch of yet more uncleanly tumblers, and a box marked Havanas, which were but too evidently "live-oak penny-a-grabs." The stock-in-trade of the establishment, however, lay in a couple of barrels which stood in one corner, with a spigot in each, marked "Highly-rectified Whisky,"... The bartender and proprietor was... slightly inebriated... a single-eyed chap, with a very red nose, and an astonishing pair of legs, sat astride of one of the liquor barrels... "Legs" was fiddling away—as if his very existence depended upon the accuracy of his execution—at that never failing tune, "The Arkansaw Traveller."

Next to this worthy, upon a rush-bottomed chair, which might as well have had but two legs instead of four, for any service required by its present occupant, sat a kindred spirit, who braced himself against the stove door with his right foot, while its companion swung backward and forward, or when this motion grew wearisome, varied the monotony by kicking time vigorously against the floor.

A filthy, liquor-stained table—extemporised for the occasion by placing a piece of plank across an empty barrel head—at which three bad Border specimens were playing what in Mississippi river parlance is sometimes called "a friendly game of poker," completed the filling up of this miniature pandemonium; and when we add that those who didn't smoking, were for the most part swearing "strange oaths and barbarous to hear," we presume that we have given the reader a sufficiency of outline, which he may fill up or not as his fancy dictates.

The New York Daily Tribune correspondent gave a description of the Border Ruffian of the lowest type:

... did you ever see a border ruffian? A bonne fide, Simon pure, unadulterated "Puke"? After all, they are a good deal like... the ordinary run of "hard cases." What I mean is, they are neither one-eyed ogres nor "three-fingered Jacks." Still, they are decided characters. Most of them have been over the plains, the probability is, they have served through the war in Mexico; or seen a "deal of trouble in Texas:" or, at least, run up and down the Missouri river often enough to catch requisite inspiration from the catfish aristocracy, and penetrate the sublime mysteries of euchre or poker. I have often wondered where all the hard customers on the Missouri frontier come from. They seem to have congregated here by some law of gravity unexplainable. Perhaps the easy exercise

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185 Brewerton, War in Kansas, 253-54.

186 Nickname for a Missourian.
of judicial authority in frontier countries may explain their fancy for them. Amongst these worthies a man is estimated by the amount of whiskey he can drink; ... Imagine a fellow, tall, slim, but athletic, with yellow complexion, hairy faced, with a dirty flannel shirt, or red, or blue, or green, a pair of common-place, but dark-colored pants, tucked into an uncertain altitude by a leather belt, in which a dirty-handled bowie-knife is stuck rather ostentatiously, an eye slightly whiskey-red, and teeth the color of walnut. Such is your border ruffian of the lowest type.187

Life was just a bit routine during the first two months of '56 in the seven Free-State settlements: Lawrence, Topeka, Osawatomie, Hampden near Osawatomie, Wabouss above Topeka, Manhattan, and Council Grove;188 but on March 4 the Free-State legislature met at Topeka. Wherever a legislature met in Kansas, there was bound to be happenings. About April 17 the Committee for Investigating the Wrongs of Kansas arrived and reviewed the injustices of the elections of 1854-55 for the sake of history.189

Further immigration was planned with companies coming from Wisconsin,190 from Ohio to the Vegetarian Settlement,191 and reinforcements to Osawatomie.192 The New England Emigrant Aid Company was still functioning and became bolder as the months passed. It had recently given open aid to those Free-States sent East to arouse interest in Kansas.

190 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 194.
In 1856, Thaddeus Hyatt of New York was President of the National Kansas Committee and aided in promoting immigration to Kansas, in sustaining Free-State settlers, and in carrying forward measures of defense. Mr. Hyatt himself was a philanthropist and he came to Kansas during the winter of '56 to look after the distribution of funds and supplies and also to note the conditions on the frontier. The poet Richard Realf likened Hyatt to Moses, leading the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt.

During the first three months of the year, Southerners were busy organizing colonization. Among the successful propagandists and organizers of Southern migration was Jefferson Buford, who collected at various times before the 1860's groups of colonists in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. A few of these emigrants were Northerners who had come South. In late November, 1855, appeared a broadside in the *Spirit of the South*, Eufaula, Georgia. The notice directed the Southerner as to his cheapest and surest chance to do something for Kansas. Major Buford guaranteed to each "industrious, sober, discreet, reliable man capable of bearing arms" free passage to Kansas, a homestead of forty acres of first-rate land, and support for one year. Mechanics, ministers, and those with special military or agricultural outfits were to receive further inducements. T. H. Gladstone, whose letters on his trip throughout the United States were published

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193 Thaddeus Hyatt Collection, Kansas State Historical Society Vault.


195 Eufaula *Spirit of the South*, November 26, 1855.
in the London Times, attended mass meetings in Mississippi and South Carolina whose purpose was to bestir the people in Dixie to migrate. In May, Gladstone went to Kansas to see the results of the propaganda. 196

In March, a correspondent for the New York Daily Tribune, coming up from Tennessee, reported that twenty-seven young South Carolinians were en route to Kansas and two hundred were coming the next week from Alabama. "Send your friends of Freedom faster and faster," he advised, "or all will be lost." 197

In January the State of Alabama appropriated $25,000 to the cause, while Buford gave a like amount. 198 Buford and about 350 men—only occasionally were provisions made for families to join the caravan—reached Montgomery on April 4. Some of the emigrants, especially those who were paying their own ways, went from Columbus to Nashville, where they took a steamer; however, the conducted contingent journeyed by steamer to Mobile and New Orleans and then proceeded up the Mississippi River on the boats, America and Ocean. 199 On the Keystone, they came from St. Louis to Westport, where the settlers were equipped and were sent into Kansas in March. A. J. Hoole and his wife went by boat from Nashville down the Cumberland River to Cairo and on to St.

196 T. H. Gladstone, The Englishmen in Kansas; or, Squatter Life and Border Warfare (New York, 1857), passim.
198 Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette, January 13, 1856; Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 455.
199 Walter Lynwood Fleming, The Buford Expedition to Kansas (Montgomery, 1904), 175-79.
Louis, and finally to Kansas City; then by stage they went to Lawrence.\textsuperscript{200} More South Carolinians came during April.\textsuperscript{201} The men scattered somewhat to get good homesteads, but they remained in groups to serve the purpose of their cause at Franklin, Lecompton, and west of Westport—ready for voting or warfare.\textsuperscript{202} Two hundred Southerners came from Georgia on May 6.\textsuperscript{203} That same month as many as could be mustered went to Lawrence to help in the sacking. A month later, Buford went back to the South in behalf of the failing cause.\textsuperscript{204} The Westport Star was quoted by an Eastern paper as estimating Buford's loss on his emigrant aid experiment at $10,657.\textsuperscript{205}

Nevertheless, Buford's importation in the spring of '56 brought alarm and resolution to Free-State men.\textsuperscript{206} One Northern man opined that "Nine tenths of them [Southerners] will return home, or at least leave Kansas before they have been there three months. They have left their old homes in beautiful Springtime, all nature looking green and luxuriant—their warm and sunny homes in the South for the windy plains of Kansas, as yet brown with the frosts of winter. They have taken the wrong time to emigrate and the new country will not

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\textsuperscript{201} New York Daily Times, April 10, 1856; Thomas H. Webb Scrapbooks, XI.
\textsuperscript{202} Fleming, The Buford Expedition, 180-82.
\textsuperscript{203} New York Daily Tribune, May 13, 1856.
\textsuperscript{204} Fleming, The Buford Expedition, 187.
\textsuperscript{205} New York Daily Tribune, January 1, 1857.
\textsuperscript{206} Reeder, "Diary."
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That the surmise of the young man from Juniata was at least partly true is evidenced by some grumblings of discontent and departures:

The people in this Territory have very poor houses, generally built of logs with rock chimneys. The one we are boarding in is three log houses built in a row—the middle one of which is the kitchen where the Negroes stay. They have four or five Negroes.

In June:

Leonidas King's son, who came out here from Eufala, with Major Buford, left for home last Wednesday. . . . He was pretty sick of the Terr., I tell you, and I presume a great many others are. I among the rest. My only hope of getting pay for coming here lies in the hope of preempting a piece of Delaware reserve, when it is treated for, and selling it again.

Envy over Northern success in colonizing and Southern disappointment came to a terrible outburst in May, 1856, while the hot presidential campaign was being waged, and while the sweet-scented, rose-colored verbenas were blossoming around the Kansas prairie homes. Dr. Robinson, going East on business, was taken a prisoner by a gang of Missourians at Lexington. Several outrages and a general pillaging of property were noted not only on the Missouri River but along the Mis-

209 The New York Daily Tribune, November 10, 1856, reported that the Delaware lands would be on the market on November 17, 1856.
211 Gladstone, An Englishman in Kansas, 13.
souri-Kansas border also. All during the spring Lawrence continued
to dig in and to import Sharpe's rifles and ammunition. More colonists
were fortifying the town. A break nearly took place when on April 23
Sheriff Jones, a proslavery sympathizer, was shot while he was in Law­
rence—shot by an old personal enemy from Missouri who shifted the
blame to a Free-Stater. An invasion of a Free-State town—most
probably of "the Gall Bag of the Territory," as the Missourians termed
Lawrence—was expected.

On the morning of May 21, hordes of proslavery men, armed with
United States muskets, were marshaled upon Mount Oread.

Between the hours of eight and nine o'clock a part of this band
moved down from Capitol Hill, above our house, nearer the town,
on the table land where the house stood. . . . About eleven
o'clock, W. P. Fain, United States Deputy Marshal, with eight
men, went into the town. They went directly to the hotel, par­
took of the hospitality of the house. Col. Eldridge then took
the prisoners [prominent men of Lawrence] and a part of the
posse to our house, which had been taken possession of, by the
"legally authorized militia," for their head-quarters.

About one o'clock, at the head of a posse of twenty or
twenty-five mounted men, armed with United States muskets and
beyonets, this immortal sheriff [Jones] rode into Lawrence, to
the door or the hotel, [and demanded the surrender of all can­
non and Sharpe's rifles.]

General Pomeroy surrendered the Lawrence cannon, but said that the
rifles were personal property and would be retained. As soon as Gen­
eral D. R. Atchison, of Missouri, had concluded his speech that the
destruction of Lawrence was making this the happiest day of his life,
the militia moved towards the town in solid column, until near the hotel, when the advance halted. Jones told Col. Eldridge the hotel must be destroyed; he was acting under orders; he had writs issued by the First District Court of the United States to destroy the Free-State Hotel, and the offices of the Herald of Freedom and Free State. The grand jury at Lecompton had indicted them as nuisances, and the court had ordered them to be destroyed.

Jones gave Col. Eldridge from that time—about half past three o'clock—until five o'clock, to remove his family and furniture, which it had taken weeks to put in order. The house had been furnished at an expense of ten thousand dollars, and was by far the most elegant house west of St. Louis. The cellar was stored with provisions, advantage having been taken of the high water in the Kansas to bring up several months' supply.

The posse, growing weary of removing furniture, even in the expeditious manner of dropping it from the windows, began to ransack drawers, cupboards, and cellar, carrying with them boxes of cigars, wines, oysters, sardines, cans of fruit, etc.

After the red flag had been hoisted upon the hotel, four cannons were stationed about one hundred and five feet distant from it, and pointing towards it. The first command was given to fire, and the balls went far above the hotel and over into the ravine beyond the town. When the cannonading commenced, it was thought prudent for women and children to leave the town, and many went across the ravine to some houses west of Lawrence. Thirty-two balls were fired, doing little damage to the hotel, the balls easily going through the concrete. Some kegs of powder were carried into the cellar; the order was then given to the military commander, Col. Titus, just arrived from Florida to fire the building. By setting fires in each of the rooms, the large hotel was destroyed, nearly the entire wall falling in.

When the walls of the hotel had fallen in, he turned to his posse and said coolly, "You are dismissed; the writs have been executed."

This was the signal for a general plunder of private houses, and as the drunken gang rushed from place to place, they took anything of value upon which their eyes fell.

About nine o'clock the flames burst forth from the home on Mr. Oread, and the "legally organized militia" had completed their work. Many thousand dollars' worth of property had been destroyed. People had been robbed of their all. Lawrence was destroyed; and the President bears the signal honor. Crown his brows with asphodel and wormwood, ye American people, for he
Charles Henry Lerrigo's *A Son of John Brown* was based upon the fictional episode of John Brown's rescue of a white baby from the slave market. The child was adopted by a Northerner of means and was named John Brown Bentson. The Bentsons went to Kansas during the crucial days before the 60's and John Brown Bentson was charged with the burden of this sentence from John Brown: "Look out for the crushed millions that have no comforter."\(^{217}\)

As the steamboat *Duncan S. Carter* carried three hundred passengers and a thousand tons of freight up the Missouri River toward Kansas, she grounded for the eleventh time on the trip. As the Bentsons prepared to get off, Bus, the well-educated servant and helper, explained:

"We are going to land in Missouri and almost all the people of western Missouri are pro-slavery. They have what they call the Blue Lodge. They do a lot of flummery and if they want to try you out they ask 'Are you sound on the goose?' Just now the proper password is 'right on the hemp!' Some of 'em tie a bit of hemp in their coats just as a pleasant reminder to abolitionists of what they may expect to get. They won't expect us to do that, but we must know the password."\(^{218}\)

At the sacking of Lawrence in May, Jud Bentson did not see all that went forward.

But he saw the destruction of the printing office of the *Kansas Free State*. He saw the cases of type carried away for dumping into the river. He saw the *Herald of Freedom* office reduced to complete ruin.

When the soldier mob settled down to the demolition of the *Free State* Hotel difficulty was encountered and therefore greater determination aroused. In keeping with military tradition it seemed that bombardment would be the correct procedure, so the

\(^{216}\)Ibid., 243-48.


\(^{218}\)Ibid., 70.
first attempt at destruction was by cannon. It was said that Senator Atchison himself fired the first shot, but Jud did not see this. Some thirty shots were fired, creating much terror for the peaceable citizens of Lawrence but doing little damage to the substantial hotel. Then it was decided to burn the place and, piles of paper from the printing offices being spread liberally and fired, the whole interior was soon in a blaze.

With the flames at their height Sheriff Jones expressed his gratification to his posse. "Gentlemen," he declared, "This is the happiest day in my life! I determined to make the fanatics bow before me and kiss the territorial laws. I have done it, by God! You are now dismissed!"

Three days later James P. Doyle and his two sons were murdered about eight miles from Osewatomie by a Free-State party led by John Brown. This became the professed cause for a revenge raid upon Osewatomie in late summer.

Before and after the Lawrence raid, men who stood in defense of the Free-State party and government were hunted down and killed, if found, and so Free-State men left their families and went into exile in Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, and elsewhere—not from cowardice, but to allow the wrath of the wicked to pass and to preserve themselves for a better fate than mere slaughter at the hands of ruffians. The Emigrant Aid Society and the Kansas National Committee, along with relatives, helped the families who remained in Kansas without a source of income.

Mrs. James Townsley wrote from Pottawatomie Creek that while her husband was in Iowa she and her little boy had tried to inclose a small space for a garden in order to raise a "trifle of something."

219 Ibid., 166-67.


221 Eli Thayer Collection; Thaddeus Hyatt Collection, passim.
We succeeded in fencing in about an acre, and planting it to corn, beans, and other vegetables, when I was taken sick from over-exertion, . . . I had two or three complaints—one was, chills and fever. . . . The neighbors were pretty good to attend me, which was all the help I had. Sometimes every inmate of the house was so low as to be unable to assist so much as to give each other water to drink.222

The Missouri dragoons came to search for Mr. Toansley while he was gone; they came with guns cocked and looked under the bed and in trunks. Their reason for wishing to kill him was that he was an active Free-State worker. Finally, when they caught him, the Border Ruffians burned his wagon and harness, abused him, and led him away to imprisonment.223

On June 7, after a company of United States dragoons had conveniently left Osawatamie, about 150 Border Ruffians came into the town, pillaged and stole, seizing horses in particular. At the principal boarding house, they broke open trunks of the emigrants who were stopping there previous to locating a claim, and took all their money and firearms. They also raided private houses.224 Robberies were committed on the roads near Wyandot Village, but Sheriff Jones, when informed of those suspected, refused to take any steps to recover a Free-Stater's money.225 The bodies of thirty-two travelers who had been murdered were found in July.226 Said a Free-State settler, "This is of a piece with the whole machinery of justice. Free state men

222 "Selections from the Hyatt Manuscripts," loc. cit., 205.
223 Ibid.
224 "Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 32.
225 New York Daily Tribune, January 12, July 6, 1856.
226 Ibid., July 12, 1856.
are treated just as negroes are at the South. They are a class devoted to oppression and persecution, and when protection is needed that protection is at a point where it is not wanted." A reign of terror had indeed settled upon Kansas. "We try to possess our souls in patience,' and hope for the best," said those waiting for justice.227

When the Free-State Legislature met on July 4, it was dispersed by Colonel E. V. Sumner, who had been sent to Kansas by President Pierce to keep order, which, according to the proslavery element, necessitated imprisoning or slaying the Free-State settlers. The border was harassed and remained in a state of uncertainty all summer.

The New York Daily Tribune advertised Western Border Life: or, What Fanny Hunter Heard and Saw in Kansas and Missouri as more thrilling than a novel.228

The story of what a Connecticut clergyman's daughter found near La Belle Prairie in the 50's and 60's is told. Although her Missouri employer's wife had constantly at hand a pipe and a shovel of coals, Fanny Hunter saw other frontier customs that shocked and amazed her. The log schoolhouse was not a picture of Yankee efficiency.

Its one window, consisting of a single row of lights, extending the length of the building, a log having been left out for the purpose. The chinks between the logs were filled up with clay, which, falling out piece by piece, left large air-holes, useful for ventilation, but rather inconvenient in rainy weather. A rude bench, without a back, extended across one end of the room, but this not supplying seats for all, a smooth round log stood near, upon which the younger children sat; and being little roly poly things, they were continually


228New York Daily Tribune, August 29, 1856.
slipping off, greatly to the amusement of the rest.

The door, alas! would seldom shut, and when it did, could only be opened by "clawing," a process well understood where latches are scarce, but in which it took our New England girl some time to gain expertness. The teacher's chair was placed in the middle of the room, and seating herself thereon, she succeeded, with the aid of a bell, taken only the day before from the neck of old Brindle, in calling her school to order. 229

Fanny, Puritanical of mind and accustomed to analysis, reason, and dignity in religion, was amazed at the Methodist meeting she attended with her pupils. As they arrived, "The congregation was still singing, but what the music had gained in power, it had lost in solemnity." It was a deafening chorus.

Fanny gazed with astonishment at the strange assembly in the log church. There were young men and maidens, old men and children, but of a description that she had never seen before.

It was not their poverty of dress that surprised her, though she had seldom seen so ragged and forlorn a set, but a certain look upon their unhealthy countenances, a sullen, cowed expression, that told volumes of object suffering, and humiliation. Middle-aged men were there, upon whose unshaven faces there was none of that look of manly self-reliance that characterizes the same class of laboring men in New England; and women, in old straw bonnets, and rusty black shawls, whose sallow, care-worn countenances, and wrinkled brows, bore the same hopeless expression;—untidy girls, and great, shambling, stupid-faced boys, and little puny children, with uncombed hair, and frocks sewed together at the back, to keep them from falling to pieces. 230

During the sermon someone fell in a faint, having lost his strength in getting religion; the congregation shouted, groaned, and clapped their hands. One man confessed to a killing; a child near Fanny got excited and almost collapsed in a hysterical stupor. The wonders of such religion on the border were as inexplicable to Fanny

229 *Western Border Life; or, What Fanny Hunter Saw and Heard in Kansas and Missouri* (Philadelphia, 1864), 71.
as were other frontier customs.

The bounty of the frontier was illustrated to the Yankee girl at a "set supper" after a dance.

The long table was bountifully spread with the substantial of this life, and though not in the style of an entertainment in Fifth Avenue, it was admirably suited to the guests, who partook of it. A roasted "shoot" graced each end of the board, a side of bacon the center, while salted beef, cut in thin slices, with pickles and cheese, constituted the side-dishes. Hot coffee, corn bread, and biscuit, were passed to each guest, and a piece of pound-cake, and a little preserved fruit, for dessert.231

In Bowles's *The Stormy Petrel* the slavery question for Kansas in the 50's was treated. This fictional account of the period pictured a visit to the Free-State town Lawrence, the Topeka Constitutional Convention, the meeting at Grasshopper Falls, and the stormy times in Southern Kansas. Much interest centered in the troubles around Fort Scott and Osawatomie.

The watching and praying were unavailing, for not many weeks later Osawatomie was attacked by a band of ruffians, and although stoutly defended by Brown with a little band of forty men, of whom three were his own sons, was burned to the ground, and his son Frederick killed and brutally mutilated.

Governor Geary, who had recently been appointed, was active in trying to prevent further collisions between the contending factions, and attended by United States troops, he was visiting, urging and commanding both parties to disband and return to their several homes and occupations.232

To overcome the embargo on Free-State travel up the Missouri River, General Lane sent out on July 4 a circular in Iowa announcing the establishment of the Lane Trail, which led from Iowa City, in Eastern Iowa, to Nebraska City on the Missouri River, and south to Topeka.233

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231 Ibid., 199.
On August 17, 1856, Governor Shannon, called by John Brown "a weather van—in a tornado," made the second treaty with Lawrence and the proslavery men and ordered that there should be no more arrests under territorial laws. The next day Shannon was forced to resign and acting Governor Daniel Woodson turned the border over to the Southern troops to quiet what was falsely called an open rebellion and insurrection—the quiet of a peace-loving, home-making frontier people.

Richard Realf, who was in Kansas from the fall of 1856 until October, 1857, wrote "The Defense of Lawrence," after hearing the account of the resistance in September, 1856, when Free-State men successfully held the town against 2,400 armed Missourians.

All night upon the guarded hill,
Until the stars were low,
Wrapped round as with Jehovah's will,
We waited for the foe;
All night the silent sentinels
Moved by like gliding ghosts;
All night the fancied warning bells
Held all men to their posts.

We were but thirty-nine who lay
Beside our rifles then;
We were but thirty-nine, and they
Were twenty hundred men.
Our lean limbs shook and reeled about,
Our feet were gashed and bare,
And all the breezes shredded out
Our garments in the air.

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235 Sara T. D. Robinson, Kansas, 226.
And when three hundred of the foes
Rode up in scorn and pride,
Whoso had watched us then might know
That God was on our side,
For all at once a mighty thrill
Of grandeur through us swept,
And strong and swiftly down the hill
Like Gideons we leapt.

Realf quickly espoused the Free-State cause and wrote many poems in
behalf of a "Free Kansas." His wholehearted love for the State is
well expressed in one line of his poem "Kansas": "Yet dearer than
all is dear Kansas to me." 237

T. B. Ferguson has written in The Jayhawker:

Upon the rolling prairie, beside the murmuring streams,
and beneath the glittering stars of heaven were committed some
of the darkest, foulest crimes ever recorded in the annals of
human history. 238

He had told the story of the bloody scenes that centered in the Marais
de Cygnes region about John Brown, the underground railroad, and James
Montgomery. In later years when the war was over, the Hoosier and the
Vermont, who had withstood the years, viewed the scenes. Said the
Hoosier: "Right where them feed stacks stand were where we fit the
Ruffians. Som of 'em are buried up yonder agin' the hill now." 239

On August 30 the Border Ruffians raided and burned Osawatomie and
added another injury to their many insults against the border settlers.

James Carruth, who had arrived in May, 1856, wrote back home to L.
Ingalls, of Watertown, New York: "I have stood on the hill near our tent

236 Richard Realf, "The Defense of Lawrence," Poems by Richard
Realf Poet ... Soldier ... Korkman, with a Memoir by Richard A.
Hinton (New York, 1898), 89-91.


Kansas in the Early Days (Guthrie, 1892), 9.

239 Ibid., 410.
and seen the smoke and flames rise from house after house till Osawatomie is not much but ashes. I have helped to bury the dead and take care of the wounded.

John R. Everett came in from his farm and helped with the rescue work at Osawatomie, and the people from Lawrence sent help. In looting the town, some of the ruffians robbed the postoffice, went through letters and took the money, then tossed away the contents; they opened the safe with a cannon. Carruth made an appeal to the citizens of his former State: "Men of New York, what do you think of these things? Consider, take advice, and speak your minds." A week later the Missourians came in and made "clean work" on Sugar Creek. Then it was that Carruth wrote to the minister back home telling how the settlers had not raised anything, ague, fever, and diarrhea had made their claims, the rabbits had destroyed peas and beans, a neighbor's cow had eaten every hill of the first planting of corn, the drouth took the second planting at its tassel stage. The need for money was so urgent that foodstuffs could be sent in until green things would grow in the spring. As for seed corn, wheat, and potatoes, the pioneer would barter around for these or buy on credit until the next crop came in, but some form of cash was needed and supplies for the majority of Kansas settlers in the southeastern section.

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240 James Carruth to L. Ingalls, September 1, 1856, "Life Pictures in Kansas."


242 James Carruth to L. Ingalls, September 1, 1856, "Life Pictures in Kansas."

243 Id. to Id., September 12, 1856, "Life Pictures in Kansas."
An editorial soliciting contributions for Kansas appeared in the same issue of the Reformer in which the plea from Kansas was printed.244

On November 23, the New York Daily Tribune reported that over a hundred boxes of clothing had arrived in Lawrence early in the month. Said the correspondent from Kansas: "Tell our friends to send a few hundred blankets and as many good stout shoes as they like."245

Of this sad time another pioneer recorded that sickness and sometimes death came. There was no undertaker near, no lumber for coffins, and so the men in the district of Cottage Grove (Vegetarian Settlement) on the Neosho River used cottonwood puncheons and made coffins and then dug the graves over the swell of the prairie, out of sight of the cabin homes so that the women might not see how close death had come.246

Governor John W. Geary came to Kansas on board the Keystone on September 9 and gave impetus to fair play in government.247 Hope revived with the coming of Geary, but the election of Buchanan in November caused no hope to spring in the breasts of Free-State men, although they were more determined to struggle for a Free State than ever before. Justice was still on the side of the oppressed; the Welsh Congregationalists, the Presbyterians, and the Quakers of Southern Kansas vowed that they "would not leave now for anything."248

244"Id. to Rev. Snyder, October 15, 1856, "Life Pictures in Kansas."
245New York Daily Tribune, November 28, 1856.
246"Memoirs of Watson Stewart."
249"Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 151-52; James Carruth to L. Ingalls, October 15, 1856, "Life Pictures in Kansas."
With green crops so light and so many hungry mouths to be fed, what a misfortune that the autumn brought prairie fires, which John and Sarah Everett fought one October night from twelve to three. But in spite of that work about two thirds of the hay that had been cured and stacked on their place burned. 250

However, up on the Big Blue River, Thomas Wells wrote more encouragingly of the crops:

I expect to harvest my corn this week, I think I shall have 275 or 300 bushels, and I expect to get 25 or 30 bush. potatoes and two or three bush of beans—we have gathered two or three wagon loads of winter squashes crooknecks etc and have quite a lot yet in the garden. 251

Along the Big Blue River, prairie hens, wild turkey, and deer were available, and the Indians were friendly and willing to sell dried buffalo meat to white customers. In the absence of buffalo meat, the Manhattan folks had beef and declared "there is no beef like that raised on the Kansas prairies." The young man who said that felt affluent enough to marry. 252 That winter he wrote home by candlelight, while A. J. Hoole was writing his letters on Sunday afternoons because he couldn't "afford to buy candles for this purpose." 253 Another pioneer related that one of the beauties of a huge fireplace was that it "made such a big blaze by night we needed no dips (candles)." 254

However, in some communities food was not so varied as along the Big

250 Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 150.
252 Ibid., 284-85.
Blue. Cracked corn prepared in a coffee mill was the substantial fare of some settlers down in Wabaunsee County.255

Colonel Sumner revealed to relatives and citizens in the East that it was their duty to lend aid, and the press made appeals for money as well as for food and clothing for Kansas settlers on the border.256 Gerrit Smith, a New York philanthropist, gave $10,000 at the Syracuse rally for Kansas aid; Boston sent help; and Chicago again responded generously to Colonel James Lane's ardor and enthusiasm for Kansas. While the Grand Rapids Eagle declared patriotically on Independence Day that the bona fide people of Kansas "must be protected," a writer wrote in the Daily Patriot that the money subscribed by New Englanders for emigrant aid never reached Kansas, but was being used by "unprincipled men of hollow hearts."257 However, supplies and cash kept rolling in for distribution even though passing them to the needy was a task of great proportions, sometimes badly managed.

Mrs. Townsley wrote:

I have received . . . one sack of flour, five yards of cloth for my little girl a dress, also half a pound of tea. This is all I have received as yet. I have four children, aged one, four, six, and nine, respectively; all of them want clothing. . . . The neighbors have recently hauled and cut a large quantity of wood, which will last me a long time. Some that assisted in this were Pro-Slavery men.258

Sarah Everett wrote in November, 1856:

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255 "Pioneering in Wabaunsee County," Collections, XI, 596.
256 Lowell Journal and Courier, June 23, 1856, Boston Daily Courier, August 18, 1856, Boston Evening Telegraph, September 1, 1856, in Thomas H. Webb Scrapbooks, XXX, XVI.
257 Thomas H. Webb Scrapbooks, XIV.
One of our neighbors went to Alton Ill. to meet his wife who had been visiting East, and by stating the wants of the people of this part was successful in raising 5 large boxes of clothing & bedding (second hand) beside two or three barrels. These things he has been distributing to such as need especially to those who have braved the war and not run from the field.

I got for George Cutter, a man wounded in the Battle of Osawatomie who had been in the Everett home since June, socks, shirts, bedclothes and overcoat—for John overalls, vest, boots & socks, for myself dress & stockings, for Frank stockings, aprongs a nice little embroidered padded merino sack also a nice red french merino long cloak—and worsted trousers, and a bundle of soft flannels—I got one heavy white woolen bed blanket. We have had 50 lbs. of flour this week from the regular relief fund. . . ."259

Mrs. Everett hastened to add that they would take no more relief as soon as payment was made for the care of George Cutter.

When Hyatt made his flying trip to points in Kansas about the middle of December, and came by Osawatomie for his visit, he gave twenty dollars to get better tubs for using the water treatment on George and promised prompt payment for the care of the disabled man, to whom he gave ten dollars for Cutter's wallet—a souvenir of the border war to be showed in the East.260

One of Sara Robinson's friends from Oyster Bed, Rhode Island, joined in the response for clothing for Kansas pioneers: "Every body is sending a 'box' to Kansas. Please write me if it's best to make up cloth. I have so often been asked the question. What did you lose in the conflagration of yr walnut-house? Everything?"261

But December 25 brought good cheer to many households in Kansas, with company to help eat turkey and other good things and to furnish

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260 Ibid., 158.
261 Lennie [E. P. Leonard] to Sara, November 24, 1856, Robinson File.
pleasant chats. The sun was rising on a hopeful Kansas, and Border Ruffians, who had not got their $1.50 a day and forty acres of land as pay for their deeds in behalf of slavery, were becoming discouraged. So wonder the Missourians were saying, "Kansas can go to hell!" A Southerner near Douglas gave this description of his Christmas, 1856, among the Border Ruffians:

I went over the river squirrel hunting, walked over the ice. After I got over I heard that there was to be a meeting of the settlers on that side about a mile above. So I went up to the meeting. There were about 12 or 15 men there; . . . The speaker was drunk. They had four bottles of liquor, and so before the meeting broke up (for it did not adjourn), one got so drunk that he fell down; another got about a hundred yards off, and there he lay. . . . Betsie went to our next neighbour and spent the day.

But during 1856 people were still living, marrying, going to church, and following the fashions—in the papers, at least. Getting married was a problem. Since there were few girls in the Territory at the time, finding the girl of one's choice might mean a journey back home under rigorous circumstances.

A young man started from Wabaunsee in February, 1856, on foot, with only $4.50 in his pocket for Mendon, Ill. He did chores where he stopped nights for his lodging, supper and breakfast. A part of the time the thermometer stood at twenty degrees below zero. When he arrived at Mendon he had twelve and one-half cents in his pocket. He came back in the spring with a breaking team of two yoke of oxen and a young wife.

Sunday in some parts of the West was little observed unless a

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262 "Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 159; Goodnow, "Diary."
263 "Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 158.
preaching was going on. Few rural communities had a regular preacher, and sometimes the circuit preacher who was due to offer a sermon did not arrive. In some centers, stores and whisky shops did a brisker trade on Sundays than on other days.\footnote{266}{R. H. Williams, \textit{With the Border Ruffians, Memories of the Far West}, 1852-1868 (Toronto, 1919), 112.}

Said a pioneer:

A young man . . . asked me to go with him up to Lecompton, to preaching. So I dressed and went, but the preacher did not come, and we had our walk (about 6 miles) for nothing. I am astonished to see so little regard paid to the Sabbath, as there is here among people who seem to be enlightened in every other respect. When I went up to Lecompton today, the steam-mill was going as if it were not Sunday, and all of the groceries were open, as on any week-day. But this is pretty much the case all over the Terr.—those who do not work go hunting, or do something else, not much better.\footnote{267}{Hoole (ed.), "A Southerner's Viewpoint of the Kansas Situation," \textit{loc. cit.}, 143.}

The New England and Ohio Valley immigrants were more strict about Sabbath school and church attendance. They had been accustomed to hearing the doctrine expounded with some finesse and were as gratified to hear a graduate from Andover perform his duty well as they were to cast an intelligent vote. In Lawrence, the first sermon was preached in the Pioneer House on October 1, 1854. Late the next April Mrs. Robinson attended Plymouth Church.

The hall . . . is simply boarded with cottonwood, and that to a person in the country, is explanation sufficient of its whole appearance; for the sun here soon curls the boards, every one shrinking from every other, leaving large cracks between. For a desk to support the gilded, morocco-covered Bible, sent to the Plymouth church, a rough box, turned endwise, and standing near one end of the hall, was used. . . . rough boards \textit{were} used until the settees are finished. All this seemed rough and uncouth, and at the first moment we felt that two thousand miles lay between us and the pleasant sanctuaries of our fathers, where they tread the aisles on soft carpets, . . . \footnote{268}{Sara T. B. Robinson, \textit{Kansas}, 42.}
In May, a Sabbath school was being held four miles out on the Cali­
ifornia Road, in the home of some people from Ohio, at which were some
little English girls "very bright and interesting."\textsuperscript{269} This illus­
trates the common practice among early settlers of holding church in
the homes.

Mrs. S. B. White told how pioneers near Junction City held a fair
and built a little stone church on a hill in the early years of the
'50's.\textsuperscript{270} In the spring of 1857, Thomas S. Wells of Manhattan wrote
that the Manhattan Association, which was the governing body, had
voted ten shares each toward building Methodist and Congregational
churches and that the Cincinnati Company had agreed to give twenty
lots each for the same, shares selling at from $50 to $75 each, lots
from $25 to $50 each.\textsuperscript{271} During the spring before, Wells had found
at Juniata a strong proslavery minister of the Methodist Church South
who said he "would as soon sell a nigger as an ox."\textsuperscript{272}

A circuit preacher who kept his library as well as his linens in
his saddle bag preached in the Marais des Cygnes district in 1855 in
behalf of the Methodist Church South. The meeting was held in the
hewed log house of Henry Sherman—often called Dutch Henry. During the
sermon, said the preacher, Sherman helped entertain the congregation by
closely watching the pot of beef and turnips he had put on the fire to
cook. "Twice the pot boiled over and the preacher had to wait until

\textsuperscript{269}Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{270}White, "My First Days in Kansas," loc. cit., 556.
\textsuperscript{271}Wells, "Letters of a Kansas Pioneer," loc. cit., 303.
\textsuperscript{272}Ibid., 165.
Henry could adjust the fire. Of course, the room was filled with the delightful odor of boiling turnips, but the people heard the preaching gladly and urged the preacher to come back.

During the summer of 1856, Kansas women learned from papers and magazines sent from the East that hoops were all the rage. A young woman recorded that one of her friends living near Fort Riley had seen the ladies there wearing hoops. Having bought hoops, the ladies made some wide skirts to wear, "dressed up and strutted around, feeling very swell." Since men were not overly fond of the hoop style, even in the city, and since Kansas winds made sad havoc of them, this style was soon discarded in the plains country. Even in Junction City hoops were not used much by a certain set, they having a pleasant time at spelling bees instead of at a fashion show.

In The First Christmas in Palmyra, William Colfax Markham has pictured the pioneers of the little town near Lawrence. They "early sought to give expression to . . . religious instinct by the establishment of a definite church relationship; and Palmyra, on the brow of the Big Hill, found a church organized as soon as the town had street names and a few cabins to hold down the lots between."

After a program of Christmas songs and recitations,

David Lamond, covered up with buffalo robes, and encircled with jingling sleigh bells, came forth to play the part of the

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275 Ibid., 552.
276 William Colfax Markham, The First Christmas in Palmyra (Baldwin, 1912), 5.
patron Saint. Amidst the joyous cries of the children, he took from the tree packages of pop-corn, candy and gingerbread that had been brought to the little town from Westport. While he called off the presents, the young people were reading the endearing mottoes found wrapped up with their kiss candies or stamped upon the candy hearts.277

Brighter days were coming as the year 1857 unrolled its fresh scroll as clean as the snow that fell at Osawatomie on New Year's eve.278 The noble and devoted people had suffered much since November 20, 1855, when the Wakarusa War began. The proslavery people were now ready to recognize defeat west of the Missouri line. The governors of Kansas, all of whom had come from the East, began to see that slavery could not be forced upon an unwilling people.

At the first of the year, near Osawatomie, corn was worth from 40 to 60 cents; flour, $4.50; butter, 25 cents; turnips, 25 cents; potatoes, 9 to 12 cents; and pork, 5 cents.279 Near Lecompton prices on provisions were higher: flour, $6 a hundred; meal, $1.37½ a bushel; salt, $4 a bushel; sugar and coffee, 20 cents a pound.280 The prospects for the summer, reported another settler, were brighter than ever before. Health was better, and the prospect for peace and confidence was good. He continued, "I hear on all sides noise of anticipated improvements the coming season." Among the new improvements was a sawmill coming to a point just west of Osawatomie;281 and another to

277Ibid., 10.
278"Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 159.
279Ibid.
281"Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 159.
New Haven Colony in Wabaunsee County; rail fencing for another twenty acres was being split; the breaking was in process in late March; lots in Lawrence on Massachusetts Street were priced.

Lawrence people were visiting in Osewatoia, and vice versa. Pie plants sent from Reesen, New York, were peering above the prairie soil by March 5; interruptions were made in a letter by a prairie fire driving straight into the writer's timber and so man and wife worked hard for about eight hours to keep it back. Children were learning to be self-reliant and independent, going to bed with their clothes on and without supper when parents were away fighting fires.

Although little Southern immigration was coming into Kansas by July, 1856, and Kansas was lost to the slave cause, the South hoped to control national politics. James Buchanan was inaugurated President of the United States on March 4; two days later the Dred Scott decision was handed down by Chief Justice Taney of the Supreme Court, declaring that a citizen could not be prohibited from taking his slave into any State and securing protection of that property. A week later, Governor Geary was forced out of the governorship. Newcomers were

282 Pioneering in Wabaunsee County, loc. cit., 595-99.
283 Letters of John and Sarah Everett, loc. cit., 161.
284 The process of turning the virgin sod, particularly with a breaking plow.
285 Letters of John and Sarah Everett, loc. cit., 280.
286 Ibid., 166, 168, 172.
moving out on the western prairies "in good earnest"; every boat
brought more people into already crowded shanties, sod huts, tents,
and hotels of Lawrence. 288

School was being taught at Indianola, a young lady being in
charge who was "of more than ordinary intelligence" and who sometimes
wrote for Eastern magazines like Godey’s Lady’s Book. 289

A Manhattan citizen recorded: "The School house in Manhattan
makes quite a show; it is built of limestone, size 32 ft by 43 ft
I believe and two stories high. They are now building two large stone
hotels and a Methodist Church also of stone. The Congregational Church
has not yet been commenced..." 290 In 1857, Bluemont College, later
to become Kansas State College, was established in Manhattan. 291

At Junction City, a Mrs. McFarland, "that tireless little woman
who could and would not be idle," taught a term of school in the
kitchen of the City Hotel, then vacant. 292 Many a Kansas school had
an humble but brave beginning in a vacant cabin or in an unused part
of some building.

In Ogden near Fort Riley, a former resident of Germany, Theodore
Weichelsbaum, opened a general store on Main Street. Having stored
his goods in the little log cabin, he slept on the counter and later

288 Richard Cordley, Pioneer Days in Kansas (Boston, 1903), 64.
291 Goodnow, "Diary."
moved into a log shanty of his own. Six years later, he married a girl named Fanny, direct from Germany, whom he had never seen. His parents had picked her and sent her to Kansas to meet her pioneer husband. The Kansas merchant had seen a photograph of his fiancee and had corresponded with her, but pioneering admitted of few trifling frivolities on the part of the bride-to-be and little dissatisfaction after marriage.

Up in Rock Creek district immigrants were now coming in. A man first built a little shack to live in, cleared off a small tract of ground in the edge of the timber and, having nothing with which to plow, set to work with his spade, turning sufficient ground for a potato patch which he planted with a bushel of seed potatoes. The season was favorable and, in spite of bugs which he fought diligently, the new settler got a fine crop. A good potato crop on the edge of civilization and good health made a man realize that he could expect the fulfillment of the years. Such was the promise of the American frontier.

On March 10, 1856, a Free-State convention met at Topeka to devise a plan for action toward political moves and eventual statehood. The bogus legislature, dominated by proslavery men, had tried all spring to form a proslavery constitution, planned to be sent to Congress without submission to the voters of the Territory. Governor Geary had vetoed this bill in February, but the bill was passed over his veto.

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293 Statement of Theodore Weichelsbaum, of Ogden, Riley County, July 17, 1908, Collections, XI, 561.
294 Ibid., 586.
It provided that the delegates to the proposed constitutional convention should be apportioned on the basis of the April 1 census which had been taken in but fifteen of the thirty-four counties of the Territory. The other nineteen counties, settled in the main by Free-State men, and located too far from the border of Missouri to be controlled by proslavery voters, were disfranchised. The Free-State men decided not to participate in the framing of the Lecompton Constitution, which had to be postponed until after the fall election or be submitted to the voters at that time.

At the election for the Lecompton Constitution on December 21, 1857, a ruffian in the town of Palmetto on the Big Blue River cast nearly one hundred votes for that infamous instrument, using names from a business directory of St. Louis.

The manner of voting was unique even for border ruffians in Kansas. A hole was cut in the ceiling above the ballot box. The voter went into the garret and thrust his hands through the hole. In his hand was a ballot, and he called out a name. The election officers took the ballot and recorded the name, but did not see the voter at all.

Kansas during 1857 was partly governed by a sort of military despotism from the outside under the form of an unlimited democracy; but the settlers were biding their time until their strength could assert itself in forming and ratifying a Free-State constitution which Congress should accept. Not only must the constitution carry through a majority of Free votes in Kansas, but also the antislavery element

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297 Ibid., 284.
Congress must be strong enough to admit of a passing vote. Thus the political trials in Kansas from '54 to '61 were attendant upon the maturing of this conception in the national legislative body, while the appointment of officials in Kansas was the result of a Democratic control of the executive branch of the national government.

On May 27, Robert J. Walker became governor and, although he made mistakes in behalf of the proslavery element, his administration in the end favored the legitimate settlers of Kansas. From the beginning of his governorship dates a falling away from the old parties in Kansas. The year 1858 witnessed a fair administration of Territorial affairs and growing strength of free voters. On October 5, the election of the legislature rested in the hands of the Free-State voters. On December 17, Walker, deserted by the President and his party, was forced to leave the gubernatorial post.

The autumn harvest in 1857 was better than it had promised to be in June and July, and about 95 per cent better than it had been in 1856 in Southeastern Kansas. Fine sod corn was cribbed. August and September were showery and good growing weather. Said the Kansas correspondent of a large Eastern daily: "Rain, rain—we have had blessed rains at last." Two hundred bushels of potatoes were dug on one farm; one hill often yielded two meals. Melons were abundant; pumpkins were so plentiful that they were boiled for the pigs.

299"Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 283, 239.
300Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 562.
A former Southerner wrote in August to his people in South Carolina that he had not eaten chicken in almost a year. The Southerner’s cotton was “full of offers, blooms and small pods, tho’ it is so late, I fear few bolls will mature.” His economic status did not promise much when he was buying all of his vegetables for the table and had no staple crop for money. He, his wife, and his child returned to South Carolina late in 1857. He recognized that Southern men were not making a success of their pioneering because “they did not have the great cause at heart sufficiently.”

Even in July, Hoole had felt that Kansas would be a Free State since immigration from Dixie had practically ceased and since many emigrants were on their way back South. The North had redoubled her efforts, he believed.

Early in October, Thomas Wells from near Manhattan wrote:

We have been haying for the past two or three weeks, and I have got up two large stacks of excellent hay. My corn is ready to gather, or rather to cut up, it is hardly dry enough to put away in a crib. I expect to have 400 or 500 bushels notwithstanding the injury it received from drought and grasshoppers. My corn suffered less from drought than most other fields around, because I plowed deeper, and the grasshoppers did not injure it so much as they did many other fields.

Corn is worth $1. per bush. here now and will be worth $2. or more in the spring. We shall have plenty of squashes & pumpkins, but very few beets and no potatoes. There are a cartload or more of nice water-melons in the field; you may have as many as you wish if you will come after them.

Our pigs grow finely, and we shall have plenty of fresh pork by & by. We have about 100. hens & chickens from seven or eight last spring, and might spare you a few very well.

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304 Ibid., 165.

Prairie fires were evident along the Blue River in November, although the rainy fall forestalled widespread destruction of other year. By November it was apparent that the drought had killed much corn. Wells, however, harvested 450 or 500 bushels. There were more people and cattle in Kansas now, and the demand for corn boosted the price. Labor too was in demand: common laborers were getting from $1.75 to $2.00 a day; masons and carpenters, from $2.50 to $3.00 a day.306

Transportation in Kansas was still crude and hazardous in 1857. A settler from Riley County on his way from New Haven to Kansas City had difficulty in crossing Shunganunga Creek when it was bank full. He made this record of an episode.

I was wholly unfamiliar with the region. It was raining hard and growing cold when I reached the creek, and being anxious to go on, I decided to see if the lead oxen were afraid. I spoke to them without using the whip, and they plunged right in. I saw at once that they were lost, but made an effort to cut them loose. It was a hard sight to me, and I tried to free them, but had to give it up to save my own life. A friendly Indian directed me from the opposite bank to a place farther upstream where I could swim across. He took me to his near-by cabin, which he cleared of its inmates. I was thoroughly chilled and my teeth chattering, and the roaring open fire looked good to me. I accepted his offer of blankets, in which I rolled myself while my clothes were drying... 

The next morning the two yoke of oxen were found hung on the tree so that their hind feet were touching the ground.308

In the late 50's the typical pre-emption cabin remained "ten feet

306Ibid., 316-17.
307Francis A. Abbott, "Some Reminiscences of Early Days on Deep Creek, Riley County," Collections, XII, 394.
308"Pioneering in Wabaunsee County," loc. cit., 596.
With families steadily increasing, improvements in housing were much needed, yet there were not enough masons and carpenters free from other duties to house frontier families properly. In the fall of 1857 or the spring of 1858, a Quaker missionary and his wife from England visited Kansas. Robert and Sarah Lindsay interviewed Friends at Osawatomie who had come in 1855 and were somewhat settled. Then Benajah Hiatt took them up to a new settlement at Cottonwood. The English missionaries were uneasy to find whole families eating, sleeping, and cooking in one room, but they noticed that "The woman of the house went about lively, in a good humor, got a good supper, and when bedtime came, sure enough, put Robert and Sarah in the bed, made a bed on the floor for Benajah, and backed their covered wagon up to the door and made beds for the family in that."  

October, 1857, brought to the East a financial crash which soon affected the West. "Such intense excitement was never witnessed in Wall street in any monetary crisis which has heretofore been visited upon the country," said the New York Daily Tribune.

Money was scarce in the Territory in 1858. But there was a further reason for this. The proslavery constitution framed at Lecompton had gone to Congress for consideration early in '58 and this gave the people of Kansas a good deal of excitement, and with that

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311 New York Daily Tribune, October 14, 1857.
move was brought a scheme to require all pre-empting settlers to pay for their claims by July 5 or forfeit their lands. The majority of the settlers had little cash ready and could not pay without making ruinous sacrifices. The design was to force them into the hands of a group of loan sharks newly come to the Territory. Short-time sales were also to be a "screw to force the settlers to vote for the Lecompton Constitution." If the settlers should ratify that pet measure of the President, which the Free voters detested, land sales would be postponed two or three years, according to Demn Rumor. By the last of April it looked as though by early summer money for a mortgage would be loaned at 50 to 100 per cent interest. Perhaps some was. In preparation for such an eventuality one thrifty settler wrote to his father in the East:

Can you borrow money for me at a less rate than that on the security of my land? The improvements on my claim are worth from $250 to $300. The land will be worth at a low valuation from $800 to $1000 when preempted. It cannot be mortgaged until it is paid for. I shall want $200 to pay for my claim. . . . I am you know within two miles of Osawatomie (the town has grown towards us), a place that seems now to be very thriving about 80 or 100 houses with three or four new houses going up every week. I have between 65 and 75 acres enclosed—about 14 broke.

On January 15 a correspondent from Iowa to the New York Tribune reported that there was scarcely an Eastern bank note west of Cleveland and that "any few dollars that may struggle this way are eagerly snapped up and sent East as a remittance. Gold is hidden, where it still lingers; but very much not only of this, but of silver

312 "Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 292, 293.

313 Ibid.
change, has been gathered up and sent East. 314

Despite the fact that people talked about the free lands of the West, Thomas Wells, who had arrived from Rhode Island in March, 1855, wrote back home on August 2, 1856, that it cost more to establish himself and his wife in Kansas Territory than an Easterner might imagine:

First our fare out here cost me full $100.
1 two horse wagon and harnesses in St. Louis 100
2 horses in Weston Mo. 300
Plow, harrow, cultivator, rifle, & necessary sundries 200.
Stove, corn planter, crockery, corn for horses etc. 40
Second trip to Leavenworth for bal of things 75
board since we have been here $6.00 per week 500
It will cost me to finish my house at least for my claim, due next Month 150
must have a well dug and stoned up 60
must build a barn this fall 250
must pay for rails, staples, etc to fence field 100
must buy provisions some furniture etc, etc 1,375 315

Money in whatever form it existed—or did not exist—was a problem until national banks were established in 1863 or 1864. Shindusters, or local bank notes, were often reduced in worth overnight. Kansas Territorial scrip had no redeemers. 316 Cash was hard to get and harder to keep. A check on a bank in New York or even a draft could not be cashed without having at least one per cent discount taken out. One must even then have come to the trading center on a day when the merchant had enough money on hand to cash the check, and the person desiring the money must have been known in a community in order to draw it. A merchant might be unwilling to cash a check. 317 At this

time the only currency recognized by the United States in payment for land was gold and land warrants. By using a land warrant instead of cash, a settler, in paying for a claim, might save from $45 to $50.

Sutherland's directory of the city of Leavenworth for 1859-1860 listed eight State banks; the immense business opened up in Leavenworth by the Government Overland Transportation Company of Majors, Russell & Company accounted for this growth in banking facilities. In 1858 this organization employed 4,000 men, 3,500 wagons and teams, and over 40,000 oxen and 1,000 mules to haul supplies to General A. S. Johnston's army in Utah. The Leavenworth banks were so busy handling funds for huge enterprises that they failed to reach the problem of the settlers living in the interior of Kansas.

The outlook for "quick money" drew a few people to Kansas, and a few came to "skin" the other fellows. But in the end, those usually found out that there were others who were still sharper. A gentleman from Ohio who came to Lecompton with a few thousand dollars had intimated that he was going to cut something of a swath. In 1858, as he stood with one foot on the step of the coach headed eastward, he remarked: "When I get back to Ohio I will tell them there is nothing but a sheet of brown paper between this place and hell!"

In the years from 1857 to 1860 the Kansas Band from Andover

321 Ibid., 369.
Theological Seminary was spreading out in Northeastern Kansas. During the summer of 1856, when Kansas troubles were at their height, the Kansas Band was formed at the Seminary; it consisted originally of four members of the "Middle" class, Sylvester Dana Storrs, Governor C. Morse, Roswell Davenport Parker, and Richard Cordley, who agreed to go to Kansas after graduation and to make that Territory their field of labor. The Kansas prayer meeting was one of the events of the week at Andover. Often the room was full and membership in the band grew to sixteen. Sometimes a friend "fresh" from Kansas would stop off and tell the group about his experiences on the border.322

Storrs went first to Kansas in the autumn of 1857, landing at Quindaro, which was being advertised in Free-State papers as the "Future Great" of the West. To this point the band shipped their books and in due time all followed. Morse did much in stirring up interest for the State Normal School, established in Emporia. Parker came into the whirl of business at Leavenworth to preach the gospel and later carried on at Wyandotte, now Kansas City.323

Cordley arrived in Lawrence in the autumn of 1857, when the Free-State Convention was in session. Living accommodations could not be secured, so an officer of the church kindly took him in for three weeks. A cot in the open garret served for his bed and a stand in the unfinished parlor did service as his study table. His first sermon was prepared while three carpenters pounded away in the same

322 Cordley, Pioneer Days in Kansas, 6-9.
323 Ibid., 13-20.
room; however, Cordley realized that he was preparing a sermon for "people of culture and character who had come to make Kansas a free state," and he carried forward the work in Lawrence.324

In the spring of '58 some were just starting their breaking of an eighty. Said one settler:

I was the possessor of two breaking-ploughs, each of which was worked by three yoke of cattle; with one I broke my own land myself, and the other I let out at $3 a day. The ploughs cut a width of thirty inches, and the Indian corn was sown in turned-over sod by chopping a hole and dropping in the grain. By this primitive culture I got a fine crop of twenty-five bushels of corn per acre; and between the rows had a fine lot of water melons, pumpkins, and cucumbers.325

In April, 1858, the roads in Bourbon County were reported "very bad";326 but this was the general condition all over the Territory, despite a pleasant winter. On April 19 there were many cranes in the cornfields up along the Big Blue River. And a large number of people were passing over routes west for Pike's Peak, some with horses, mules, or wheelbarrows, some lugging packs on their backs.327 About the same time relatives and friends from Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania were coming into the Dragoon Creek settlement. Spring rains had soaked the ground; grass, sod corn, and gardens fared well.328

Kansas was much in Eastern newspapers during the early months of

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324Ibid., 55-60.
325Williams, Border Ruffians, 114.
1858 on account of the Lecompton Constitutional Convention being in session at the first of the year and the Leavenworth Convention in March and April.\textsuperscript{329} The New York \textit{Daily Tribune} increased its agricultural notes, running a series on "How to Buy a Horse" and one on "Sorghum Culture."\textsuperscript{330} When it came time to plant Indian corn—"the grand necessity of all American agriculture," the paper gave instructions from the original planters: "When the leaves upon the oak trees are as large as the ears of the squirrels that sun themselves on the branches, then our squaws plant the seed that has been so carefully preserved in the smoke of our wigwams."\textsuperscript{331}

On March 16, 1858, James W. Denver was appointed governor and on May 18 the Leavenworth Constitution, favoring slavery, was defeated by popular vote. The people of more sections heaved a sigh that the nefarious scheme was dead, but on May 19 in Southern Kansas occurred the Marais des Cygnes massacre. Peaceable and unoffending Free-State men were taken from their fields, marched defenseless into a ravine and shot by Charles A. Hamilton's men until all were believed to be dead. Five survived.\textsuperscript{332}

Whittier again found a Kansas subject suited to his pen:

\begin{quote}
A blush as of roses
Where roses never grew!
Great drops on the bunch-grass,
But not of the dew!
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{329} New York \textit{Daily Tribune}, January 1, 11, February 7, April 10, 1858.
\textsuperscript{330} \textit{Ibid.}, January 14–February 4, 1858.
\textsuperscript{331} \textit{Ibid.}, May 11, 1858.
\textsuperscript{332} William Hutchinson, "Sketch of Kansas Pioneering Experience," \textit{Collections}, VII, 400.
A taint on the sweet air
For wild bees to shun!
A stain that shall never
Bleach out in the sun!

Back, steed of the prairies!
Sweet song-bird, fly back!
Wheel hither, bald vulture!
Gray wolf, call thy pack!
The foul human vultures
Have feasted and fled;
The wolves of the Border
Have crept from the dead.

From the hearths of their cabins,
The fields of their corn,
Unwarned and unwarnered,
The victims were torn,—
By the whirlwind of murder
Swooped up and swept on
To the low, reedy fen-lands,
The Marsh of the Swan.

With a vain plea for mercy
No stout knee was crooked;
In the mouths of the rifles
Right manly they looked
How paled the May sunshine,
O Marais du Cygne!
On death for the strong life,
On red grass for green!

... ... ...
On the lintels of Kansas
That blood shall not dry;
Henceforth the Bad Angel
Shall harmless go by;
Henceforth to the sunset,
Unchecked on her way,
Shall Liberty follow
The march of the day.333

Highwaymen and horse thieves annoyed the frontier. In the spring
of 1858 two boys were sent from Wilmington to Kansas City to purchase
supplies. Returning, they met a highwayman at a lonely point on the
road who robbed them of their money. Later the offender was pursued

333 Published in the Atlantic Monthly, September, 1858. John
Greenleaf Whittier, "The Episode of Marais des Cygnes," The Poetical
Works of John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston, 1892), III, 185-37.
and tried by a vigilance committee. The money was restored to the boys and the robber was sentenced to thirty-nine lashes on the naked back; six members of the committee were delegated to administer the penalty. The culprit was then given his supper, escorted out of town, and told never to return.334 Such was the justice of the prairie frontier.

State and Southern leaders tried to catch such men as Captain James Montgomery, the Corbins, and other Abolition leaders on the Missouri-Kansas border.335 On June 6, Montgomery's Jayhawkers raided Fort Scott, a proslavery stronghold. It appeared that border troubles were starting afresh. Actually, guerrilla warfare continued during the Civil War, but Free-State settlers were in the ascendency, and the proslavery men residing around Fort Scott promised to be peaceable.

Troubles from Missouri invasions and counterinvasions were brought to a close by the amnesty act passed in February, 1859.336 There were reports of persecutions of Free-State men around Fort Scott and in other neighborhoods of Southeastern Kansas,337 and it was said even at the end of the year that accounts from Southern Kansas indicated "a very unsettled and disordered condition of affairs, frequent robberies, house-burnings, and other depredations."338

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337New York Daily Tribune, January 8, March 11, July 2, 5, 1858.

338Ibid., December 15, 1858.
John Brown spent about six months in Kansas that year. During the spring months he went to Canada to perfect his scheme to liberate slaves in the United States. He returned to Kansas in June and assumed his disguise—the linen duster and a palm leaf hat with a wide sagging brim. In Southeastern Kansas he received money and arms. Slaves were taken on the "underground railroad" to Nebraska City and on into Iowa. At Nebraska City a vegetable cellar became a station on the railroad. On Dragoon Creek the station was located in the loft of Henry Harvey's house; Enoch Platt's cabin in Wabaunsee was the next station.

The frontier saw losses as well as gains, and sometimes loss was a gain to coming generations. For instance, one day in May of the 1850's, Susan Stone lost at Shawnee House in Leavenworth a trunk which, with its contents, was valued at $98.73, according to an inventory letter later found in Susan's lawyer's business papers.

Susan listed the things she had brought to the Territory:

1 Trunk, 1 Shawl, 1 Delaine Dress "Wool," 4 items worth $15.00, 1 White Basque, 5 Night Dresses, 4 Chemise, 2 Skirts, 3 Pr Drawers, 3 Yds Cotton Cloth, Thread, 1 Brush & 2 Combs, 1 Accordion, 2 Finger Rings, 2 Fine Collars, 1 Pr Mitts, 2 Linen Edkfs, 1 Veil, 1 Rose Wood Work Box, 1 Pr Boots, 1

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340 A cooperative effort whereby slaves were helped from the border to the farther North of the United States or to Canada.

341 Wayne Overturf, "John Brown's Cabin at Nebraska City," Nebraska History, XXI (1940), 95.

Bible, Books, 1 Pr Ear Rings, 3 Aprons, 1 Wool Plaid Dress, 2 Calico, 3 Belt Ribbons, 3 Daguerreotypes.

The weather in Kansas received more than the usual comment during 1858; perhaps the disturbed elements presaged the coming drouth of 1859-60. Until the first of February the weather was "mildly magnificent," but it soon turned with a "pretty sharp frost and a light snow." In June the thermometer stood at 106 degrees in the shade for a couple of days, and the rest of the summer was hot.

One day a tornado hit:

It was on a Sunday and there was a "preaching." The heat had been most oppressive all the morning, and by three o'clock the sky had darkened and it was almost suffocating, for not a breath of air was stirring. The people in the town stood about in groups, wondering what was coming. I had dined with the judge, and when it was evident a terrific storm was brewing, I invited all present to come over to my place, where they would be safer in my one-storied log cabin than in their flimsy frame houses. We were just in time.

Down came the rain in bucketfuls, a perfect deluge of water, the sound of which drowned our voices. Suddenly it ceased, and for a minute or two silence reigned. Then came the wind, with an appalling roar. It seemed to shake the cabin to its very foundations, and for the twenty minutes or so that it lasted, the girls of the party crouched on the floor, and we all expected the roof to fall upon our heads. But the stout cedar logs stood the awful strain, and not one of them was displaced.

Outside in my yard stood two great freighting wagons, or "prairie schooners," and they were carried off, and dropped in shreds, over a distance of about three miles. My log stables were down, and quite a mile of fencing, the logs being scattered about the prairie as though they were straws.

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346 Williams, Border Ruffians, 114-15.
Again in September the heavens were disturbed; the Comet of 1858 was seen on Salt Creek.\textsuperscript{347}

The Territory was, in spite of atmospheric disturbances, striving to become a State. An election was held on August 2, 1858, to vote on the Lecompton Constitution, another offering of the proslavery element to make Kansas a slave State. In early August heavy rains fell, causing creeks in the vicinity of Dragoon settlement to overflow. The polling place was at Wilmington, some four miles south of the creek. A citizen who was registered to vote across the creek wrote:

When our party arrived at Dragoon creek it was found bank full from the recent rains. There were no bridges across the stream in those days, so a temporary structure was managed by cutting a large elm tree that leaned out over the stream, reaching nearly half way across. Albert, the fourteen-year-old son of George Harvey, took an axe, and climbing on the fallen tree trimmed it so as to get as far out over the creek as possible. He then plunged in and swam to the other bank, carrying his axe with him; on that bank he cut another tree, which fell across the first one, thus affording a bridge over which George and Samuel Harvey, Samuel Woods and myself crossed. Before we reached Soldier creek, which was fordable only on horseback, we overtook Jehu Hodgson, who lived on the south side of the Dragoon. He was riding horseback. After crossing Soldier creek he dismounted and led his horse back into the stream, making it swim to the opposite side, when it was caught and ridden back by one of our party. We repeated the performance until we were all across.\textsuperscript{348}

By September 1, 1858, several reports had come back from the Cherry Creek gold diggings in Western Kansas—now Colorado. A company which went out from Lawrence in June met with good success during the summer. Two men picked out $600 in one week in a small stream not

\textsuperscript{347}Wiley Britton, \textit{Pioneer Days in Southwest Missouri} (Kansas City, Missouri, 1929), 268.

\textsuperscript{348}Speer, \textit{"Reminiscences of the Early Settlement of Dragoon Creek, Wabaunsee County,"} \textit{loc. cit.}, 352.
more than fifty miles from Pike's Peak.\textsuperscript{349} By September 16 a table of distances to the gold diggings was published in the New York Daily Tribune and a bit later the news was more encouraging; miners made from $10 to $30 a day; really the trip to Western Kansas was a pleasure trip; there was no difficulty with Indians or bears; little capital was needed as an investment—less than $5.00 for a shovel and a pan; the soil was rich, the atmosphere salubrious, and the most formidable animal met on the plains was the buffalo, the hunting of which was said to afford the "most exciting sport."\textsuperscript{350} Who could ask for more in money and adventure, even in 1853? It is no wonder that the counties just east of the Rocky Mountains were formed long before the counties of the western half of the present State.

Early in October, John Ingalls landed in the "Promised Land" and threw himself into the business of drafting the city charter for Sumner, which soon received the vote of the citizens and then went to the legislature. Kansas was becoming a Territory of towns—of real towns and of boom towns.\textsuperscript{351}

Governor Denver resigned of his own accord on October 10. Five days later, the last of the Lincoln-Douglas debates was spoken from the balcony of the New City Hall in Alton, Illinois. The slavery question had reached the stage of oratory on the part of candidates and the point of smouldering silence on the part of voters.

Over on the Big Blue River, Kentucky stock was being brought in

\textsuperscript{349} New York Daily Tribune, August 29, 1853.

\textsuperscript{350} Ibid., November 13, 1858.

\textsuperscript{351} "Some Ingalls Letters," loc. cit., 107.
by landowners—thoroughbred jacks and stallions. A few razorback hogs were also imported; but, since they could never be fattened, they did not become popular.

Another settler had found that the Chinese Sugar cane does well here; several barrels of Sirup have been made in this vicinity [Manhattan] and they are still making [October 25]. Next year—I think we shall raise all the sweetening that we need in this part of the country. I can raise sugar cane enough on an eighth acre of land to supply me with Sweetening for a year and it is no more work to raise it than corn. It is said that the seed are as good to make cakes of as buckwheat.

That fall the blue-backed spellers and McGuffey readers were open on the desks of pupils in schools of the Territory and rods were being wielded in the hope of not spoiling the children. Then Baker University offered the first college instruction in art.

The natural population was increasing and this called for more little red schoolhouses built of cottonwood boards and furnished with inelegant puncheon desks and seats, for in May the report was that babies were "as thick as blossoms in a clover field" in Osawatomie.

The year 1858 saw many settlers pre-empt land, settle into routine activities of raising crops, and make improvements so that they could better care for their growing families. The peak rush

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352 Britton, Pioneer Days, 268.
353 Spear, "Reminiscences of the Early Settlement of Dragoon Creek, Wabaunsee County, loc. cit., 353.
357 "Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 296.
of immigration was over for a time, and "every bodie's pocket was empty" on account of the hard times all over the country.\footnote{Wells, "Letters of a Kansas Pioneer," loc. cit., 315.}

That Kansas was still "untamed" was shown by the scare an emigrant train got from buffalo moving out to new pastures on the Big Blue River.

It was just after sundown, and we had corralled the wagons, and all hands were busy cooking at the fires outside the circle. A little way off, in the gathering gloom, we could see the scouts and cattle-herders rushing the animals along for the corral, as fast as they could drive them with frantic yelling and much cracking of whips. At first I thought the Redskins were upon us, but as the mob drew near we could hear the cry of "Buffalo, buffalo!" and realised the situation.

The fires were made up, and every man stood ready with his loaded rifle and six-shooter. The cattle came lumbering into camp at the top of their speed, and close at their heels followed the vastest herd of buffalo I had ever seen. On they came in countless thousands, and the sound of their trampling was like the distant, dull roar of the surf on the sea beach. . . . The whole multitude was on the move to pastures new, and as was the custom of their kind, travelled at a steady "lope," or canter; the hindmost following blindly the lead of those in front.

For several hours the buffalo streamed past us, so close that we could see the shine of their great bright eyes and the dim outline of their shaggy forms.\footnote{Williams, Border Ruffians, 127-28.}

By January 14, 1859, the report had reached the East that the Pike's Peak fever was on the increase around Lawrence at the beginning of the year. Business was brisker; the Kaw River was clear of ice and prices increased as one journeyed west. There was a good deal of corn in the Territory, which was selling at Lawrence for 25 cents a bushel.\footnote{New York \textit{Daily Tribune}, January 14, 1859.} The gold seekers were beginning to ascend the Missouri River,
said John Everett in his April 5, 1859, letter to the folks back East. Everyone was glad to shed the winter's sickness and blossom forth as did the good Kansas soil. But within the month around Osawatomie, south of the main route from Kansas City and Leavenworth to Pike's Peak, the gold fever had died down. Not one left out of four who had planned to go because they came to the conclusion that a few might make fortunes but the majority would be happier and healthier in Kansas.  

On the morning of May 20, the first overland express from Denver City arrived in Leavenworth, having been in transit ten days. It brought seven hundred dollars in gold and four passengers over its 625-mile route. The Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express was established to meet the need of a direct route to the mines. It ran from the Missouri River over the old Fort Leavenworth-Fort Riley road to Indianola, St. Marys, Manhattan, Fort Riley, and Junction City, and on in a northwesterly direction along the divide between Chapman's Creek and the Republican River—west to the Rockies.  

There were graves along the road when it was only two months old.  

In 1859 Kansas was more than crossroads, for Larry Lapsley, a freedman from Kentucky, had come via Missouri, Texas, Indian Territory to
a Kansas claim. Families from Wisconsin had also come in. James R. Mead spent the summer getting acquainted with Kansas through two Delaware Indians, former Fremont guides to California, finally landing in the Saline River country to explore and name its tributaries and to study its Indians. But many of the people who came to Kansas in 1859 found it impossible to stay and returned East of the Big Bend of the Missouri on account of hard times and lack of money in the Territory.

Possible railroad routes to connect the East and the Far West were troubling Congress, and a railroad convention to discuss routes was held in St. Louis in May. To connect with the East through the Hannibal and St. Joseph road whose western terminus was just across the Missouri River from Elwood, plans were being discussed for a road out of Elwood to Topeka soon; the company was to grade the bed and put down rails during the year, but this was not done until the 60's. Transportation did not suffer, however, for the report was that "every stream and body of timber from Elwood to the Big Blue River is enlivened by the tents of emigrants." Men were still traveling across the country with handcarts, with packs on their backs, by ox team, Indian pony, and mule, or trudging along on foot.

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Horace Greeley set out in May, 1859, to visit the West and to report its progress. He arrived in Atchison on May 15, and took a coach down to Osawatomie, where he made a speech to the Republican Convention. He visited Junction City, which had a store, two hotels, and thirty or forty dwellings, and was "as yet the most western village in Kansas, save that another has been started some fifty miles up the Smoky Hill." Ten days later, he first saw a herd of buffalo. It stayed constantly in sight for 125 miles. He noted that several sportsmen who were traveling on the stage wagon fired point-blank at the buffalo, and that "no Buffalo . . . experienced any personal inconvenience therefrom." Finally, Greeley passed over the western line, glad to be gone from Kansas, which he pronounced "a sore trial to patience." His parting exclamation was "Adieu to bedrooms and washbowls! Adieu to cold rains and flood rivers! Hurrah for Pike's peak!"

Another visitor from the East reported that Kansas was exceedingly muddy whenever rains came, adding that the rain had washed the earth away from the huge stones which formed the basis of the road between Kansas City and Westport.

Of the pioneer home he said:

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371 Ibid., June 25, 1859.
372 Ibid., June 18, 1859.
373 Ibid., June 9, 1859.
Our combined kitchen, dining-room and parlour presents a strange and busy scene,—huddled together,—as near the fire as possible to avoid the winds whistling through the hundred and one chinks and cracks with which the room is ventilated,—not forgetting the ill-fitting frame of six-light window sash;—the busy housewife bustling round in close proximity to the stove, and striving to make a decent meal by the aid of the aforesaid biscuits,—steaks, coffee, and apple-sauce,—is a scene,—the novelty of which will not be easily forgotten.375

This traveler was surprised that Humboldt, the capital of Allen County, had streets properly laid out, stores built in city style, and a church. Although he found "little decency or decorum in Kansas," he, like other Easterners, persisted in forgetting that the frontier provided a fight for existence and not a calm and casual life for an aristocrat.376

But Kansas was developing, among other things, city lots. Greeley, bred in the narrow poverty of the Vermont hills, did not appreciate the prodigality of the West and emitted a journalistic flash that was true for three decades: "The twin curses of Kansas... are land-speculators and one-horse politicians."377 However, settlers were little moved by Mr. Greeley's visit. In Rock Creek vicinity near Topeka, horse teams were scarce enough to attract attention,378 and settlers were so concerned with making ends meet that they were not aware that the editor of the New York Daily Tribune had breezed through Kansas until they read "An Overland Journey" in the paper.

With butter at 25 cents a pound, and homemade Western Cheese at

375Ibid., 151.
376Ibid., 159-64.
12½ cents, the Everetts were elated over their sixteen cows and thirteen calves. Sarah asked about the fashions, for she was thinking of having at least a new everyday dress so that she would "not be put to so much haste and inconvenience" when she washed the single everyday dress she had.379

Since settlers were still miles and days from trading centers, it behooved them to raise everything they needed. Although half an acre would produce sufficient sorghum for the family, a newcomer planted five acres of cane, fashioned a press with rollers of logs, and boiled the sorghum down to molasses for home use and to brown sugar for sale. This was a big help in a family's economy. Tobacco was on the list of luxuries which Kansas planters grew and cured. A quart of buckwheat seed from an old Pottawatomie Indian turned an experiment into 3½ half-sacks of buckwheat for food. But sod corn and pork were often the chief supplies in the larder, along with potatoes when the season was good. Happy was the family that had a good cow or two and some chickens for eggs. At times the unvarying fare was corn bread, parched corn, hominy, cornmeal mush and milk, with turnips for a change.380

The usual mode of travel was by ox teams, which "always took their time." Going to Sabbath services when the circuit preacher came to Uriah Cook's cabin on Rock Creek was an all-day affair.381

381 Ibid., 502.
Even in the eastern counties two days' travel to the post office and nearest store and home again was not an unusual trip.\(^{382}\) If a man broke his ax while he was chopping wood on a frosty morning and had to go forty miles to replace it, he found the implement costly indeed. The nearest physician often lived twenty-five miles away and could be summoned only in the most pressing cases, as his fee was from fifteen to twenty-five dollars a visit.\(^{383}\) Money continued scarce, and paper bills were not always good in Kansas. But silver and gold—always!\(^{384}\)

The old scourge of pain and fever occasionally plagued the settlers when their work was most pressing, but prairie malaria came less and less often. Land was being broken, but the breaking never did go as fast as the settler had expected it to. Although the summer was "favorable for vegetation," the fall of '59 was dry and led into a rainless cold winter and into a dry spring. Winter wheat looked as brown and dead as prairie grass by December.\(^{385}\)

On Dragoon Creek the grasshoppers came in swarms from the southwest, devouring what little vegetation there was. The settlers cut and dried cornstalks—no ears had started—for forage. The drouth was so severe that streams stopped running, and most of the pools in creek beds went dry. Prairie grass was short and eaten close to the ground by milk cows and young stock. Some rain fell in the Marais

\(^{382}\) Morrill, "The Early Settlers of Kansas," loc. cit., 149.
\(^{383}\) Ibid., 149.
\(^{384}\) Ibid.; "Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 352.
\(^{385}\) "Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 354.
des Cygnes country, so settlers came in and made hay, which they
took back to timber, where they camped and wintered the cattle. 386

On July 5, 1859, the Wyandotte Constitutional Convention met and
worked on the articles which were to usher Kansas Territory into the
family of states early in 1861. 387 On July 26, when delegates were
drawing the convention to a close, an observer said of the proposed
constitution: "So far, it is a pretty good instrument." The Kansas
voters accepted the document on October 4, 1859. 388

On the night of October 16, John Brown crossed the Potomac River
into West Virginia with twenty-one followers and took possession of
the United States armory and of the town Harper's Ferry. Although
the North was horrified and the South was aroused and angry, Kansas
seemed to be a bit warm and sympathetic, for someone else was
feeling the press of persecution which was resulting from the slave
question. 389 The trial of Brown was reported at length in newspapers.
On December 2, John Brown was hanged. 390

John Brown came to Kansas in 1855 and in the next three years
became indissolubly connected with the Kansas situation and the anti-
slavery feeling there through guerrilla war and his leadership in
Southeast Kansas. Five of his sons were in the State and aided in
his activities. Brown's days in Kansas have been portrayed in novel,

387 New York Daily Tribune, August 2, 1859.
388 Ibid., November 3, 1859.
drama, and verse, all of which furnished an interesting commentary on the man.

Elbert Hubbard gave the story of John Brown's life—the outward and inner motivations—in *Time and Chance*. He treated the inspiration of Ruth Crosby, a young matron who was a mother to young John, and the part Margaret Brydges played through her sacrifice toward turning the man John to his work of freeing the slaves. Toward the end of 1859 the martyr wrote to Margaret: "I am happy, happier than ever before in my life; I die tomorrow and my only regret is that in this life I cannot repay you even in part for all you have done for me. Farewell!" 391

Brown's Patent Adjustable Darkey Carriage, used in the underground railroad, was a load of hay above boards on top of a hay-padded wagon box, wherein Negroes were stowed and carried to safety. 392

After reading that Miss Mary Partridge, who lived south of Pottawatomie, had been selected to visit Harper's Ferry as a spy and to plan the rescue of John Brown from the Virginia authorities, Mary E. Jackson decided to write a story making this woman the heroine. *The Spy of Osawatomie* included Richard Realf, Dr. Robinson, Dr. Updegraff, and many others who participated in the early struggles of Kansas. The manuscript was written in a log cabin and finished in a stone house on the Kansas prairies. 393

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392 Ibid., 324-25.

393 Clipping in copy of Mary E. Jackson, *The Spy of Osawatomie; or, The Mysterious Companions of Old John Brown* (St. Louis, 1881), in Kansas State Historical Society Library.
Of Old John Brown she said:

Among those assembled to extend congratulations to the boys on their escape from the hands of the Border Ruffians was an old man. He was sedate and calm, seemingly unmoved by the demonstrations. When the cheers resounded upon the morning air, his hat was not lifted, neither did his voice join in the shouts. His small blue eyes flashed a fire never before observed. As the vociferations died away, he stepped forward from the crowd, and mounting the steps to the porch, in a calm and deliberate voice said:

"It has been said that I am a member of the Republican party. It is false. I despise the Republicans, I am an Abolitionist; not only opposed to the extension of Slavery, but in favor of its extirpation." 394

The battle of Black Jack and the battle of Osawatomie were followed by the Harper’s Ferry incident and Dickey Deane’s visit to Brown’s cell. The humiliating Quantrell murders were reversed by the triumphal unveiling of the John Brown monument in Osawatomie after the war. 395

William R. Lighton’s story, *Sons of Strength*, began in the spring of 1854, when young men in Illinois were waiting for President Pierce to sign the Kansas–Nebraska bill so that they might enlist in behalf of freedom for Kansas. On the way up the Missouri River, a Missouri boy whose father was a rabid proslavery man joined the "sons of strength," and all journeyed on to Lawrence to see the "real fightin’." A young man explained the reason:

"There was some folks got mixed up in a murder, and the sheriff had a Free Soil prisoner, takin’ him down to Lecompton, makin’ his brags about what they was goin’ to do. But the prisoner was stole away from Mr. Sheriff, an’ taken down to Lawrence. That’s what’s made the trouble. The sheriff called on the governor for militia to help. Militia! In Kansas!

Ain't that rich? We know where the 'militia's' comin' from, an' so do the Lawrence folks, an' they ain't goin' to stand it. There's a thousand 'militia's' camped down to Franklin right now, an' more comin'! 

Said one of the "sons of strength" about John Brown:

"I knew that I was living to some purpose while those eyes were fixed upon me, for a sincere and dauntless soul looked out of them... Calm dignity of thought marked the wide forehead, sheltered by shaggy hair; the firm lips showed perfect control and mastery of self; but the beautiful eyes I loved best, for in them blazed a will so mighty that no earthly circumstance could subdue it or turn it from its way."

During the late 50's the Santa Fe Trail in the Vinland Valley brought numerous settlers into the Territory:

Along this historic old highway in the middle '50's came the westward-facing people, with purposes as varied as the varied speech and manner of the men who held them: the frontier border raider; the New England emigrant, Pilgrim Father of the Plains; the Southern gentleman, loyal to the empire-extending spirit; the refugee Negro, sometimes close upon his heels; the half-civilized Indian from Michigan; the staunch-headed Quaker from Indiana; the adventurer, the State-builder, the outlaw, the missionary, the dreamer of a day of better things—the footprint of each was, from time to time, in the dust of this Trail. Each had crossed the border line between the old Missouri State and the young Kansas Territory, and, moving westward over the rolling billows, had come to this wooded crest [the height above Vinland Valley].

When John Brown visited the Quaker household, he spoke on the vital issue:

"Hiram Marrow, there is only one issue in our Nation today. It centers here in Kansas. There is only one thing to do, and that is to meet this issue..."

... The firelight fell full on his face. It was not a brutal nor stupid face. No line of hatred marked it, no dull blood-

397 Ibid., 166.
398 McCarter, A Ball of Men, 4.
lust bleared the clear vision. But a sense of prophetic, irresistable power dwelt around the temples and set the stern lips. 399

Despite the fact that John Brown truly prophesied ten years of trouble and bloody warfare, occasionally neighbor fell in with neighbor along the roadside and Southerner and Free-Stater went together to a preaching.

A preacher, welcome visitor to the early frontier, a Methodist preacher, it chanced was spending the day in Palmyra. He had come into town on Saturday with a wagon train, going westward on the Trail, bound for Santa Fe. The train had moved on to travel on the Sabbath as well as any other day, but the preacher had staid behind. Word had swept the Vinland Valley like a prairie fire that Saturday afternoon that a sermon could be heard in Palmyra on Sunday. Hence these prairie Pilgrims making for one common shrine in the loneliness of this autumn day. It mattered not that this preacher called himself a Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Quaker, or Episcopalian, with those who claimed no specific church affiliations, all came hither, hungering not more in truth for the gospel message than they were drawn by a homesick longing for the Sabbath of a civilized land. 400

And so they all came into Palmyra. The preaching was in the upper story of the new Palmyra hotel. The stairway was not completed, and the feet of the worshipers stumbled in the ascent. There were no walls as yet to divide the second floor into rooms. The seating was a rude improvisation, nothing in all the appointments suggested the sacred temple for divine service except one thing—the preacher. He stood beside the crazy little table that held his Bible and hymn book, a tall, dark-skinned man, thin, and full of nervous energy. His voice was pitched in an upper key, and his words came swiftly; short, sharp pointed words, with no effort at eloquence. 401

Arthur Paterson wrote For Freedom's Sake to record the happenings of the years from 1856 to the death of the "bloodiest fanatic alive"—John Brown. The author set the story in the Mersiz des Cygnes country:

399 Ibid., 30.
400 Ibid., 79-80.
401 Ibid., 87.
All this country was soon to become as familiar . . . as the streets of Boston. He noticed now that the face of the country was hanging. He crossed by a rough wooden bridge a deep and swiftly running river—the Merais des Cygnes. The prairie road, dull and monotonous, gave way to a path up the hill, winding between broken plantations of scrub cedar and oak. Osawatomie was about a mile from the river side—a cluster of log huts "cleared" from the plantation.  

A character said that it was not until he had become acquainted with John Brown and studied his face at rest that he took any note of the large hooked nose, the broad, strong mouth, and the massive chin.

For it was by the eyes that John Brown was known to friend and foe. Eyes of great width, the lids slightly drooping, giving a look of watchful keenness which, combined with a natural steely brightness, imparted to them an extraordinary power of expression. Above the forehead his hair, dark but touched with grey, grew thick and low. It was brushed straight back without parting, and was closely cut round the clean-shaven face.

There was not a weak place anywhere; and the lines over the forehead and round the eyes and the mouth, the down-drawn curve of the lips, and the hard "set" of the jaw showed the nature of the man. . . . He saw one side of life, but only one; and where he inspired one man with devotion, he filled ten others with fear and hatred. Yet he did his life's work as few have ever done.  

In Marching On, Ray Strachey remarked on the difference of character portrayal by Northerners and Southerners and added:

I have tried to be strictly accurate in every essential fact. . . .

I am aware that I have given a very harsh and unsympathetic view of the South and of the Southern attitude in the period just before the Civil War. My reason is that the book presents the years of preparation for war mainly through the eyes of a young greenhorn from the Middle West; and to such the South was unrelievedly wicked.

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403 Ibid., 88.

404 Ray Strachey, Marching On (New York, 1923), v.
Much about the Abolition Movement and in particular the happenings of the 50's on the Kansas-Missouri border are treated in the book. One of the most realistic pictures given is John Brown's strike upon Dutch Henry's Crossing. Said Brown:

"Dow was murdered in December, ... Since then they have killed four other men. That makes five. We therefore, must go and take the lives of five men in accordance with the laws of God. We shall go at once to Dutch Henry's crossing. There are enough men there. We shall select five, and do our work. Then justice will be done. It is God's will."

At the end of the story thousands were going into battle with these lines from a hymn upon their lips:

| John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave   |
| But his soul goes marching on!                    |

On December 2, 1909, William Allen White wrote an editorial entitled "John Brown," part of which said:

Fifty years ago John Brown died on the gallows. He was a crank. The raid that ended with his capture, conviction, and his death did not stop slavery; but his soul went marching on and the life that he gave for his conviction was the most precious single treasure ever offered to this union of states. It precipitated the struggle; it made compromise appear to all the world the hollow subterfuge it was. It was more than John Brown that died on the gallows that day fifty years ago. John Brown carried to the gallows with him the doctrine of vested rights in human beings, and it was executed with him.

Henri Emile Chevalier and F. Pharon wrote Un Drame Esclavage— a romantic story that centered around the days of Brown in Kansas. "Le Camp de Brown" received the author's attention:

405Ibid., 294.

406William Allen White, Forty Years on Main Street (New York, 1937), 280.
Ce camp était adossé à une forêt vierge impénétrable, qui l'abritait en partie. Il avait la figure d'un hure de sanglier, dont le groin, formant bastion, était défendu par une haute palissade, surmontée d'une galerie, construite avec les abats brancus des arbres.

Le front de bandière, relient de chaque côté le bastion à la forêt, était composé de troncs de pins, inextricablement enchevêtrés, qui en faisaient une barrière infranchissable.

Le camp, ainsi établi à l'ouest de la forêt, commandait une plaine immense. Il eut été impossible à l'ennemi le plus rusé de s'en approcher sans être aperçu, à plusieurs milles de distance, par les sentinelles placées en vedette sur la galerie.

A l'intérieur, se dressaient des tentes de cuir, des huttes de feuillage.

Fourteen days after the hanging of Brown, the premiere of Mrs. J. C. Swayze's Ossawatomie Brown was played in New York. The drama set at North Elba before the Browns came to Kansas, in and near Brown's house on Pottawatomie Creek, and at Harper's Ferry, had a pro-Northern bias, as is seen in this scene, when the Browns were trapped by proslavery men:

Brown. Don't fire boys, we will leave that till the last. They may have wives or sisters, and I want not to shed a drop of innocent blood if I can help it.

Julia. Looking out. But who are these who threaten you so violently? These are no hired ruffians! Oh, tell me in heaven's name what you have done to arouse such hatred in them? What heavy crime committed?

Brown. Crime, girl! Look down upon these men, and in every face behold a slaveholder! The crime I have committed against those men is not the bloody deed with which they charge me, but worse, far worse, for I have told them to their teeth, that I hold not with their creed which teaches them to barter human souls.


408 "An Old Play on John Brown," Kansas Historical Quarterly, VI (1937), 34.

409 Mrs. J. C. Swayze, Ossawatomie Brown; or the Insurrection at Harpers' Ferry (New York, 1859), II, ii. Copy in Kansas State Historical Society Library.
Muriel Culp wrote her short story "John Brown's Soul," to give an insight into the tender, affectionate nature of this reformer, who was sometimes accused of being ruthless and soulless. During the "Wakarusa War" years, there often came the picture of the front line Kansas defense: "Foremost of the defenders stood John Brown, rifle in hand, his sons just behind him." But this story strove to picture the man joining a child in the simple ways of life.

Kirke Mechem's *John Brown* was set in Lawrence, near Pottawatomie Creek, in Peterborough, New York, and at Harper's Ferry. Jim Lane, Charles Robinson, Wilson Shannon, Sheriff Jones, Mrs. Thomas Barber, and others were given words in the play. Said Brown of peace in Kansas after the events of 1855:

... Peace?
And slavery? Never, never again!
And this death of Thomas Barber
Is but the prelude to disaster!

And again, after the May, 1856, raid on Lawrence:

Day after day these new atrocities
Come pushing us on to war or a coward's peace.
Their pledge is broken; I'm released from mine.
As Christ armed Peter so shall I be armed,
For the Law says without the shedding of blood
Is no remission of sin. Once more these ruffians
Have crossed the border as they did last winter;
This time with orders from Lecompte's own center
Empowering Sheriff Jones to enter Lawrence,
Raze the Free State Hotel, destroy the presses,
And, what will follow, pillage as they please.412

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The events of the years from 1854 to 1860 were many and important. What Kansas lacked in development during the years from 1850 to 1854 she hastened to make up after her organization as a Territory. The period has received detailed treatment in prose and remains an interesting era for study.

The earliest book to appear on Kansas was Edward Everett Hale's *Kansas and Nebraska*, which came out in late August, 1854. Hale never set foot on Kansas soil. The next spring T. B. Mason and C. B. Boynton, Committee for the Kansas League, published *A Journey Through Kansas; with Sketches of Nebraska* as a result of a tour west during 1854. Eighteen fifty-five also saw the appearance of J. Butler Chapman's *History of Kansas and Emigrant's Guide*, published at Akron.

During the year 1856 correspondents and propagandists were busy. Among them was G. Douglas Brewerton, correspondent for the New York Herald, who left for Kansas on December 4, 1855, and returned East in February, 1856. He wrote *War in Kansas*, an impartial account. William Phillips wrote an interesting journalistic narrative and commentary, *The Conquest of Kansas*, chiefly a history of Kansas troubles from the passage of the Organic Act until the end of July, 1856. Phillips was correspondent for the New York Tribune, which had an anti-slavery bias. *What Fanny Hunter Saw in Kansas* appeared about the same time. Mrs. Sara T. D. Robinson, wife of Dr. Charles Robinson, agent for Kansas in the New England Emigrant Aid Company, contributed a rather accurate account as she viewed the happenings on her trip to Lawrence and in that city from 1854 to 1856. She expressed a Free-

413 (Cincinnati, 1855).
State prejudice. The same year appeared Hannah Anderson Ropes's authentic letters to her mother about a dreary *Six Months in Kansas*, from September, 1855, to the next April.

An entirely different type of narrative, but one with much information upon the physical status of the Kansas Territory, appeared in 1856 in *The Life of Col. John Charles Fremont*. This book by an explorer, who was the son-in-law of Thomas Hart Benton, Senator from Missouri, and Republican candidate for the presidency in 1856, undoubtedly received much attention and brought new light to the public about the territories mentioned therein.

In 1857 an English correspondent of the London *Times*, Thomas H. Gladstone, sympathetic toward the Free-State movement, wrote valuable sketches entitled *The Englishman in Kansas*.

Greeley's *An Overland Journey*, originally printed in his New York *Daily Tribune* in 1859, appeared in book form in 1860. In 1859 William P. Tomlinson, who visited the State from spring until December, 1859, published *Kansas in Eighteen Fifty-Eight*. The book was written "to disabuse as much as possible the public mind of its many erroneous impressions regarding the recent difficulties in Kansas, ..." It was dedicated to Henry Ward Beecher, "The Unwavering Friend of Kansas."

The 1860's and 70's were periods of adjustment to pioneer living as it reached westward in Kansas; there was little time for literary expression. But the 70's and 80's saw an outburst of writings on territorial years—explications of facts and retrospections, as well as fiction. Since that time pioneers have recorded their recollections and thus have added greatly to the source of information and literature.
about Kansas Territory. In 1872 Mark Twain's *Roughing It* came out with references to his trip over the plains. L. W. Spring published *Kansas: The Prelude to the War for the Union* in 1885. Eli Thayer wrote in 1889 *A History of the Kansas Crusade. Its Friends and Foes*, dedicated to the first governor of Kansas. His work is an explanation of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the Emigrant Aid Society, the part of the Church in slavery agitation, and praise for the work of abolitionists and Free-Staters.

Sketches such as Reeder's "Diary" and the narratives in the Thaddeus Hyatt and Eli Thayer collections are rich in pictures of the life of the days portrayed.

During the 1890's, Hugh Dunn Fisher published *The Gun and the Gospel*, reminiscences about the years of strife over slavery. In 1898 Charles Robinson published *The Kansas Conflict*, which was then chiefly valuable for the documents contained. Cordley's sketches, written earlier, were published in book form after the turn of the century.

In general, the novels about the years from 1854 to 1860 are based upon stories handed down by word of mouth or upon research. In the early eighties Jackson contributed *The Spy of Osawatomie* and Humphrey wrote *The Squatter Sovereign*. *Une Drame Escravitiste* by Chevalier and Pharon illustrated the French interest in the period. More recent

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414 (Boston, 1885).
415 (New York, 1889).
416 (Chicago, 1899).
417 (Lawrence, 1898).
American writers who have delineated the territorial years are Brooks, Cowgill, Culp, Ferguson, Hubbard, Lerrigo, Lighton, Lynn, McCarter, Marshall, Paterson, White, and Strachey, all of whom have incorporated much history into their stories.

Some of the poets who have written about these years in Kansas are Allerton, Larcom, Realf, and Whittier. The life of John Brown was considered sufficiently exciting and adaptable to call forth Swain's play at the time of Brown's hanging and Mechem's play in the twentieth century. They stand out on account of the dearth of this genre. Of significance is the domination of the Abolition spirit, purposeful writing, and the Northern bias in the literary activity about the period.
Eighteen sixty was the year of the Kansas drought. The early immigrants who had come to Kansas in the 50's and had experienced trials and sorrows of the formative years were yearning for an opportunity to sow and harvest in peace. But until after the war that was not to be. The Fates were spinning a far different thread of destiny. The fall and winter of '59 were dry. The spring of '60 opened auspiciously enough, but its showers were sufficient only to sprout the seed. For over sixteen months there was not generally a rainfall of two inches over the State. Furnace-hot winds blew during the summer, and grasshoppers which came in swarms from the southwest devoured what little vegetation there was.¹

Thus was Kansas deprived of her daily bread, and she had none stored. During the 50's many immigrants who came to Kansas moved on to the Far West. Teamsters and soldiers moved northwest and southwest to the frontier; hence the produce of the frontier continued insufficient each year to meet the demands upon the western granary, let alone to provide for the lean years. One pioneer estimated that for five months during 1860 never less than 300,

and sometimes over 500, wagons passed daily over the road near the Little Blue River, either freighting or carrying immigrants to the West.\(^2\)

The discovery of gold—the Comstock lode in Nevada and the Cherry Creek vein in Colorado in 1859 and the Montana diggings in 1863—drew many to the West. The passage of the Homestead Act in 1862 also lured many movers from east of the Mississippi River. Add to this the almost constant movement of soldiers to frontier garrisons. It has been estimated that over 250,000 immigrants used the Oregon Trail and the overland stage route between 1859 and 1869.\(^3\)

But gradually, during the late 50's and the early 60's was effected a practical marooning of Kansas from the Northern states, except via Nebraska, through the closing of the Missouri River route by hostile slave interests in Missouri. When secession and war came, further hostilities and severance of all trade resulted. Kansas was stranded, but being a war baby she cried for help and the Northern states responded.

Back to January of 1860 and conditions in Kansas! Said a settler, when he had gathered his 1859 corn crop: "I had about a thousand bushels of corn this year... We can get only 20 cts a bushel for ours, and mostly store goods at that, it is almost impossible to get money for anything at any price."\(^4\) About the same time


Hugh M. Moore of Topeka observed:

Times have been very hard in deed there is but little money in circulation. The Summer & fall has been very fine indeed. Crops have been very fine & are yielding well. Corn is worth 20 cts, potatoes 30, wheat 100, butter 20¢, pork 6 to 8 cts, beef 5 to 7 cts.

Horses are worth from $50 to 200, mules 300 per pair, those are about the prices current.5

On April 20, hail ranging from the size of a hen's egg to as large as a quart bowl was reported by an observer in Eastern Kansas.6

Up Manhattan-way in late June a farmer reported that his winter wheat was thin but well filled out; his spring wheat hardly came up, as did very few oats; his garden was backward; wild plums were killed by a late frost, but corn and sweet potatoes were "growing finely."7

In August John Ingalls wrote from Topeka that the summer months were "only fit for a Hottentot, accustomed to the ardors of Sahara."

Reverend Hugh Dunn Fisher of Lawrence said:

The country was blighted almost as if by a great prairie fire. The grass dried up; the leaves fell from the trees as if from the autumnal frosts; the ground opened with great yawnings, by which horses and cattle often stumbled and were injured; running streams went dry; the rivers became so low that steamers, even of the lightest draught, could navigate them with difficulty; the wells and cisterns were soon emptied, and people had to haul water for domestic purposes many miles in many instances; horses, cattle, and even the buffalo on the plains died from thirst, the blighting drought being destructive in the extreme upon every living thing.9

This report came from just six miles north of Council Grove along the Neosho River: "Though normally there was an abundance of wild game, the drought and consequent scarcity of animal food had largely driven it out of the country, and many of the settlers, inexperienced in the science and use of the wild game that did remain, were often in want of food."

In spite of these voices crying in the wilderness, Samuel J. Crawford wrote some years later:

The Spring and Summer of 1860 came and passed without any rainfall, and yet the prairie grass was nutritious, the cattle and horses were rolling fat, and wild game we had in abundance; besides, the gardens were fairly good, and a considerable quantity of corn was produced on the valley lands. So, as a matter of fact there was no real suffering for food on account of the drought.

In June a tornado swept the entire eastern section of Kansas Territory; it began as a wind storm that looked like rain.

Almost before it was understood that possible danger lurked near the storm broke in mighty fury and spread wide its destruction. Houses were unroofed and blown down; the county jail was so badly damaged that prisoners were liberated, only to find death in the path of the tornado; trees were torn up by the roots and church spires and roofs were demolished; Three-Mile Creek became a raging torrent from a dry ravine in a few minutes, sweeping away a number of houses and drowning a dozen people; such little garden patches as had been nurtured through the drought were destroyed by the wind and hail and rain; the inky blackness of the night, only relieved by the most vivid and blinding flashes of lightning, made the situation the more appalling and increased the terror of the already greatly alarmed people. It seemed as if out of the drought and heat and famine had come another destroying power to finish the devastation that had been worked upon us.

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10 Thomas F. Doran, "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," Collections, XV, 85.

11 Samuel J. Crawford, Kansas in the Sixties (Chicago, 1911), 7.

What sad and widespread destruction the tornado carried for many settlers who had just finished pre-empting and investing their borrowed money in stock, making ready to farm. With crops, fences, stock, and homes destroyed, many who had come in '58 and '59 had to leave. But others stuck it out. Despite the drought, there was still immigration into some communities.

A newly arrived and recently married couple received an early frontier initiation in Wabaunsee County economy:

... in May, 1860, ... [Herman Weseke] got married, and in that spring and summer built a house on his land, into which he and his wife moved; ... he tried to do some farming, but ... the drought was so severe he raised nothing. He had at the time a yoke of oxen, a wagon, a plow, a scythe, an ax and a hoe as farming implements; also two cows, no hogs, and no other stock except a yoke of oxen and two hens, but no rooster. ... he had enough money to provide flour for himself and wife sufficient to reach into the next spring, besides rye to parch for coffee. When he had provided thus for the winter his money was all gone, and he and his wife settled down for the winter.

... during this late autumn and early winter the two hens had laid an occasional egg, and ... he and his wife both agreed to save these eggs until their needs became greater. By the time winter was fairly on and the winter holidays very near, his wife had often wished that she had saleratus to bake biscuits out of the flour, a desirable change from the continuous diet of only light bread and rye coffee (saleratus is a soda, known fifty or sixty years ago only by the name of "saleratus" in the stores, and it preceded the baking compounds now known as baking powders, and was used with sour milk, or with sweet milk and cream of tartar, ...), and the winter weather being mild for a considerable part of the day, he resolved to go to Council Grove, the then nearest market, distant eighteen miles, to get saleratus, provided they had eggs enough to make the trade. He and his wife counted up and found they had eleven eggs. He then made a good search to see...

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if an egg might not have been laid that day so as to make a full dozen, but could not find one. So, on the next morn-
ing, the weather being clear, he yoked up the oxen to his wagon, and with his eleven eggs drove to Council Grove, and got there a little before night. He camped there for the night, intending after camping to do his trading, so that the eggs should not freeze, and he would be ready to get an early start for home next morning. Before doing his trading he met Mr. Carl Grunewald, a Wabaunsee county neighbor (though living a half dozen miles from each other), and told Grunewald why he came to Council Grove, and the embarrassment he was in because he only had eleven eggs. Grunewald said, "Why I had an extra egg, and the store gave it back to me. I'll give you that egg." Measke thankfully accepted the proposition, ... and bartered his now full dozen of eggs for saleratus. He slept in his wagon, and next day drove home, having spent two full days and one night in a trip to Council Grove for no other purpose than to get saleratus so his wife could bake biscuits. 15

In October, to save money on provisions which he must purchase, one farmer borrowed some wagon bows and a wagon sheet, fitted them to his lumber wagon, hitched his horses, and, taking his wife along for an outing, went to Leavenworth, a trip of at least 250 miles. On the Leavenworth market, flour was $1.50 cheaper a hundred weight than on the Manhattan market; other commodities were half the price of the Manhattan prices. After harvest this settler, who had taken in a thousand bushels of corn from his field in 1859, had to admit that he garnered in the last months of 1860 from one hundred to two hundred bushels containing many nubbins, two bushels of good sweet potatoes, half as many Irish potatoes as he had planted, two bushels of squash, and no beets, turnips, carrots, or cabbages. 16

In Southeastern Kansas it had not rained enough in the spring to bring up the corn and in September the settlers saw that their crops.


had entirely failed except for a scanty return of potatoes and sorghum cane. Yet, even in September, some settlers hoped to get along without assistance. Real suffering came later. A new affliction, blackleg, decimated many of the remaining herds of cattle. The stored-up cheese spoiled and everything else went wrong:

... there are too many things in this country to absorb one's time and thoughts. There are a great many poor & sick around you—and every thing is awkward and unhandy. When provisions are getting low with you, you can step to the store and get a bbl. of flour at a time—we get 10 to 12 lbs. just what we can pay for—it takes quite a part of one day to search up the team and take a bushel of corn to mill and a part of another to get it again, and so on too tedious to mention. ...

But the pioneer woman cautioned her relatives back East not to feel sorry for her family: they had corn, bread, meat, and milk, she said. However, some neighbors were in real distress:

That ragged coat and those ragged pants one woman said to me yesterday is all that William (meaning her husband) has got for the winter—and this dress a slit-tied out old calico my only outside garment and not corn enough for bread no potatoes nor any other eatable except meat which they were to have enough for themselves and a little to spare—and not fodder enough for their stock and her husband not a sock for winter.

Times got harder as the year progressed. In November a resident of Kansas wrote to an Eastern newspaper:

This is a wild, madman, woman-destroying country; words are too weak to tell the whole truth. Married ladies have to keep a loaded revolver constantly by their side to protect themselves from insult and violation... We live in poor houses; are deprived of all conveniences; to say nothing of the necessities of life; our society, only our own families;

18 Ibid., 360-61.
19 Ibid., 361.
our schools are nowhere, our churches ditto, our food the roughest kind; our clothing coarse, and last, but not least, our lives are in danger every moment; . . .

During the early autumn months the East turned to reading more pleasant and novel stories than those about Kansas, which had occupied the columns of newspapers for more than six years as a controversial issue. In August a good crop was predicted for Iowa. But the cry of Kansas continued so persistent and so loud that the East gave ear and sent help. Said one Kansas citizen:

... it was only the timely help of friends and the eastern public generally which served to tide us over this hard season. At Atchison the State Aid Society had headquarters, with Samuel C. Pomeroy as chairman. There was no railroad then, and Atchison was distant more than eighty miles from our settlement, but those owning oxen, even though their animals were poor in flesh, used them for hauling supplies. The principal bread in most of the families was made from corn meal, while dried buffalo meat constituted almost the sole source of the meat supply.

Another Kansan wrote of the Kansas situation:

The winter of 1860-'61 was a cold, disagreeable one, weather changeable, considerable snow, the roads at times in a horrible condition, feed for teams scarce, and those who came to Atchison with teams often suffered for feed for hours. Those teams had to be provided with feed. The people who came and expected aid had to be furnished the necessary food and sleeping-place while waiting for the expected supplies. General Pomeroy furnished two large rooms for sleeping-places for the waiting people and kept them warm and comfortable. Often for days no aid came, and then in a rush would come large quantities of flour, meal, beans, a little salt meat, and considerable, though cast-off clothing. At times a whole car-load of aid, and sometimes two, would come in at once. It took time to unload, assort and arrange the goods ready to hand over to the waiting crowd. It was a

20 *New York Daily Tribune*, November 15, 1860.
sad sight to see some of the different phases of humanity at such times. Some were patient, and content to await their turn to be helped; others were greedy and importunate and wanted all in sight, showing a swinish nature that was not willing to divide the shipment with those more needy than themselves. They would grumble, find fault and often exhaust the lexicon of profanity because they did not get all the provisions in sight.

In the spring of 1861 seed-wheat, seed-corn, buckwheat, and all kinds of garden seeds were sent to Kansas—plenty for all who needed and could use them. The railroads made no charge for transportation. Everything east of the Missouri river came to Winthrop, just across the river from Atchison, ... When the Missouri river was not frozen over the goods were ferried over; when closed by ice, the goods had to be hauled to the warehouse provided by General Pomeroy on the west bank of the river.23

Into Southeastern Kansas relief for drought sufferers went, but December was reported "very favorable for stock," and until late January cattle were getting half of their living on the prairie.24 The free range was said to "fatten a dry cow more than if stall fed."25 Samuel James Reader made observations on wintering stock on the Eastern Kansas range:

The grass on the high ground grows about 1 ft in height and in low swamps nearly as high as six feet! This latter is very useful in keeping such stock as run out and take care of themselves during the Winter because we never have snow heavy enough to completely bury it. I have no doubt it sounds strange to hear of horses and cattle "wintering" themselves but such is the fact. Last winter [1860] was hard on them on account of the shortness of the grass. One day I saw several Indian ponies scraping the snow away with their fore feet in order to get the grass underneath.26

23George W. Glick, "The Drought of 1860," Collections, IX, 483.
26"The Letters of Samuel James Reader," Kansas Historical Quarterly, IV (1940), 45.
In March, 1861, John Ingalls wrote from Atchison: "Times are harder than ever, and it is all I can do to keep my personal expenses from stranding me. Everything is merged in the one effort to 'get along.' . . ."\(^27\) In fact, money was exceedingly scarce until after the war was over, and there were few who stayed in Kansas without feeling the pinch. A Deep Creek subsister said:

During the war we did not see much money, and what we had did not go far in providing for a growing family. I remember selling a horse to Mr. Campbell of College Hill, who, not having the cash, gave me an order for $75 at Higginbotham’s store. I rose the horse over and delivered him, then went to the store and traded out the entire sum in sheeting, gingham, hickory shirting, etc., and walked home to Deep Creek with the bill of goods tied up in a handkerchief.\(^28\)

In January, 1863, this letter went East from Southern Kansas:

I enclose $3.00 in this. Will send more after hearing from you. Have no more Eastern money or would send more now. What are custom house demand (U. S. Treasury) worth with you? Have some of them. They only have heretofore offered 10 per cent for them here.\(^29\)

The total cash expenditure of a newly married couple from the fall of 1865 to the next autumn was sixteen dollars.\(^30\)

Despite the distress in 1860, the overland pony express for carrying mail and other dispatches began in April weekly and later semiweekly runs from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, using the old California Road. The trip was accomplished in eight

\(^{27}\)Some Ingalls Letters," loc. cit., 121.


\(^{29}\)Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 375.

\(^{30}\)Rosella S. Honey, "Early Days of Elm Creek Settlement," Collections, XVI, 592.
days. But the completion of the Pacific telegraph spelled the end of the pony express late in 1861.31

At the end of April, 1860, the first "iron horse" to run in Kansas champed his bit at Elwood, just opposite from St. Joe, and started up the rail line to Marysville, a run of a hundred miles. This locomotive, "Albany," was brought across the river on a ferry boat on the twenty-eighth.32

In all probability prospecting for oil was going on during the year around Iola. This was inspired by stories of oil and gas springs that early settlers got from the Indians, who told how they placed blankets on the surface of a spring showing oil and in a couple of hours squeezed the oil from the blankets into containers.33

January 29, 1861, brought Kansas into the Union. Charles Robinson was elected governor and "Honest Abe" Lincoln was President of another Free State. Seven of the Southern states had already seceded, and the Confederate Congress was in session in Montgomery in March.34

In April President Lincoln made his first call for 75,000 soldiers to quell the rebellion.35 A week later, Samuel James Reader wrote from near Indianola to his half brother that three companies had been raised at Topeka and that the governor was offering one


33Ibid., 135.

34New York Daily Tribune, March 4, 1861.

35Ibid., April 15, 1861.
thousand men as volunteers. Kansas furnished more troops according to her population than any other State in the Union.

Benefactions continued to pour into drought-stricken Kansas, but in early spring there was still much suffering and the New York Daily Tribune made a "Personal Appeal to Each One of the 300,000 Subscribers" to relieve the destitution apparent in Kansas and to provide seed wheat for the new crop in both Northern and Southern Kansas.

Wrote one pioneer woman, "... every dweller in Kansas owes a lasting debt of gratitude to 'the East' for what she has done for the suffering here." Then arose before the correspondent's vision the picture of hungry little children, grief-worn parents, barefoot and half-clad teamsters toiling beside their half-starved teams through the snow for food sent from New England and the Ohio Valley. The drought, the famine, the suffering, and removals of friends to the East, made Kansas in the spring of 1861 "very lonesome." It was reported that "No one felt in good spirits on account of the hard times—people's dispositions having soured by suffering and misfortunes."

Some of the women were tearfully grateful for clothes sent in from the East:

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37 Spear, "Early Settlement of Dragoon Creek, Wabaunsee County," loc. cit., 356.

38 New York Daily Tribune, January 5, 1861.

39 Ibid., February 16, 1861.

40 Ibid., February 27, March 27, 1861.

41 Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 270.
... the things were so apropos to our wants—The blankets as we shiveringly nestle beneath are a nightly benediction— and the boots and shoes not less so—My feet were cramped into a pair that I wore in the summer which though large enough then were quite too small with woolen stockings and the soreness that has been occasioned by getting chilled—

The stockings too—just the thing—. . . The waist and pants couldn't be bettered. . . The smaller of the two caps just fits both boys—The little boots are nicely fitted—. . . Mary hoped I could find some use for the dress she sent. I found so much use for the skirt of it as to wear it to a wedding at Mr. Chestnut's Christmas Eve—also your nice undersleeves hood and skeleton—. . . Frank went to the wedding in his new suit and John had the benefit of his new cap, gloves cravat handkerchief (Fathers) boots socks & a pair of the pants for the occasion. 42

As spring came in Kansas there was plenty of work in the garden and round the house for the frontier woman. Among other things, hard and soft soaps had to be made for the coming year. 43 The big kettle in the backyard reminded the housewife that she must use up her hog fat and winter meat drippings before they became too rancid. 44

The granddaughter of a pioneer of Wabaunsee County told of her grandmother's use of the old iron kettle, brought from Pavilion, New York, in 1854:

In all these years grandmother never got to use the big sap kettle for making maple sugar, which was a real disappointment. Instead, she saved some of the best wood ashes in a barrel and soaked them several days, making her own lye. She saved all the fat and drippings from the meat. Then they built a fire under the sap kettle out under the big trees east of the house. She put the lye and fat in the kettle and boiled down the soft soap—a barrel full of it at a time. . . Then at butchering time the big kettle was brought out under the trees, and all the frying out of the fat was done there. They

42 Ibid., 363.


44 Charles Sumner Gleed, "Eugene Fitch Ware," Collections, XIII, 42.
used beef or preferably mutton tallow for making their candles... Nothing was wasted.45

When cotton was on the list of Kansas crops, it had to be picked in the fall and carried on horseback to a hand gin some miles away. There the rider, girl or man, ginned the cotton before bringing it home for "mother to card and spin on an old-time spinning wheel." The girls in the Kansas families helped to make up the summer clothing. During the fall, wool, even from a single lamb, was carefully cleaned and knit up into stockings.46 Another settler, who had kept a small flock of sheep on shares, had some forty pounds of wool for his wife to work up. Cloth purchasable at the store was so "shoddyish" that a woman was glad to tread her own wheel and run the loom before doing her sewing. Sometimes wool was carded away from home.47 In the 60's a merchant in Wilmington, Wabaunsee County, bought a caravan load of wool, which had been brought in from the distant Southwest, and made a large profit selling it to near-by settlers.48

During her spring or early summer leisure, the mother of a pioneer family braided a straw hat for the youngest child—to keep the freckles off of the face of one member of the family.49 A frontiersman told how straw hats were made at home:

49 "Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 368.
... before the straw got too ripe, we cut a few bundles at full straw length; then mother would take the straw and weave it into a strand, one half or three quarters inch wide. Then the strand would be sewed and made up into the proper shape for a hat with a good wide brim for a sunshade. They were not handsome looking hats, but a straw hat thus made by mother would outwear the machine made hat of today.  

All this was routine. A mother might be awake two or three times an hour or all during the night with a sick child, but this did not lessen her work the next day:

John and I are doing alone (except haying) and we cannot get time to write much—I generally milk 11 cows in the morning and 10 at night that is about three good hours work in a day—then it takes 4 hours more to work the cheese off and the rest of the time I have to do the family work. How many letters a month could you mail and do all the work including sewing for a family of five, and do 7 hours hard work in a day extra?

On the frontier a woman's work was never done. And even if she had time for it, she had few means of beautification. To see if her hair was parted straight, she had to look upon the smooth surface of water in the kitchen pail. Said one woman of German descent who had come from Wisconsin to Kansas on her honeymoon in 1857: "We all had to do that." Another German-descended and frontier-reared woman related:

As I was the oldest child in our family, I had to do all kinds of hard work. Many days I have plowed, and we did not have riding plows of any kind in that time. As soon as I was large enough I bound wheat as my father would cut it with a cradle, and I could bind just as fast as any man. In the winter, and all my other spare time, I would sew. Everything was made by hand; sewing machines were very uncommon in those days.

At fifteen a girl taught her first term of school near Alma, some

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52 Ibid., 157.
ten miles from home. Her pupils were from three and one-half years
to older than herself. But during the week she rode to and from
school on her black pony, bought from some Indians in exchange for
poor bacon, an item of food which the red men like a great deal.53

During the summer and in the early fall, canning, drying, and
preserving went on, and the modern preserver, using the culinary
facilities of 1862, would do well to turn in such a report as the
following:

There has been an unusual amount of wild fruit in the
woods here this season—we had gooseberries two months. I
canned about 14 qut after they were picked over beside having
them constantly while they lasted, then plums came on and
lasted till the frost came, then there were summer and frost
grapes all through the woods in every direction, in some
places there were a great many blackberries and also mul-
berries... there are in places, too, "heaps" of paw-
paws, a large green sickish fruit that some people are very
fond of, and persimmons that before they have been ripened
by several severe frosts will pucker ones mouth up so that
they can not find their tongue for a week after—But which when
fairly frost ripened are very nice. Some people sprinkle
sugar on them and dry them and call them raisins—but they
sint. I dried a flour sack two thirds full of plums after
they were stewed and the pits taken out—have besides now
about 4 gallons of plum sauce—Peaches were generally a fail-
ure. We are quite favored however—we had all we wanted to
use in every way during the season and sold and gave away
about ten bushels. I pickled two thirds of a bushel and made
seven or eight gallons of sauce for winter and dried perhaps
7 lbs. I dried only such as fell off faster than I could
otherwise dispose of them. We had tomatoes a plenty late
but very few early ones. I made about a bushel into catsup—
and a bushel more into a kind of sauce but did not get it very
nice—Molasses we failed on this year the cane getting injured
by frost or rather by remaining too long unworked after the
frost—Our other crops are all light vegetables. We have none
of any such except potatoes (I forgot pumpkins of which I have
dried 15 and we are eating them in pies every meal) and they
[potatoes] are turning out poorer than we hoped... 54

53 Wheeler, "Tales of Pioneer Times."
54 Letters of John and Sarah Everett," loc. cit., 376.
Man's farm work was in full swing by March. With a number of cows to care for until the grass turned green, with spring provisions to be laid in, machinery to be repaired, spring plowing, planting, and cultivation to follow through, the Kansas farmer had plenty of work from morning till evening. If a neighbor was ill or in need, there was even more work to do. Added to this was the fact that desperadoes and ruffians were abroad, so it is obvious that the Kansas pioneer had little time for loafing. Many frontier farmers were in the same case as the young man on Deep Creek who knew nothing of farming, but he was consoled by his neighbor's saying that even if he had been a farmer, he would have had it all to learn over again in Kansas.

Farmers who knew better didn't try to burn a fire guard around their stacks, to protect them against the oncoming prairie fire, only to lose control and set fire to the stacks themselves. City-bred farmers soon learned that a plowed fireguard was more successful near stacks and buildings. Prairie fires were terrible in those early days, when grass grew shoulder high on the fertile bottom lands and there were few roads and plowed plots to offset a conflagration. Buffalo and other game and valuable domestic stock were lost by fire.

March of 1861 was dry, but in April rains set in and revived the winter wheat. Spring planting looked promising, but in spite of this Sarah Everett reported that they were behind one year's interest on a

56 Ibid., 394.
note held by an Eastern money lender.57

On September 3, Samuel Reader wrote: "Our corn crop will be heavy; vegetables are doing well. Hay will be plenty and cheap." After reporting that corn was 10 cents, pork 2½ cents, beef 3 cents, this correspondent rounded out his details with "No news in Kansas." But with things so dull on the western frontier, settlers evidenced interest in the war and in progress elsewhere. Reader wrote his half-brother Frank, who had been at the battle of Bull Run, to "please detail to us all the minutiae or better still send a communication to the newspapers. . . ."59

Sarah Everett was a bit pessimistic about national affairs, but hoped that finally the "dull heads at Washington" would awake and do something before it was too late. As ever, the pioneers were eager for encouraging letters:

If you who have so many pleasant surroundings find it pleasant to hear from us, much more you must remember will it be to us, to hear from you—to us, who are struggling on with debts, poverty and all the inconveniences of a pioneer life—over­burdened with strange work & surrounded with uncongenial associ­ations. Your letters filled with kind remembrances are as great beams of sunlight among shady places in our pathway.60

Such a letter expressed the yearning of a sacrificing people for love and appreciation, and revealed a desire to tame the frontier until it should be like the Ohio Valley and New England. No wonder Kansas became the stronghold of Puritanism in the latter half of the nineteenth

59Ibid., 153.
60Ibid.
In Kansas 1861 was a better year than was 1860. Despite restrictions on immigration and purchases in cash, one writer said that the great West was still pouring out an "enormous wealth of Grain, Flour, Cattle, Beef," though sold at low prices. By the end of 1861 Kansas was reported "full of refugees, white and black, from Missouri." Family after family of the former had fled into Kansas, "to escape the din and misery of war."

By the spring of 1862 the Civil War had nearly closed traffic between the interior of Kansas and the trading centers in Missouri. On the frontier coin money had practically gone out of circulation and paper money was hard to get and variable in value. Two German farmers in Wabaunsee County who had country-cured pork and an accumulation of eggs needed money and sought to dispose of their produce. The hogs from which the pork was cured were young well-fatted 200-pounders. The hams, shoulders, and sides were neatly trimmed, brine cured, and well smoked with hickory wood smudge. Knowing that there was no market in Wabaunsee and fearing to go to Missouri on account of the number of secessionists and bushwhackers in Johnson County, who might hold them for a part of their loads, the owners of the produce set out for the capital. At Topeka they sold nothing, as country produce was easy to get; in Lawrence they found the stores oversupplied; so on to Leavenworth they took their ox-drawn loads. En route they sold a few hams at 5 and 5½ cents a pound and eggs at 6 cents a dozen—cash.

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At Leavenworth the regular markets were crammed with pork, but with a German merchant who had no money and who had been driven from Missouri and had not yet secured his country produce, the travelers exchanged their produce for groceries at wholesale prices. They trekked home, in effect having gone two hundred miles to dispose of their country hams.\textsuperscript{63}

In the spring, floods brought dangers. In going to the mill at Cottonwood Falls, a man was nearly drowned in the rushing waters at the ford. Being unfamiliar with the crossing, and knowing that there had been no rain there, he was not aware that the river was up and swift. So he drove in.

The oxen were soon swimming and the wagon load of wheat floating downstream with them. It became fast on a tree and the oxen paddled helplessly. The driver could not swim, but in the excitement of the situation he waded out on the wagon tongue between the oxen and succeeded in pulling the pin that connected the yoke with the wagon. The wagon tongue immediately went down under his weight, and he went into the rushing water with it. In falling, however, he caught the ox yoke and held on. The oxen reached the bank in safety, and he with them, but the ox yoke was completely turned over, showing that the oxen had also made a complete revolution. The wagon was lashed to the tree with ropes \([\text{until morning when it was rescued}]\).\textsuperscript{64}

Another pioneer told of winter hazards in plains travel:

\begin{quote}
My father once went to Kansas City with a load of wheat to mill, in the dead of winter. He was three weeks in making the return trip with his load of flour. A blizzard came on and snow covered the whole landscape. It was two feet deep on the level and from five to fifteen feet deep in the ravines where it had drifted with the wind. All roads were blotted out. The whole earth was a glistening sea of white snow. The thermometer fell to ten degrees below zero. But he slowly
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[64] \textit{Ibid.}, 489-90.
\end{footnotes}
plodded on. The wagon often stuck in the snow banks and he was compelled to shovel it out. The oxen became weary and would not pull the load. But the strategy of the plainsmen always brought them through. Their [the oxen's] feed was cut off till they were hungry. Ear corn was then taken to the top of the hill and exposed to the view of the hungry animals. They would come lunging up, dragging their heavy load with ease. Though believed to be lost, he finally reached home, feet and hands frozen, but glad to be alive.65

In 1862 the stage route ran from Junction City to Fort Larned, making a through route from Leavenworth to Larned—three hundred miles. The conveyance was a buckboard drawn by a pair of mules. At that time Abilene was "one house, a small store, about 12 x 12, and a blacksmith shop, used occasionally." Salina had

. . . three dwelling-houses, one a hotel with one sleeping-room next to the rafters, one store, and a blacksmith shop. At the time there wasn't anything west of Salina in the way of settlements. At Smoky Hill crossing, near where Ellsworth is now there was a hunting ranch. Two young men lived there by killing buffalo for their pelts and tallow, and by killing wolves for their pelts. From there to Fort Larned there was not a white man.66

Late in 1862 a soldier passing through the town designated Emporia as "a forlorn hamlet," in which the killing of a stray buffalo in the suburbs was of more consequence than the coming of the soldiers from Fort Riley.67 Topeka was small. It had no pavement and not a foot of sidewalk. A pontoon bridge led across the river and beyond. "No road, no guide, no houses, nothing but prairie."68

65Doran, "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," loc. cit., 489.
At Fort Scott the drill ground south of town was the popular gathering place:

... the assembling of several thousand soldiers at a small town is an event for the whole community. I am satisfied that the farmers for miles around Fort Scott neglected their hauling and other farm work just to come to town and watch those soldiers drill. It was getting late in the season and they ought to have been at home getting ready for winter, but they put it off to see the fun. They came in wagons and buggies, on horseback and on foot, and brought their wives and children along. This drill ground was their favorite rendezvous, and any good day there were scores of them there from early till late. When our company went out and had gone through the saber practice there were our friends and their kindred to enjoy it and applaud it.69

The drivers of the stage across Kansas had many difficulties with which to contend:

Some of them were the ferry, about a mile and a half below Weston, an uncertain landing, as the water in the river rose and fell, a profane captain that could swear a blue streak, awkward drivers, and, when the ice was freezing, many times having to break ice four inches thick, and, near shore, six inches. One trip I will never forget. It was in the winter of 1864 or 1865. The ice was frozen too hard for the boat near shore, but was quite thin in the middle of the river. We laid down boards in the thinnest places for the passengers to walk on, for safety. We had a large hand sled we hauled the mail, express and baggage on. One day we had some mail and express matter on the sled; two men were pulling on a rope about twenty feet long, and I was pushing behind with a long stick. The ice gave way with the sled, breaking as far back as where I was. I and the sled went into the river. I struck bottom in about four or four and one-half feet of water. There was considerable current; consequently mail and express goods commenced floating down stream. I threw out money box, goods, and mail, as fast as possible, on the ice, the men grabbing them as they came out. After all was out, I jumped into a stage and drove for Leavenworth as fast as possible, about five and one-half miles. On arriving there, my clothes were frozen so still I had to be helped out of the stage and into the Planters House and stage office.70

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During the Civil War the average two-room cabin in Kansas had a stone fireplace and chimney, sometimes laid in mortar made of home-burned lime and wood ashes, at one end. The cabin, chinked with rock or mud, was more often than not of rude logs, but occasionally it had native walnut weatherboarding and was shingled, not with the usual clapboards but with walnut shingles sawed from the near-by timber at a local sawmill. Albert Greene said that after a house was finished and ready for occupancy in Osage County, "my father... gave a house-warming... there was no dancing and no little brown jug with contents as fine as silk. The circuit rider was invited, and the neighbors were called in, and there was a sermon and a good meal for everybody and much good-fellowship." The log stable and smoke house were usually erected soon after the cabin had been finished and were covered sometimes with clapboards split with a cleaving instrument called a frow and dressed down with a drawing knife, sometimes with hay.

However, little building went on during the war, since few men were at home to do the work and, when there was time for it, food production was more important. Farm work was largely abandoned, and men and women devoted much of their time in the rural parts to practice with firearms. Front gates were sometimes used as targets, and passers-by sometimes were invited to note the accuracy of the settlers as a kind of forewarning. At night families moulded bullets and cut patching and replenished the supply of ammunition at portholes of the houses and sheds.

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71 Doran, "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," loc. cit., 487.
72 Albert R. Greene, "In Remembrance," Collections, XI, 484.
73 Ibid., "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," loc. cit., 487.
74 Ibid., 487-88.
A Wabaunsee County pioneer had a heavy iron ladle-shaped cup with a lip made for the purpose of melting the lead. It was so shaped that it could be lowered into a bed of coals in the kitchen stove. Pieces of lead were put in the cup and when melted poured into iron bullet molds.75

The war was affecting citizens of Kansas in many ways. In September, 1861, Samuel Reader reported that the daguerreotypist in his vicinity was out of materials and could make no pictures. (Reader himself sketched, but of course not every family had an artist.) Eight months later he reported that many farms round Indianola were not being cultivated for want of working men.76 No dyes were available except those made in the Kansas home or sent from the East; nevertheless, the spinning wheel was busy making the necessary clothing,77 while war on the frontier was most vengeful—a continuation of the old border struggle of ambush and assassination.78

Tragedies occurred in spite of the caution of settlers.

In 1862 the "Anderson boys," a noted Missouri Guerrilla band, stole some horses belonging to A. I. Baker, a settler who ran a store on Rock creek only a few miles away. Baker pursued the thieves and recaptured the horses, but in doing so he had to kill the Anderson boys' father in self-defense. A few days later they came to Baker's store under the pretense of purchasing supplies. They sent him into the cellar to get something. As he was coming out they shot him, but his trusty rifle got one of them before he died; they also shot his brother-in-law and then burned the store over their victims.79

75 Wheeler, "Tales of Pioneer Times."
77 Wheeler, "Tales of Pioneer Times."
78 McCarter, A Gall of Men, 407.
79 Ibid., 433.
During the war pioneer women had to be resourceful to protect their homes as well as to carry on its activities while the "man of the house" was away. A Lecompton woman displayed this pioneer spirit:

One day, while her husband was away and she was alone at the store, a band of border ruffians arrived and demanded that she prepare dinner for them. "We shall be back in an hour," they said, with the threat that if dinner were not ready they would tear the house down around her ears. "It will be ready," she calmly replied, and set to work preparing it. When they returned dinner was already on the table, but before sitting down they noticed horsemen coming, and fearing them to be free state men, which they were, the ruffians escaped.

When the free state men arrived they found the dinner ready, and they also found that in the cellar directly under the table there was a keg of powder from which there was a trail of powder leading to the back yard. Mrs. Hoad had not only prepared a dinner, but it was to have been their last.

Diamond Springs was not without its tragedies during the Civil War. One deserves mention.

Dick Yeager was one of Quantrill's officers at the Lawrence raid and massacre of August 21, 1863; but in May of that same year... as soon as the grass was good, this noted border desperado and trusted lieutenant of the guerrilla Quantrill led a gang of his kind from their lair in western Missouri and went as far in their raid along the Santa Fe trail as Diamond Springs. Before they returned they committed a number of cowardly acts of murder, robbery, horse theft and burning.

A few months later Council Grove was saved the fate that had befallen Lawrence. Southern sympathizers living there gave Yeager a goodly supply of stimulants and a local doctor gave relief from a racking toothache.

During the summer of 1863 even beardless Kansas boys shouldered guns and marched to war under the Stars and Stripes. Kansas sent

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81 Morehouse, "Diamond Springs, 'The Diamond of the Plain,'" loc. cit., 799-800.
over twenty thousand soldiers to the field of the Civil War out of but little more than one hundred thousand population. When August came, Lawrence was doomed. Plans had been made in advance; this thriving town was to be wiped out. Objectionable houses of such antislavery men as Colonel Eldridge, Reverend Fisher, and Colonel Lane had been marked for special attention. The Lawrence raid was in revenge for the Lane raid on Osceola and for the collapse of the military prison at Kansas City, which had killed women who were Southern sympathizers. The whole plan sprang from the wicked brain of Quantrell and his close accomplices who knew that Lawrence was unfortified and that a guerrilla attack would be sure, quick, and cheap in the cost of life to the guerrillas.

Story tells us that Quantrell and his men drew their Dutch courage from a whisky flask.

In the shadows of the same August night, in the Missouri woods, a guerrilla band of three hundred men was gathered. The night was hot, and in the woodland, intensely dark, little fire smudges here and there about the camp drove off the mosquitoes, and dimly revealed the faces and forms of men whom darkness flattered more than daylight did. Heavy, rough, reckless men they were, and as they sprawled about in the shadows or crouched in the faint gloom, there was about them a suggestion of the jungle beast, mingled with fatal human

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82 "Kansas Quarter-Centennial," Transactions, III (1886), 374.
85 Fisher, The Gun and the Gospel, 188.
cunning. Their dress was of the frontier type, with heavy boots outside of coarse pantaloons; their hats flung sloppily at their heads, were of soft felt, with brims flared up defiantly in front, or rolling above the ear. They were decked with quill or plume, or squirrel's tail, or maybe some bit of tawdry jewelry, or whisky or tobacco label.

But the badge of this order was the overshirt which each man wore. This garment was made of durable stuff, cut low in front, with a slit on the bosom, finished with a rosette or bit of ruffling. The slit with the four pockets and sometimes the tail was faced with a bright fabric. These shirts varied in color from brightest red to dun and gray, ... Their firearms were light but dangerous, mostly the Colt's Navy revolver, and each man of the three hundred wore two of them at least while many had four or even six.

These were the men who marched upon Lawrence on August 21, 1863, and left it smouldering ruins.

The line of march was up out of Missouri into Kansas—half of the three hundred were Quantrell's men, tried and trusted; the others were picked Texas Rangers of the most desperate type. They advanced under the Union flag until they neared the town, when they ran up their black flag, emblazoned with their leader's name in red.

In the story of "Jane Orchard, Heroine," Harry O'Connor tried to beat the Missourians to Lawrence to save his sweetheart Jane, who in turn rescued him, hid him in a cornfield and took him in a boat down the Kaw River, to safety.

Quantrell's visit to Lawrence was the subject of a spirited folk ballad:

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87 McCarter, A Hall of Men, 413-14.
Come all you bold robbers and open your ears,
Of Quantrell the lion-heart you quickly will hear;
With his band of bold raiders in double-quick time
He came to burn Lawrence just over the line.

... They came to burn Lawrence, they came not to stay,
They rode in one morning at breaking of day,
Their guns were a-waving, their horses a-foam,
And Quantrell a-riding his famous big roan.

They came to burn Lawrence, they came not to stay.
Jim Lane he was up at the break of the day;
He saw them a-coming and got in a fright,
Then crawled in a corncrib to get out of sight. 90

Having entered the town on that hot August day from the southeast,
they rode in regular order until they reached the center of the resi­
dent portion. They broke into squadrons and, yelling like demons,
rode furiously into every section, firing houses and dealing death.
Men were called from their beds and murdered at their hearths before
the eyes of their wives and children. Barbarity reigned as pierced
bodies were tossed into flaming homesteads. The escape of those men
who survived to tell the tale was "miraculous."

The Reverend Fisher, who had been marked as one of the victims
of the massacre, had spent a restless night, and he awakened about
five in the morning to the thud of horses' hoofs with a presentiment
of impending evil. He and his boys, ages ten and twelve, started
toward Mount Oread, where the bushes would have screened them from
the view of the intruders. But faintness caused the minister to re­
turn and he secreted himself in the cellar behind a low bank of ex­
cavated dirt and the foundation of the house. Searching for him
with a lamp, three guerrillas overlooked him at what he thought was

90 "Quantrell," in Lomax and Lomax (comps.), Cowboy Songs, 143.
his final moment. The house afire, his wife carried water to ex­
tinguish the flames and to warn the minister what was happening.
Horses galloped by, the invaders shouting and cursing as they carried
forward the destruction. As the kitchen fell in flames upon Fisher,
he escaped to the shelter of a shrub in the yard and hid under a rug
and a dress held by his wife and a woman neighbor. Upon him they
also piled chairs and household furnishings.

By eleven o'clock that morning, when the minister crept from
his hiding place, he was careworn and strained—four times death had
passed near. The house and much of its belongings and supplies were
in ashes. The boys returned safe during the day. The wife and
baby were unhurt.

By evening few houses remained unburned and some of those to
which families returned were found occupied by intruders who had taken
possession while the mothers were away caring for the wounded. By
evening those of the nearly 1200 people who remained alive knew that
180 citizens had been killed, many burned beyond recognition. Eighty
widows and 250 children were left in indescribable grief.

Quantrell also raided the Union regiment encamped near Lawrence
and dispatched many of these boys. His pursuers made it imperative
that he leave Kansas posthaste, but on his return to Missouri his
path cut a wide swath of destruction and murder. General Thomas

91 Interview, Mrs. W. H. Sears, June 17, 1943; Fisher, The
Gun and the Gospel, 195-209.

92 Interview, Mrs. W. H. Sears, June 17, 1943.

Ewing issued Order No. 11, by which the homes of Jackson, Cass, Bates, and Vernon counties of Missouri were evacuated into forts so that Quantrell might be hunted to the death. Six thousand Federal soldiers were on his trail. Quantrell disbanded the guerrillas. He escaped his pursuers until the summer of 1865.\footnote{Harrison Trow, Charles K. Quantrell: A True History of His Warfare on the Missouri and Kansas Border During the Civil War of 1861-1865 (Kansas City, Missouri, 1923), 56-59.}

Two novels, Dagmar Doneghy’s The Border and Carolina Abbot Stanley’s Order No. 11, have treated the Kansas question from the point of view sympathetic to the Southerner.

The Leinsters in The Border were a prosperous and happy family in Missouri when 1850 opened upon the Missouri border, but soon the father was called to the cause of the Confederacy and the atrocities of the Red Legs and of Quantrell’s men began to harass the countryside. In this book, Quantrell is the hero. His raid upon Lawrence has a different coloring than in McCarter’s A Wall of Men. Doneghy said:

That afternoon and night, Quantrell’s band rode fifty miles to Lawrence, Kansas. In the gray twilight of early dawn, the guerrillas swooped down upon the torpid village.

Two days later, the Leinster family learned a little of what had taken place, for two guerrillas, tired, worn out, bespattered, their horses jaded, stopped at the cabin to water their horses and rest a bit. One was wounded in the wrist. Mrs. Leinster bathed the wound carefully, disinfected it with turpentine, and bandaged it.

The men were too tired to give many details. But from their broken phrases, the Leinsters learned that Lawrence had been sacked and burned and every man killed, save those who escaped in almost miraculous ways.
The Union troops were hot upon Quantrell's trail. He was throwing off the pursuit by breaking his men up into bands of twos or threes.95

Order No. 11, set in Western Missouri, showed the desecration of homes of the border counties east of the line during the years 1855 and 1858. The Kansas Red Legs retaliated against the Border Ruffians with raids into Clay, Jackson, and Cass counties. Dr. Abiel Cheever, a teacher in Lawrence, discussed with Colonel Trevilian, a Missouri plantation owner, the topics of the day such as John Brown, the so-called farming implements—muskets, sharpshooters, revolvers, carbines, and ammunition coming into Kansas from New England.96 The utter degradation visited by Army Order No. 11 upon the people of Western Missouri was a worse ordeal of destruction than that experienced by the border settlers west of the line; moreover, the peoples of Western Missouri seemed less fitted to bear these horrors and revived less readily than did the sturdy Kansans.

Stephen Holmes, Jr., wrote The Guerrillas of the Osage, a story set in the Osage hills. In it, a band of ruffians names "McCulloh's Pets," composed of desperadoes of all stamps from the Mississippi steamboat gambler to the lawless mountain adventurer, had a rendezvous in an abandoned mine, from which they plagued the loyal Unionists of Kansas and Missouri.

The headquarters, or place of rendezvous of this band, was in an abandoned mine, the entrance to which was by means

95Dagmar Doneghy, The Border; A Missouri Saga (New York, 1931), 208.

of a shaft which had been closed years before by means of a land-slide. Indeed, the pit had been so long out of use, that but very few people in the neighborhood knew of its existence. The opening was in the side of a hill, difficult of ascent, and covered with a dense growth of brushwood, ... these emissaries of Jeff. Davis would rush upon their prey, first singled out by some of their number, who, in one disguise or another, were continually scouring the country, and placing a mark upon the threshold of every loyal citizen.  

Lawrence merchants, along with other citizens, were having difficulties, even before the war. In 1858, when there were few grocery stores of the retail variety in the West, groceries usually being handled in general stores with dry goods, hardware, shoes, and other things, Peter D. Ridenour and Harlow W. Baker established a retail and wholesale grocery in Lawrence. Besides retailing groceries in Lawrence itself, they did a wholesale business with farmers who came in from fifty to two hundred miles to get their year's supplies, and with buffalo hunters and trappers who came off the plains with wagon loads of buffalo hides, tallow, and furs to trade. But the war complicated this business with a lack of money and transportation. There was also a fear of raids.

At the time of the draft riot in New York, on the Fourth of July, 1863, Ridenour happened to be in New York buying goods, and was there during all the days of that riot. At that time the battle of Gettysburg had been fought, and Vicksburg was surrendered to the Union army; there was a large decline in the price of gold, as was always the case when the Federal troops won a victory. Sugar, coffee, tea—in fact, all imported goods—were sold in New York for gold. The gold had to be bought with greenbacks, which fluctuated all the way from thirty-five to sixty cents on the dollar. Merchants in the West had to take greenbacks for their goods, so it was necessary for a buyer to watch the gold market as closely as he did the market price for goods.

This decline in gold was an inducement to Ridenour to

97Stephen Holmes, Jr., The Guerrillas of the Osage; or, the Price of Loyalty on the Border (New York, 1864), 14.
buy more goods than he contemplated, because he believed gold would go up again. After he had purchased to the extent of the funds he had, he purchased several thousand dollars' worth of tea and coffee on time, for which he gave notes payable in greenbacks. The goods were shipped, and when all had arrived at Lawrence it made the largest stock the firm had ever had at one time. This entire stock was destroyed by the fire set by the Quantrill band on August 21, 1863. A team hauling from Leavenworth, which brought the last load of this big lot of tea, got into Lawrence and unloaded the tea at the store about dark the evening before the raid.

During the Civil War, peace officers on the frontier were few, and citizens administered their own justice. Mack Cretcher in The Kansan recorded a typical case.

When news of the raid of the horse thieves reached Bison City there were mutterings and much silent preparation. Homesteaders who brought news of the raid, were furious over their losses. All reports agreed. The raiders had pursued their usual tactics by rounding up the stock during the night and heading straight south for the border and the refuge of the Indian Territory. Long before pursuit could be organized they planned to be safely over the state boundary into the no-man's-land of the Indian Territory with their stolen property, free from arrest, secure and unmolested.

"Why wait for the law?" asked one of the indignant settlers. "They've all of my horses, but if some one will furnish me a mount I'll promise to do my share toward enacting real justice. I'm strong for law and order—but I want my horses." 99

The thieves were caught and hanged but the organizer of the gang, Curly Clawson, escaped and in revenge tried to burn Bison City by starting a prairie fire. The town was saved by backfiring.

In October, 1864, came the great scare occasioned by the


100 Ibid., passim.
threatened raid of Confederate General "Pap" Price into Kansas. Most of the able-bodied young men were already in service, but older men and young boys answered the frantic call for volunteers. At the eastern border, unarmed and without military training, they waited in vain for the Rebel army, which was turned back before it reached the raw recruits.101

A valuable recollection by Henry Trinkle, recorded the invasion of the Kansas border on October 24. Trinkle was stopping on Middle Creek, east of where La Cygne now is,

and rode out towards West Point and saw the rebel army of nearly 40,000 men scattered over all the country to the east. The rebels were driving before them all the cattle they found, and those that were exhausted by the drive were taken up and slaughtered by the rear. Some of the cattle got beyond their reach, and Harvey McDonald gathered up forty fat steers which he sold in Osawatomie for $1,600. Night overtook the rebels at Trading Post, only a portion getting across the river. But there was little rest all night for either side. John Fickes, a brother of Morgan, owned the Trading Post mills at that time, and stayed in them while the rebels ran every machine to its fullest capacity. Wagons were loaded as rapidly as possible and sent on to the advance. Three hundred beeves were slaughtered at the Post. Just at daybreak Pleasanton made so sudden an onslaught on the rebel camp that they fled precipitately, and every little campfire had beefsteaks on spits, showing that many of the rebels left with empty stomachs. They also abandoned a great deal of clothing. Carcasses of beeves were strewn everywhere and people had to stay away for weeks for fear of pestilence.102

The Texas troops under Price marched in close ranks in military order toward Missouri while the Missourians were scattered as they pillaged and murdered. It was a mad chase for the rebels to get

out of Kansas alive. Nearly their whole army was assembled at Mine
reek, which ran almost straight east with its north bank precipi-
tate for a mile or more, making it impossible for the Southerners
to pass except at a narrow ford in the center of the army. Half of
Price's army got across the creek; the rest were forced over the
bluff and into the water, where they were slaughtered and "mowed
down in windrows."

There were gathered from the battlefield three big
wagon loads of guns of all kinds, from old flintlocks to shot-
guns and rifles and revolvers, and three wagon loads of
saddles. In 1868, when the Gulf road was built through
where the battle was fought, the plain was white with bones,
some of which were of slain men. 103

Another pioneer told of the fight on the Kansas City road from
Independence on the Blue River at Byron's crossing. A Union army
of 7,000 regulars and 20,000 Kansas militia, tired and worn out,
tried to hold in check a rebel army of 30,000 on October 22. General
Curtis sent his army to the relief of the Union men. Sunday morning,
October 23, 1864, dawned clear and calm and General Pleasanton came
up with 10,000 Missouri cavalry and attacked Price's army in the
rear. Thus Kansas City was saved. 104

Thomas Peacock in his epic poem has given the story of Price's
retreat:

All summer Price had forced his way,
With his fierce army of the Gray
Toward North and distant setting sun,
While Curtis, Blunt, and Pleasanton

103 Ibid.
104 William T. McClure, "The Fourth Kansas Militia in the Price
Disputed every foot he stepped,
With Kansas men who never slept
So sound but they remembered well
The foes that came so fierce and fell.
Many a man of Kansas soil
Had Shouldered arms the foe to foil;
They swarmed on prairie, hill, and glen,
Men who were fighting for their all,
And the invaders to the wall
They swore to drive—fierce hurl them back—
As swift as cyclones forests rack.
Price fiercely fought to Westport—there
Looked longingly to Kansas, where
He saw afar more spoils and fame,
And thought to win a brighter name.
But this he found a task full sore—
That fame was his, ah! nevermore!105

Other border incursions occurred. The Confederates were charged
with promoting Indian uprisings, the Indians after a decade of tranquility having become restless and uneasy in the 60's over the
white man's occupation. And so, until peace was made at Appomattox, and for another five years, every citizen in Kansas found it necessary to sleep on his arms.106

But life on the Kansas prairies during the early 60's was not always sordid and sorrowful. There was a need for alertness, but
work and play helped to keep the people resilient. There was always a bright side. Most of the men and women were young and hardy; they abounded in stamina and come-back. Moreover, no caste existed: all enjoyed, suffered, and learned together; they worked for a common cause. There was always room for one more around the table or in the cabin for a Sabbath service. One who had goods shared, according


106 Crawford, Kansas in the Sixties, 337.
to the law of the plains, with the other who had nothing.

Those who were fortunate enough to be in Topeka during the winter of 1863-64 found the little city "quite gay" while the Kansas legislature was in session.\textsuperscript{107}

On the frontier the means of obtaining information and an education were not greatly varied, but what did exist was appreciated by the better pioneers. Newspapers sent in from the East were welcome, and the views found the the trends pictured therein were often heartening. A pioneer wife wrote of Henry Ward Beecher's sermons published in the Independent:

\textit{I believe if it were not for reading now and then some things in his sermons that I should tire to death of this life and give up— - - - I perfectly abhor a printed sermon. But sometimes when everything else grows so tiresome and weary and the vexations and cares of life seem like a multitude of thorns piercing me on all sides I get hold of one of his sermons and it always contrives to turn the sharp points and make a pathway through them—\textsuperscript{108}}

The Sabbath was not always honored, but of a Topeka Sunday in 1864 David R. Cobb, a representative to the legislature from Bourbon County, wrote:

\textit{The Sabbath here seems more like civilization—the good old Bell chimes forth its notes of peace, of rest, and love. The people are not a church going people if I was to judge from those I saw out last Sabbath and today— . - . The preaching in this city is of a rather higher order than what we usually get at Marmiton, singing passable perhaps—not so tonight—\textsuperscript{109}}

\textsuperscript{107}Cobb (ed.), "Letters of David R. Cobb, 1858-64," \textit{loc. cit.}, 70.

\textsuperscript{108}"Letters of John and Sarah Everett," \textit{loc. cit.}, 359.

\textsuperscript{109}Cobb (ed.), "Letters of David R. Cobb, 1858-64," \textit{loc. cit.}, 70.
Religious meetings had their place in the well-established communities, but at times they were more hilarious than worshipful. In the spring of 1353 the New York Daily Tribune reported that a Protestant revival was sweeping the East touching Williamsburgh, Philadelphia, New York and Boston.\textsuperscript{110} This wave of religious sentiment did not hit the frontier until the early 60's, when came...

\textldots the day of camp meetings and circuit riders, and many John the Baptists crying in the wilderness, except at that the most of them were Methodists and United Brethren. People were literally driven into the church by a mania of singing and shouting and exhortation.\ldots On a fair day a preacher of average ability could be heard a mile or more. It was said of one of these enthusiasts that when he was in good trim his secret prayers would reach that far—horizontally. Camp meetings during the summer were as much a feature of the year's experience as shucking bees and spelling matches were of the winter season; there were no circuses those days. Everybody took a week off and attended. The crowds that assembled in what seemed to be a thinly settled country were astonishing for numbers; also for other things.\textsuperscript{111}

It is interesting to note that Act I of Sinclair and Lloyd Lewis' \textit{Jayhawker} was set in an outdoor camp meeting during March, 1861, in a Kansas grove.

Despite the hardness of frontier life, novel solutions evolved in many church problems. In 1865, when the women of Council Grove wished to pay a debt by holding their church festival, they found no suitable hall in town.

Seth Hayes [the oldest settler in town] offered his saloon. Some of the women were horrified, but Miss C. L. Strieby \ldots knew that Mr. Hayes would keep his promise and all liquor would be out of sight. The bar was curtained with wagon covers, and decorations were much in evidence. Mr. Hayes, equal to the occasion, took charge of the door and ushered...

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{New York Daily Tribune}, March 11, 15, 18, 1858.

\textsuperscript{111} Greene, "In Remembrance," \textit{loc. cit.}, 485-86.
the guests to a well-filled table instead of the bar. The affair was both a social and financial success.\textsuperscript{112}

Schools were poor compared with those of the East and education was a neglected phase of life until someone assumed the civic responsibility of promoting a school. Under the shadow of an old oak tree on the bank of Elm Creek a mother organised the first Sunday School in Osage County where many a pioneer boy learned the alphabet from the Bible.\textsuperscript{113} During the summer, schools ran for a three-month term, but this was lengthened according to the demands of the community. A winter session was worked in as the settlers were able to afford it. "Our first schoolhouse was a log cabin, three and one-half miles from home," said a boy of the 60's; "the seats were slabs with wooden pegs for legs. The term was three months, . . ."\textsuperscript{114}

Although the community was sparsely settled around Council Grove in 1865, there were two schoolhouses there, each with forty pupils. In August of that year the building of the first graded school was agitated in the Council Grove Press:

See notice of graded school meeting next Friday. Let all attend. If you don't want schools, or anything that induces immigrants to come into the country, vote down the school house. If you are determined that you will injure Council Grove all you can, vote down the school house. If you are anxious to make your presence felt for evil, vote down the school house. If you don't want education, or civilization, unless you can have them for nothing, vote down the school house. If you want to be a savage, try to get the Kaws to vote, every one of them will vote against it—would rather have the money to buy worthless trinkets

\textsuperscript{112}R. M. Armstrong, "Sixty Years in Kansas and Council Grove," Collections, XVI, 553-54.

\textsuperscript{113}Greene, "In Remembrance," \textit{loc. cit.}, 487-88.

\textsuperscript{114}Doran, "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," \textit{loc. cit.}, 497.
For Dragoon Creek settlement, which had been made in 1857, "Miss Eliza Spence taught a private school ... during the summer of 1861, holding sessions in a log cabin."  

In 1864 there were nine families on Elm Creek, Cloud County, and after a few weeks had been spent in getting settled, it was decided that a school should be established for the children. A vacant cabin was offered, and one of the girls in the community became the teacher. An odd collection of school books graced the pupils' desks, as each came from a different community. The schoolhouse was of cottonwood logs smoothed off so that they would not be too full of slivers. The seats had no backs; however, they were no more primitive than the children's seats at home. The windows were holes in the walls. From an immense walnut log, split and polished and set upon pegs, was made the teacher's desk. When the first settler died, no board was found long enough to make the bottom of the casket, and so this desk was used and was supplemented with pieces of packing cases. The first term of school was for three months and the teacher's salary was "the magnificent sum" of $8.00 a month. This salary the people gave; no taxes had been collected yet. Sufficient money was also got together for a short winter term. 

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The beginning of short-term grammar schools in rural sections was as great an accomplishment as the establishment of important secondary institutions in the State. The endowment by the Congress of the United States of the State Agricultural College and its location by act of the Legislature, February 16, 1862, was followed in due time by the opening of the school at Manhattan. On September 12, 1866, the first session of the State University opened at Lawrence with three professors and forty students. Established in 1864, the Normal School building at Emporia was dedicated on January 1, 1867. This stand for higher education during the days of the war was evidence of the pioneers' great progress. 118

In some communities ambitious boys who herded cattle read Shakespeare, Byron, Longfellow, Thackeray, and Dickens, gathered from the library of a neighboring professor who had come West for his health. But there must have been neighborhoods where a supply of reading matter was slight, although there was always the Bible for study. 119

Many experiences attended the cattle range watch, which began with sunrise and ended with sunset. Cattle and horses were allowed to roam the boundless prairies at will, except that they had to be kept from the neighbors' corn and bean patches. A boy or girl of from eight to fifteen was often given the watching job, which was wearying and monotonous. The grazing season began in June and closed about the end of October. Sunshine or rain, hot or cold, the herder had to be on duty. Cattle often grew restless and, seeing the rich

118Crawford, Kansas in the Sixties, 243-45.
verdure of a cornfield, would move to graze on that forbidden ground.

At such times, the herder had to ride up quickly and turn back the stock, or run hastily afoot and frighten the animals away by brandishing a stick at them.

Sometimes in the fall the weary herder fell asleep on duty, or he would wander away himself in search of more inviting pastures, to some well-known copse where the trees were arboried with ripening grapes for which he had waited all summer, or to some plum thicket, laden with luscious fruit, or, in company of a kindred herder, to some near-by watermelon patch whose owner was absent from home. While he was satisfying his hungry soul and palate, the cattle, in full realization of their freedom, would rush to the nearest and most inviting pastures, usually some neighbor's field of ripening corn. Once this occurred, and the cattle tasted the rich and satisfying juices of the corn, like men, they became intoxicated with a desire to repeat the spree, and were almost uncontrollable.120

Even though a cornfield was enclosed with a stake-and-rider "worm" fence, a crafty old brindle cow could put her head under the rider and toss it off into the air, making it merely a "jump over" for the whole herd to get into the field.121 An early settler on Mission Creek said that "shanghai fences just served to show the cattle where the corn grew."122

In Douglas County before the claims were fenced, a boy futilely protected a twenty-acre field of wheat which gave promise of a bountiful crop:

... as soon as the wheat was high enough to attract our neighbors' live stock, on they came. At that time it was considered ruinous to permit cattle to graze upon the growing wheat, hence it fell to my lot to keep them off, and during the fall I traveled about 3,927 miles, most of the

120Ibid., 498.
121Ibid.
way on the run, but I kept them off. The wheat grew a foot high, every stock of it jointed, and when the springtime came and the wild flowers peeped out from their winter abode, that wheat field was as brown as the dead prairie grass; not a spear of it was alive. Thus vanished our dreams of wheaten biscuits, and we tried to be thankful for our daily portion of corn pone and sorghum. To relieve the monotony of this diet, we made one fall a few gallons of syrup from the juice of watermelons, but it was not considered a very good substitute even for sorghum. 123

Many young pioneers have testified that the brindle cow was not the only unruly thing on the great open spaces.

Prairies were burned off every fall, and we have had some thrilling experiences in fighting fire. The wind would change with a rush in the night, and you would awake with the whole country ablaze, making lively work to save stacks and stables, and we did not always save them. First thing to do was to turn the stock loose onto the breaking. Everybody would turn out and try to save a strip up and down the creek for stock to run on during the winter, and keep that black dust from blowing into the houses. There were no roads for firebreaks. It required expert managing to head it off, and it was no picnic, either. 124

Another Kansas lad of the 60's recorded that a "thrill of apprehension" swept his childish frame as he saw his father and the team "clearly silhouetted against the lurid light in that southeastern sky and watched their form drop down over the divide" as the father proceeded onward toward the fire. 125

But the Kansas boy did not work all of the time. Wild game, being plentiful along the creeks, furnished sport for him as well as many a piece for stew. Miss Rosella S. Honey, of the Elm Creek settlement, reported that wild turkey were in abundance in the 60's, "some-

124Ibid., 607-608.
times as many as a hundred or more in a flock." A man might mount a mustang pony and run a turkey down in a few minutes. Beautiful white and gray cranes and stately blue herons stalked the river's edge. And quail were in abundance.  

One day a flock came into the yard and several roosted on a log corn crib. I had never fired off a shotgun, and wished to try my luck, so I put a kitchen chair in the doorway and rested the gun over it, trying to sight the quail. Then I shut my eyes and pulled the trigger, and much to my surprise two quail fell dead.

Another pioneer told of prairie chickens roosting in the fields and stockyards in winter to secure grain. He said:

I have seen them so numerous at such times that sitting close together, their weight would break the branches. I once saw thirteen killed at one time by a deadfall made of a barn door set up with a figure-four trigger. The ground under the deadfall was cleared of snow, sprinkled with shelled corn, while a section of ear corn was stuck on the end of the trigger. The chickens picked on this, and this threw the deadfall.

On the high plains prairie chickens were really the harbingers of spring. They gathered in great flocks on rounded knolls to strut, fight, and mate. The loud booming of the cocks was a pleasant sound to the settler's ear, for it meant that spring truly had come.

The rage of dancing—quadrilles, waltzes, shottisches—did not hit Kansas until the Civil War was over, partly because there was little time for grown-ups to indulge in the dance and partly because the youngsters engaged only in entertainment that their elders spon-

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126 Honey, "Early Days of Elm Creek Settlement," *loc. cit.*, 591.
128 Doran, "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," *loc. cit.*, 497.
129 Stanley, "Address Before the Old Settlers' Reunion, Lincoln, Kansas."
sored—literary gatherings, spelling bees, corn huskings, and casual games. However, some communities approved of dancing and indulged. In the larger towns of Northern Kansas leisure was spent in reading, study, mental games, and neighborly get-togethers. The border towns had less leisure during most of the war, when men, women, and children dared not remain in their homes on account of the raids and so slept in the cornfields for safety. Some of the border people had more inclination for sports and amusements. Country people had their days filled with meeting the daily exigencies of life except on special occasions which took the entire family on an outing once or twice a year, as the Fourth of July, a shopping trip to the trading center, or a wedding.

From Indianola, Samuel James Reeder, a young man of twenty-six years, wrote:

I never go to any of the many Balls, hops, fandangoes or whatever you have a mind to call them in this neighborhood. . . . I never tried to dance but a few times and am now too old to learn. I took my cousin Fannie to several surprise parties this winter at which we sang (I of course through my flute); played chess and amused ourselves as best we could. . . . We have had a singing school for several weeks. However, it was commonly known that no lady who attended a dance in the early days need be a wall flower.

Perhaps the greatest social event on the frontier was a wedding; at many, it seemed, the greater the crowd, the more was the fun. Anyone who could put aside his plowing or her housework was welcome to

130 Wyandotte Commercial Gazette, August 17, 1861.
attend a wedding, there to catch up on the news and gain the latest information about farmwork, chickens, soapmaking, and the new babies of the neighborhood. After the wedding supper, often served outdoors under the trees, the bride and groom simply moved into their own humble cabin. There was no honeymoon, unless that be called one when the bride went in an ox cart to the gristmill with her husband during the next spring or summer.  

Sometimes hindrances beset couples about to wed. On Lyon Creak in 1862 a wedding party was assembling and the groom had arrived at the bride's house with the justice of the peace. All preparations had been completed and the couple were arrayed before the justice when a guest looked out of the window and saw deer feeding along the hillside. Although great was the excitement among the men who wished to postpone the wedding until after a hunt, the "officiating gentleman" did not approve of putting off a wedding for any purpose, and his wishes prevailed.

The bride, of course, always looked lovely, but the crowd was sometimes a deterrent to preparations. One pioneer told how the bride managed to dress in spite of the gathering throng:

I recall being invited to a wedding about sixteen miles from Council Grove. A young lady accompanied me. When we reached the place, we found a house of one room and a lean-to kitchen and seventy-five guests. My companion took the bride, stood her on a bed which was curtained off and dressed her for the wedding.


134 Shields, "The Lyon Creek Settlement," loc. cit., 156.

From the Delaware Baptist Mission, where Reverend and Mrs. John G. Pratt were missionaries, came reports of less formal proceedings:

Saturday, the 24th of January, 1864, Mr. Pratt was too ill to go to Leavenworth as usual. At noon a man came for him to go five miles, just off the reservation, to marry a couple of whites. Mr. Pratt said he was too ill to go—that he would come the next morning, but the man was imperative. There was to be a dance that evening which the couple wanted to attend, and the wedding had been put off once; it was to have been on New Year's, but the groom was from Chicago and could not get here on account of the blocked roads. Now that he had come, a minister must be found, and no other was handy. Mr. Pratt had compassion on them, and mounted his pony and rode away to make the two happy.\textsuperscript{136}

Later in the winter early one morning,

... a man and women rode up to the gate and sent in word by one of the children for Mr. Pratt to come out and marry them without their alighting. Mr. Pratt was not well, was lying on a couch, and sent back word that if they would dismount and come in he would marry them. They were white people and had ridden eight miles. From the man's boots his toes peeped out, and his elbows showed through holes in his coat sleeves. The woman was tidy in a homespun woolen dress, blue-checked apron and the usual "slat" sunbonnet, which she did not remove. This sort of bonnet was worn in the South and West, both indoors and out. Mr. Pratt told them to stand together and take hold of hands, but had to move them around into proper position and place the bride's right hand in the right hand of the groom before he performed the ceremony which made them husband and wife. The man asked "what was to pay?" Mr. Pratt told him what he would have to record the marriage, and taking it from his pocket, the groom gave the amount to Mr. Pratt, and the bridal party mounted their horses and departed.\textsuperscript{137}

On occasions of moment to the entire town groups assembled during the Civil War. In Springvale when a company was called to the firing line,

There was a great gathering in town... A speaker's stand was set up in the yard of the Cambridge House and the boys in

\textsuperscript{136}Clara Gowing, "Life Among the Delaware Indians," \textit{Collections}, XIII, 193.

\textsuperscript{137}Ibid.
blue were in the broad street before it. It was the last
civilian ceremony for many of them, for that Kansas Company
went up Missionary Ridge at Chattanooga, led the line as
Kansans will ever do, and in the face of a murderous fire
they drove the foe men back. 138

During the war, ruffianism was carried on around Springvale.

The Red Range schoolhouse had been burned, and the teacher,
a Massachusetts man, had been drowned in a shallow pool near
the source of Fingal's Creek. . . . Eastward the settlers had
fled to our town, time and again, to escape the border raiders,
whose coming meant death to the free-spirited father, and a
widow and orphans left destitute beside the smoking sabers of
what had been a home. 139

Another novel which treated the late 50's, the Civil War period,
and the postwar years of expansion was written by William Allen White.

A Certain Rich Man developed much power as a novel with John Barclay's
transactions in wheat and land. However,

All his life . . . [John Barclay] remembered the covered wagon
in which the Barcleys crossed the Mississippi; but it is only
a curious memory of seeing the posts of the bed, lying flat be­
side him in the wagon, and of fingering the palm leaves cut in
the wood. He was four years old then, and as a man he remem­
bered only as a tale that is told the night at Westport Landing,
where his father was killed for preaching an abolition sermon
from the wagon tongue. The man remembered nothing of the long
ride that the child and the mother took with the father's body
to Lawrence, where they buried it in a free-state cemetery. 140

Then there was the year of the great drought of 1860, "remembered
all over the plains."

And as the winter deepened and the people of Sycamore Ridge
were without crops and without money to buy food, they bundled
up Martin Culpepper and sent him back to Ohio seeking aid.
. . . when he pictured the sufferings of the Kansas pioneers to
the people of the East, the state was flooded with beans and
flour, and sheeted in white muslin. . . . the picture he painted
of bleeding Kansas nearly fifty years ago still hangs in many
an old man's memory. And after all, it was only a picture.

138 McCarter, The Price of the Prairie, 64.
139 Ibid., 65-66.
For they were all young out here then, and through all the drouth and the hardship that followed—and the hardship was real—there was always the gayety of youth. The dances on Deer Creek and at Minneola did not stop for the drouth, and many's the night that Mrs. Mason, the tall raw-boned wife of Lycurgus, wrapped little Jane in a quilt and came over to the Ridge from Minneola to take part in some social affair. And while Martin Culpepper was telling of the anguish of the famine, Watts McHurdie and his accordion and Ezra Lane's fiddle were agitating the heels of the populace. And even those pioneers who were moved to come into the wilderness by a great purpose—and they were moved so—to come into the new territory and make it free, nevertheless capered and romped through the drouth of '60 in the cast-off garments of their kinsmen and were happy; for there were buffalo meat and beans for the needy, the aid room had flour, and God gave them youth.141

John Barclay remembered the famous drought year better "by Ellen Culpepper's party, where they had a frosted cake and played kissing games," than by the dry weather. Another incident traced on the memory of childhood the fact that Kansas was at war.

One day in the summer of 1860, as he and his fellows were filing down the crooked dusty path that led from the swimming hole through the dry woods to the main road, they came upon a group of horsemen scanning the dry ford of the Sycamore. That was the first time that John Barclay met the famous Captain Lee. . . . The coming of the soldiers made a stir in the town. For they were not "regulars"; they were known as the Red Legs, but called themselves "The Army of the Border." . . . "The Army of the Border" proceeded to get bawling drunk, whereupon they introduced to the town the song which for the moment was the national hymn of Kansas:

"Am I a soldier of the boss,  
A follower of Jim Lane?  
Then should I fear to steal a hoss,  
Or blush to ride the same."

As the night deepened and Henry Schnitzler's supply of liquor seemed exhaustless, the Army of the Border went from song to war and wandered about banging doors and demanding to know if any white-livered Missourian in the town was man enough to come out and fight.142

141 Ibid., 17.
142 Ibid., 9.
During the war the women and children cared for the farms and the stores as best they could and "opened every newspaper with horror and dread, and glanced down the long list of names of the dead, the missing and the wounded, fearful of what they might see."

It is odd that Sycamore Ridge grew during the war. Where the people came from no one could say—yet they came, and young Barclay remembered even during the war of playing in the foundations and running over the rafters of new houses. But when the war closed, the great caravan that had lagged while the war was raging, began to trail itself steadily in front of Mrs. Barclay's door, through the streets of Sycamore Ridge and out over the western hills. Soldiers with their families passed, going to free homesteads, and the lines of movers' wagons began with daybreak and rumbled by far into the night.\(^\text{143}\)

In 1866 "new boys came to town so rapidly that sometimes John met a boy in swimming whom he did not know."\(^\text{144}\)

An old tintype picture of perhaps that year showed a girl of fourteen, "a pink-cheeked child in short sleeves with the fringe of her pantalets showing above her red striped stockings and beneath bulging skirts, and with a stringy, stiff feather rising from the front of her narrow-rimmed hat."\(^\text{145}\)

Such was life along the Missouri-Kansas border, down along the Osage and the Marais des Cygnes near Osawatomie, along the Santa Fe Trail by Council Grove, up at Lawrence, the Athens of Kansas, and up by the Big Blue River's juncture with the Kaw at Manhattan. But life on the army's western frontier in Kansas was equally interesting.

During the early 60's settlements continued to follow the estab-

\(^{143}\text{Ibid.}, 48.\)
\(^{144}\text{Ibid.}, 51.\)
\(^{145}\text{Ibid.}, 47.\)
lished lines of military travel because protection, supplies, and means of transportation and mail were more sure along these routes, and some settlers reached Central Kansas by 1865. However, the great migration did not reach beyond the eastern third of Kansas until after Appomattox. By 1864 one hundred army posts had been set up on the American frontier, five of which were in Kansas; a year later there were nine in Kansas: Fort Leavenworth, at the head of all the trails, was the general depot for other Kansas posts. Fort Scott, although aloof from the trails, was connected with Leavenworth by a military road. Fort Riley, Fort Harker, Fort Hays, Fort Wallace were on the Smoky Hill route to Denver; Fort Larned, Fort Zarah, and Fort Dodge marked the Santa Fe Trail.

The Leavenworth-Scott road aided travel toward Ottawa, Osawatomie, Iola, and Humboldt although travel southward from Leavenworth in the early 60's was not particularly safe on account of border difficulties.

The military road from Leavenworth west led to military posts at Riley—during the 50's the point of departure for mounted expeditions against the Indians—to Harker, Hays, and Wallace, by which route the Butterfield overland dispatch traveled.

Colonel William A. Phillips, who came to Kansas in 1855 as special


correspondent of the New York Daily Tribune, selected the site of
Salina in 1857, in the heart of the buffalo and Indian country be­
fore settlement had reached that far west.148

In the fall of 1859, James R. Mead went out to the Saline Valley
and trekked up the Smoky Hill Valley, where he and his companions
found a lone man and a dog, "verging on insanity from solitude and
fear" of the wilderness. Thousands of wolves howling, snarling,
and fighting at night made the place a pandemonium, but hunters col­
lected the pelts of these wolves. The next summer, close to the
cabin were several stalks of corn growing; on one, two well-developed
ears of corn. This was the first civilized corn grown on the banks
of the upper Saline."149 Here a settlement was made with a store,
postoffice, and hotel, in the midst of the buffalo range. Between
Salina and Fort Larned were two hunters' ranches along the trail.150

The stage route joined Leavenworth and Salina and followed the Smoky
Hill to the Rockies. Thus from its beginning Salina was on the main­
traveled road to Colorado; it remained the frontier settlement in
North Central Kansas until after the war.

The Oregon Trail with dragoon protection facilitated travel and
the growth of Manhattan, established in 1855, and Junction City, es­
established in 1853. On the Santa Fe Trail were the villages of Coun­
cil Grove, Lost Springs station with a near-by German settlement on

148Humphrey, "The Country West of Topeka," loc. cit., 381,
384, 386.
150Ibid., 11-12.
Lynn Creek, and the military outposts of Zarah, Larned, and Dodge.

In the spring of 1865 settlements had been made west in Kansas as far as Concordia, Salina, Marion, Eureka, Humboldt, and Independence.151

It was in the fall of 1864 that Robert M. Wright brought his family down from the mountains along the Arkansas River into Kansas to Fort Aubrey, a hundred miles west of Fort Dodge by wagon road.152

On the first attempts to settle on the Little Arkansas River this record by a pioneer showed that

in 1857 a party of men came from Coffey county, Kansas, for the purpose of hunting and trading. Of these, Moxley and Ed Moseley built a trading-house at the Osage crossing and engaged in trading with the Osages. C. C. Arnold, Bob Juracken and others went up the big river a few miles and built a cabin, and it is said broke up some ground, and undertook to make a fortune catching buffalo calves for the eastern market. Moxley was drowned not long afterwards fording the river at Lawrence. Moseley returned to Humboldt, and their trading-house was burned. Arnold and his associates left for Butler county, and soon no trace of their occupation remained. These parties were hunters and traders and could hardly be classed as settlers. But in 1860 came John Ross, with his wife and two children and a hired man, equipped with tools and utensils for farming and housekeeping. He built a comfortable cabin, stables, etc., about three miles beyond the Osage crossing, on a high bank of the big river, broke up some ground and planted a crop. All went well with him until, in the fall, he, with his man and team, went for a load of meat a few miles across the river, in the direction of Cow Skin Grove. They did not return. ... His family returned East, and the two Arkansas rivers reverted to their original solitude.153

In June, 1863, James R. Mead and two others visited the Little Arkansas River and the present site of Wichita on a three weeks' tour of exploration, during which they traversed all of Sedgwick County,

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151Andreas, History of Kansas, 1016, 1257, 1200, 671, 1566.


then lacking human habitation. They killed sixteen buffalo and a big-
horn elk within an hour of the old Ross cabin. That fall fifteen
hundred Indians, affiliated as the Wichitas, settled in the timber
near the mouth of the Little Arkansas and placed their grass huts
there. The Kickapoos, Shawnees, and Delawares soon followed and
settled on Walnut and White Water creeks. Osages and Kaws came also
for the fall hunt. Above the Arkansas River and along the Smoky
Hill Valley ranged immense herds of buffalo, and there countless
deer, elk, antelope, and smaller game fed also. It was a hunter's
paradise—that country around Smoky Hill Buttes during the 60's.

Inman's "A Race for Life" indicated the thrills possible in
making a trip from Fort Zarah west toward Fort Larned in 1864. This
is a capital story written from the experience of a westerner.

In 1864 the magnificent valley of the "Smoky Hill," with its rich share of wooded streams and fertile uplands, and the still more Elysian expanse watered by the great Arkansas—that embryo granary of two continents—were simply known as the regions through which passed twin inter-oceanic trails, the Oregon and the Santa Fe, both now mere memories.

Pawnee Rock, Walnut, Coon, Ash and Cow creeks were mute
witnesses of a score or more battles that reddened the blos-
soming prairies in springtime, and the slopes of the Pawnee,
Heath's Branch and Buckner's were resonant with the yell of the Kiowa and Cheyenne, who under the pale moonlight held
their hideous saturnalia of butchery.

To protect the trains on their weary route through the
"desert"—as the whole of this region was then termed, and
confidently believed by the world to be—troops were sta-
tioned, a mere handful, relatively, at intervals on the "great
trail," to escort the freighters and the United States mail over
the most exposed and dangerous portions of the route.

154Ibid., 16.
155Ibid., 10-11.
156Henry Inman, "A Race for Life. An Incident of the Indian
War of 1864," Tales of the Trail, 58-59.
In 1364, Salina was occupied by one company of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry; in a wooded bend of the Smoky Hill was a little log stockade—later Fort Ellsworth—commanded by Lieutenant Ellsworth. Three hundred unassigned recruits of the Third Wisconsin Cavalry under Captain Conkey were stationed at the crossing of Walnut Creek on the trail to the mountains. This was Fort Zarah, a good observation point, below which passed the favorite highway of the Indians on their yearly migrations north and south. At Fort Larned, some forty miles up the Arkansas was stationed one company of the Twelfth Kansas and a section of the Ninth Wisconsin Battery.¹⁵⁷

Captain Henry Booth and Lieutenant Hallowell left Fort Riley in the spring of 1864 to inspect these forts and to go on to Fort Lyon. For the trip they drove mules to a light wagon fitted with an array sheet drawn over wagon bows and tied up behind with a cord. The captain and the lieutenant were accompanied by an escort from Fort Riley.

Junction City was in those days in reality the limit of civilization, although Abilene with its solitary log cabin, and Salina with only two, made great pretensions as the most westerly cities of the Great Plains. A single glance at the howling wilderness surrounding either place, however, dissipated all idea of possible or probable future metropolitan greatness.

The rough bluffs that border Alum and Clear creeks, in Ellsworth county, through which the trail wound its tortuous way, were always in those days a favorite haunt of the Indians, and many a solitary straggler has met his death from their swift arrows in what are now called the "Harker Hills."¹⁵⁸

The race occurred on the way from Fort Zarah to Fort Larned.

Inspection having been made of all matters but the official papers,

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 60-61.
¹⁵⁸Ibid., 63.
the soldier escort was sent ahead early in the morning from Zarah. Three hours later Booth and Hallowell left Zarah alone in the ambulance wagon. When they were five or six miles out, they saw ahead what looked like a drove of turkeys, but which was Indians. The redmen were soon speeding after the light wagon, which, in the meantime, had been turned back toward Zarah. "Thirty-four feather-bedecked, paint-bedaubed savages, as vicious-looking an outfit as ever scalped a white man, were coming down upon them like a hawk upon a chicken."

Booth—using his gun—and Hallowell—driving at breakneck speed while shipping, kicking, and yelling—outwitted the Indians for some distance, but there was need for a diversion if the captain and the lieutenant were to reach Zarah. Booth threw out a valise with dress suits and other clothing.

The Indians noticed these new tricks with a yell of apparent satisfaction, and as soon as they reached the valise they all dismounted, and one of them grabbed it by the two handles and attempted to open it; failing in this, another drew a long knife from under his blanket, and, ripping up one side, thrust in his hand and pulled out a sash, and began winding it around his head... letting the tassels hang down his back.

While he was thus amusing himself, another had pulled out a dress coat, a third a pair of drawers, still another a shirt—all of which individually proceeded to put on, meanwhile dancing around and yelling. 159

This detention of the Indians gained some time, but one of the mules was wounded in the foreleg and both mules were so frightened that they were losing their speed. By dumping another valise and by whipping and kicking the mules, the white pair reached the log bridge that crossed Walnut Creek and led up the hill to Fort Zarah.

159 Ibid., 34.
The captain had a slight wound and the lieutenant had two rather severe ones. "On examination of the inside of the wagon, twenty-two arrows were found lying in the bottom, innumerable holes through the sheet, made by the passage of arrows, besides two from bullets, and the outside of the bed was scarred from one end to the other." 160

In 1865 Council Grove, without even a sidewalk, was still a sleepy village, to which the coming of the local stage from Topeka was an important event. The overland stage on its way from Westport to Santa Fe drove down Main Street, a mere cow path following the old Santa Fe Trail. A pretty little stream, the Neosho River, lined on each bank with weeping willow, cottonwood, oak, elm, and hickory trees, ran through Council Grove, which was the center of the Kaw Indian reservation. The village also was headquarters for supplies of the Overland Stage Company. From May 21 to November 25, 1865, Charles Withington, who kept a toll bridge across One Forty-Two Creek, reported 4,472 wagons, 6,197 men, 1,267 horses, 6,452 mules, 38,281 oxen, 112 carriages, 13,056 tons of freight, had moved across the bridge. People were still talking in 1865 of the Hermit Priest who had lived in a cave on the hillside during five months of 1863. The block house built for protection during the early part of the war was still standing. All-in-all, the town was still a frontier outpost. The usual travel in these parts was on horseback or in two-horse wagons, with split-bottom chairs for back seats. There was but one buggy in Council Grove in 1865. 161

160 Ibid., 91.

Later a poet wrote of these colorful years of Kansas:

O Kansas! thou hast wonders seen,
While Territory and a State!
Thou art, like mortal man, I ween,
A creature led by tyrant fate!
Here white men drove the red man back,
To be supplanted by the black;
Though now and then a moment seen,
The strange wild Indian of the plain,
His star is setting low between
The Rocky Mountains and the main.
His fate and the buffalo's are one--
They gather to the setting sun. 162

Kansas writers have brought forth many accounts and stories concerning the stirring years from 1860 to 1865. The period itself saw little literary effort, since all hands were put to the wheel of life to keep it intact and turning. However, letters, diaries, and accounts of the times were kept and many reminiscences have been added to historical files on the life of the hard years on this frontier. Moreover, Fisher and Crawford have published firsthand accounts of their experiences.

To the novelist, the Civil War years made a striking appeal. Many heroes and heroines have arisen in Kansas literature written in behalf of the Free-State cause, and an equal number of proslavery villains exist in the Kansas stories. Kansas never had a Southern background, but the writer who lived east of the Missouri-Kansas line wrote also about the slavery question in Kansas—from a different angle from that used by the writer who lived west of that boundary. Cretcher, Holmes, McCarter, Streehey, and White showed leanings toward the Northern cause. Donoghey and Stanley presented the same

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years from backgrounds of Southern sympathy. It is interesting to note that the novels about the years on early statehood are often continuations of tales about territorial days, for authors often found it difficult to leave their characters, confronted with the famine and war of the 60's, in a happy frame of mind—as most of these novels leave the deserving hero and heroine. The end of the war offered them a satisfactory point of conclusion, and a bright horizon with a new life in the West.

Gulp's story about the Quantrell raid on Lawrence and Inman's tale of the forts in West Kansas are representative stories about the period.

A few ballads exist. Little other poetry has been found on these years. Peacock's epic, "The Rhyme of the Border War," is unique, both in the period and in Kansas literature.

In drama, the Lewises' Jayhawker, though set during the war years, portrays little of the life of this era.
VI

MIGRATING WESTWARD

In the national and international arenas a number of momentous happenings marked the years between the day on which Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee met at Appomattox Courthouse and the turn into the 70's. This was a period not only of readjustment and restoration, but also of growing enlightenment in science and medicine and in social reforms.

A bright aspect was found in the reclamation of the West through immigration of land-hungry peoples from countries where distress dogged their steps, and of first-generation Americans from the North, East, and South. The lands of the West were being advertised profusely and glowingly:

Great Sale of
Selected Kansas Lands!
At Auction
In Tracts Not Exceeding 160 Acres

Sixty thousand acres of the Sac and Fox Indian reserves in Osage County were on sale at Lawrence on June 2, 1868.¹

In the summer of 1866 Bayard Taylor took a trip across the plains and declared that there was "much in Kansas to remind one of California." He mentioned that the grass along the Kaw bottoms

¹New York Daily Tribune, April 1, 1868.
was "superb," weeds were rank and plentiful, and mud was still a mark of Kansas. However, he noted also the thriving peach orchard at St. Mary's and the good hotel and the "handsome weekly" newspaper at Junction City, a village of 400 or 500 inhabitants.2

The Indians occupied occasional space in the Eastern newspapers, but many times their atrocities were told about in small type and at not too great length. On September 14, 1867, the New York Daily Tribune reported that the Peace Commissioners were having difficulty getting the Indians to treat with them.3 The redman's hunting and health were said to be good, despite the fact that cholera was raging among many of the plains Indians. At the beginning of the next year the commission was trying to safeguard the railroad workers and frontier settlers and to "inaugurate a plan for civilising the Indians," impossible as that was. Six and one-half columns of type were given to the efforts of the commissioners.4

But in July a revelation of the swindling and aggressions of the whites was printed. The missionaries had never been given a chance to make the Indians into Christians, testified such men as Kit Carson and Colonel Bent, for the Indians, after giving up their finest hunting grounds to the white man, were receiving third-rate coffee and flour, no sugar, and no vegetables but beans. In the Saline and Solomon valleys, around Hays, Kansas, in Arizona, and

2Ibid., July 10, 1866.
3Ibid., September 16, 1867.
4Ibid., January 9, 1868.
in New Mexico Indian troubles continued.  

That 1865 to 1870 was a period of readjustment was evident in Kansas in spite of the fact that the State had been free from the great battles, for the border warfare of earlier years had left many wounds. The period opened the way for mass immigration westward, and by 1867 there poured into the State a great tide of people who expected to bring the land to early fruitage. At Appomattox, Grant had allowed soldiers to keep their horses because, he said, they would need them in their fields. And so they did. The settlers-to-be trickled in along the routes of streams and high roads, over the grassy prairies, and on railroads. Fanning out from the northeastern corner of the State, the settlers scurried west and south, moving back and forth in their efforts to locate richer claims. The line of settlement kept pushing forward irregularly.

After 1865 the iron horse continued to trot forth and snort defiance to the plains Indians, and by 1870 a transcontinental line was in operation across the State. Even during its building the railroad afforded some protection to the settlers because of the soldier garrisons which accompanied the advancing line. Some settlers secured work on the railroads for a livelihood. But during the summers on the western frontier there continued a ravaging warfare between the whites and the resentful Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches south of the Platte River. Occasionally, the Sioux, who were resisting the palefaces in Nebraska, joined in harassing Western Kansas.

5Ibid., July 1, 1868; June 25, July 9, November 25, 1869.
But the day had come when white settlers were wresting Kansas land from the redmen. McCarter has pictured the coming of civilization to the plains during the late 60's and early 70's:

Meanwhile the sunny Kansas prairies lay waiting for the hearth-stone and the plow. And young men, trained in camp and battlefield, looked westward for adventure, fortune, future homes and fame. But the tribes, whose hunting-grounds had been the green and grassy plains, yielded slowly, foot by foot, their stubborn claim, marking in human blood the price of each acre of the prairie sod. The lonely homesteads were the prey of savage bands, and the old Santa Fe Trail, always a way of danger, became doubly perilous now to the men who drove the vans of commerce along its broad, defenseless miles. The frontier forts increased: Hays and Harker, Larned and Zarah, and Lyon and Dodge became outposts of power in the wilderness, whose half-forgotten sites today lie buried under broad pasture-lands and fields of waving grain.  

Ingalls spoke of the great growth of population after the war:

With the close of the war the first decennium ended, and the disbanded veterans returned under the flag they had redeemed to the State they had made free. Attracted by homesteads upon the public domain, by just and liberal exemption laws, and by the companionship of the brave, those heroes were reinforced by a vast host of their comrades, representing every arm of the military and naval service from all the States of the Union.

Population increased from 8,601 in 1855 to 140,179 in 1865, 526,349 in 1875; 1,285,562 in 1885. In a community so rapidly assembled the homogeneity of its elements is extraordinary. Kansas is distinctly the American State. Less than 10 per cent of its inhabitants are of foreign birth, principally English, German, and Scandinavians; and less than 4 per cent of African descent. The State is often called the child of the Puritans, but, contrary to the popular impression, the immigration from New England was comparatively trivial in numbers, much larger contributions having been derived from Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania, New York, and Kentucky. It is the ideas of the Pilgrims, and not their descendants, that have had domination in the young commonwealth which resembled primitive Massachusetts before its middle classes had disappeared and its society became strati-

6 McCarter, Vanguards of the Plains, 308.
fled into the superfluously rich and the hopelessly poor. 7

With their brides young veterans hastily placed their belongings into scooply-topped covered wagons drawn by horses and mules, or sometimes by yokes of staunch oxen or pairs of hardy mustang ponies. With brindle cows following behind and spotted dogs at the side, the couples set forth to sail upon the prairie ocean and to seek homes and fortunes in Kansas. The ex-soldier emigrants were glad to see green grass, May flowers, birds, and great open spaces after four years of war.

Said another writer of the great migration:

The move's wagon was never absent from the boy's picture of that time and place. Either the canvas-covered wagon was coming from the ford of Sycamore Creek, or disappearing over the hill beyond the town, or was passing in front of the boys as they stopped their play. Being a boy, he could not know, nor would he care if he did know, that he was seeing one of God's miracles—the migration of a people, blind but instinctive as that of birds or buffalo, from old pastures into new ones. . . . a great ethical principle was stirring in them. The pioneers do not go to the wilderness always in lust of land, but sometimes they go to satisfy their soul. The spirit of God moves in the hearts of men as it moves on the face of the waters. 8

As emigrants came in their wagons, they found that the trail, "flat along the ungraded ground, tended in the direction of least resistance, generally toward the southwest. It was bounded by absence of landmarks, boulder or tree or cliff." Alongside were sunflower stalks, their "blooms of gold marking two gleaming threads across the plains far toward the misty nothingness of the western


8White, A Certain Rich Man, 3.
In these great open spaces Nature still deceived the untrained eye:

"Why, we are right in a big saucer. All the land slopes to the center down there before us. Can't you see it?"

"No, I've seen it too often. It is just a trick of the plains—one of the many tricks for the eye out here."

Many of the Kansas emigrants had a background of physical prowess along the tributaries of the Mississippi River and in the woods of the North, where men took pride in their skill as marksmen.

Hunting and trapping were their chief forms of recreation. Sturdy sons of the forest, they could swing the scythe or the grain-cradle from sunup to sundown. They were masters of the arts of the woods, being equally skillful with axe and rifle, and at home in a log canoe, spearing fish. (In those days it was considered almost a crime to spear a fish, no matter how fast it might be moving, in any spot but just behind the gills, or to shoot a squirrel anywhere but through the head.)

In their culture emigrants were often like a Bourbon County settler who said in the late 60's, "My folks had been nurtured under the political guidance of Sumner, Steward, Zack Chandler, and Abraham Lincoln, and read after Horace Greeley and Petroleum V. Nasby."

Occasionally a neighbor "voted the national Democratic ticket, as the sparks fly upward," but political differences did not lessen neighborly friendship.

Of the descendant from "catfish aristocracy" and the offspring

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9 Margaret Hill McCarter, Winning the Wilderness (Chicago, 1914), 16.
10 Ibid., 18.
of the Yankee, Ingalls said: "The one, squirting a gourdful of tobacco juice onto the jimson-weeds, with a prolonged, rising inflection, draws out 'W-h-i-c-h.' The other stops whittling, or lays down The Kansas Magazine, and jerks out 'Hauw!'"\(^{13}\)

Let us watch these movers seeking the gold of the prairies of the south, central, and even more westerly portions of Kansas.

Eugene Fitch Ware was mustered out of the Fourth Iowa Cavalry during the summer of 1866. He was in "bad shape," with a lingering wound that did not heal as he worked on the Hawk Eye in Burlington, Iowa. These were the years of such "decoctions" as Dr. Nassau's preparation, which the soldier took as a cure for persistent malaria and other ailments. The medicine was a combination of whisky and fifteen or more bitters—Peruvian bark, camomile, dandelion, gentian—of which "No man could drink over a tablespoonful at a time and no man could have nerve to drink a spoonful oftener than once in two hours."\(^{14}\)

Old Bill, Ware's war horse, was saddled with the McClellan saddle, a trunk was packed, and a jug was filled with Dr. Nassau's prescription; then off set the soldier for Kansas with two war buddies and their rich and tyrannical father in a fine covered wagon. Deserted at a crossroads in Missouri by those in the wagon, the sick soldier joined a westward moving emigrant train, in which were other boys who had been in service.

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\(^{13}\) John James Ingalls, "Catfish Aristocracy," A Collection of the Writings of John James Ingalls, 123.

\(^{14}\) Ware, "History of Sun-Gold Section," loc. cit., 295-314. For a novel on the Union soldier who came to Kansas, see McCarter, Winning the Wilderness.
Western Missouri bordering Kansas was practically deserted.

"The chimneys were standing lonesomely everywhere." In answer to a querying look from the strangers, a woman of forty who had married a boy of eighteen said: "What is a woman to do? My husband was killed during the war and there ain't any more men around. They've been killed, and what is a woman to do? Why, she has to do the best she can." Close to the Kansas line, one discouraging Puke said that outlawry was common in Kansas and that grasshoppers were knee deep. In border Kansas, times were bad: bacon was fifty cents a pound, corn-meal five cents, and there was no flour in the country.

But Kansas was more attractive than Missouri. In what is now Cherokee County, the movers who remained spent weeks looking for perfect claim sites. They found few settlers except a few Union soldiers.

For settlement depended on many things: good land, timber, a sawmill reasonably close by, and a breaking plow near at hand. Finding a temporary sawmill on Lightning Creek and a man who would break twenty acres of land for eighty dollars, the soldiers laid claims on Deer Creek and became settlers. Deer were numerous on the tributaries of the Neosho River, but store-bought food was available no nearer than one hundred miles east. To the south lay Indian Territory. Fort Scott was a hundred miles northeast—by way of the ridges when snow or rain fell.

We went to the Neosho river bottom and found a man who claimed a bottom quarter and he told us to go in and haul away all of the down dead timber that we wanted, that it would save him the trouble of clearing. We went down to look at the timber. It was a perfect mass of ancient dead trees lapping over each other. There had apparently never been a fire and the big black walnuts were overlapping each other on the ground, and the bushes and young trees were so dense among them that we
could hardly get through. There were black walnuts that had evidently fallen over a hundred years before. 15

When, during the early spring, Ware got back from a trip into Missouri for supplies, his lumber was piled up. It was two-inch broad boards, which he had hauled up to his temporary claim where the breaking was going on.

In the following year, the entire Ware family was induced to come West and the soldier-settler returned from his trip to Burlington by horseback to prospect for the family's new holdings.

... finally I picked out the hill on "Sun-Fold Section" and concluded that I would take up a square mile; a one quarter for myself, one quarter for father and one for each of my two brothers. There were 100 square miles of vacant territory there and I had my choice. 16

The year 1868 was dry and most of the land in the vicinity was sold, supposedly, to a railroad company which tried to keep out immigrants. To supplement his income, Ware worked all winter in the harness business at Fort Scott and in the spring came down to his claim and put twenty acres into sod corn. That summer's work was profitable; it netted $1,400 in cash from the corn raised. Immigrants who came in paid $1.25 a bushel for corn and 15 cents a shock for fodder. The rest of the Ware family had come to Fort Scott by this time. Late in 1869 from hedge seed sowed on his Deer Creek claim the pioneer took up enough hedge plants and planted them around Sun-Gold. 17 He plowed a garden plot of five acres, a part

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15 Ibid., 304.
16 Ibid., 307.
17 Stone fences were not available in many places; barbed wire was not yet in general use; and hedges grew quickly. Several
of which was on each quarter, and put up a cabin. But when the Wares brothers arrived on Sun-Gold early in March, 1870, they found that Sun-Gold claim had been jumped by two rough inhabitants who had brought several friends along for support. After disposing of the usurpers, the Wares sold the Deer Creek claim and its crop for $1,500, and late in 1870 they moved up on the hill of their new claim. Having read a little law during the four years since his mustering out, the soldier-settler found himself re-established in a new country with his family, a pointer dog, a gun, and a fine section of land to which the railroad was bringing a market. Thus was one Union soldier rehabilitated.  

Besides the soldiers, Union nurses came to Kansas. In June, 1866, several settlers and Mrs. Emily Haines, a nurse among the Union soldiers from 1861 to 1865, came to Ottawa County from Logan, Ohio. After reaching Kansas City, Mrs. Haines and her children continued on the Union Pacific railroad to Topeka. Then by team they drove westward, stopping at St. Mary's, the Indian Mission, and at Junction City, where the nurse was warned by the receiver of the land office that "the southwest corner of Ottawa county was a wild place, no women, nothing but soldiers." On the north bank of the Saline River, Mrs. Haines's nephew

farmers near Fort Scott grew hedge plants and sold hedge seed. Ibid., 309.

Another pioneer reported that "four years' growth from the seed produced a lawful hedge. It is very durable and ornamental." Paul H. Giddens, "Eastern Kansas in 1869-1870," Kansas Historical Quarterly, IX, 376.

18 Were, "History of Sun-Gold Section," loc. cit., passim.
erected a one-story cabin of driftwood, mostly cottonwood, which he found in high drifts at every bend in this very crooked stream. He cut green cottonwood branches and laid them from the ridge-pole to the walls, covered them with cottonwood brush, and piled on the earth. We moved in at once.

I had brought with me all my little keepsakes, and these and the little luxurious appointments which I had foolishly brought were placed about to adorn our rough habitation. Then a heavy rain came, ran through the loose earth with which the roof was covered, and poured in rivulets over my furnishings, and rained mud three days after the sky was bright without. By that time my keepsakes were ruined and the earth firmly packed on the roof, so that we had little trouble of that kind again.

Because there was nothing on the homestead to make the new settlers comfortable, they went down to Salina to spend the winter. There they found work. Mrs. Haines and two other women, on their way back to the claim in early April, spent a night in a dugout. Eighteen soldiers from Fort Harker also took refuge from a spring storm in the dugout. The women slept in the one bed in the outer room, and the soldiers slept on hay on the floor of the inner compartment.

During the summer of 1866, Mrs. Haines’s nearest neighbors were a family born and bred on the frontier, the wife in the family being the only other woman within fifteen miles. That summer the nurse-settler taught the two youngest children their lessons at thirty dollars a month. The family—named Tripp—believed "in having everything convenient."

Tripp, being too lazy to chop wood, knocked out a stone in the back of the fireplace and thrust a log through into the fire. When the end was burned off he went out and pushed it further in. The chimney was capacious. A crane was hung in it, upon which a bunch of venison or huge piece of buffalo could be suspended. When a meal was needed the crane

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would be swung so that the meat would be over the fire. When the lowest or exposed surface was cooked, a slice would be cut off, and the meat swung off to cool again.

Their table was made of two cottonwood boards laid across wooden horses. At my first meal they had a piece of buffalo and corn bread. Our plates were pie-pans. The meat sat near Mr. Tripp's end of the table, the corn bread toward the center. I sat furthest from the food. Mr. Tripp said to me, "Sit up and help yourself."

After the Smoky Hill River flood in early June, 1867, the Baineses returned to the cabin which they had left for a few days to find the mud ankle deep on the floor. Their attempts at a crop and garden were washed out. Then the drought which followed the rains brought a plague of grasshoppers. Prices rose: salt was 10 cents a pound; poor butter, 75 cents a pound and "hard to get at that price."

Mrs. Baines sold her watch for $60 and bought a Texas cow. A yoke of work oxen cost $100, Molly the mare, a half Indian pony, cost $120. The year 1868 likewise brought in no crop but the Indian raids in August.

Besides the soldiers and nurses, plain Iowa farm families migrated to Kansas after selling their farms and improvements for a consideration of $1200 or $1500. Like others who came to the Solomon Valley were the Shafer and Noble families from Manchester, Iowa, who were hit by the Kansas fever in October, 1867:

Our outfit consisted of two covered wagons containing eatables, our personal effects, and some few household necessities. These wagons, behind which were led two milch cows for the purpose of furnishing milk for the family en route, were drawn by four head of horses or one team to each wagon.
Although the Missouri River was now open to traffic and steamboats had stores below for horses and feed, many families who came preferred to make the trip entirely by wagons overland. Time was no great factor and the cost of travel was less by land. When the Shafer-Noble party arrived on the west side of the Missouri River, the colony traveling together disagreed as to where they should go—southward or westward. The decision was made to go west. Then came the rather weary plains trip to the Solomon Valley and the search for the claim before winter set in. The Noble family put up in the settlement of Minneapolis while the father continued prospecting for the claim. On the Solomon River wild game was abundant. There were buffalo, antelope, coyote, wolves, prairie dogs, prairie chickens, quail, wild turkey, and also numerous fur-bearing animals.

In the early day it was great sport, as well as means to furnish meat for the larder, to hunt the buffalo. The men would organize, mount their horses and sally forth in small bands on these hunts and kill enough to supply their respective families for some time. All animals killed on the hunt would be butchered where they fell, the meat cut and loaded in the "follow-up wagon," which could always be found trailing the hunt. This wagon when loaded would return to the settlement with the meat. The hunters would come in later. The carcasses would be left on the prairie where the animals fell, and I have seen the prairie white with their bones, bleaching in the sun...23

On the way back from the buffalo hunt the father saw some land that suited his idea of a claim and got a half section on Mortimer Creek, a tributary of the Solomon River, with a patch of land broken, a dug-out, and a well by trading to the disappointed owner a horse which

22-Ware, "History of Sun-Gold Section," loc. cit., 306.
afforded him means for getting out of Kansas. Spring found the entire Noble family on the new claim and in the dugout, which furnished them as good living quarters as had the log cabin in Minneapolis. The family planted corn, watermelons, and other garden truck. The winter had been balmy and spring was full of sunshine and hope.

After corn had been planted, mother being so persistent in her demands for a house in which to live, father made arrangements for the hauling of the lumber from Junction City, this being the nearest point at which lumber could be bought. In making a trip to Junction City for lumber it required a day (from sunrise until sunset) with the empty wagon and the return trip with loaded wagon would take two days.

During June, 1868, there was excessive rainfall, followed by a drought. The south wind blew hard for weeks at a time, drying the corn. The crop was not a complete failure, but it was badly damaged. After a few weeks of this weather the high estimate of pioneers for Kansas "suffered a relapse," and they found themselves wishing for the day to come that would be minus that miserable south wind.

August, 1868, brought the Indian raids to the Solomon Valley, and with them attendant anxiety and fear until the closing of the decade, when the Indians were quelled.

Twenty-five miles west of Fort Lodge, in 1867, A. J. Anthony and R. M. Wright bought the Cimarron ranch, the company from whom they purchased it being "heartily tired of the place, and eager to sell, for two of their number had been brutally murdered by the Indians, while attempting to put up hay." The Indians were sick with cholera that summer and did not molest the ranchers. Later the Indians came day after day to harass the workers, burning their hay, firing into

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Ibid., 722.
their camp, running off their stock, and presenting such annoyances that old-timers were unwilling to work even for such exorbitant wages as $75 to $100 a month. When the Indians had exhausted the ranchers of their horse stock, ponies were used; but these animals were so small and so slow that the ranchers were forced to purchase a big span of mules from the United States mail company, paying $600.

The constant skirmishes with the Indians kept up until the late fall of 1868, when the Indians made a treaty. Then Wright again sent for his family, which had been sojourning in Missouri until the threats to the frontier could be quelled. But the settlers ever tempted the Indian and tried to push beyond the fortified lines maintained by United States troops.²⁵

One adventure led to another.

The ultimate fate of the old ranch was, that the Indians burnt it, together with several hundred tons of hay, the day after Mr. Anthony abandoned it, by order of Major Douglass, commanding Fort Dodge. Upon the loss of our ranch, Mr. Anthony and I thought we would take our chances again, and burn lime on the Buckner, or middle branch of the Pawnee, about thirty miles north of Fort Dodge. We were well aware that the government could not furnish us a guard. But the Indians were now supposed to be peaceable and not on the warpath. They had only captured a few trains, burnt a number of ranches, and murdered small parties of defenseless emigrants on the trail; still they were not considered at war. All the whites were forbidden to kill or molest an Indian in any manner, although it was perfectly legitimate for them to murder us.²⁶

In the summer of 1868 an eighteen-year-old Canadian-born lad, who had been working on an Illinois farm breaking land, setting posts, and milking cows from three in the morning until eight at night, found that

²⁶Ibid., 60.
he had saved enough to go West:

So I went to Chicago, to the C. B. & Q. station. I told the agent I wanted a ticket. He asked, "Where to?" I said, "Out West." "We have no station by that name on our schedule," replied the agent. I then told him I wanted to go as far west as my money would take me. The agent said, "We have two lines or railroads west of the Missouri river, one out of Omaha and the other out of Kansas City." Never having heard of Omaha, I chose the route leading west from Kansas City. I poured my money out on the counter. The agent counted it—almost $70—and informed me that I would have $3.35 left after paying for a ticket to Ellsworth, Kan., as far west as they were running regular trains. The construction of the Union Pacific was being extended westward in Kansas at that time. I invested most of my remaining $3.35 in bologna and crackers. We got started. It was slow traveling either by ox team or railroads in 1868.27

Having arrived at Kansas City, the greenhorn was forced to spend a whole day going via train to Ellsworth:

We got there about 7 p. m. I sat beside the depot until about 9 o'clock not knowing just where I would stay for the night. My finances now were only seventy-five cents. So I ventured across the street to a big saloon with a big sign over the door, "U. S. Saloon." It was a big one, about 125 feet deep. I took a chair in a corner near the front where I could watch everything. It was getting interesting. Soldiers from Old Fort Harker were coming and going. The dames and gamblers were there. Yes, and there were Indian scouts, teamsters, bull whackers, and citizens of all sorts promenading the streets, as well as the dance hall. The orchestra was playing melodious tunes and the ball was on. Drinking, gambling and dancing were in full blast, all of which was a new picture to me, and there I sat looking on.

Every now and then groups of long-haired men wearing high-heeled boots, and spurs, red underwear, cartridge belts full of cartridges, scabbard at side with pair of six shooters, and bowie knife would come; call for drinks, and as they went out, bang, bang, bang, would ring out from their guns.28

At three in the morning the barkeeper closed the the "Kid," showing that he had only seventy-five cents while beds were one dollar, was

28 Ibid., 286.
taken up to "Drunkards' heaven where there were about fifty single cots containing that many drunk men." He lay there with fear and trembling until daylight and got out quickly by the outside stairway. At seven he boarded the construction train that landed him in Hays about noon, August 20, 1863, hungry and "busted." En route not a house was seen but there were mirages practically all the way. At the Commercial Hotel, run by an Irishman, he was fed and set to washing dishes and doing odd work until he had saved enough money to go on. Thus was another greenhorn initiated as a real Kansas pioneer.29

The late 60's brought a rush of immigration from the Northern countries of Europe, also. Although the Swedes began coming in the 50's, a greater tide of them flowed into Kansas after the Civil War. John A. Johnson came from Galesburg, Illinois, and settled at Mariadahl in the neighborhood of Cleburne, in 1855. Between then and 1860 his mother, brothers, sisters, and other families came from Sweden. In 1858 Anders Palm came to Lawrence and four years later brought his windmill from Sweden to that city. J. O. Jaderborg migrated to Salina in 1858 in company with Colonel Phillips, Dr. Gran, and others. Jaderborg stopped at Fort Riley and built a blacksmith shop so that he could make enough money to pre-empt and live. He spent his winters at the forge; his summers on the claim. Many of the Swedes who came to Kansas before the war allied themselves to the cause of the North and went into the army.30

29Ibid., 286-87.
The first Swede in the Smoky Hill Valley south of Salina came in January, 1864, and lived in a hollow cottonwood tree until he built a dugout and later a log cabin.\(^{31}\) This actual incident has its parallel in story: "The plainsman's eyes twinkled as he waved his hand toward a large cottonwood tree, in whose hollow trunk a room had been fitted up. His cabin had been washed away by the flood a few weeks before, he explained, and he had taken up temporary quarters in the tree, pending erection of another cabin."\(^{32}\)

As early as 1866 Lindsborg was established as a trading post to which goods were hauled from Leavenworth. Indians and hunters exchanged their hides and furs for supplies which were taken to Topeka and sold for cash. But it was not until the formation of the First Swedish Agricultural Company in 1868 in Chicago that any great influx of Swedish settlers came to the country around Lindsborg. The newcomers were all poor; some had been in the war; others were seeking freedom in a new country. The people were deeply religious and thrifty. Although the Swedish pioneers were sincere Christians and civic-minded people, several years passed before schools and churches could be built in some communities; in the meantime, religious and educational training was given in the homes. It was not until the 70's that real progress was evident in houses, churches, and roads.\(^{33}\)

Danish immigration to Kansas also began in the 50's. Many of

\(^{31}\)Ibid.

\(^{32}\)Anna Matilda Carlson, *Heritage of the Bluestem; a Romance of the Prairies* (Kansas City, Missouri, 1930), 21.

these people were from the laboring class, but a few were skilled mechanics and merchants. All adults could read and write because of the compulsory school law in Denmark. In 1855 a Danish settler was found on Walnut Creek, and in 1869 colonies were established at Denmark in Lincoln County and at Lyndon in Osage County. Some of the Danes had traversed Nebraska before deciding to make their homes in Kansas.34

By 1870 the settlements had been made as far south and west in Kansas as Chetopa, Coffeyville,35 Medicine Lodge, Sun City,36 Dodge,37 Hays City,38 and Kirwin.39 Most of them were young men who simply stayed on the land long enough to comply with the law and then got employment at one of the western forts, on the Union Pacific, or on the Santa Fe, in order to earn a living until the soil could produce something. Since game was still plentiful, they had simply to furnish themselves with bread, a task of no small proportion, until the first crop came in. Their first corn and wheat crop was ground at a windmill a little south of Salina.40

34Thomas Peter Christensen, "The Danish Settlements in Kansas," Collections, XVII, 300-301.
38Kansas Daily Tribune, February 9, 1869.
39Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, 1516.
In 1863 several prominent Swedes in Kansas secured railroad rates for other Scandinavians in Illinois, Iowa, and other parts. The severe famine in Sweden at the time caused many to leave their native land. Despite Indian troubles in Kansas, the Kansas Pacific railroad company sold 16,000 acres of land to a Swedish colony coming to McPherson County. Salina remained the distribution center for the entire valley, but Lindsborg, laid out in the fall of 1869, grew into an enterprising town.41

In 1869 a young Swede, Claus Peterson, came with his family from Michigan and settled on Salt Creek in Osage County, where the Swedish community of Stotler was founded and grew during the 70's. Here Swedish families lived in cellars, caves, and in one-room shacks while passing through the uncertain years of establishing themselves in Kansas. They worked on the Santa Fe railroad, in the stone quarry, and in the strip mines. They subsisted often on black bread and coffee or on mush and milk.

As settlements moved west in the late 60's, horses came into commoner use in eastern Kansas; however, where there were "no oats or horse feed except green grass, an ox team was the best rig."42 The double buggy was in use for comfort, and wagons were much wanted to get corn to the mill and big families to Fourth of July celebrations and occasionally to town.

The first settlers in central Kansas generally used oxen. These work cattle consisted of native animals and Texas long-
horns. Some of the Texas drovers brought work cattle up the trail with their herds and found a profitable market for them in Kansas. Thus the Texas cowmen supplied the power for the grangers to turn the sod, thereby hastening the day of their own exit from the Kaw country.43

But the great development in transportation was coming in the iron horse.

On account of the war, railroad expansion had been delayed, but in 1870 there were 1,283 miles of track in the State.44 However, the work begun in the 60's by the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad, from Leavenworth to Pawnee on the site of the Fort Riley military reservation, was purchased by the Kansas Pacific Railroad after the war. Land grants were made by the government that year, and within two years 559 miles of track were completed on the eastern end. A part of this was put into operation.45 By April, 1869, the Union Pacific stretched from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean.

In 1864 the promoters of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad got a Congressional grant of 6,400 acres of land per mile of road actually built in the State, to be completed within ten years. In 1869 less than thirty miles had been built westward from Topeka; a year later the line was extended to Emporia, about sixty miles from Topeka. In 1872 the line was finished to the eastern outlet at Atchison, while in the early part of the next year the western boundary of Kansas was reached.46

43 Streeter, The Kaw, 212.

44 "Kansas Quarter-Centennial," loc. cit., 375.


46 Ibid., 100-103.
The Kansas City, Lawrence & Southern Railroad was opened in 1870 as the Leavenworth, Lawrence & Galveston Railroad and had nearly two hundred miles of line in the eastern part of the State in 1872.\textsuperscript{47}

The Missouri River, Fort Scott & Gulf Railroad originated in 1868 for the purpose of developing the southeastern part of the State. It ran from Kansas City to Baxter Springs, a distance of 161 miles in 1870. In the same year work was commenced on a line to extend from Junction City, on the Kansas Pacific, to Fort Smith in Indian Territory. This line was completed across the State in 1871 but, since it did not join trading centers of great size, the road was found to be useless without an extension. The lead and zinc mines and coal fields later brought the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad into southeastern Kansas from the East.\textsuperscript{48}

The railroads were inextricably connected with immigration and further westward expansion. It has been said that western migration went hand in hand with the laying of the rails. The Irish came to work on the section gang and some Swedes and Germans did likewise. Farmers wanted the railroads to pass through the near-by trading centers and many townspeople boasted that their towns were sure to be "the new Chicago of the plains" when the railroads reached them. The railroad companies sold land to the settlers to finance building their lines, for money was scarce and land grants alone did not supply cash to pay the workmen.

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}
to Wyandotte in the spring of 1864:

She was an old wood burner and had been used by the government on the Orange, Alexandria & Manassas railroad in Virginia. Matt Cleary was transporting the rolling stock from Weston on the Missouri River, the then terminus of the Platt County Railroad, and the nearest rail point to Kansas City. He brought the engine down on a barge, a cut was made, rails were laid from the water's edge to her deck, and on these the engine was slid along to terra firma. J. L. Hallett fired her up and used her to draw a small push car. Also! he knew not the ways of locomotives, and ran her too near the edge of the river. In she plunged up to the headlight, the rear end fortunately remaining on the bank. With scarcity of both knowledge and tackle, it was several days before she was pulled out. 49

Courtney Ryley Cooper, in The Last Frontier, has given a vivid picture of the railroad coming west. He speaks of the Kansas Pacific.

Stake men, chain men, linemen going ahead, checking over work already carefully checked; superintendents rechecking, to be followed by the constant chugging of ties as they struck the ground, were hurried into alignment, then tamped into place to await the rails—such was the scene as it went forward, steadily forward, while the crowd grew greater, and because of it, the difficulties of labor steadily increased. 50

And so, with shouts of "The Railroad! The Railroad! It's at the top of the hill! You can see them working—" news spread along the hinterland that the great wonder of the age had arrived on the Kansas plains.

On the day when the little old engine came down the track for the first time there was a great furor and an expectant throng. There was a hilarious reception of the iron horse.


50 Courtney Ryley Cooper, The Last Frontier (Boston, 1923), 125-26.
The bugles! The shrieking of the engine whistle! The faint sound of brass-throated music, growing stronger—the cheering of the crowds—and a woman turned to weep happily, softly, in her husband's arms... the rushing forth of youngsters, to dance and cavort with the swelling surge of the music—nearer—nearer—the band, the soldiers, the engine lazily moving proudly along!

At last the little black engine puffed into a stop before the station, swathed in flags and bunting.

Surveying parties in advance of the tracks in the western part of Kansas were not immune to adventures nor to attacks by the Indians. John Cruise recorded a thrilling incident about a surveying party of Kansas Pacific engineers who were in the spring of 1869 beyond the terminal town of Phil Sheridan, near the Kansas-Colorado line.

Having departed from their supply base early one morning, the engineers and helpers scattered westward over several miles. The leader of the party, Howard Schuyler, was "looking out the line" and indicating the way by building sod mounds. Not an Indian was in sight, nor had there been any for perhaps a month. When the Indians, ambushed along the proposed route, had cornered Schuyler on three sides, they shot his horse in the hip. Having mounted, he put spurs to his horse and escaped over the rough ground.

Having once got clear of the broken ground, Howard, looking back, found himself well ahead, and was congratulating himself on so easy an escape, when he saw directly before him, springing out of the grass, a formidable array of Indians intercepting his flight. Those pursuing in the rear closed up, and almost before he could realize the situation, he found himself again entrapped, this time by a line of Indians that entirely encircled him, numbering about 100, as nearly as he could judge. They rapidly narrowed the limits of the circle and began taunting him with all manner of insult and telling him of the tortures.

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51 Ibid., 129.
that awaited him, and of the slow roasting that they proposed to give him. For several minutes he sat on his horse trying to reconcile himself to the certainty that death was before him, but when the first struggle was over all trembling ceased, and with as true aim as ever huntsman leveled at a reindeer, he threw up his rifle and fired at the nearest man, killing him instantly. Earlier in the fight he had realized that he was more lightly armed than usual, having that morning left his belt with a brace of pistols and a box of cartridges in camp to be cleaned, taking his Winchester carbine, carrying only twelve shots. He now determined to sell his life as dearly as possible, and counting every shot, to be sure that he saved one for himself as a dernier retrait in case of capture, since death by his own hands was preferable to slow torture. Twice more he shot in quick succession, without fatal effect, when he suddenly put spurs to his horse and dashed through their lines.

The entire engineering party arrived at the camp site after an hour's ride and running fight, with only one man wounded.  

Telegraph operators near the end of the line had interesting experiences to relate, for they were, in the 60's, "all-round men." They had to send telegrams, repair breaks in the line, locate interruptions from grounding, install offices, and do anything that came to hand in connection with the telegraph service.

During the latter part of the month of November, 1867, our train ran into quite a severe storm as we neared Hays City, about 300 miles west of Kansas City, at that time the end of the track. We were domiciled at the Ferry House, the leading hotel of Hays City. This building had been hastily constructed, and when we awoke, after an uncomfortably cold night, we discovered streaks of snow across our beds, drifted in through the walls and roof. The wind was high and the snow was fine and dry. Persons who have experienced snowstorms on the plains know how hard it is to keep this snow out of the best of houses, for it comes through the frames of doors and windows, especially when driven by a strong wind. We were soon downstairs in the dining room eating buffalo steak, potatoes au naturel, black coffee with dark brown sugar, and soda biscuits, served on tin plates with tin cups and tin spoons; but we had good wholesome appetites, well whetted by the bracing atmosphere.

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53 Ibid., 545.
When the relief train came in from the East, spirits really rose, for food was not to be found anywhere on the prairies, which were covered with snow and blasted by a blizzard. Back at Ellsworth, the western point to which trains ran then, a man could catch the regular train to Wyandotte. The baggage master provided in the baggage car a bed made from buffalo robes and blankets on top of coffins of several persons who had been victims of cholera. Here the tired telegraph operator slept well, and it was not until morning that the occupant of the buffalo-robed berth knew what lay beneath him.54

A buffalo hunt by rail was organized for the benefit of a church in Eastern Kansas and left Lawrence about ten o'clock on Tuesday, October 6, 1868, on the Kansas Pacific Railway. Of the three hundred in the group, twenty-six were women. The Lawrence Cornet Band went along to entertain the excursion on the platform. Said one of the sportsmen, "Our train consisted of five passenger coaches, one smoking car, one baggage and one freight car. The two latter were used for the commissary, although on our way back the freight car was devoted to another purpose [two scalped corpses were brought back from Hays]." En route to the hunt, a straw vote on the presidential candidates was taken with the result that the group voted four to one in favor of Grant.55

Of the country west of Hays City the reporter said:

There is here none of the tall prairie-grass which prevails generally over the West, and in this respect the contrast

54Ibid., 546.

is great. But what are those round spots about eight feet in diameter, slightly depressed, and where the grass is darker in color and grows ranker, and of a different quality from the prevailing buffalo-grass? Those spots are all over the Plains, say two rods apart. These are "buffalo-wallows," where the bulls have ploughed the sod with their horns, and rolled in the soil their shaggy manes.

Another thing noticeable: what gives to the telegraph-poles in this region that smooth, greasy appearance a few feet from the base? That is where the animals have rubbed themselves when passing.56

Early in 1868, the town of Hays witnessed an invasion of buffalo which dashed through the streets while men and women made indiscriminate war upon the invaders by shooting from windows and doors. "Fresh buffalo meat was very plentiful."57

But during the summer other savage elements were loosed upon Central and Western Kansas.

For the war clouds were gathering. It was summer now, with the trails hard and the streams gone down from their rampages of the spring. Every return of the hunters to the camp, where the railroad now had pushed forth its lines by night and day... brought fresh news, fresh forebodings. The stages were running only at intervals, and then with three of the lumbering vehicles in a group, the one in the lead and that behind crammed with soldiers, ready for instant defense. Stations had been burned; Salina was thick with men and women and children who had ventured forth a year before to make the beginnings of a home in the far-off stretches, but who now were flooding in, begging for protection. The signal fires were burning. Here and there about the various agencies, great stretches of tepees were missing, nor could the blank-faced agents give any information of where they had gone. Traders had disappeared from the towns; they were traveling toward where the Indian awaited, protected through that unwritten law of safe-conduct which the red man ever gave to the being who would bring him guns and the wherewithal to defend what were to him his sacred lands. The Indian would not fight the railroad, once its trains rushed along the rails. It would be a losing battle—there was too much chance for protection, too easy an access for escape. But now—58

56Ibid., 453.
57Kansas City Daily Tribune, February 9, 1868.
58Cooper, The Last Frontier, 134-85.
the redman was on the warpath against every white settler.

The enthusiasm of settlers for the railroads is indicated by the fact that the Junction City, Solomon Valley and Denver Railroad was projected during the 60's and the company, which was largely composed of Junction City men, sent the president out "to make such exploration on the proposed route of railway as his judgment would deem necessary and proper."59 The president kept a diary on the trip and recorded these conclusions:

For the past ten years, or since 1859, the settlements up the Sol. have not advanced practically, five miles. The dread of the Indian has blocked the progress of civilization.

One snort of the iron horse in this valley would do more to people the wilderness we have traversed, than an army with banners.60

The following excerpt from a letter sent about the middle of May, 1870, to the Venango Spectator of Franklin, Pennsylvania, shows how one visitor enjoyed celebrating the completion of the Missouri River, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad from Kansas City to Baxter Springs.

Last Wednesday found me, with a railroad pass in my clothes, upon the train bound for Baxter Springs, . . .

The train was made up of eleven cars and a gaily trimmed locomotive. . . . Everybody seemed inclined to enjoy themselves. Songs and speeches were made, a generous chap with a keg of whiskey swung on his shoulder freely gave the exhilarating liquid to all who would, and freely received their inquiries for more.

Time passed merry as a dinner bell. . . till our arrival in Baxter at about half past eight o'clock. Those of us who bore little pieces of ribbon with the inscription "Invited Guest" were marshaled to a large tent where supper was provided for us, large in quantity and elegant in quality. In fact, the

59 Junction City Union, October 16, 1869, quoted in Martha B. Caldwell (ed.), "Exploring the Solomon River Valley in 1869," Kansas Historical Quarterly, VI, 60.

60 Ibid., 76.
tables groaned beneath the delicacies. . . After supper I attended the Indian War Dance upon the public square.61

But the visitor was soon tired of the war dance and adjourned to the halls where his "Caucasian fellow men were tripping the light fantastic toe. The ball was a large and elegant assembly of the elite of Baxter and indeed the whole state. The ball was kept up during the whole of the night, . . ."62 The next day there were speeches, a grand barbecue, Indian dances, riding, a canoe race, and other exercises.

Freighting was carried on to a considerable extent between 1860 and 1868. During the war, men who did not wish to give army service were employed as "mulewhackers." After the war, young men who loved adventure and wished to see the West were used also. A great business was operated—taking groceries, other merchandise, lumber, and munitions from Westport or Leavenworth to Salt Lake City and to Santa Fe. These two routes afforded many an adventure for young men working for freighting companies and doing a little business on their own. Pay was good. Mexican outfits were also detailing goods back to the western frontier of the States and sometimes caused difficulties at water holes by not allowing American freighting trains to use the water too.

Buffalo provided not only meat, but often amusement. Said a freighter,

When we went into camp . . . [one evening in 1864] there were no buffalo in sight, but on getting up at daylight next morning we saw an unusually large herd to the east of us, scattered

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62Ibid., 381-83.
from the river up into the hills, and moving north. When the cattle were brought in we missed two steers. I knew right away that they had sneaked off during the night and gotten in with the buffalo, for there was no place anywhere near camp for them to hide. So I rode out as near to the herd as I could without stampeding them and looked a long time all over them, but not a steer could I see. I therefore came to the conclusion that they had joined some passing band early in the night and were miles away. It is a well-known fact that when domestic cattle get mixed in with buffalo they soon become as wild as the buffalo.63

Later in the fall of that year:

We were going over the Jornado [the trip from the Cimarron Crossing of the Arkansas River to the Cimarron Valley] and nearing Sand creek. I rode ahead to look for water, and found a good pool, also one solitary old buffalo bull, a monster in size, but so old and poor that he didn't try to get away. Drawing my pistol I tried for a side shot, but the old fellow kept turning, always with his head towards me. As my horse had never been so near a buffalo he was very nervous and it was hard to keep him from bolting. When I finally got near the old reprobate he made a lunge towards us; as he did this my horse wheeled to the right causing my arm to swing to the left, and pressing the trigger I barely missed the horse's head. I then drew off to a safe distance and killed the buffalo. I cut out his tongue, that being the only part of him fit to eat.

My next tumble was a few years later. At this time I had a Texas pony "Billy." He was very swift and could go any distance and would go right alongside a buffalo. He liked the sport as well as I did. It was no trouble to ride into a herd and pick out any one I wanted.

We were traveling up the Arkansas, west of Pawnee Fork when I saw four young buffalo that had just crossed the river and were heading for the upland. I started after them and when near enough for a final spurt gave Billy the spur and was just in the act of cutting one out when Billy stepped into a gopher hole and down he went. It was done so quickly I couldn't tell what happened. I had a sensation of being down and something scrambling over me. I was completely dazed and when I got on my feet it took me some time to get my wits together sufficiently to locate the road and the direction of the train. Next thing was to look for my pistol, which I found some distance from where we fell. The ground was torn up as if rooted by hogs. How I escaped being hurt has always been a mystery to

63 Charles Raber, "Personal Recollections of Life on the Plains from 1860 to 1868," Collections, XVI, 324.
me, but I never got a scratch. Billy was about four hundred yards away grazing. When I got to him I found the bridle bit broke, and his head and one hind leg skinned. He had a pretty bad jolt, but was not hurt; he was very sure footed and this was his only tumble.64

In Heritage of the Bluestem the author mentioned the buffalo coming in a great mass eastward along the Smoky Hill River toward Salina in search of water:

The entire plain, as far as they could see, was now a moving, seething mass. The animals were crowded so closely together that at a distance their backs presented the undulating surface of a vast black sea, whose waters rose in uniform cadence, as the buffaloes moved forward. Here and there, far on the outskirts of the moving panorama, a solitary animal was seen grazing alone.

In various exposed spots a break in the uniform blackness now became visible and columns of dust rose where battles raged among the contending bulls of the different bands of the great herd. Above the roar of the thundering hoofs was heard the hoarse bellowing of the contenders as they rushed at each other, their horns clattering in the conflict.65

One of the heroes who gained his early fame by shooting buffalo in Kansas was Buffalo Bill.66 Cooper's The Last Frontier gave a picture of Buffalo Bill in 1866 as "a man with drooping mustaches, long hair waving about his neck, ivory-handled revolvers crossed, in the narrow belt which encompassed his dusty long-tailed coat, lengthy rifle across his saddle, and a whisky jug very much in evidence." At this time Buffalo Bill was conducting wagon trains westward in Kansas. In the evenings he was accustomed to sing over and over:

64Ibid., 326.

65Carlson, Heritage of the Bluestem, 19.

66It is said that he killed 4,280 buffalo in eighteen months, hence his name. E. G. Cattermole, Famous Frontiersmen, Pioneers and Scouts. The Romance of American History (Tarrytown, 1926), 464.
Buffalo gals, won't yer come out ternight?
Come out ternight? Come out ternight?
Buffalo gals, won't yer come out ternight?
And dance in the light o' th' me-o-o-o-o-n?  

A little later, he was killing buffalo to feed the workers on the railroad:

Fire and reload and chase! Swing and duck and counter—driving into the center of the herd to separate it, one half from the other—then straight across the wide, smooth plains, with the snorting quarry roaring on ahead, and with Buffalo Bill bellowing in the distance as he sent Old Brigham galloping after the game which must fall to his rifle that a thousand men might live and work—and the outstretched arms of an empire's progress be filled with strength.  

Behind the buffalo hunters came a wagon: into the fore part were loaded the reeking heads which "some day, stuffed and mounted, would advertise a railroad to a whole continent." The rear part was piled high with buffalo humps, "while the rest of the carcass lay behind to rot where the beast had fallen, and to form one more pile of bones to whiten with the summer suns as a temporary monument to a passing thing."  

Prairie fires and blizzards offered dangers to freighters, buffalo hunters, and others. Said one plainsman:

I made it a rule never to camp in high grass in the fall of the year if I could avoid it on account of the danger of fire. But if I had to, my cook had orders to always clear a space before starting a fire. Mr. Spatzier's cook failed to do this and the result was that we had to fight fire for several hours before we got it turned away from the wagons. We had a close call, for part of Spatzier's cargo was powder. I didn't know it until after the grass caught fire. The fire followed on down the Cimarron and we could see clouds of smoke for several days.

On the 28th of October we were caught in a blizzard near

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67 Cooper, The Last Frontier, 3, 6.
68 Ibid., 115.
69 Ibid., 116.
the Rabbit Ear Mound. Fortunately for us there was a large dry laguna that was grown over with sunflowers and other high weeds, over a man's head, furnishing some food and shelter for the stock, but we were corralled on high ground and got the full benefit of the storm. My men had room to sleep in the wagons, but Spatzier was loaded to the wagons' bows and some of his men had to sleep on the ground. One young fellow . . . from Clay county, Missouri, came to me and begged to be allowed to crawl into one of my wagons "and die." But there was fun in camp when freight was laid up for two weeks near Salina on account of bad weather. For a German lad the boys framed a snipe-hunting expedition.

They were going to take him away out in the hills and plant him with the sack. I thought I would have a little fun on my own hook, so I posted Jack and instructed him what to do. So when the boys got ready for the hunt Jack was a willing victim. Of course he was back, hidden in camp, before the boys returned. They were a jolly lot and were having a great time telling how they did the trick, when out jumped Jack and turned the joke on them.

John Booth of Westport was one of our party, and he had the knack of getting all kinds of results from table rappings. So one of our amusements was to take a box, in lieu of a table, and go into a wagon at night and have rappings. Jack got interested and wanted to see how it worked. In the meantime the boys had taken a wheel off of the wagon and put a prop under the axle. The spirits were working overtime answering Jack's questions and he was very much absorbed, when down came the wagon and out jumped a badly frightened Dutchman. But in the fall of 1868, when one freighting partner had taken a wife, the other partner sold his wagons for less than half the original cost and disposed of his cattle investment the next spring. With the coming of railroads, freighting by mule team was going on West.

In other industries, Kansas, despite the trying times, showed progress between 1860 and 1870, during which time the population

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71 Ibid., 334-35.
treated. Forty-one counties reported manufacturing increased about sevenfold although the shops were small. The number of lumbering establishments grew 70 per cent. Lumber led in the number of factories, but milling held first place in the value of products and continued to keep this rank until after 1885. Most of the mills for grinding were run by small waterwheels; half a dozen, by wind; the rest, by steam. Although little hard winter wheat was yet used in Kansas, in 1870 about two and one-half million bushels of wheat were raised. Twenty years later the yield was 30,000,000 bushels—thanks to better seed and improved crop conditions. When milling was not in season, waterpower was used to run the saws. During the 60's the manufacture of furniture, wagons, and carriages of a cheap type in small shops increased. Said a writer to the Titusville, Pennsylvania, Herald, in August, 1870:

We are now sending the finest black walnut timber to Cincinnati and Philadelphia to be made into chairs and cabinet ware, and are bringing our stoves from Troy, our printing material from Chicago and St. Louis, and our ready-made clothing from New York. As our population increases and our resources become developed, it is essential to our growth and prosperity that we learn to supply our own wants, . . .

Agriculture was still of great interest, but differences in the soil and climate of Central Kansas from that of Eastern Kansas showed that the State could not be entirely a corn producer. During this period harness shops prospered, seventy odd shops doing more than a $400,000 business in 1870. A year later the packing of hogs began for

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the Irish and English markets. Not five years were to pass before
the great cattle-raising regions were opened by the railroads and
Kansas City became an important shipping point.74

Towns on the newly extended railroads showed a favorable growth
and were to reap the profits of their location in the next decade. In
1869 the land of Sedgwick County was bought from the Osage Indians and
thrown open to homesteaders. Claims were taken round about and the
site of Wichita was laid out. It is interesting to note that Camp
Beecher, established at the junction of the Big and Little Arkansas
rivers, was called Wichita as early as June, 1868.75 Court was held
in an unused hay loft of a livery stable at Third and Main streets in
June, 1870. "His Honor" had the only chair in the room, the other
seats being 2x6 planks over nail kegs.76 In July, 1870, the largest
cities were reported as Leavenworth, 22,000 inhabitants; Topeka,
8,450; Lawrence, 6,500; Fort Scott, 6,500; Atchison, 6,000.77

The meat-packing industry in Kansas had its inception soon after
the war. It was in the winter of 1865-66 that Ridenour and Baker,
two merchants of Lawrence who had escaped the raid of 1863, began a
meat-packing business in a small way. They bought all the dressed
hogs they could get from in and around Topeka and Lawrence and turned
them into smoked meat, for which there was much demand in the new

74Douglas, "A History of Manufactures in the Kansas District,"
loc. cit., 96-97, 124.
75Kansas State Daily Record, June 12, 1863.
76Wichita Daily Eagle, March 19, 1905.
77Douglas, "A History of Manufactures in the Kansas District,"
loc. cit., 98.
country. This was quite an item in their business for more than a dozen years. An early meat-packing business was also established in Junction City in 1867, where about a thousand cattle were dressed and shipped to market.

Notwithstanding the ravages on the Indian border and the tribulations arising in many of the new communities, new fields, orchards, houses, and towns were supporting a progressive civilization and a prosperous period. Harvests after the drought year of '60 were luxuriant until 1873. Eastern Kansas had an accustomed order and was developing the general culture of the West. Governor Samuel J. Crawford appointed Thursday, November 28, 1867, as a day of Thanksgiving and prayer to Almighty God, and the people were glad for this observance, because "Abundant harvests have rewarded the labors of the husbandmen, and every department of industry has thrived."

Kansas, the child of the prairies, declared a pioneer,

... has always attracted men of intelligence, who knew a good thing when they saw it. They brought with them the school, the church, and the printing press; they planted an orchard and a grove as soon as they had harvested their first crop; and if they were compelled to live in a dug-out the first year or two, they were reasonably certain to own a comfortable house the third.

The pioneers' cellars, fruit cupboards, smokehouses, caves, and granaries became storehouses of abundance because the pioneers possessed

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80 "Kansas Quarter-Centennial," loc. cit., 375.
81 Crawford, Kansas in the Sixties, 282.
82 "Kansas Quarter-Centennial," loc. cit., 375.
great knowledge and skill.

They made their own butter and cheese, killed and cured their own pork and beef, they mended their own harness; half-soled their own shoes, and made the wooden pegs and waxed-end thread, with hog bristle points to do it with. They scored and hewed the logs to build their cabins, and sawed the lumber and made the shingles for their buildings; they made flails, mauls, axe handles, wagon tongues; made wagon spokes and put them in, set wagon tires, made their ox yokes and bent the bows without splitting the wood. They built churches and schoolhouses, educated their children, made laws and constitutions, and made Kansas a great state. 83

During the summer of 1866, John Greenleaf Whittier, still the bachelor poet, visited Leavenworth to deliver a lecture and to view the State that had become "the homestead of the free" through the help of his "Song of the Kansas Emigrant." 84 Ralph Waldo Emerson lectured in Kansas the next year. 85 The West was hungry to hear the scholars of the nation.

Schools on the frontier just after the Civil War were primitive. When the first school in Lincoln County was held in a little dugout on the Saline River in 1866-67, the pupils were the three sons of the teacher. In Ottawa County a Union nurse in the Civil War taught two little girls of eight and ten years, the first school held in that section. The little girls wore calico dresses and sunbonnets and enjoyed the wild life on the prairies during part of the day. 86 Near Delphos, school was held in a one-room log cabin in which books, after

83 Doran, "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," loc. cit., 501.
84 Crawford, Kansas in the Sixties, 238.
85 Hubert H. Hoeltje, "Ralph Waldo Emerson in Minnesota," Minnesota History Magazine, XI (1930), 145.
the Indian raids, were scarce since most of the families were nearly
destitute. In one family of ten children, it was necessary for the
girls just out of the third grade to begin working around for other
families in the neighborhood to help support their own families.\footnote{37}

At recess or noon in the little red schoolhouse of the country
districts it was "a privilege to go after a pail of water from which
all the children drank with a common tin cup."\footnote{38}

Charles Moreau Harger has written of the school on the prairies:

\begin{quote}
An earthen mound on the prairie's swell,  
The work of new settlers' hands,—  
An uncouth temple for learning made,  
Its walls of the rudest earth-squares laid,—  
The lone sod school-house stands.

Not a tree in sight from the open door,  
Not a shrub on the landscape's face,  
But a sea of grass fills all the view,—  
Its waves are of emerald's sparkling hue,  
And above, cloud-shadows race.

I hear the sound of a tinkling bell,  
The teacher's signal sweet;  
There's a drowsy hum from a score of lips,  
There's a smothered laugh at some dullard's slips,  
And a noise of restless feet.\footnote{89}
\end{quote}

But it was said of the normal school at Emporia that it was
"ably conducted" and afforded excellent training for teachers, although
not a sufficient number of them for the State since "every community
as it crystalizes into a town, devotes its first attentions to the
erection of a school building and the procurement of competent teachers."

\begin{flushright}
\footnote{38} Best, "Early Days in Drywood," \textit{loc. cit.}, 356.
\end{flushright}
Considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining teachers from the East who were willing to make a permanent home in Kansas and thus establish a feeling of sympathetic understanding between teacher and pupil. And so another normal school was on its way—at Leavenworth.90

During the late 60's even in rural Eastern Kansas, there were few amusements.

The proverbial shindig was seldom if ever invoked. School exhibitions and play parties were the Olympics of Drywood. At the latter, ring around the rosy, dropping the handkerchief, and paying forfeits were the star performances. Another, old mother Wobble Gobble, was also popular; in this all were seated and the presiding genius would say, "Old mother Wobble Gobble, pray pitty you; old mother Wobble Gobble, do as I do," whereupon the reciter of this inspiring rhyme would distort his features, or do some ridiculous thing, and all the rest were at once to prove their lineal relation to the missing link by doing the same thing—which led to much gayety. At one play party, Wash Hardy set the example by standing on his head, and Hettie Nance was the only suffragette brave enough to wobble according to Mrs. Wobble Gobble.91

There were also rabbit hunting, political talk, and occasional horse races, speakings on patriotic days and during election campaigns, and intercourse with one's neighbor while he stood at the plow.92

The days of the week were full of duties, but the Sabbath morning found many settlers gathered together in small groups "making a prairie sanctuary" of their cabins. Not only were these meetings of benefit for the devotions, but they helped to break the awful loneliness of the plains, which was a part of the fight with the wilderness.93

97 West, "Early Days in Drywood," loc. cit., 357.
98 Ibid., 354-57.
99 McCarter, Winning the Wilderness, 45.
At times a missionary or a preacher would appear on the frontier. What has been called Wichita's first religious service occurred in the late 60's. A Mr. Platt, sent West by the Congregational Missionary Society, made a tour into Southwest Kansas and stopped to visit a young man teaching school in a dugout on the site of Wichita. In the town was also a saloon, to which the preacher went for his congregation. As he entered the saloon, the barkeeper put down a violin he had been "scratching" with the bow and offered a drink to the newcomer.

Mr. Platt was a skilled musician, both a violinist and a vocalist, ... He picked up the violin and drew the bow across the strings enough times to discover that it was an instrument of unusual tone. He played a few instrumental selections and then began to sing, accompanying himself on the violin. One by one the men began to leave the tables and gather about him. ... After singing several rollicking songs, he sang an old ballad, descriptive of a storm upon the ocean, the refrain of which ran, "God is upon the sea as well as upon the land." ... the entertainment closed with the singing of one of the most familiar hymns of the church. Mr. Platt then laid the violin across the bar and made a short religious talk to as attentive and respectful an audience as any preacher might wish to have assembled before him. He closed by inviting these men to come to the dug-out schoolhouse and hear him preach the next morning.

The doctrine of "fire and damnation" was sometimes expounded. A child in Heritage of the Bluestem said:

"I get very much frightened sometimes when my Sunday School teacher tells of the terrible Judgment day, when we shall be called before the bar of God. ... And then the books will be opened and if in them is found anything written against us we shall be sent to hell to be punished in a lake of fire and brimstone forever and ever, and that's an awful long time.

"I burned my hands once in helping fight a prairie fire and it was pretty bad. I am sure I couldn't stand to burn forever and ever.

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"I am so frightened sometimes I can't sleep, and I think maybe the trumpet will sound and the Lord will come in the sky to judge us. . . .

"My father says the Lord is an avenging God. . . .

"I would rather have mother's God. She says He loves us and forgives us when we do wrong if we are truly sorry about it. She says He watches over us and sends His angels to take care of us and keep us from harm, if we pray to Him and believe in Him."

To live on the frontier a settler constantly needed to remember the Biblical promise: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

The frontier held suffering and work for men; for women it held all that plus utter loneliness and torturing anxiety for their loved ones. Amid the most elemental and barren surroundings day after day passed, and the same meager economy prevailed. The lonely feeling was unbroken by the sight of familiar faces except those of the family.

During the long day while the men were away at work, while the children were out herding cattle, plowing, or attending school, while the older sons were serving against the Indians, the mother spent her time going over the monotonous, inconvenient, and often heavy tasks at home. She carried on during the frigid winter, through windy spring months when the plains wind fiercely carried everything movable before it, and through the blazing furnace heat of summer. A cloud of gritty dust encircling the house quickly undid what her vigorous efforts of the early hours had accomplished. Seating herself for a moment of rest, the pioneer woman gazed at evening upon the same vast expanse of treeless plain which she beheld at dawn. The long lashing waves of dry grass burned her eyes, and only the cottonwoods moaned untiringly.

With a brood of children, most of the time eight or ten, was it any wonder that one pioneer wife was laid away to be succeeded by another and then another?

McCarter has pictured the monotony and sadness of the plains:

The next day, and for days following, the wind blew; fiercely and unceasingly it blew, carrying every movable thing before it. Whatever was tending in its direction, it helped over the ground amazingly. Whatever tried to move in the face of it had to fight for every inch of the way. It whipped all the gold from the sunflowers and threshed them mercilessly about. It snapped the slender stems of the big, bulgy-headed tumble-weeds and sent them tumbling over and over, mile after mile, until they caught at last in some draw, like helpless living things, to swell the heap for some prairie fire to feed upon. It lifted the sand from the river bed and swept it in a prairie simoon up the slope, wrapping the little cabin in a cloud of gritty dust. The cottonwoods along the waterway moaned as in pain and flung up their white arms in feeble protest. The wild plum bushes in the draw were almost buried by the wind-borne drift smothering the narrow crevice, while out on the plains the long lashing waves of bended grass made the eyes burn with weariness. And the sun watched it all with unpitying stare, and the September heat was maddening.96

Even children were sometimes deeply affected by the silence, the vastness, and the elemental cruelty of the prairies and the plains. One Kansas girl on occasion when great patience and unrewarded waiting were required would sit at the organ, pumping and playing as hard as she could—for relief.97

Many of these women had been reared well and wished the best for their children. It is not to be considered strange, then, that a spirited woman should protest at living with ten children in a sod house dug out of a bank of a stream in Central Kansas. One woman said, "She'd be darned if she'd hole up like a prairie dog" and live

96 McCarter, Winning the Wilderness, 30.
97 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit., 516.
in a soddy. She more than once wondered why a man of good sound
judgment like her husband would bring his family to such a God-forsaken
country as Middle Kansas. But like other pioneer women she sacrificed
her ideals and consented to the plans of her husband and the possibilities of the frontier. A sod house became home; a two-room cabin was
"ample for the present" when the Kansas mother in Central Kansas wrote
back to her folks in the East.98

Sod roofs sometimes leaked onto the very spot where the lady of
the plains was frying pancakes, but sometimes this was remedied by
some member of the family holding an umbrella over the cook and her
cakes.99

Blair has written in praise of the women of the State:

A song to the mothers of Kansas
Who came with the first pioneers,
Who lived in the tent covered wagons,
Whose lot oft was hardships and tears,
Who worked with the fever burned temples
For others they saw in distress,
Who never would give up their homesteads
Nor any misgivings confess.

A song to the queens of the prairie
Whose cabins were never too small,
Who welcomed the way-faring strangers,
Who always found shelter for all,
Who made each a guest tho' a stranger,
Without thinking once of the pay,
And sent them away on the morrow
Regretting so short was their stay.100

"A Willer Crick Incident," by William Allen White, told of a

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99 Harrison, "Reminiscences of Early Days in Ottawa County,"
loc. cit., 624-25.
woman's suffering in rearing her crippled son who finally was buried

"Mid the sunflowers lightly blown."

Long ago before the hoppers an' the drouth of semty-four,
Long before we talked of boomin', long before the first Grange store.
Long before they was a city on the banks of Miller Crick
Come a woman doin' washin' an' a little boy named Dick.101

Mary E. Jackson's "Myra," told the sacrifice of a woman who lost
her loved one during the Civil War. The story took place "just across
the Kansas river from Lecompton" in the pleasant village of Perry,

amid "the wild grasses and hazelnuts in the groves on the Grashopper."102

Despite the trials in Kansas women stayed and made their homes "on
the edge of nowhere." McCarter said of the sod home on the Kansas
plains:

Two decades in Kansas saw hundreds of such cabins on the
plains. The walls of this one were nearly two feet thick and
smoothly plastered inside with a gypsum product, giving an
ivory-yellow finish, smooth and hard as bone. There was no
floor but the bare earth into which a nail could scarcely
have been driven. The furniture was meager and plain. There
was only one picture on the wall, the sweet face of Asher's
mother. A bookshelf held a Bible with two or three other
volumes, some newspapers and a magazine. Sundry surprising
little devices showed the inventive skill of the home-builder,
but it was all home-made and unpainted. It must have been the
eyes of love that made this place seem home-like to these
young people whose early environment had been so vastly dif-
erent in everything.103

And time wore on. Said the reminiscing cottonwood tree—some-
where on a ridge on the Smoky Hill fork of the Kaw River or on the

101 William Allen White, "A Miller Crick Incident," in White
and Paine, Rhymes by Two Friends, 153.

102 Mary E. Jackson, "Myra," Topeka Daily Commonwealth, Sep-
tember 2, 1893, in Short Stories. Clippings, I, 187, Kansas State
Historical Society Library.

103 McCarter, Winning the Wilderness, 26.
Republican River in a familiar story of the State:

I've seen the stalwart, fresh-cheeked young fellows come out here from Pennsylvania and Indiana (wherever in the province of winds those places may be), and I've watched them bend and shrivel and harden in the hot summers and sharp, bitter changeable winters... I've seen the fair Ohio lassies, bright-eyed, pink-cheeked girls, grow old and turn yellow-brown... 104

During the late years of the decade, cholera stalked members of the overland and water-route parties. It disposed of a number of Indians and took newly arrived citizens and soldiers who had served in putting down the Indian incursions.105 And so cholera, poison, cold, hunger, heat, loneliness, and hostile Indians harassed the settlers.

At the close of hostilities between the North and the South many of the Indian tribes located in Kansas were induced to transfer their lands back to the Federal government at a price as low in some cases as fifteen cents an acre.106 Moreover, whenever the protecting army withdrew from the Kansas reservation, emigrants nabbed land belonging to the Indians and would not give it back.107 Settlers petitioned Congressmen to have the government remove the Indians from what they called the path of civilization. The poor Indian was in a pitiable

104 McCarter, The Cottonwood's Story, 55.
105 Wright, "Frontier Life in Southwest Kansas," loc. cit., 55; McCarter, Winning the Wilderness, 27; Hill P. Wilson, "Black Kettle's Last Raid," Transactions, VIII, 115; Elizabeth Custer, Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Kansas and Texas (New York, 1887), 676-96.
106 Marion Tuttle Hock, Illustrated History of Oklahoma (Topeka, 1890), 9.
Lo, the poor Indian, whose untutored mind, etc., of this section of the country is something of a nondescript. He is neither red, white, yellow, black, blue or green, but a mixture of all, most likely though his color is somewhat uncertain. He's a dressy chap, is Lo. The fashion-plates are nowhere in comparison with him. When he's fixed up for company his classic features are likely to represent the different hues of the rainbow. He may wear a "stovepipe," or it may only be a "slouch," but there is surely a feather in it and perhaps several of them. He may have a nice black dresscoat, or perhaps only a bright colored "Garibaldi." If he's stylish he possibly has a white shirt, but if he has, the tail thereof is nicely spread out over his breeches. Some of his clothes are ornamented with beads, and he may have boots, nicely blacked up to the top, with tassels on them, if he has the wherewithal to buy them. 103

This observer added that although some of the Indians in Eastern Kansas were well-to-do, maintaining a carriage and other adjuncts of civilized prosperity, "it will only be a short time after the completion of the N. R., Ft. S., & G. R. R. until that too will be seized by the all-grasping white man." 109

In the meantime, the nomadic tribes were incited to deep wrath at the loss of their plains and the buffalo disappeared all too rapidly. This was all a result of the white man's advance, and leaders of the redmen proposed to put a stop to the thefts and the resultant extermination of their food supply on the plains.

During 1865 and 1866 the chief theater of war was in Wyoming and along the Platte Valley of Nebraska. The white man's government continued to follow a policy of appeasement. White pioneers were allowed to take the land and the government gave the Indians firearms, powder, and rations of food and clothing to pacify them until a later date.

109 ibid., 375.
The sale of illicit whisky around the agencies and forts was not suppressed and this furthered the redmen's hatred of the whites.

The Skidi band of the Pawnee swept down into Kansas, in pursuit of buffalo herds, driven south by the drought, which had burned the Nebraska and Dakota grass lands a sear brown. But Kansas offered no relief. It, also, was in the grip of the drought, which extended far down into Mexico. The grass lands were a barren waste and the water holes were dry. Exhausted, in need of water, many of the animals perished. For eight months no rain had fallen and the drought showed no signs of abatement.

The artful Medicine Man, mindful of his opportunity, incited the band against the Whites.... The pale face settlers were to blame for the drought, he declared, and Morning Star—the Pawnee Spirit of Fertility—must be propitiated.

Soon the tom-tom-tom of Indian drums was added to the Medicine Man's droning, and passed gradually into a hypnotic rhythm. Slowly the warriors, who had been squatting around the camp fire, rose. With staring eyes, as if under the influence of some unseen power, they took up the droning, their lithe bodies swaying to the rhythm. Then the more deliberate motions gave way to speed. Faster and faster they moved, circling around the fire, which cast weird shadows over the scene, their faces disfigured by warpaint and the burning passion within, aroused by the Medicine Man's incitations; the feathers rustling like so many autumn leaves whipped by the breeze. Around the circle the women and children formed to keep watch. The Ghost Dance was on.

In 1866 when ominous rumblings of Indian warfare were heard in Western Kansas, a committee was sent from Washington to inquire into the causes of the continued destruction along the border. Satanta, war chief of the Kiowas, spoke his mind freely. He boasted that he had... no desire to kill the white people, but they ruthlessly killed off the buffalo, and let their carcasses rot on the prairie, while the Indian only killed from necessity. The whites had put out fires on the prairie and destroyed the grass, which caused their ponies to die of starvation, as well as the buffalo. They cut down and destroyed the timber and made large fires of it, while the Indian was satisfied to cook him "chuck" with a few dry limbs. Only the other day,... I picked up a little switch in the road and it made my heart bleed to think...
that small limb so ruthlessly torn up and thoughtlessly de­
stroyed by the white man would have in the course of time
become a grand tree, for the use and benefit of my children
and my grandchildren.\textsuperscript{111}

After the powwow when Satanta had imbibed a few drinks of red
liquor he spoke truly from his heart:

Now, didn’t I give it to those white men in good style? The
switch I saw in the road made my heart glad instead of sad,
for I knew there was a tenderfoot ahead, because an old plains-
man never would have anything but a quirt or a good pair of
spurs. I said, “Come on, boys; we have got him,” and we came
in sight of him pressing closely on the dead run; he threw his
gun away and held tight onto his hat, for fear he might lose
it. \textsuperscript{112}

In the summer of 1867 the Indians became active from the Red River
in Texas to the Platte, and from the Rockies to Eastern Kansas. De­
spite the fact that the Seventh Regiment of United States Cavalry and
the Eighteenth Kansas Cavalry were in the field constantly, the Indi­
ans were not controlled. Western forts were almost like islands in
a great sea of hostile Indians. The 1867 campaign of General Hancock
in Southern Kansas and what is Northern Oklahoma gave the Indians re­
newed confidence.\textsuperscript{113}

In the story "The Tragedy at Twin Mounds," Inman told of how
Paul Resume, who had been a pioneer in the wilds of Wisconsin twenty
years before, in 1866 became an emigrant to Kansas and established a
ranch at a magnificent spring a few hundred rods north of the base of
Twin Mounds. He settled there in spite of the decided opposition by

\textsuperscript{111} Wright, "Personal Reminiscences of Frontier Life: in South­
west Kansas," loc. cit., 69.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{113} Paul I. Wellman, "Some Famous Indian Frontier Scouts,"
Kansas Historical Quarterly, I, 349.
military authorities at Fort Harker, which was about fifteen miles south of Twin Mounds. The next year during April, when raids were being made by Satanta on the overland coaches and freight caravans on the routes to Mexico, the Reame family was slain with the exception of the oldest girl Susie. After rescuing Susie, Jack Hart, a scout from Harker, was attacked by a panther, which he killed although he later swooned from loss of blood during the fight. The mirage seen at the cavalry camp on the Saline River brought rescuers.114

In an attempt to conciliate the Indians, Washington authorities gathered some fifteen thousand of them in a council at Medicine Lodge and sought to get the redmen to abandon Kansas forever. The white diplomats lavishly gave away empires of land in the Indian Territory to the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches, and extracted a promise that proved to be too weak for consideration. This was the last straw woven into the pattern of conciliation.115

Before the end of the decade was in sight the central and western parts of the State were slashed and strewn with dead and the Indian was driven from this part of the plains—never to return in great force.

Early in June, 1868, the Cheyennes raided the Kaw reservation, Council Grove, and other parts of Marion County. When on June 3 settlers in Marion County were warned that a large band of Indians were approaching, the settlers flocked into Marion Centre for pro-


115T. A. McNeal, "The Indians Agree to Abandon Kansas," Transactions, VI, 344-46.
tection. Although the town was not disturbed, farm houses were destroyed and stock was killed in the vicinity. Tall Bull, chief of the Cheyennes, and possibly Little Robe, also a Cheyenne, led three hundred braves against the Kaws in retaliation for the death of seven Cheyennes in the summer of 1867. The attackers were driven off and went west, plundering as they left Council Grove.116

A mile out they ransacked the home of William Pollard, stole his flour, killed his dog and left the entrails on the door step, taking the carcass along for meat. They pillaged every white settler's house along the road. The people fled before them to places of hiding. They took special delight in taking feather beds, cutting a hole in one end, and riding like mad carrying the ticks in the air, while the feathers, scattering in the wind, covered the prairies like snow. The militia followed them some distance, but when pressed they scattered as chaff in the wind, and it was useless to go further.117

It is not known whether these Cheyennes joined in the raid on Spillman Creek and the Solomon Valley, but it is supposed that they did not.

Along the Santa Fe Trail, renegades of the Sioux, Kiowas, Comanches, Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Apaches, under the leadership of Charley Bent, joined in harassing the traffic and waylaying travelers.

..., Fort Dodge and vicinity was the central point from which most of the Indian raids culminated and depredations were committed. The Indians became so annoying in 1868 that the Barlow Sanderson's stage line, running from Kansas City, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, found it necessary to abandon the line as there were not enough soldiers to escort the stages through. Also the Butterfield stage line on the Smoky Hill route was abandoned. ..., In all some five thousand or more armed

116 Kansas State Daily Record, June 6, 7, 1868.

117 Doran, "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," loc. cit., 491.
Indians joined forces to drive the white people off the plains. 118

Cholera also made inroads upon the white men of the West, joining forces to dispose of the white encroachers upon the plains. 119

About August 12, 1868, came the first raid on the Solomon Valley by bands of Sioux and Cheyennes. Said one settler:

I can well remember the excitement that took place after word had been received that the Indians were coming. Everyone was in great haste to get the families safely out of danger. There were soldiers stationed along the frontier to protect the settlements from Indian raids, but the Indians had taken advantage of a time when the soldiers were on a buffalo hunt and began their depredations. All the settlers were trying to get their families to Minneapolis where they would be protected. Among the first families to get out were those living near the site of Delphos. The soldiers had returned from their buffalo hunt, after the Indians had entered the settlements, and were now coming to the aid of the settlers. 120

Neighbors who were working away from home were informed of the coming raid and someone tried to warn each family and help them to escape if the team was not at home. 121

Although we escaped the savages our property did not. Our dugout was destroyed and the addition burned. The lumber which father had hauled from Junction City and piled in a neat pile by the dugout was also burned. The windlass was broken and the pieces thrown in the well, the cow ran off and the mare and colt were stolen. 122

The second raid on the Solomon Valley came in October, 1868. From

119 Ibid., 107.
120 Clark, "Early Days Along the Solomon Valley," loc. cit., 723.
121 Ibid., 724.
122 Ibid.
Fort Hays a band of some forty braves under Black Kettle, a Cheyenne, after boasting how they loved the white men, went eastward along the Saline River and up near the mouth of Spillman Creek into Lincoln County, where they began their murderous work. The Indians also ran off all stock and burned the cabins. "Then, crossing the divide, they entered the Solomon Valley, and camped near the Great Spirit spring, Weconda. . . . Fifteen persons were killed in this raid and five women were made captives." Miss Anna Brewster Morgan and Miss Sarah White, a girl of seventeen, of Ottawa and Jewel counties, were captured and carried off by the Cheyennes. Among others, the Indians took two small girls whom they held as prisoners until night, then left them alone on the bleak prairie far from home. The children were found next morning wandering round over the plains. "A night alone on the prairie in those days was enough to frighten a grown person." Coyotes hunted and prowled in packs by night, uttering yapping cries and blood-curdling yells.

J. H. Lawton wrote of the Indians' approach to the settlers of the Solomon Valley:

Stealthily the grim beaked Indians crept among the rocks and silently stealing from tree to tree the little band reached a precipice overlooking the Valley of the Solomon River. The warriors were painted in their most savage colors, giving their faces a terrifying appearance. Eagle feathers adorned their heads and with two or three of the party, the row of feathers was extended down their backs and almost trailed in the grass. All of the members of the party were armed with guns and their every action betokened that they

were out on the warpath. Revenge sparkled in their cold black eyes and nothing but the blood and life of the settler could appease them.\textsuperscript{125}

During the winter of 1868-69 the settlers drew in the scattered edges of settlement in these valleys and lived together for protection. By spring the settlers had organized to protect the entire community and at the same time to have freedom in performing their farm duties and improving their claims.

This movement resulted in a fortification being built during the winter months of 1868-1869 on Yockey Creek, not over one hundred yards east of the present site of the Spiritualist camp-meeting ground near Delphos. This fort was made up of a group of one-room buildings around which were logs set perpendicular with the upper end sharpened. There were loopholes at various points in this fence of logs for the use of the defenders in case of attack. There was but one opening in this fence. The slabs from which the buildings were made were hauled from Minneapolis, and the logs that were used were gotten on the creeks in the near vicinity and dragged to the fort. This fortification became known as "Yockey Fort," and was used during the summer of 1869.

Early in the spring all the families in that locality assembled here at this fort. They moved their personal effects and household necessities into these one-room cabins and there remained all summer. The men folks, with the exception of a few left to guard the fort, would go to one man's claim and do his improving and plant the crop, then go on to the next man's claim and do likewise and so on until the work of the entire community was accomplished.\textsuperscript{126}

In June, 1869, came another attack from the Indians, but it was easily broken up and the savages were driven back before much damage was done.\textsuperscript{127} Moreover, by this time Custer and Sheridan had inflicted

\textsuperscript{125}J. W. Lawton, "Stealing a White Squaw," \textit{Kansas Magazine}, Ser. III (1933), 49. Lawton has made several errors in this story: the date of Black Kettle's raid was given as 1867; Mrs. Morgan's husband was said to have gone as a soldier to effect the freeing of the women from the Indians; a half-breed baby appeared in the story when the women were retaken in March, 1869.

\textsuperscript{126}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{127}\textit{Ibid.}, 726.
severe damage upon the towns of the Cheyennes down in the Washita Valley and had killed the leaders of the raids of the previous summer and fall.

An abundance of wild game and a plentiful supply of fish remained for the Solomon Valley settlers after the raids, but provisions of navy beans, cracked peas, sugar, salt, pepper, corn meal, and flour were scarce. In January, 1869, the government began issuing from Fort Harker rations of salt pork, sugar, salt, beans, corn meal, and a very small portion of wheat flour.128

It was through the efforts of Mary A. Bickerdyke, who was known as "Mother Bickerdyke," that we were able to draw these rations from the government. Mother Bickerdyke served during the Civil War as an army nurse. . . [and] certainly was a mother to the settlers in the Solomon valley. I believe that had it not been for her and the deeds of kindness and mercy she performed there would have been several deaths in the valley due to starvation and lack of proper clothing. She made an inspection tour of the valley in the early part of January, 1869, and seeing the needs of the settlers, and realizing that they were destitute and without the necessary subsistence, made an appeal to Lieut. Gen. W. T. Sherman. . . for rations for one thousand people. This appeal was taken under advisement and later the request was granted. She was also instrumental in getting several carloads of seed potatoes, corn and grain shipped to Kansas for the relief of the needy. . . . This was made possible by the appropriation of a large amount of money by the state government for that purpose. She also made a trip to Washington, D. C., at her own expense, to use her influence in obtaining an order from the government for rations for the settlers in Kansas for a period of ten months. When she returned she had a large number of army blankets which she immediately distributed among the needy.129

At a meeting in Chicago in October, 1868, the Peace Commission, which had been set up under Congressional act of July 20, 1867, to

128 Ibid., 727.
129 Ibid.
come to terms with the hostile tribes, was now convinced that the United States government must abandon its pacific theories and advised that the Indians be dealt with by the War Department. Major General Phillip H. Sheridan, at Fort Hays, had already ordered the Indians out of Kansas. Now he began preparations for war to the death. He planned to concentrate the peaceful Indians south of the Arkansas River and to carry on intensive war with the other tribes until they submitted. More troops were needed. A regiment of twelve companies of volunteer cavalry was raised in Kansas for six months—the Nineteenth Kansas Cavalry.

When the Indians made their August raid on the Solomon Valley and escaped with at least two white women to their villages, a band of settlers and frontiersmen followed but were unable to meet the demands of carrying war to the Indians.

On August 24, Major George A. Forsyth, brevet colonel of the United States Army, was directed by General Sheridan at Fort Harker to get fifty frontiersmen and scouts and to go in pursuit of what he supposed to be about 250 Indians moving northwestward from the Solomon Valley. At Harker and Hays, fifty men were enrolled, armed, and mounted, the youngest being a fifteen-year-old scout. The group moved to Sheridan, then the end of the track of the Kansas Pacific, where some freighters had been attacked and killed by the fleeing

130 A. L. Runyon's Letters from the Nineteenth Kansas Regiment, Kansas Historical Quarterly, IX, 58.
131 Ibid.
Indians. Investigation disclosed that the scouts were on the trail of a large body of Indians—some 600 lodges having been reported by a participant. The squaws and children were segregated and settled as a village while the braves kept watch of the troop of scouts who were on the Arickaree branch of the Republican River before they were within close range of the Indians and could determine their dilemma. The Battle of the Arickaree was fought on land that is now in Colorado, but in the late 60's it was a part of Kansas. Kansas claims this stirring fight as a part of her heroic history.

At daybreak on the morning of September 17, the Indians began their attack on the scouts, with the "clattering of a thousand hoofs, the shouts of the guards, the yells of the Indians resounding over the hills and valleys." It was then that the scouts first realized their desperate situation.

Apparently as numerous as the sand-grains of the little fortification, the Indians hemmed them in on all sides. More than a thousand hideously painted and screaming warriors surrounded them, with all their hatred of the race depicted on their fiendish countenances, in anticipation of the victory which seemed so certain.

Scattered among these, out of rifle-range, were the squaws and children of the aggregated band, watching with gloating eyes the progress of the battle, while the hills re-echoed their diabolical death-chant and the howling of the medicine-men inspiring the young warriors to deeds of daring.

On Beecher's Island—an island in the dry bed of the river, which afforded some shelter by means of sage grass and weeds, and gave water

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133 Field Freeman, "The Battle of Arickaree," Transactions, VI, 347-49.
134 Ibid., 349.
135 Henry Inman, "General Forsythe at the Arickaree," Tales of the Trail, 9-10.
after some digging—the group of white scouts had secured themselves.

"The island was about 125 yards long and fifty yards wide, situated in the middle of Arickaree creek, about 100 yards from either bank. It was composed entirely of sand, the elevation being about two and one-half feet above the dry bed of the Arickaree."136 Here the white men stood off repeated attacks, one of the fiercest of which was made late in the morning by Roman Nose, a powerful Cheyenne chief.

As Roman Nose dashed gallantly forward and swept into the open at the head of his superb command, he was the very beauideal of an Indian chief. Mounted on a large, clean-limbed chestnut horse, he sat well forward on his bareback charger, his knees passing under a horsehair lariat that twice loosely encircled the animal's body, his horse's bridle grasped in his left hand, which was also closely wound in its flowing mane and at the same time clutched his rifle at the guard, the butt of which lay partially across the animal's neck, while its barrel, crossing diagonally in front of his body, rested slightly against the hollow of his left arm, leaving his right free to direct the course of his men. He was a man over six feet three inches in height, beautifully formed, and save for a crimson silk sash knotted around his waist and his moccasins on his feet, perfectly naked. His face was hideously painted in alternate lines of red and black, and his head crowned with a magnificent war-bonnet, from which, just above his temples and curving slightly forward, stood up two short black buffalo horns, while its ample length of eagles' feathers and herons' plumes trailed wildly on the wind behind him; . . .

Riding about five paces in front of the center of the line, and twirling his heavy Springfield rifle about his head as if it were a wisp of straw, Roman Nose recklessly led the charge with a bravery that could only be equaled but not excelled; . . .137

Although the death of Roman Nose turned the tide of the battle,

136 Ibid.

The afternoon an old and celebrated chief of the Sioux, perhaps Bull Knife, led a futile attack and lost his life. 138

The fighting had been fast and furious since daylight. The Indians were beaten, but the plight of the scouts was critical. Forsythe had received two severe wounds—his right thigh had been shattered by a bullet and his left leg broken below the knee. Beecher and Moore were both killed, and thirty of the scouts had been killed and wounded. The latter, because of the death of the surgeon, received no medical attention. All the horses were dead and the provisions exhausted. They were ninety miles from Wallace, the nearest point from which relief could come, and were surrounded by a thousand bloodthirsty savages. Two of the scouts volunteered to steal through the Indian lines in the night and carry a message, on foot, to Fort Wallace. They succeeded, and the remnant of the command was rescued on September 26 by the arrival of Capt. Louis H. Carpenter, with a company of the Tenth United States cavalry. 139

Because the redmen lost between seven hundred and eight hundred braves, "Arickaree remains in tradition among the red men as the most tragic event in the annals of frontier warfare." Because fifty brave men stood against a thousand or more savages on a sandy island—because these men for more than six days lived in shallow pits dug with their hands and toes, drank muddy water from hand-scooped wells, ate tainted horse flesh which they boiled and sprinkled with gunpowder—Arickaree remains in the tradition of Kansas as one of the glorious events in frontier warfare. Inman says it was a battle "of brute force and savage subtlety against the cool and calm judgment of the disciplined plainsmen." 140

The battle of the Arickaree has also been incorporated into

140 Inman, "General Forsythe at the Arickaree," loc. cit., 3.
The Price of the Prairie—the sandy surface of Beecher's Island overgrown with tall sage grass and weeds; the three days' onslaught and the withdrawal of the Indians; the laborious digging of shallow pits with elbows, toes, tin plates; the cold nights and hot days; the wounded men and stinking horses; the muddy drinking water and the tainted steaks cut from slaughtered horses, boiled, and sprinkled with gunpowder; the wild coyote wandering onto the island that gave its flesh and bones for soup; the wild plums from those scraggly bushes at the end of the island; and finally the rescue by Colonel Carpenter and his colored cavalry.141

Eble has given the story in poetry:

Do you know the story of Roman Nose?
The Cheyenne was of chief command,
Gigantic of stature, wonderfully dressed,
Arch enemy of the white man's band.
Have you heard the General Forsythe tale?
With a brilliant record achieved through war,
He, with but fifty chosen scouts,
Routing this great conspirator?142

The Indians on the warpath now had broken up into small bands and had retired into winter quarters. The winter of 1868 was a terror on the plains.

The blizzard that had swept across the land had caught the Indian tribes on their way to the coverts of the Wichita Mountains, and forced them into winter quarters... extending up and down the sheltering valley of the Washita for many miles... In their snug tepees were the squaws, fat and warm, well clothed and well fed. Dangling from the lodge poles were scalps with the soft golden curls of babyhood. No comfort of savage life was lacking to the papooses here. And yet, in the same blizzard wherein we had struggled

and starved, half a score of little white children torn from their mothers' clinging arms, these Indians had allowed to freeze to death out on the Plains. . . .

The War Department continued to pursue the braves to their camping grounds and to administer a final punishment. General Sheridan remained at Fort Hays and had personal command of the campaign. When General Alfred Sully's operations south of Fort Dodge were not satisfactory to Sheridan, the latter called for General George A. Custer, a well-known and tenacious Indian fighter. Custer had been serving out a sentence of loss of rank and pay for one year, but with this call the unexpired portion of the sentence was remitted and Custer joined his regiment with Sully's command south of the Arkansas River. Custer had been wishing he could do something about 'the speeding lance, the snarling arrow, the crackling rifle and the reeking scalp lock.'

The winter months brought action.

November 12, 1868, found the columns of soldiers moving into Indian Territory and establishing themselves at Camp Supply, one hundred miles south of Fort Dodge, from which the troops conducted their search for the Indian villages. Although on November 22 a blinding snowstorm began, a battalion of the regiment struck the trail of a war party five days late and Custer's regiment was soon in pursuit and found the villages on November 23. The plan of attack was arranged in such a way that the onset was made from four sides at the

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143 McCarter, The Price of the Prairie, 371.
145 Cooper, The Last Frontier, 105.
signal of the band playing "Garry Owen." Black Kettle and his warriors were slain except a few; some squaws and other Indians were also killed or wounded.

The battle being ended, Black Kettle's herd, numbering 500 ponies, was rounded up, and after the captured squaws had been allowed to select as many animals as they required to carry them, their children, and their household effects, the remainder were killed, the teepees were taken down, and with the camp equipment were placed in piles and burned, making the destruction of the village complete.146

The Nineteenth Kansas Cavalry was mustered into service early in October to engage in Indian warfare. They were soon mounted and drilled. On November 5 they left Topeka under the command of Governor Samuel J. Crawford, who had resigned to take the regiment. "A collection of huts and tents with one company of infantry as a garrison" on the site of Wichita, composed Camp Beecher, according to the report from one in the regiment.147 Here the boys were "all in the best of spirits, and eager to have a brush with the 'red skins.'"148

But when the regiment arrived on the Cimarron, only half of the men were able to move—horses and men being exhausted from lack of food and from the severe cold. On leaving Camp Beecher, they had only five days' rations and had met few buffalo so late in the season. Even the guides were unfamiliar with this territory south of the Arkansas River, and so the outfit wandered around in the canyons of the Cimarron River in a severe storm until supplies and guides from Fort Supply

148 "A. L. Runyon's Letters from the Nineteenth Kansas Regiment," loc. cit., 64.
One of the characters in The Price of the Prairie spoke of the hazards encountered by the troops in Southwest Kansas:

The Plains had no welcoming smile for us. The November skies were clouded over, and a steady rain soaked the land with all its appurtenances, including a struggling command of a thousand men floundering along day after day among the crooked canyons and gloomy sandhills of the Cimarron country. In vain we tried to find a trail that should lead us to Sheridan's headquarters at Camp Supply, on the Canadian River.

Then the blizzard had its turn with us. Suddenly, as is the blizzard's habit, it came upon us, sheathing our rain-sodden clothing in ice. Like a cloudburst of summer was this winter cloudburst of snow, burying every trail and covering every landmark with a mocking smoothness. Then the mercury fell, and a bitter wind swept the open Plains.

Nevertheless, the Crawford regiment re-enforced Custer and then went into the Washita Valley to force the Kiowas, Arapahoes, and Apaches to treat with the whites. Some of the Cheyennes were not brought to terms until overtaken on the Sweetwater River in March, 1869. Mrs. Morgan and Miss White were rescued through the holding of Cheyenne chiefs, Fat Bear, Dull Knife, and Big Head, with the threat that the chiefs would be killed if the women were not immediately surrendered. Fat Bear and Big Head were wounded in a scrimmage with the guard and later died. Dull Knife, though wounded, recovered and returned with the other Cheyennes to the reservation and promised to be good—a promise broken ten years later.

Back at Fort Hays the Kansas Nineteenth was mustered out on April

149Mahlon Bailey, "Medical Sketch of the Nineteenth Regiment of Kansas Cavalry Volunteers," Kansas Historical Quarterly, VI, 381.

150McCarter, The Price of the Prairie, 362.

18, 1869, for the Indians had been driven from Kansas and raids in Western Kansas ceased to be a frequent occurrence. Kansas men had won the war against the pillaging, destruction, and rapine of the redman.

The five years following the great storm of the Civil War was a period of which historians recorded quiet adjustments and in which novelists anchored the end of their novels or the bright beginnings of new stories. In spite of Indian warfare in Central and West Kansas, the years were not as thrilling in Eastern Kansas as were the early 60’s, nor as rowdy and flamboyant as were the 70’s in Western Kansas; and so it appears that not as much has been written on the period as on the years immediately preceding or following this quinquennium.

In addition to the works of historians and the reminiscences of pioneers, sketches by J. H. Cook, Crawford, Ingalls, McCoy, McNeal, Streeter, and Wellman furnished records of life in the later 60’s. Some of the novelists who pictured the period in Kansas and, a bit more generally, the years on the plains were Carlson, Cooper, Grey, McCarter, and White. Andrews, Forsyth, Inman, Jackson, Lawton, and Platt wrote tales about experiences on the Kansas plains.

In the verse of Blair, Eble, Harger, and White are accounts about the State during the late 60’s.
COW TOWNS

A cowboy's life is a dreary, dreary life,
Some say it's free from care;
Rounding up the cattle from morning till night
In the middle of the prairie so bare.

Half-past four, the noisy cook will roar,
"Whoop-a-whoop-a-hey!"
Slowly you rise with sleepy feeling eyes,
The sweet dreamy night passed away.¹

The great trails coming up from the South gave Kansas a promising business during the late 1860's, a huge business during the 70's, and a vanishing trade during the 80's. "It was a curious, colossal, tremendous movement, this migration of the cowmen and their herds, undoubtedly the greatest pastoral movement in the history of the world. It came with a rush and a surge and in ten years it had subsided. . . . The cities of Cibola began. The strong men of the plains met and clashed and warred and united and pushed on."²

Much has been said and sung of the cattle kingdom of the plains, of the trails northward, of the cow towns, and of the cattle barons and cowboys. The evolution of the cattle business—in Kansas alone—was an intriguing and flamboyant tale. It deserves mention in this

¹"The Kansas Line," in Lomax and Lomax (comps.), Cowboy Songs, 16.
study because of the complications it presented to the settlement of the southwestern part of the State and for the color it has added to life all over Kansas.

Even in 1862 the Texas range was overflowing with cattle, and a way to market these beasts was being sought. The Civil War hastened the opening of a mart for Texas beef but did not solve the problem. A few cattle were driven to New Orleans and some to Mexico; some just after the war were put on steamboats and were sent up the Mississippi River to Chicago. But a larger outlet was needed, and soon Texas longhorns were being driven through the Indian Territory to Sedalia, Missouri, from which, on the Missouri Pacific Railroad, they were taken on to St. Louis. Baxter Springs, Coffeyville, and Chetopa, in Southeastern Kansas were shipping points for Texas cattle driven to those points. In 1865 cattle worth from three to five dollars a head in Texas were sold for from eight to ten times that amount in Chicago. The profits were so encouraging that larger drives were planned for the next year. But during the summer of 1866 Texas drovers were beaten and outraged while their herds were driven off and despoiled or finally brought back at the price of five dollars a head—all because the settlers were losing their shorthorned cattle from Spanish fever, contracted from these intruding Texas longhorns. Drovers were soon led to avoid this region on account of the outlawry and murder resorted to.4

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Baxter Springs was a "real border town," with prospects of being in a few years "the metropolis of southern Kansas."

Baxter Springs is growing rapidly and undoubtedly has a very fair future. In their haste the people have forgotten to build churches but they have a nice brewery and something over fifty saloons. I was in one of these where I counted twenty tables, all occupied by men playing cards for the drinks, which were brought to them by "polite lady waiters." In one corner was a raised platform occupied by a piano and several musicians who kept up a continual din. In another was a healthy looking chap, with a plug hat and diamond studs, dealing faro to as many gamblers as could crowd around the table.5

Perhaps Baxter Springs or Coffeyville was Seekersburg City in Arthur Paterson's A Son of the Plains:

Seekersburg City was a place of importance in 1873—more important than it is now. It was then the spot where Western stockmen from New Mexico, Northern Texas, and even from Colorado, brought the produce of their labours and met buyers from Chicago, St. Louis, and elsewhere. At the present time the railway enables producers to find a sale in their own territories, or to ship flocks and herds in the cars direct to Chicago; and the glory of Seekersburg has departed. . . .

In 1873, at this time of the year, it would have been hard to find a brisker place than Seekersburg. There were houses of wood and houses of adobe (Mexican brick), shops in abundance with enormous signboards, broad sandy streets, with the inevitable "sidewalk" of roughly laid planks, over which passed all day long a constant stream of persons of every shade of colour, while outside the town, and dominating all else, was a network of corrals for horses, cattle, and sheep.6

To this town in the summer of 1873 a camp of two thousand sheep were leisurely making their way. "The sheep were 'Mexican,' but well-graded with Merino blood, and while retaining the physical strength and hardiness of their original ancestry, had gained a crop

6Paterson, A Son of the Plains, 55-56.
of thick, long-stapled, silky wool, which would give them a good market value anywhere." Seckersburg City was a part of the triangular trade with Van Buren, Arkansas, and Santa Fe, New Mexico.7

In later years, a pioneer in Barber County reported that "Cattle driven through our valley left a train of death. When our cattle came in contact with the grass growing on this trail, they died within a short time." This was a serious loss to a pioneer family; since horses then were being affected with blind staggers from eating worm-ridden corn—the only kind available—no recourse was left but the purchase of Texas steers as work animals.8

These steers had horns so long that they had to be sawed off and tipped with brass knobs to keep them from goring some one to death. We used them for several years to work on our farm, and to draw our wagon when we wished to go anywhere. We called them Tom and Jerry. They were very wild, and I could tell you of many a thrilling ride we took behind these oxen. But they soon became gentle and moved at the typical oxen gait—slowly . . . they would run with the wagon into a buffalo wallow, where they would stop with a chug, drink until they quenched their thirst, and then turn and go back to the road from which they had come. After which they would continue the journey at a slow, even gait.9

Another settler gave reasons for the settlers' hatred of Texas cattle:

The herds, sometimes miles in length, when driven near cultivated land were huddled close together and driven fast, to as far as possible prevent them from trampling down the fields of grain; but in spite of all that could be done, crops were often totally destroyed. The bill for damages was, however, usually settled immediately without controversy . . . As these herds were passing through it was difficult for the

7Ibid., 3.
9Ibid., 612.
settlers' to prevent their domestic cattle from mingling with them, and when once absorbed they were as good as lost, as it was difficult if not impossible to cut them out. The cowboys were not vigilant in their effort to prevent the adoption of domestic cattle; in fact, they always carried a convenient branding iron, and if an unbranded calf was picked up, it soon had the brand of the Texas herd emblazoned on its hip or side.

Sometimes the Texas herds stampeded in Kansas and left, over a wide swath extending eight or ten miles in length, "not a vestige of vegetation or a fence in the whole course of the stampede."

It was in 1867 that the Kansas Pacific was extended west from Junction City to Abilene and gave rise to the opening up of much of the cattle business in that village. Joseph G. McCoy, of Springfield, Illinois, had engaged the place to meet the demands for a western point on the railroad from which cattle could be shipped east.

Abilene in 1867 was a very small, dead place, consisting of about one dozen log huts, low, small, rude affairs, four-fifths of which were covered with dirt for roofing; indeed, but one shingle roof could be seen in the whole city. The business of the burg was conducted in two small rooms, mere log huts, and of course the inevitable saloon also in a log hut, was to be found.

The saloon keeper was a "corpulent, good-souled, congenial old man of the backwoods pattern," who kept a colony of pet prairie dogs for his own amusement. The principal owner of the town was living on a farm and had been a member of the legislature the previous winter.

One of the merchants who was selling goods on a commission basis for a firm in Junction City had a larger stock of self-esteem than of

10Doran, "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," loc. cit., 499.
11Ibid., 500.
12McCoy, Sketches of the Cattle Trade, 44.
anything else. But Abilene was not selected to be the end of the cattle trail from Texas on account of these characters. It was chosen because the country was unsettled, well watered, excellent in grass, and nearly the entire area was adapted to holding cattle. Also, it was the farthest point east at which a good depot for the cattle business could be located. 13

In his story North of 36, Emerson Hough said of the country around Abilene:

Around this primitive scene stretched a wide and primitive world. The blue sky, flecked with fleecy clouds, bent over an endless sea of grasses growing to the very edge of Abilene. The flowers nodded and beckoned in the gentle wind. Not a furrow of plow was there. These rude men of Abilene were forerunners of an inland empire soon to come but not yet over the horizon. 14

But cow days changed Abilene. A three-story frame structure, made up of one hundred rooms, a laundry, a dining room, and a broad front veranda, soon appeared close to the railroad tracks. This was called Drovers' Cottage, the scene of many a thrilling and narrow adventure, as well as of numerous shrewd bargains between Northern buyers and Southern drovers. 15 Here Lou Gore presided as guardian nurse and friend of the cattlemen. Livery stables, saloons, brothels, and gambling halls "where the ceiling was the limit to the amount one could bet on the turn of a card" sprang up. 16 Within sixty days a

13 Ibid., 43-50.
14 Emerson Hough, North of 36 (New York, 1933), 332.
15 George L. Cushman, "Abilene, First of the Kansas Cow Towns," Kansas Historical Quarterly, IX, 244.
16 J. H. Cook, Fifty Years on the Old Frontier, 53.
Shipping yard that could accommodate three thousand cattle, a barn, and an office were complete. A little later the station house was added. All was in readiness; Abilene was at the door of a new era.

All Abilene came to see and welcome the first herd up the trail. It seemed a large event to them. Not a man of them, not the wildest dreamer of them all, ever guessed that it was the opening of one of the greatest epochs in American history. Men even would have scoffed at the assertion that thirty-five thousand cattle would reach Abilene that year, seventy-five thousand the year following; that soon the state of Texas would be trailing north over a million head a year. 17

An old folk ballad told of getting ready for the trip over the trail to Abilene:

Well, we worked for a week till the country was clean
And the bosses said, "Now, boys, we'll stay here.
We'll carve and we'll trim 'em and start out a herd
Up the east trail from old Abilene." 18

Along with the herds of cattle, drovers, cowboys, and buyers came others to the new towns:

The worst class of thieves, thugs, and murderers flocked to those towns, for the purpose of reaping a harvest from the wages of the cowboys. The better element was overwhelmed by this deluge of reckless adventurers and the cowboys were systematically drugged, doped, and robbed, and, when they became desperate and shot a few of these robbers, they were rated as hard characters and desperadoes. 19

Lawlessness and wildness increased in Abilene to such an extent that "Wild Bill" Hickok was proposed for marshal to clean up the town. 20 Abilene had become "first in graveyards, the same as she is first in everything else." 21 Wild Bill was chief among scouts and

17Hough, North of 36, 335.
18"Whose Old Cow," Lomax and Lomax (comps.), Cowboy Ballads, 133.
19Donoho, Circle-Dot, 29.
20Abilene Chronicle, May 18, 1871.
21Hough, North of 36, 316-17.
guides. He was straight as an Indian, had sharp clear blue eyes.

His dress was fastidious and he was a sure shot. Born in Missouri, where his father was an abolitionist in a nest of Southerners, young Bill became a keen onlooker. As a youth he evinced great courage and cool daring as a driver on the overland stage. 22

At the time of his election as marshal of Abilene, Wild Bill was the famous marshal of Hays City, the terminus of the railroad. Frank Harris recalled these years of Hickok's career in My Reminiscences as a Cowboy. 23

Frank J. Wilstach has written in The Plainsman a piece of fiction that is also an attempt to be accurate. "So picturesque was the man, and so astounding his exploits," he said of Wild Bill, that this hero early fell into the hands of fiction writers and soon became something of a Homeric figure. However, some true stories have been told of this expert gunman and "famous peace officer of the frontier." And interesting example of Wild Bill's marksmanship:

One day he was walking along the street when he observed a ripe apple hanging on a tree. Pulling two revolvers from their holsters, he shot with his left hand and nipped the stem. As the apple fell his right-hand revolver pierced it with a bullet. On another occasion he was riding in from the fort with General Custer. Bill pointed out a knot on the telegraph pole, remarking that he wanted to see how many bullets he could put in it as he rode by at a gallop. He fired all six chambers of his revolver, and every bullet hit the knot. 24

22 Cattermole, Famous Frontiermen, 478-89.
23 (New York, 1930).
24 Frank J. Wilstach, The Plainsman. Wild Bill Hickok (Garden City, 1937), vii, 10.
And thus another tall tale was added to American mythology.

In *North of 36* Hough told not only the story of a herd coming by the Chisholm Trail through the Arbuckle Mountains to Abilene, where they arrived on July 4, 1867, but also the events of Wild Bill's days in that town. This marshal never neglected to clean his heavy long-barreled, ivory-handled revolvers. "No hand but his ever had been allowed to touch one of these weapons, even in the slightest or most friendly way. He himself never failed to examine them every morning."25

An interesting story of the country near Abilene during the cow days was written by Thomas Clark Hinkle. It is the tale of Tawny, a great fighting dog, whose mother, Old Yellow, was so well known in the hills of Eastern Kansas. "Standing on a hillside on the opposite side of the cut, only a short distance away, stood the most suspected, the most talked-of, yet the most interesting, animal on the range,—a huge yellowish female dog, so unjustly persecuted in this Kansas hill country."

Even in those days the "vast herds of Longhorns that had fed on this range throughout the summer had been shipped to the markets. Only a small bunch was left in the keeping of Charlie Bell. It was a mixed herd, including a number of cows and calves. The cattle now were kept in the heart of the timber to winter on stacks of hay. . . ."

These were the days too when a dog that could fight and kill three timber wolves, at the age of ten months, was judged a killer of cattle and so was sought with poison, traps, and guns throughout all

the Flint Hills region.26

Lincoln Phifer has written of the first cow town in Kansas and the trail leading to it:

When the first western railways passed through Kansas, and startling plans were made to market these wild cattle of the plains that cost men nothing, Joseph G. McCoy drove down to Texas, and ploughed a furrow up to Abilene, six hundred miles in length, as mark for those who wished to drive the cattle up for shipment. They came in droves. The cowboys had before been roping steers and branding them. They now rounded up herds and headed for the railroad, following the furrow that became a road. Thousands in every herd, the herds so close one to the other as they journeyed northward, each herdsman ever saw the one in front. They sauntered 'mid the shout and vicious oath, through sage brush, cottonwood and muddy ford, on to the place of fate. At night they camped, killed a beef maverick and had their supper, then slept beneath the stars, with heads on saddles, ropes coiled around to keep tarantulas and snakes from them. By day they jogged along, hands on the pommel and the feet in stirrup, lest the mustang should stumble in the hole of prairie dog or buck at sight of rabbit bounding away. They found few habitation. But here and there a ranch was seen with house like some baronial castle. 'Mid such romance, more strange than any Canterbury tales or adventurous crusade of olden knights, they drew through strange mirage and thirsty tale to the new town Abilene.27

Cattle came to Baxter Springs over the Old Shawnee Trail, which had branches to Coffeyville and Chetopa. Cows trailed over the Chisholm Trail and its extension through Wichita to Abilene. After 1872 the Western Chisholm Trail was followed by herds to Newton.

26 Thomas Clark Hinkle, Tawny: A Dog of the Old West (New York, 1927), 18, passim.

27 Lincoln Phifer, "Drama of the Cow Towns," The Drama of Kansas, 102-103.
Wichita, and Dodge on the Santa Fe Railroad, and on to Ellsworth on the Kansas Pacific Railroad. Some cattle also were shipped from Great Bend until 1874, when Hays and Dodge City became the western centers for the cattle business. Caldwell, Hanwell, and Hutchinson also were cattle receiving centers of importance.28

John Rossel's full treatment of the Chisholm Trail cleared up many misconceptions about it. Of its origin and location he said:

In the spring of 1864 the affiliated bands comprising the Wichita Indians, about 1,500 in number, began their trek northward. Their ultimate destination was the mouth of the Little Arkansas river, the site of present Wichita, where they made their village. With them was Jesse Chisholm, a half-breed Cherokee Indian, who established a trading post there in the same year. He was quite familiar with the territory as he had guided a party from Arkansas in search of buried treasure to the mouth of the Little Arkansas in 1836, and had made many subsequent trips.

In the summer of 1864 Chisholm collected a herd of three thousand head of cattle which were grazing on the site of present West Wichita and in the fall drove them to the Sac and Fox agency and on to New Mexico to fill a government contract. In the spring of 1866 he returned over the same route, bringing furs and robes and cattle. The trail from Wichita into the Indian Territory became known as Chisholm's trail. It received the appellation "The Chisholm Trail" after it had been used extensively for cattle drives. McCoy's contribution to the Chisholm Trail was the extension north from Wichita to Abilene. Texas cattlemen extended the trail south from the Indian Territory into Texas.30

28 McCoy, Sketches of the Cattle Trade, 405–21.
30 Ibid., 6–12.
Perhaps the most popular cowboy ballad of the trails and cow towns is "The Old Chisholm Trail," with its many variations about the trials and hardships from the Red River to Wichita. 31

Although many of the 600,000 cattle brought to Kansas in 1871 were sent from Abilene to market, in 1872 the settlers decided that the cattle era had passed for Abilene and requested drovers to seek another point from which to ship Texas cattle. 32 Drovers' Cottage was moved to Ellsworth and that village of one thousand began to grow by trafficking in cattle. 33 Sharpsters of every type moved in. A courthouse and jail was built. During the season of 1872, 40,161 head of cattle were transported from Ellsworth over the Kansas Pacific Railroad. 34

Newton, on the new Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, was also becoming a cow town. 35 Although Newton was overrun by cows and cowboys for only a short time, they left some finger prints on her early history. Settlement in Newton was soon followed by a herd from the South in early summer.

One night in June, 1871, at a dance-house in Hyde Park, a difficulty arose between cowboys and railroad men, and a fight with revolvers ensued. The whole town was aroused by the rapid firing of revolvers and the shouts and oaths of the

31 Lomax and Lomax (comps.), Cowboy Songs, 28-41.
32 Abilene Chronicle, February 22, 1872.
33 Ellsworth Reporter, June 26, 1873.
34 Ibid., July 25, 1872.
35 Kansas Pacific Railroad Company, Seventh Annual Report, quoted in Floyd Benjamin Streeter, "Ellsworth as a Texas Cattle Market," Kansas Historical Quarterly, IV, 393.
Several hundred shots were fired, and thirteen men were killed and wounded. The dead were buried on a little knoll in the southeast part of the town, and it was named "Boot Hill" because the men interred there all died with their boots on.³⁶

In 1872 the Santa Fe Railroad built an extension from Topeka to Atchison and from Newton to Wichita, which placed Wichita on a direct line to Chicago. Until 1874 Wichita was headquarters for the Texas trade.³⁷ Among the "toughs" who drifted into the city about 1872 were "Rowdy Joe" and "Rowdy Kate." One day Rowdy Joe and "Old Red"—proprietors of neighboring saloons—disagreed about which way the Arkansas River was running. Rowdy Joe shot Old Red in the breast and within a few minutes annexed Old Red's dance house. This was the way some property changed hands in early Wichita.³⁸

In 1873 Long Long, a drummer, won several hundred dollars playing "bank." He asked to be taken by Joe Basset to see the sights of this red-hot cowboy town, and they went to Rowdy's place, where dancing was going on and cowboys were riding by and firing shots through the windows in the upper part of the building.

Long Long heard the revolver-shots and saw the glass shattered and falling to the floor, and then he made a rush for the door and down the street toward the bridge, followed by Basset, who was accustomed to such exploits and wished to convince his friend that there was no cause for alarm. Basset called in vain for Long to halt and wait for him, but that polite gentleman, looking back and seeing Basset was calling him, replied: "No, no; many thanks, Basset; I am under many obligations for your courtesy in introducing me to this lively and interesting

³⁶Donoho, Circle-Dot, 177.
³⁸Donoho, Circle-Dot, 173-79.
cowboy show, but I have other engagements that will prevent me from staying longer, and I do not desire any company at this time, as my mind is preoccupied and I could not be social; so if you will permit me I will proceed to the hotel alone."

All of this was spoken while he was making double-quick time toward the bridge. Basset was unable to overtake him until he reached the hotel, and then it took several good stiff drinks of whisky to get his nerves back to their normal condition.39

Victor Murdock described a cattle baron of Wichita:

So it happened that the earlier cattlemen who frequented Wichita were as booted and spurred as their cowboys. They came to town a-horseback over the Chisholm trail, behind grinding, bellowing herds which had been for weeks on the way, from un­limited ranges, across unlimited ranges, to the railroad’s end.

After the books had been closed, the balance struck, the early cattlemen were given to faro. Here hazard was entrenched behind a deck of cards and here they attacked her. She was the same old hazard they had met on the range and on the trail—but with a difference. There she rode the blizzard and sirocco, driving the shivering cattle into the shallow draws in winter, scattering them starving far over the sun-scourched plains in summer... But here, under a brilliant light in a warm room, she met her enemies softly, gently, in a jack, a queen, a ten-spot. But hazard is not all there is to adventure, and the early cattlemen, after a little time, would yawn, shove back his chair, cash in, stalk on his high heels to his hotel, gather his gang and start back, the next morning, to the open range where a man could fill his lungs to their full and meet fickle fortune face to face on horse-back, and never think of yawning.40

In the 70’s Southwest Kansas was a cattle country and but sparsely settled.

The level prairies stretched away as far as the eye could see, the tall, lush grass rising and falling with the breeze, like the billows of old ocean, when lashed by a mighty tempest. Here and there, the sameness would be broken by canyons the strata of the sides of which showed that in the far-away past, before the feet of man had pressed this hemisphere, a body of

39 Ibid., 180.

40Victor Murdock, Folka (New York, 1921), 151.
water had been confined within their limits. Now they were dry, except when an occasionally heavy rain made a little rivulet flow down them, soon to be dried up by a blazing sun. The "dug-outs" of the settlers were far apart, and few human beings were to be seen; but look where you would, great droves of sleek, branded cattle, met the eye, for there were not many trees to intercept the view and distant objects were plainly seen.41

Emigrants were coming in, for Medicine Lodge had been laid out as a town, but it was not to be many years until the rights of the cattlemen were contested.

To the west of them lay a ridge of hills, while beyond, was a knoll, which had just been selected as the site of the prospective town of Medicine Lodge. This site was of historic interest, for it was there, that the Osage Indians, for many, many moons, had gathered after their skirmishes, or wanderings, to consult their Medicine Man, and hold their councils. Here it was, that the Medicine Man pitched his tepee, and rubbing his herbs together gave forth his oracles.

Here also the Government officials met the Indians, and consummated the treaty, which caused them to leave the lands in possession of their hated foe, the "pale faces."

This spot is about twenty miles, more or less, from what was at that time the northern boundary of the Indian Territory.

The original town-site comprised four hundred acres of ground. It was situated on the rising land between the Medicine River, and Alma Creek.

From this place, there is a fine view of surrounding country for many miles, and to the west, there is a line of red hills, with almost inexhaustible beds of gypsum within their bosom.

As soon as the "town" was laid out, the tide of immigration set in, and... there were a few general stores, on a small scale, a blacksmith shop, which was a crying necessity, as there were always horses to be shod—those belonging to the Government, or those of people on the "trail," and wagons to be repaired. To this embryo town came also a physician, and with the first settlers, there were two lawyers. There were a few houses which were entitled to the name, a number of shanties, and "dug-outs" of settlers who had come west to try their fortunes, and get rich, as they fondly hoped, by raising cattle or some other method which might present itself. There

was also a boarding-house for those who were without a home.\textsuperscript{42}

Medicine Lodge continued to grow and in 1878 the first newspaper in Barber County was established there. T. A. McNeal has related many interesting episodes about Barber County and Southwest Kansas. The frontier barber, who set up his tonsorial parlors in one corner of the livery stable, was "chamber maid for a number of raucous-voiced mules and partially civilized bronchos."\textsuperscript{43}

McNeal recalled how some Harper men in the 70's settled a score with the Medicine Lodgers. The sheriff and deputy of Medicine Lodge arrested Harper men who had cut free wood on government land west of Medicine Lodge and had hauled it back through the county seat of Barber County, where they were taken. The dealers of the law "regarded this as a good joke on the Harper men, and also an easy way of securing firewood." The Harper men waited for a chance to even the score. One of those arrested was a young fellow named Kittleman.

Pony races, and even contests between men on foot, were favorite pastimes of the railroadless frontier towns. One day a fellow by the name of Calder dropped into Medicine Lodge to look for a sheep ranch, and incidentally he got backing from the loafing cowboys for a foot race against anyone from Harper County. When the Harperites sent Kittleman to compete with "the famous Calder," the Barberites doubled their bets. Kittleman won the race by ten yards and got the money sack. When they saw Calder and Kittleman dividing the money, the

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., 20-21.

\textsuperscript{43}T. A. McNeal, \textit{When Kansas Was Young} (Macmillan, 1922), 80, 96.
Medicine Lodge cowboys saw that the race was a frame-up by which the Harper boys had got "even with those Medicine Lodge fellows for that load of wood." 44

In *Across the Prairie*, a story of the establishment of order in Southwest Kansas during the 70's and 80's, the author related the part the Santa Fe Railroad played as a fence across the Kansas plains:

... during the lurid period of construction in the seventies, there was a saying that "the railroad stinks from Congress to the Rockies." It was a figure of speech Tom Wyeth never had heard until it was dropped in a reminiscent drawl by one of a pair of grizzled, sun-baked cattlemen in the seat across the railway carriage. Today it was a reality. For long hours the ears had reeked of the strong odor of decaying flesh. The Santa Fe right-of-way was fenced across Kansas from Wichita to the Colorado line; against this barrier were piled the dying carcasses of cattle in tens of thousands in an endless heaped string. Turkey buzzards raised in perpetual fluttering clouds. 45

But settlements pushed west of Barber County, and Dodge City became the great and last cow town of Kansas. She continued to be a stopping point on the Old Western Trail, over which cattle were driven from Doan's Crossing through "No Man's Land," over the north fork of the Canadian River, up to Dodge, to Slaughter's Bridge, to the Beaver, then to Oglalla, and on northwest for wintering and fattening. Of Dodge City an old cowman said to some greenhorns, "I've been in Dodge every summer since '77, ... and I can give you boys some points. Dodge is one town where the average bad man of the West not only finds his equal, but finds himself badly handicapped. ... behave yourselves." 46

45 *Dora Aydelotte, Across the Prairie* (New York, 1941), 9.
The railroads were inducing settlers to come even to Dodge City.

Outside of the depot, we were given a cold reception to the land of our dreams. The wind was driving sand, dust, pellets of snow and hard pebbles, in a manner to make us wonder where all of that "salubrious" climate was which the Santa Fe Company had told about in the circulars which had been sent to prospective tourists. We had understood western Kansas to be a sunny glade of balmy breezes.47

Henry King gave a description of Dodge City as a cow town:

We reached New Sharon, my friend Eastman and I, at noon of a radiant Kansas Saturday... The buildings were of such varying and irrelevant patterns, and so lacking in neighborliness of size and attitude, that one was justified in wondering if they had not been bought at auction. Few of them boasted any underpinning, and many of them sat dizzily perched upon awkward corner-props, as if fearing a flood. There were no fences, and hence no dooryards; no trees and no awnings, and therefore an unchecked excess of sunlight. Above the town, a spray of sandy loam blew northward in frequent and rapid whirlwinds and settled with a sort of resentful disdain about the overlooking cupola at the center of the public square ("the park," by courtesy), which proved to be the ambitious top of a structure designed to serve in time the purposes of a court-house, but contenting itself for the present with the humbler, though more popular, uses of a shooting-gallery. Here and there, too, tents were pitched, with blankets spread upon the guy-ropes; and opposite our hotel, a railroad freightcar, shorn of its wheels and squatting in the dust, abjectly besought patronage with a placard announcing "Meals at all hours."48

The waves of settlement sweeping west were determined to keep drovers and their tick-laden cattle out of the territory east of Hays and Dodge City, the two wild and woolly outposts. In '75 and '76 nearly 250,000 head of cattle were driven to Dodge City, and each year the drive increased until nearly half a million came annually. Dodge City held the cattle market nearly ten years, which was three


48 Henry King, "Over Sunday in New Sharon (Dodge City)," *Scribner's Magazine*, XIX (1880), 768.
Sioux as long as did any other Kansas town. Dodge City was called "The Beautiful, Bibulous Babylon of the Frontier—a perfect paradise for gamblers, cutthroats, and girls"—the city with a burying ground for "those who died with their boots on" and a cemetery for "those who died with a clean sheet on their beds—the soul in this case is a secondary consideration." 49

Dodge City took delight in being bad. A writer of the 70's said:

Dodge has many characteristics which prevent its being classed as a town of strictly moral ideas and principles, notwithstanding it is supplied with a church, courthouse, and jail. Other institutions counterbalance the good works supposed to emanate from the first mentioned. Like all frontier towns of this modern day, fast men and fast women are around by the score, seeking whom they may devour, hunting for a soft snap, taking him in for cash, and many is the Texas cowboy who can testify as to their ability to follow up successfully the calling they have embraced in quest of money.

Gambling ranges from a game of five-cent chuck-a-luck to a thousand-dollar poker pot. Nothing is secret, but with open doors upon the main streets, the ball rolls on uninterrupted. More than occasionally some dark-eyed virago or some brazen-faced blond, with a modern sundown, will saunter in among the roughs of the gambling houses and saloons, entering with inexplicable zest into the disgusting sport, . . . Dance houses are ranged along the convenient distances and supplied with all the trappings and paraphernalia which go to complete institutions of that character. Here you see the greatest abandon. Men of every grade assemble to join in the dance. Nice men with white neck-ties, the cattle dealer with his good clothes, the sport with his well-turned fingers, smooth tongue, and artistically twisted mustache, and last but not least the cowboy, booted and spurred as he comes from the trail, his hard earnings in his pocket, all join in the wild revel; and yet with all this mixture of strange human nature a remarkable degree of order is preserved. Arms are not allowed to be worn, and any noisy whisky demonstrations are promptly checked by incarceration in the lock-up. 50

John H. Cook has recalled the incidents of a drive up one of the

49 Wright, *Dodge City*, 142, 145, 257.
50 Ibid., 140-41.
Texan-Kansa trails during the early days and a later drive into
Kansas and the Northwest. One of his contributions was a firsthand
description of a stampede en route, caused by a cowboy riding in so
close to the herd one night that he touched a cow on the back with
his foot. As she awakened from sleep startled, she gave a bound, a
snort, and plunged away. The stampede was on. To stop the roar and
crash of the headlong herd called for the ingenuity of every cowboy.\(^5^1\)

Wilson Howard described his experiences following the trail from
Texas to Dodge City during the 70's and also his experiences in bringing
mules from Dobe Wall, in what is now the Oklahoma Panhandle, back
to Dodge City while outlaws were rampant in that section.\(^5^2\)

Dodge City was the favorite cow town in cowboy ballads; one such
song was entitled "Dodge City, the End of the Trail."\(^5^3\) Another said:

When we reached Dodge City we drew our four months' pay.
Times were better than, boys, that was a better day.
The way we drank and gambled and threw the girls around—
"Say, a crowd of Texas cowboys has come to take our town."\(^5^4\)

A third cowboy reminisced:

It was only a few short years ago
When we were in our prime,
When a bunch of us went up the trail
To have a jolly good time.
It was hot July when we got to Dodge,
That wickedest little town;
And we started to have some fun
Just as the sun went down.

\(^5^1\) J. H. Cook, Fifty Years on the Old Frontier, 42-43.

\(^5^2\) Wilson Howard, "On the Trail from Dobe Wall," Kansas Maga-

\(^5^3\) Lomax and Lomax (comps.), Cowboy Songs, 133.

\(^5^4\) John Garner's Trail Herd," Lomax and Lomax (comps.), Cowboy
Songs, 26.
We killed a few of the worst bad men
For the pleasure of seeing them kick;
We rode right into a billiard hall,
And I guess we raised Old Nick.
The bartender left in wonderful haste
On that hot and sultry day;
He never came back to get his hat
Until we were miles away. 55

After the cow days were over an old cow hand sang of his comp-

companions sleeping on old Boot Hill:

But many a boy I worked with then
Is sleeping on old Boot Hill;
For his last cow drive was made to Dodge,
Over the Jones and Plummer trail. 56

The justice of the open plains decreed that when a man found an
unbranded calf and claimed it, it became his. "The Blind Goddess at
Dodge" was written upon an episode which bears out this point. 57

Sometimes actual characters of cattle days acted like story
book people. Wright mentioned such an incident in plains justice in
his Dodge City:

When the Irishman—an offender—was put on trial, Justice
Joyce asked the prisoner the usual question, "Are you guilty
or not guilty?" "Guilty, your honor," replied the prisoner.
"Shut up your darned mouth," said Joyce; "I discharge you for
want of evidence." 58

George W. Ogden's The Trail Rider treated the coming differences
arising between the cattlemen, who wished to keep the range open, and
the nesters or settlers, who wished to plow and farm. In it Uncle
Boly, a veteran from the Civil War, supplemented his pension by manu-

56 "The Old Cowboy," in Lomax and Lomax (comps.), Cowboy Songs,
94.
57 Albert Benton Reeves, "The Blind Goddess at Dodge," McClure's
Magazine, XXX (1908), 767–73.
58 Wright, Dodge City, 10.
As taming boots for cowboys and cattlemen, who were numerous along
the Arkansas Valley range in those days.

Out of Cottonwood\textsuperscript{59} supplies went into this new country, and
into Cottonwood the wild-eyed herds were driven for shipment,
all combining to make it a busy place. No restriction had
been put on the traffic in alcoholic liquor at that time in
that part of the country, and in Cottonwood there was a good
deal of lurid life, a right smart of shooting and slashing
around.\textsuperscript{60}

Near the town was the typical ranch house of a settler:

Duncan's ranch-house was a large T-shaped building, con­
structed, like nearly all the ranch-houses of that country,
of the tenacious prairie sod. It stood on the bank of a weak,
shallow stream, and there were cottonwood trees around it,
making a cool and pleasant harbor to reach in the middle of a
thirsty day, after a ride that grew more desolate and barren
as the traveler proceeded southward from Cottonwood.\textsuperscript{61}

To control the spread of disease from Texas cattle to the native
shorthorns, set trails were used; no other routes into Kansas were al­
lowed, although some Southern cattlemen found difficulty in un­
standing this restriction.

Duncan told the delegation from the camp that they must
turn back and take the trails set by the association. He was
calm and moderate in his words and manner, and made a good
case, . . . no bluster or threat about him at all.

"The stand you Kansas fellers take might be all right
in case a herd of diseased cattle come into your country," the southern invaders' leader replied; "but it don't hold
water when it comes to a clean herd like this. Them cattle's
as clean as any on this range. I'm sorry we can't oblige you,
pardner, but we didn't drive eight hundred miles and more to
turn back."\textsuperscript{62}

Zane Grey's \textit{Raiders of Spanish Peaks} is set, in part, in Garden

\textsuperscript{59}Perhaps Great Bend or Dodge City.

\textsuperscript{60}George W. Ogden, \textit{The Trail Rider. Romance of the Kansas
Plains} (New York, 1918-24), 4.

\textsuperscript{61}\textit{Ibid.}, 108.

\textsuperscript{62}\textit{Ibid.}, 156-57.
City, around Dodge City, which is called "the wide-open cattle town of the frontier," and in Colorado. South of Dodge City cattlemen and riders were said to be "as thick as flies on a freshly skinned cowhide." The prospects for a bigger business in cattle was held by the man who said:

We are now in the midst of what I might call the third great movement of early frontier history—the cattle movement. First came the freighters, wagon-trains, gold-seekers, fur-trappers, and the Indian fighters. Next the era of the buffalo and the settlers. This is the cattle movement. For years now vast herds of cattle have been driven up out of Texas to Abilene and Dodge, the cattle terminus. From these points cattle have been driven north and west, and shipped East on cattle-trains. The cattle business is well on its fortunes are being made. With endless range, fine grass and water, nothin' else could be expected.

Such prophets and their innocent believers were doomed to sad misfortunes as the settlers drifted in and especially when the blizzard of 1886-87 cleared the Western Kansas range of every living thing.

Ogden's The Cow Jerry, a story of the battle between the open range and the oncoming railroad, was set near McPacken, somewhere west of Dodge City.

The town lay close by the sprawling Arkansas River, colloquially called the Arkansaw, at a point where the Santa Fe trail of earlier days crossed that stream of deceptive shallows and wide-spreading bars of silt-white sand. Now another Santa Fe trail ran past its door, a trail wood-girded and steel-bound, whose roaring caravans made echoes among its planked buildings...

Here Tom Laylander, former Texas cowman, found himself reduced from the high estate of cowman to a job known as a "cow jerry," cowboy section hand. The days of the open cattle range were over in

63 Zane Grey, Raiders of Spanish Peaks (New York, 1938), 2, 59.
64 George W. Ogden, The Cow Jerry (New York, 1925), 1.
Kansas. Cowmen were becoming railroad workers and nesters.65

The cowman's desire for a home on the plains and his disappointment at not attaining one was made evident in a ballad:

I went up the Lone Star Trail in Eighteen Eighty-three;
I fell in love with a pretty miss and she in love with me.
"When you get to Kansas write and let me know;
And if you get in trouble, your bail I'll come and go."

When I got up in Kansas, I had a pleasant dream;
I dreamed I was down on Trinity, down on that pleasant stream;
I dreamt my true love right beside me, she come to go my bail;
I woke up broken-hearted with a yearling by the tail.66

Several ballads pictured the Kansas cowboy. In the following, life on the range had become wearisome and irksome:

Oh, a cowboy's life is just like a dog's,
And he sometimes wishes he was dead,
When night overtakes him with his saddle and his gun,
And he has nowhere to lay his head.67

Of Top Hand, a loquacious fellow, a ballad said:

First thing he tells you, he owns a certain brand—
Leads you to think he is a daisy hand;
Next thing he tells you 'bout his trip up the trail,
All the way to Kansas, to finish out his tale.68

At other times the cowboy sang a song of the past:

The past when we headed each year for Dodge City
And punched up the drags on the old Chisholm Trail;
When the world was all bright and the girls were all pretty,
And a feller could "mav'rick" and stay out of jail.69

65Ibid., passim.
68"Top Hand," Lomax and Lomax (comps.), Cowboy Songs, 72.
The boasting drunk in Dodge City pictured the toughness of the cowboy mildly in these stanzas:

Raised on six-shooters till I get big enough to eat ground shotguns,
When I'm cool I warm the Gulf of Mexico and bathe therein,
When I'm hot there's an equinoctial breeze that fans me fevered brow,
The moans of widows and orphans is music to me melancholy soul.

Me the boy that chewed the wad the goat eat that butted the goat off the bridge,
Born in the Rocky Mountains, suckled by a grizzly bear,
Ninety-nine rows of jaw teeth and not a single hair.70

But the cattle trails were pushed ever westward. In 1830 the Chisholm Trail was closed to long herds. After 1835 the Western Chisholm Trail could not be used and cattle had to be driven through Colorado on account of the quarantine law. Moreover, the losses of the winter of 1885-86 proved that the cattle business must use new methods if it was to be profitable.

And so passed the days of the Southern drovers, Northern buyers, and moss horns. The cowboy went south or west or landed in a town saloon, livery stable, or butcher shop.71 Gone was the boil and bubble, the toil and trouble of the great migration of Texas cattle to Kansas. It was said truly, "the life of the Border is a transitory one, fast passing away."72

The cowboy married a nester's daughter and came to love the State of the tall corn;

70 "The Boasting Drunk in Dodge," Lomax and Lomax (comps.), Cowboy Songs, 135.
72 James W. Steele, The Sons of the Border. Sketches of the Life and People of the Far Frontier (Topeka, 1873), 9.
I love the state of Texas,
The state where I was born,
Though I'm living now in Kansas
Where grows the tallest corn.
And I'm happy here in Kansas,
This sunny, wind-swept land,
But don't tell my folks in Texas
For they wouldn't understand. 73

Much has been written about the cow towns and the trails leading to them, including such investigations as Edward Everett Dale's The Range Cattle Industry74 and Joseph Nimmo's The Range and Ranch Cattle Business of the United States.75 A great source book of cattle days in Kansas is McCoy's Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade, first published in 1874. It was reprinted in 1932, and an edition begun before the latter date was printed in 1940.76 Other writers about cow days in Kansas include J. H. Cook, Harris, Lowther, McNeal, Post, Rossel, Streeter, and Wright. Emerson Hough's The Story of the Cowboy gives the history of the cowboy in America and a true description of his duties, his outfit, and his work on the ranch and on the range. Adams' books give invaluable information on days of the great Texas drives.

Among the writers who have presented fictionized accounts of characters and towns of Kansas are Aydelotte, Cooper, Donoho, Grey, Hough, North, Ogden, Paterson, and Wilstach. Hinkle, Howard, Henry King, Murdock, Reeves, and Steele have delineated characters of those

74 (Norman, 1930).
75 House Document 267, 46th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1885).
76 Ralph P. Bieber (ed.) (Glendale, 1940).
days also. In this study the modern magazine cowboy story has not been used in picturing Kansas life.

In verse, Phifer, Stroud, and Woodman have set down a few lines about the cow towns. One of the Lomax collections of ballads and songs contains prize cowboy refrains, although in this study only those are used that mention Kansas or name Kansas in the title.
VIII

THE SOD SHANTY AMIDST HOPPERS AND DROUGHT

I am looking rather seedy now while holding down my claim,
And my victuals are not always served the best,
And the mice play shyly round me as I nestle down to rest
In my little old sod shanty on my claim.¹

The sod shanty came into its own during the 70's because these years were momentous in the growth of population that came into Central and Western Kansas and Nebraska. Sod was the only building material available on these long level stretches of the plains, where not a tree was seen for miles. Only when an early comer got a claim on the creek where there was suitable timber could he have a log house; or he might have a rugged, sawed cottonwood cabin on the plains by hauling timber to and from the sawmill.

Which was the most revolutionary of all decades in Kansas is hard to say, but the 70's certainly cannot be said to have taken a back seat in developments. From 1870 to 1880 Kansas grew in population from 364,399 to 996,096, an increase of 190 per cent.²

The United States increased her population 30 per cent in these ten years. In the year 1873, 459,808 aliens came to the land of the free. Emigration, prodded by the panic of that year, proceeded westward; dugouts appeared throughout the west-central part of the State; homesteading and pre-empting prevailed widely; the drought came; the grasshopper plague descended; many settlers went East; again rains came; paper towns were laid out every fifty miles or so; bonds for opera houses were voted in hick towns; railroads sold land and laid tracks; an exhilarating boom came in the late 70's and money rolled in because wheat was a dollar a bushel. Those who had not trekked back to the East during the drought were glad they had stayed. Thus the cycle ran. But life in Concordia, Ellsworth, Hutchinson, Newton, Wichita, Hays City, Dodge City, and Medicine Lodge during the seventies was not dull. It embodied a big fight against wind, drought, grasshoppers, Indians, cattlemen—all trying to keep the plains of Kansas in an uncultivated and uncivilized state. With the coming of the 80's the fight of the settlers was being won.

Henry Ware Allen has characterized the 70's as exuberant, and one might add that they were boisterous.

3 United States Census, Tenth Report, 1880, passim.
In some parts of Kansas. Even the man on the street
whistled such popular tunes as "Up in a Balloon, Boys,"
"Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," and "Little Brown
Jug." There was a fife and drum corps of young Civil War
veterans in almost every town of any size, and their
martial music was rendered in topnotch manner. Cattle
towns and railroad camps of this decade were rough and
rowdy and added to the blustering character of the frontier.
Conflicts between nesters who wished to use the land for
agriculture and herdsmen who wanted the range kept open
were bitter and often were fought to the death. Scoopyl-
topped wagons, picturesque Russian Mennonites, thrifty
Teutonic settlers, pioneers with the New England back-
ground—"iron-faced women" and "copper-jawed men"—renegade
Indians, corner lot speculators, the long line of cattle
drives, cattle barons, and Texas cowboys added color to
The Kansas towns and countryside.

By 1870 Indians had been removed largely to the Indian
Territory which later became Oklahoma. Raids were no
longer a constant menace but there was still fear of the
red man, who occasionally appeared in Kansas to piller and
kill. Although the Indian incursions were infrequent, a
bunch of soapweed with its upright hard flat leaves coming

4Henry Ware Allen, "The Happy Seventies," Kansas
Magazine, Ser. III (1942), 73.
5C. L. Edson, Dulcinea's Diary (Charleston, 1924), 33.
sharp point looked too often like Indians with their war bonnets on. "In those dangerous days anything that looked strange looked like Indians," said one pioneer. 6

Although after 1873 in Jewell County there were not so many buffalo, deer, antelope, and wild turkey, the Indians would come straggling through occasionally—about a dozen or so at a time—to beg for food, usually. The Perry McCracken family had a country store in Jewell County; and, when hungry Indians rode up and pressed food, the wife took everything she had cooked for the family dinner, including roasting ears and the pot of hot coffee, and set the food out on an old-fashioned bench before the store for the ravenous redmen. After eating, the Indians trekked on their way northward. 7

In Phillips County children were frightened at Indians in 1873. So were grown-ups. One day while one of the hay women was out hanging clothes on wild plum bushes not far from her cabin, the children who had been locked in the cabin got scared, climbed on the bed, and broke the north window so they could get out to their mother. Another day when an old Indian came riding into the yard with pumpkins cut in two and hanging on his saddle, the


7Belle McCracken, "The McCracken Family of Jewell County, Kansas," Collections, XII, 413.
days took cover under a load of hay nearby.8

From the Indian Territory braves came in around Medicine Lodge during the 70's, but the white settlers of this vicinity were organized and ready for call to stand guard. Said one settler:

I always attribute our safety to the stockade, made of cedar slabs standing upright in the ground which surrounded the few buildings built like a house but minus the windows and roof, and furnished with a few portholes to look, or shoot, through, if necessary. There were also long narrow ditches dug in the streets. These were so that in case of attack the people could drop into them and shoot at the enemy or avoid their arrows.9

On July, 1874, "the warning came that Indians were about."

Settlers gathered together a few necessities and sought refuge within the forts. During this period several people were killed by Indians between Medicine Lodge and Dodge City, two outposts in Southwest Kansas.10

At the crossing of Pawnee Creek on the old Bays and Dodge trail was Duncan's ranch, which consisted of a big stockade made of logs set two feet in the ground and standing about eight feet above the ground. The logs were fitted close to each other and formed a real protection.

Forming one side of the stockade were the log slabs standing upright in the

9Reach, "Memories of Frontier Days in Kansas: Barber County," loc. cit., 610.
10Ibid.
buildings, a house of several rooms and a stable all built to afford protection against hostile Indians. In the living room there was a table of slabs which was hinged against the wall, and which when not in use hung against the wall, filling the space between the hinges and the floor. Under this table was a secret door leading through a tunnel to a dugout, some distance away, providing a last stand should the buildings be taken.

Charles King gave a description of the country near Hays in the 70's:

It is one of those exquisite May mornings when the rolling prairies of Western Kansas seem swimming in a soft, hazy light, and the mirage on the horizon looks like a glassy sea. The springy turf is tinted with the hues of myriads of wild flowers, purple, pale blue, and creamy white; the mountain breeze that is already whirling the dust-clouds on the Denver plains has not yet begun to ruffle the cottonwoods or the placid surface of the slow-moving stream, and in many a sheltered pool the waters of the "Smoky Hill" gleams like silvered mirror, without break or flaw. Far out on the gentle slopes small herds of troop-horses or quartermaster's "stock," each with its attendant guard, gives life to the somewhat sombre tone of the landscape, while nearer at hand two or three well-filled cavalry "troops" with fluttering guidons are marching silently in towards the little frontier garrison that lies in a shallow dip in the wide, treeless prairie.

The chief Indian depredations during the 70's occurred when groups of Northern Cheyennes left the reservations in Indian Territory and made their way northward to the Sioux in the vicinity of the Black Hills of Dakota. In 1875 a group of seventy-five Northern Cheyennes were passing through.

12Charles King, Marion's Faith (Philadelphia, 1887), 8.
Kansas on their way to Dakota when they were trailed and intercepted by government troops on the hard lands plateau of Union Pacific and Sappa creeks in the northern tier of counties in Western Kansas. A three-hour fight annihilated all but one Indian.\(^{13}\)

In September, 1878, a band of three hundred Northern Cheyennes, seventy-eight of whom were warriors, left the Cheyenne and Arapahoe agency in Indian Territory under the guidance of Chief Dull Knife. They were tired of their condition at El Reno and were on their way to visit old friends in Dakota. They entered Comanche and Barber Counties in small groups and began pillaging and destroying. The settlers near Medicine Lodge had been warned of the oncoming Indians.

All the neighbors gathered in a large dugout, twenty by thirty feet, on the Frasier claim. The children and some of the women slept inside on beds spread on the floor. The men stayed outside and guarded the dugout throughout the night. That none would fall asleep, some of the women made coffee and biscuits for these men. From my little bed on a sack of corn I could see them hand the coffee and biscuits to the men.\(^{14}\)

The Indians went southwestward, pillaging and murdering.

They came up Sand creek into Clark county, and just a few miles from Englewood,... The cavalrmen caught up with them, but they barricaded themselves in a canyon and the soldiers soon saw the impass-

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\(^{13}\) William B. Street, "Cheyenne Indian Massacres of the Middle Fork of the Sappa," *Transactions*, X, 368-73.

ability of driving them out without great loss of their men. So they sent a messenger to Fort Supply for a cannon. But the line of communication was poor and the distance great in those days, and so the Indians escaped to the north through Decatur. They committed a number of outrages as they passed, and history says seventeen Cheyennes were killed in the hills. The people were very much disgusted with the government guards for letting these Indians escape unnoticed from their reservation.15

Thus this Indian band murdered thirty-two persons and revenged the slaughter of the seventy-four redskins who had been slain in the Sappa Creek episode three years earlier. The settlers who had moved out on Sappa Creek, in Rawlins and Decatur counties especially, reaped the vengeance of the Indians. This was recorded as the last Indian raid in Kansas.16

In 1870 the country around Ellis was "in its state of native wilderness. No efforts had been made to farm any of it. The prairie stretched away in an unbroken expanse of buffalo sod." To drink, buffalo came to the bank of the creek just opposite the hotel. Buffalo meat was practically the only meat eaten in town for several years.17 In June, 1871, immense herds of buffalo covered

15Ibid.
17James H. Beach, "Mother Smith, of Ellis," Collections, XII, 349.
the hills in the vicinity of Smith Center.\textsuperscript{18} Up in some parts of Republic County not a tree or house was seen on the landscape—only a herd of deer or antelope made the scene attractive. Prairie chickens in Drywood township, south of Fort Scott, made nearly as much noise as a Democratic caucus, according to one interested observer, who added that the wild pigeons were gathering acorns and beech nuts as quietly and with as much order as Republicans would sort out their party timber.\textsuperscript{19}

Onto these plains came the prairie schooners:

\begin{verbatim}

Slow was the weary, toilsome way
Where creaked the heavy-laden wain,—
Quaint follower of the speeding day
Across the plain.

White canvas covers, bulging, fair,
Enclosed food hearts athrob with joy;
The builders of an empire there
Found safe convoy.

Along its course child-voices sweet
Marked all the strangeness of each scene;
While parents sought new homes to greet
With vision keen.

No luxury or ease was there
To lap the traveler into rest,
But Stanch it bore the pioneer
On toward the West.

Deserted now, its ragged soils
Are furled—the port has long been won.
Sport of the boisterous, hurrying gales,
Through cloud and sun.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{18}Haney, "The Experiences of a Homesteader in Kansas," \textit{loc. cit.}, 309, 324.

\textsuperscript{19}West, "Early Days in Drywood," \textit{loc. cit.}, 353.
Unused, forlorn, and gray, it stands,
A faded wreck cast far ashore,
The Mayflower of the prairie lands,
Its course o'er.

The steam engine also brought in land-hungry families from half way round the world. Sometimes a contingent of the family, such as the father and the older son, came ahead to locate the land, file the claim, and build a dugout and well before the rest of the family came West. But at other times whole families and colonies migrated to Kansas and began homesteading—some with as little cash as twenty-five cents, which the father soon spent for a plug of tobacco. Kansas offered elbow room for all.21

Many of the settlers took out homesteads directly upon arriving in the new country. The first two years of homesteading one might live "off and on"—that is, a man must sleep on it once in a while and make some improvements on it within 6 months, or it will be forfeited." Nevertheless, he could hire out by the day or the month and earn a living.22

In the new country, there were settlers from various parts of the United States and Europe. Along Dry Creek, north of Henry's claim up on the Solomon River, there was a settlement of Germans—Germans from Iowa, Germans from Pennsylvania, Germans from

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21 Ibid., Sod-House Days, 13.
22 Ibid., 19.
Switzerland, Germans from Germany, "low Dutch," "high Dutch,"—all kinds of "Dutch,"... South of his claim, along the river there were settlers of many nationalities and persuasions: Germans, English, Irish, Welsh, Americans—not Mayflower quality, of course—Missourians, Campbellites, claim jumpers, and one Democrat. Among them were men of almost every imaginable calling: doctors, dentists, druggists, merchants, barbers, printers, carpenters, cabinetmakers, stone masons, cowboys, and horse and cattle thieves. ...many of these town- and city-bred Yankees were shortly crowded out by the thrifty hard-working Germans.23

Several Iowa soldiers came into Central Kansas by schooner to settle close to each, and they arrived at Concordia to visit the land office and get warrants. An early return to the office in the morning revealed that some prospective settlers had slept in front of the building all night in order to get an early choice and then move on to the new claim. There was a long line of men by nine o'clock; and during the day certain ones dropped out of the line here and there to get something for all to eat and drink, with the understanding that their original places would be retained. Finally, after seven or eight hours of weary waiting the emigrants got into the "inner circle" and made their choice of lands.24

The Haldeman-Julius novel Dust gives a picture of poor immigrants creaking into the dust-covered country near Fort Scott during a dry year:

23Ise, Sod and Stubble, 12.

Dust was piled in thick, velvety folds on the weeds and grass of the open Kansas prairie; it lay, a thin veil on the scrawny black horses and the sharp-boned cow picketed near a covered wagon; it showered to the ground in little clouds as Mrs. Fadé, a tall spare woman, moved about a camp-fire, preparing supper in a sizzling skillet, huge iron kettle and blackened coffee-pot.

An interesting story about life in Republic County in the 70's is Edith McDaniel's "Pioneer Dust." The point of departure for the story is the small graveyard "on the brow of a hill overlooking the old Pawnee village in Republic County,... where the doughty Pike caused the Spanish flag to be struck and the Stars and Stripes raised,..." To this country came Fred and Thora Jensen, young Norwegians; during that first hard year a daughter Thyra was born, fell ill, and expired while Fred was gone for a doctor. In the same soddy the next day was born a son to Jean and Douglas McDonald, Scotch immigrants en route West, but the mother Jean died.

Jean McDonald was prepared for her long rest. With the rising of the sun came a wind from the South that steadily increased in velocity. The dust from fields and trails rose in great clouds at times obscuring the low hung sun. Twenty, thirty and even forty miles an hour it blew, as the mercury mounted to 90, and then to 100, and finally to 110 degrees. The sturdy prairie flowers, which had withstood previous blasts, hung their heads in abject exhaustion, while the corn patches burned as black as the earth beneath. Thora and Douglas McDonald watched the trail in silent fear. Finally Douglas spoke:

"Your man might be kept. We'd better bury...

25 Mr. and Mrs. E. Haldeman-Julius, Dust (New York, 1921), 11.
them. I'll make coffins." The rough boards from the barn were torn down. Thora so far had made no comment of assent or dissent, but she now spoke.

"Let's bury them together. I cannot stand for my baby to be down there by herself. One box will do."

So one rough box was made. How crude it looked! Thora tried to think of some method to make it appear not quite so crude. She possessed an exquisite Chinese shawl, which Fred had picked up on a trip into Hongkong. She brought it out and placed it in the box. Jean McDonald was laid in the box. Thora then placed Thyra on the breast of the beautiful Jean. ...She gazed, long at Thyra. Then she clipped off the soft curl and pulled the shawl carefully over them. The top was nailed down.

McDonald said the Twenty-third Psalm in rolling Scotch burrs after the crude coffin had been lowered into the grave, and a "wee Scotch bairn" came to live with the embittered Morse family on the plains of Northern Kansas.

In March, 1873, out to Lakin trekked John O'Loughlin, who as a nineteen-year-old Irish-born emigrant had come to Fort Leavenworth in 1861, where he served as a teamster during the war. In 1869 he opened a trading post on the military road between Fort Hays and Fort Dodge, carrying on business with soldiers, hunters, and freighters. With the Santa Fe Railroad reaching the western boundary of Kansas, he opened a dugout store at Lakin and continued furnishing supplies to westerners. Other members of the family followed and soon other immigrants came from various

Institutions developed rapidly in Lakin. The law of the plains was administered to a horse thief by hanging him in 1877 or 1878; school was opened in a house in November, 1879. The banking facilities were often in the O'Loughlin dugout, the cache being made "in coffee cans, under bolts of calico, beneath kegs of fish,... One day a fish keg was moved; under it was a canvas sack containing one hundred fifty dollars whose whereabouts had long since been forgotten." As for farming, potatoes planted in the spring of 1879 did not grow on account of the dry weather, and in the fall they were dug up and eaten. When the O'Loughlin store was moved from the dugout to a new building in that year, "Lakin could boast of the Harvey house, section house, station, Theodore Brown's drugstore, the O'Loughlin store, the Lakin Eagle office, Potter & Mitchell real estate office, Gray & Jones Supply Company, all of which faced the railroad. For that time and place a store thirty by fifty feet not only looked but seemed as large to the citizens of Lakin as Marshall Field's." The first weddings were solemnized in the city in 1880; church services were held and a Sunday School was organized that year.  

28 Ibid.
Down at Medicine Lodge, a family of immigrants arrived in March, 1874. Six weeks had been spent in crossing the country from Page County, Iowa, and on the way the family had fallen into company with other trail followers, and they journeyed on together. Indian tepees were still in evidence—at least, the dogwood poles of the tepees were standing, and axes and bowie knives were found. 29

Companies of Swedes were coming to settle near Lindsborg, social and religious center of the Swedes in the entire Southwest after 1830, or at Scandia, headquarters of the Scandinavian Emigrant Association in the 70’s. The Association is reported to have brought about ten thousand Swedes to the Republican and Smoky Hill valleys. 30 During the 70’s, the Swedes in McPherson County were making progress. In 1873 a blacksmith shop was located on the town site of Lindsborg; the Union Hotel and a general merchandise store were also begun. In 1874 a furniture business sprang up. But the coming of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1879 marked a new era for the community.

Up to this time there had been no market for the grain and products of the farm. When a farmer wished to dispose of his grain he must haul it twenty miles or more to Salina, thereby losing time and subjecting himself to much inconvenience.

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Naturally, when he had received his money at Salina, he would do a great deal of trading at that place. This was a hindrance to the struggling business of the Lindsborg community. We find, however, that in a few years after the building of the road many business houses of a permanent nature, such as elevators, lumber yards, coal yards and banks, came into existence. We also find people cementing themselves closer together, for on July 8, 1879, the city of Lindsborg was incorporated and John A. Swenson elected mayor.31

By chance one might see a colony of Bohemians coming into Kansas in search of fairer lands than those offered near Lincoln, Nebraska. On May 5, 1874, when his school teaching was done for the term in Nebraska, Francis J. Swehla led a caravan of covered wagons south to Belleville, Concordia, and Salina, where the south wind blew so hard day and night that the colonizer lost all but one adventurous immigrant. Near Salina most of the free land was taken and so westward went the land scouts.

The eastern part of Ellsworth county that I passed through, seemed too rough for farming. On May 12, 1874, I passed through the town of Ellsworth. I don't know whether any of its citizens made out the writing on my wagon cover or not. It read: 'Ceska Osada.' Those words, meaning 'Bohemian Settlement,' conceived first in my brain, were later put on canvas, and afterwards worked into reality—a grand success. May 14, 1874, I arrived at Wilson. Jacob Sackman, an old veteran, was the first man to give me a welcome. But later I found comrades of my own regiment, and company, even, in Ellsworth county. So I decided to seek no further.32

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And so having sold their Nebraska acres for double what they had paid, the land scout and his family had their pictures taken and launched themselves upon a new claim in Kansas in the midst of the grasshopper invasion. The rest of the Nebraska Bohemians did not come to Kansas until 1875, but Swehla, after the hoppers had left the country barren, sowed winter wheat by hand for want of a better method. The field was dry and full of clods, but from an oak timber was cut a harrow with thirty-six teeth; and, weighted by a discarded railroad rail, it was dragged over the wheat. English sparrows, newly arrived pest, picked up the seeds before rain fell.\(^33\)

The largest party of Bohemian home seekers came from Chicago in the fall of 1876. Others followed—some direct from the old country—and settled in Lincoln and Ellsworth counties.\(^34\)

During this decade German-speaking people came to Kansas in large numbers. Military laws caused the Germans brought into Russia by Catherine the Great to betake themselves to the great plains of North America; especially did they colonize in Ellis County, from Catherine to Hays, where the Roman Catholics kept up their old traditions of church rituals and festivals. These people are reported to have

\(^{33}\)Ibid., 478.

\(^{34}\)Ibid., 482, 492.
Brought many seeds from their homeland, one family carrying ten pounds of Turkish spring wheat. In 1877 a colony of newly transplanted immigrants raised 10,000 pounds of tobacco from Russian seed.35

To Kansas came also Germans direct from Germany proper, from Austria, Poland, Switzerland, South America, and South Africa. In Kansas the 1880 census showed 28,034 Germans from the German Empire and 8,032 foreign-born—mainly Germans—from Russia, besides 2,668 from Switzerland, 1,285 from Austria, and 1,200 from Poland. Many other German-descended settlers reached Kansas via earlier settlement in Pennsylvania, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, and other states. Into Central Kansas they came during the 70's, not so much in large colonies but in small groups, as families and near neighbors. They settled in all parts of Kansas, for these people were mainly farmers, merchants, bakers—not much given to professions and public careers in the early days.36

In 1878, many Germans came from Bessarabia, Russia, to the plains of North America. Harassed by robbing Tartar bands, military service, and lack of land for expansion in Europe, they settled in a colony fifteen miles south.

35 Francis S. Laing, "German-Russian Settlement in Ellis County, Kansas," Collections, XI, 489-523.
of Russell and bought railroad land at six dollars an acre. It was not until about 1885 that a party from Bessarabia settled in Marion County, near Hillsboro.37

In September, 1874, six hundred families of Mennonites came to Topeka and bought 60,000 acres of land in Marion, McPherson, Harvey, and Reno counties. They arrived simultaneously with the grasshoppers, but out-stayed them.

For four weeks, pending the selection of their lands, these 400 families were quartered at Topeka, in the King Bridge shops, which, about that time, had been purchased by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company for car shops, and were not yet fitted up with machinery, but consisting merely of an immense brick enclosure of several acres of ground, safely roofed. During that period the merchants of Topeka did a thriving trade with these newcomers. Processions of Mennonite men, women and children were constantly passing between the stores on Kansas avenue and the bridge shops, carrying purchased articles for the prospective households on the prairies. Finally, the tradespeople established themselves temporarily in booths and tents near the bridge shops, and a regular fair was in progress there. Farmers for hundreds of miles around Topeka, who had no feed for their stock, owing to the protracted grasshopper visitation, brought horses, cows, calves, pigs and poultry to this market, and the new settlers bought what they wanted at ridiculously low prices, thus profiting by the scourge.38

In 1875 Noble L. Prentis visited the Mennonite settlements in Kansas. Of this people's love for watermelon he

38 C. B. Schmidt, "Reminiscences of Foreign Immigration Work for Kansas," Transactions, IX, 495.
The Mennonites have a decided preference for watermelons over every other "fruit." They call the melon "arboosen," though we would not be willing to certify that this is the correct spelling. ... Unless some other State can raise larger watermelons than Kansas—which some other State can't—the future Mennonite immigration will be directed hitherward. This fondness for watermelons and a watermelon country are an indication of the peaceable and sensible character of the Mennonite people. The American prefers to migrate to a country where he has a chance to be eaten up by grizzlies and chased by wolves, and can exercise his bowie-knife on the active red man, while the Mennonite sees no fun in danger, abhors war, and so seeks out a fertile, peaceable country where he buries his glittering steel, not in the hearts of his enemies, but in the bowels of the luscious watermelon.39

In 1874 Gnadenau, near Hillsboro, was established as a communal settlement by Bishop J. A. Wiebe and other Mennonites. The church exerted a strong influence in maintaining Old World customs and tried to regulate personal affairs, but contact with American schools and customs brought the colony to an end.40

Sehrag's novel, The Locusts, described the ways and habits of life among the Mennonites. Of Gnadenau he said:

Lydia walked leisurely through the village. The first settlers had named it Gnadenau, in honor of the divine grace (Gnade) they hoped would be granted them. They had arrived in the evening, and the following morning they had divided up the

39Noble L. Prentis, "The Mennonites at Home," Kansas Miscellanea (Topeka, 1889), 149.

40See A Guide to Hillsboro, Kansas. Compiled by Markers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Kansas (Hillsboro, 1940), 16.
land, By noon the most enterprising had begun to build their houses, and when the sun rose the next day even the most laggard were at work. They had finished the dwellings in a few days. They had set up their beds, placed their tables and benches and chairs in the rooms, and one morning they had hitched their oxen to the plow and ridden out into the prairie. After they drew the first furrow they stopped and inspected the earth. It was dark and rich and fertile, yet not too heavy. It was mixed with sand and bits of limestone; even heavy rains would not harm the seed in such soil. The settlers had nodded their heads and said to the oxen, and gradually the ancient fallow land had been transformed into the fields and meadows and gardens of the Mennonites of Gnadenau.

**Of early Gnadausau, Pretis said:**

> We drove across an immensity of newly-broken prairie before we arrived at the acres of sod corn and watermelons which mark the corporation line of Gnadenau. The houses of Gnadenau present every variety of architecture, but each house is determined on one thing, to keep on the north side of the one street of the town and face to the south.

Mr. Weibe has built a house more nearly on the Russian model. He took us over the structure, a maze of small rooms and passages, the stable being under the same roof with the people, and the granaries over all, the great wheat-stacks being located at the back door.

An immense pile of straw was intended, Mr. Weibe said, for fuel this winter. The Mennonites are economists in the way of fuel, and at the houses are large piles of chopped straw mixed with barnyard manure stacked up for "firewood." This kind of fuel destroys one's ideas of the "cheerful fireside" and "blazing hearth." There is not much "yule-log" poetry about it. Straw sounds and smells better. In order to use it, however, the Mennonites discard stoves, and use a Russian oven built in the wall of the house, which, once thoroughly heated with light straw, will retain its warmth

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41 Schrag, The Locusts, 238.
longer than young love itself.
...the Mennonite system contemplates that the
landholder shall live in the town and in the
country at the same time. The villagers of
Gadenau and Hoffnungsthal own fourteen sections
of land, yet all the farmers live in the two
towns, each of a single street. Near are the
gardens, and all around are the wide fields.42

As the grasshopper plague passed, Gadenau appeared
undisturbed:

On the other side of the road were the houses
of Gadenau, bright with the yellow light of
the lamps. The doors were open, so that you
could see into the rooms.

At the big round tables sat the farmers and
their wives and children. Before them were pale
bowls and plates, and clay jugs; quietly they
ate and drank heaven's provender for that even­
ing. On the white-scrubed wooden tables lay the
heavy round loaves, and on every table was the
small black prayerbook. Those outside could
feel the peacefulness of the houses. The smells
of the rooms must be of milk soup, of the farmers'
clothes, and, faintly, of the fresh wood of the
framework. The air would be warm and lulling,
so that one could chew and swallow and grow sleepy
without the disharmony of thought. The farmers
leaned against the table and laid their arms on
the top.43

Frentis also visited the Reimer settlement near
Newton. He wrote of the homes:

The interior of the house...consisted of two
rooms, as yet unplastered, looking like the
apartments of any thrifty settler who has not yet
had time to plaster his walls. The only "foreign
contrivance" to attract a stranger's notice was the
bedstead and bedding, the latter piled up in a
high stack when not in use, and covered over with
a calico "spread." The top of the high, narrow,
pile resembled in shape a coffin, and conveyed the

43 Schrag, The Locusts, 543-44.
unpleasant impression to the visitor that he had arrived just in time for a funeral. In the "best room" the meeting was in progress. The room was quite full and the visages of all present were as immovable as the gree-and-gold face of a Russian clock that ticked on the wall. These clocks are seen everywhere. They sport a long pendulum with a disk as big as a buckwheat cake, and long, heavy hanging weights of brass. There was not a newspaper or periodical in sight, and no books save a black-covered German Bible, according to the version of Dr. Martin Luther, and several Mennonite hymn-books; these last were bound in leather and printed in Odessa. There were few relics of Russia to be seen, especially no pictures of any sort. In every kitchen, however, there is a Russian teakettle—a large affair of copper, lined with tin; and at "Bishop" Buller's we saw some wooden bowls, curiously painted and gilded. They are very common in Russia, and the smaller sizes sell for three cents each. The Mennonite in Russia beats the Yankee in the wooden-ware line.

After the council had broken up, dinner followed, being neat and clean. The leading features were filled cakes, the English name of which appeared to be "roll-cake"; then there was black rye bread—very good—and excellent butter. We should not omit to add that there was also watermelon.

Seven years later, Prentis again called on his Central Kansas friends. At this time he pictured these immigrants and their children who had come in the heat of the grasshopper invasion, as "dwelling in great content under the vines and mulberry trees which their fathers planted in the grassy wind-swept wilderness." Prosperity abounded.

When Prentis visited the town of Emmathal,

Peter Schmidt showed all his arboreal treasures—

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sepias, cherries, peaches, apricots, pears, all in bearing, where seven years ago the wind in passing found only the waving prairie grass. No wonder Peter Schmidt, of Emmathal, waxed fat and smiled. He started on the prairie with $800; he now has a farm worth $4,000. We went into the house; of course, the door of every Mennonite is open, and the proprietor showed us his silk-worms and his possessions generally. He exhibited his Russian oven, built in the partition walls so as to warm two or three rooms, and to which is attached also a sort of brick range for cooking purposes. This device cannot be explained without a diagram. It is perfectly efficient, and the smoke at last goes into a wide chimney which is used at the family smoke-house. A happy man was Peter Schmidt, and well satisfied with his adopted country, for when I managed to mix enough German and English together to ask him how he liked America as compared with Russia, he answered in a deep voice, and with his little smile: 'Besser.'

Gorden Friesen's *Flamethrowers* is a novel about the Mennonite people who settled in Central Kansas. A character from the second generation said of the signs of progress some years later:

"Yes, that is the new Blumenhof church house. It stands almost exactly on the spot where the first church stood. It was at the north end of the dorp—there, can you see those buildings? That is the home of Gottlieb Craftholt, who now owns the land on which this end of the dorp lay. He has cleared away all the old buildings and the mulberry neighbor-path. The dorp was almost three miles long. There, along that road, on both sides, close together, lay the houses. The dorp was laid out just like in Russia, the houses facing each other across a road and the farms lying in long, narrow strips behind the houses. Gottlieb has made good work of clearing away the ruins; he gets his grain out of his land. The first houses, Jacob, were built like those in Russia, with bricks made of clay and mud and straw..."

roofed over by bundles of slough grass. They are all gone, every one of them, but at what was the south end of the dorp you will find some of the old first wooden houses.

"Yes, that is a fine church house. That stone for the basement wall is native to Kansas and is found fifty miles to the north of here....

"There were a good many original dorp s through here. In the north was Unadenau, in the northwest, Hoffnungsthal, Alexanderfeldt, and still farther, Ebenfeldt. To the northeast, Springfeldt, Alexanderthal. All our people settled here in one area."47

Sometimes the English ventured out upon the Kansas plains, but not usually in colonies. The ague and general dissatisfaction over frontier life caused some English immigrants to go back to the Isles, only to return again to the plains later in the nineteenth century.48

A number of Englishmen brought along to the West "fine guns, all trimmed up with nickel plating," but these men proved to be "better sportsmen than riflemen."49 At a prayer meeting near Salina, a pioneer of the 70's recalled hearing a young Englishman in his oral supplications implore "the 'oly hair of 'eaven," to the discreet amusement of others in the congregation.50

A cultured and refined English family near Council Grove—because of their pride—were suffering from lack of food one spring, there being nothing to eat in the house.


48 Anna Hulise Abel, "Indian Reservations in Kansas and the Extinguishment of Their Titles," *Transactions, VIII, Fasc. 1.


50 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit.
a small quantity of bran, but they told the neighbors
that they were suffering from dropsy. A kindly neighbor
brought aid. "With good food and careful nursing, in a
few days the dropsy faded out as snow before the sun-
shine." 51

One successful English colony was the Wakefield
Settlement in Clay County, which came in 1869 and 1870.
The group was a cooperative movement which purchased
52,000 acres of land and brought emigrants who were
farmers and business men expecting to endure hardships
and overcome the hazards of the frontier. 52

On the other hand, the Victoria colony of Ellis
County and the Punymede colony in Harper County were
unsuccessful because the landed gentry came in answer to
advertisements that these Kansas colonies were the "paradise
of the hunter and his hounds." These two groups were as
picturesque as they were short-lived. The colonists wore
red hunting coats in their chase of the buffalo, coyote,
antelope, and jack rabbit. The English dogs were not
fast enough to catch jack rabbits or coyotes. Because these
people toiled only slightly, they were soon without sub-
sistence or courage to remain on the plains. 53

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51 Doran, "Kansas Sixty Years Ago," loc. cit., 486-87.
52 Wm. J. Chapman, "The Wakefield Colony," Trans-
actions, L., 485-533.
53 Cecil Howes, "This Month in Kansas History,"
Kansas Teacher, LI (1943), 47.
One morning in April, 1879, a Missouri River steamer arrived at Wyandotte, Kansas, and discharged a load of colored men, women and children, with divers barrels, boxes, and bundles of household effects. It was a novel, picturesque, pathetic sight. They were of all ages and sizes, and every modulation of dressness, these newcomers; their garments were incredibly patched and tattered, stretched and uncertain; their "plunder," as they called it, resembled the litter of a neglected back-yard; and there was not probably a dollar in money in the pockets of the entire party. ...this was the advance-guard of the Exodus.54

This mass migration of the "Exodusters" came at the end of the 70's. At that time thousands of Negroes from the South were beginning to combine the acquisition of free land with their freedom from slavery. Moving chiefly on foot to the Mississippi River or by rail at times, they headed for Kansas and often spent months in getting there. They were fed and clothed by citizens en route and were finally given fare in order that river communities might be rid of them. Several steamboats were chartered to haul loads of these migrants off to the West and railroad box cars gave free transportation over the border into Kansas. The Nicodemus colony from Kentucky was better financed than most individuals and purchased a township in Graham County, where they undertook farming, being successful to a considerable degree.55

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55 Hewes, "This Month in Kansas History," loc. cit.
One pioneer woman wrote of a Negro family that came through Kansas and stopped on their farm in Geary County:

We had no tenant house, so my husband fixed up the granary until he could provide a place for them. The man was a big, strong, burly Negro and fully able to do hard work, and was a good worker. The wife was good, too, but I only had her to do the washing and ironing. She would carry a pail of water on her head with one hand to steady it, and something in the other hand, and carry the clothes basket that way, too. They would close the door and window of the granary every night although the weather was hot, to keep out the "hamts." My husband built a place in the side of the bluff, of stone, with a good floor in it, and made it comfortable for them, and I gave an hour of my time every day to teach the children their letters. But the family got lonesome and finally went to town.

Effie Graham's *The "Passin'-On" Party* is a story of some of the darkies who lived in Kansas. Aunt June's garden, like her home, was an expression of her primitive art:

One noted, too, the unique receptacles for growing plants. Modern Florists trust their treasures to the tender bosom of Mother Earth; but not so Aunt June. She elevated her darlings in every conceivable manner. Marigolds bloomed in butter kits, and geraniums glowed in punctured "deesh-pans." Fair Easter lilies were upheld by insolent punch-bowls, and Johnny-ump-ups were enunciated in baby buggies.

The covered wagon, that rolled onto the prairie lawn of the new claim of the immigrant held many things, useful and strange, for the frontier. There pioneers who

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56 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," *op. cit.*, 520-21.
sought along the long-lived cookstove with its oak leaf design on all the doors and a copper reservoir at the back for heating water. New Yorkers and Vermonters sometimes tucked in the big iron kettle, to be used in Kansas for the lowly purpose of boiling soap and scalding hogs at butchering time. And there were those who imported the first organ into the country town. It was quite an event—the coming of an organ; when the family sang a few songs with the front door standing open, the whole town gathered in the warm moonlight to feed their hunger for music. The organ drew the countryside to it on Sunday afternoons for many a year.

In one of the wagons there was a sod corn chucker or a stabber or maybe just a hatchet for cutting the sod, several hoes, spades, shovels, hand rakes, scythes, and a cradle. Some of the pioneers came West without farm implements for breaking, cultivating, and reaping; these had to borrow from friendly neighbors until they had earned enough money to buy their own. Perhaps also there were in the wagon tools for dressing stone and lumber, for the farmer needed to be a jack of all trades, and able to

58 Wheeler, "Tales of Pioneer Times."

I had assembled anything from an ox yoke to a home.

If the dishes had not come with the first wagon or were not readily available on the first night when the long trek was ended, the first meal on a new claim might be a supper of bread, butter, milk, and coffee. The horses were then picketed for the night. The crate of chickens was then put where the poultry would be safe from wild animals, and the pig—if one had withstood the hazards of the journey—was located on a rope tied to a stick. The family would then sleep soundly under the wagon, or would pile down on the floor of the cabin for the first night's rest on the site of their new home in Kansas.

Breaking the prairie was begun as early as possible and required from one to three teams of horses or a couple of yoke of oxen and a breaking plow. That first spring ten acres might be broken for the field crops, then came the back-breaking job of planting, with a hatchet or a shucker, corn in the sod. A garden spot plowed near the house might be enclosed with a double wire fence until barbed wire came into general use.

61Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit., 506.
62Ibid., 507. It was not certain until about 1880 that horses would be safe near barbed wire.
If a man or two had been "batching" in a dugout for several months before a woman was added to the claim, the place was due for a good scouring and scrubbing when her ladyship arrived. And if a Yankee, Swedish, German, or English woman was imported, the house was generally cleaned from pillar to post the first day. The wife scrubbed the floor, not with a store-bought mop but with a scrap of a grain sack found in the stable; on a window shelf she put several tin cans in which were planted geraniums and other flowers. The good wife set out the rose bushes and the asparagus slips she had treasured on the trip and watered at every camp spring. More slips would come in the spring for the garden and around the front door, but even a spring of greenery from the East added a link with the old home.

Many an Eastern mother whose daughter was going to Kansas fixed a garden trousseau consisting of bulbs, roses, shrubs, and hardy flowers so that the wilderness might soon be made to blossom as the rose.

The sacks of feed, flour, and cornmeal, which were spilled on the floor were set in neat rows behind the bed by the newly arrived wife; kitchen utensils were scoured and arranged deftly on the wall. Perhaps the husband was called on to fashion a potato masher and a rolling pin.

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Some sticks of wood put into the wagon at one of the last
pounds or even brought from back home. 65

Thus a real home was made on the prairie, even though
the dirt might be shaking down through the planks over-
head and the rain might blow in through cracks in the walls.
After supper the family would talk, knit, figure how to buy
a yoke of oxen, and dream rosy visions about paying off
the patent in two years on account of the credit earned by
the husband's army service. 66

In many cases the settlers early laid the foundations
of an orchard or grove or set a hedge around the premises. 67

By setting trees they expected to increase the rainfall as
well as to garner the fruits. 68 Up near Scandia there were
no trees in sight, and so some settlers, after breaking a
strip a rod or more in width all around the homestead for
a fire guard, set Osage hedges there and placed a grove
near their buildings. One settler set ash, hackberry, elm,
cottonwood, and some peach trees from Nemaha County. All
grew rapidly and soon one could see groves and rows of trees
in every direction. Many took pride in planting fruit trees

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65Ise, Sod and Stubble, 9.
66Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit.,
67Ward, "History of Sun-Gold Section," loc. cit.,
68Ruede, Sod-House Days, 26.
309; Bingham, "Sixteen Years in Kansas," loc. cit., 515;
Margaret Lynn, Stepdaughter of the Prairie (New York, 1914),
11-12; Ruede, Sod-House Days, 26.
and nut-bearing groves, particularly walnut and hickory.69

Sometimes the family set a patch of wild plums close to the house, getting the little plants up in the hills where the land had not been homesteaded.70 Gooseberries were brought in from the creek for ornament beside the house.71 Raspberries, strawberries, and grape vines were also set in the yard.72

Another daughter of the prairie said:

Our grove was an experimental one, as a grove in a new country must be, and held all sorts of things, which we made our own one by one. There were slender white birches, to become beautiful trees in time, from which we stripped bits of young bark. ... There were handsome young chestnut trees bravely trying to adapt themselves to their land of exile.73

Valuable indeed were the animals brought to the frontier—worth much because they were irreplaceable. The loss of any animal on the frontier was serious, although casualties did happen despite the care taken by settlers. Mrs. Bingham, who lived in Geary County, recorded that in 1871 there was hardly a team in the neighborhood because of the epizootic. The next spring, blackleg broke out among the cattle. A cow fell into an abandoned well out on


70Ise, Sod and Stubble, 71-72.

71Ruede, Sod-House Days, 41.


73Lynn, Stepdaughter of the Prairie, 11-12.
the prairie; lost and down on her knees for eleven days without food or water in the hot sun, she could not be restored by the best of care. Nellie, the mare, became entangled in her picket rope, fell, and hurt her back.74

A Pennsylvania Dutch farmer wrote back home that the death of the sow made him "feel a little blue but the fit soon wore off"; still he could not forget that five dollars and the feed were lost.75 Despite their discouragements the settlers kept on and in case of dire necessity purchased another animal. It was not long before more than one family learned that they should have saved the money to buy oats for the horses rather than to have purchased dining chairs.76

In the hills beyond Downs was a gang of horse thieves who were reputed to be part of an organization extending west from Atchison, to which point stolen horses were driven for sale. Then a man lost a horse, he was without means of cultivating his land. As one pioneer said, losing a horse was worse than losing a claim, for one could take another piece of land, but it was hard to earn two hundred dollars to buy a team.77

If some of the men folk had preceded the family by a

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74Ibid., 513-14.
75Ruedes, Sod-House Days, 225.
76Ise, Sod and Stubble, 17.
77Ibid., 17, 38.
Near onto the claim, the woman of the family gazed anxiously at her new home,

...a cabin of hewed logs, with sod roof, apparently twelve or fifteen by eighteen--almost spacious compared with the dugouts she had seen along the way that morning--with a homemade door and three small windows; a straw stable, made of wheat straw thrown over a frame of logs and saplings; a sod chicken house; a well, with a wheel and two buckets on a rope; and a small corral fenced in near the stable--about the only fence she had seen in the morning's drive. ...

There was a corn field of a few acres south of the corral; and a patch of wheat and one of oats lay west of it.

The cabin had a floor, as Henry had promised--she did not yet realize what a luxury this was--and was chinked between the logs with a kind of clay mortar. There was no ceiling, but there were wide cottonwood boards underneath the sod roof.

Of furniture there was little enough, and that of the most primitive construction; but Rosie appraised it all without consternation: a bedstead made of cottonwood boards, with a bed tick filled with straw, a table made also of warped cottonwood boards, and a tiny cooking stove. Two empty nail kegs and two boxes served as chairs, and on another nail keg by the door there was a washtub, half full of soapy water. A hammer and a saw hung from nails driven in one of the logs, a coffee grinder was screwed onto the log just below, and a few other household utensils were scattered about the room.78

Primitive as was the plains dwelling, it represented much hard work. For the dugout and sod house, sod must be broken for building material.

When the prairie is thoroughly soaked by rain or snow is the best time for breaking sod for building. The regulation thickness is 2½ inches, buffalo sod preferred on account of its superior toughness. The furrow slices are laid flat and as straight as as steady-walking team can be driven. These furrow

78Ise, *Sod and Stubble*, 7-8.
slices, 12 inches wide, are cut with a sharp spade into 18-inch lengths, and carefully handled as they are laid in the wall, one length reaching across the wall, which rises rapidly even when the builders are green hands. Care must be taken to break joints and bind the corners of the house. "Seven feet to the square" is the rule, as the wall is like to settle a good deal, especially if the sod is very wet when laid. The door and window frames are set in place first and the wall built around them.

Building such a house is hard work.

When the square is reached, the crotches (forks of a tree) are set at the ends and in the middle of the house and the ridge pole—usually a single tree trunk the length of the building, but sometimes spliced—is raised to its place by sheer strength of arm, it being impossible to use any other power. Then rails are laid from the ridge log to the walls and covered with any available material—straight sorghum stalks, willow switches and straw, or anything that will prevent the sod on the roof from falling between the rafters. From the comb of the roof to the earthen floor is usually about nine feet.

The gables are finished before the roof is put on, as in roofing the layer of sod is started at the outer edge of the wall. If the builder is able, he has sawed cottonwood rafters and a pine or cottonwood board roof covered with sod. Occasionally a sod house with a shingle roof is seen, but of course this costs more money.

At first these sod houses are unplastered, and this is thought perfectly all right, but such a house is somewhat cold in the winter, as the crevices between the sods admit some cold air; so some of the houses are plastered with a kind of "native lime," made of sand and a very sticky native clay. This plaster is very good unless it happens to get wet. In a few of the houses this plaster is whitewashed, and this helps the looks very much.79

Catherine Wiggins Porter has also given a description of building a soddy:

It was rather late in the fall, October I believe, before time was found to build our "soddy." We were fortunate in getting Billy Haferland to construct the walls, father doing the carpenter

79Rueda, Sod-House Days, 28-29.
work. There were definite rules to follow in the building of a sod house that would stand the test, as in building more pretentious dwellings. The sod must be neither too wet nor too dry. It must be plowed into an even width and depth—twelve inches and four inches. The sod was then cut into two-foot lengths. The house was 32 by 14 feet. At the rear it was partly a "dug out"—dug about five feet into the side of a hill so that there was only space for half-windows—but it was full height at the front. After the digging out process was finished they began to lay the sod—first a double row of sods running lengthwise, then sods going crosswise, and so on, much as in the erection of a brick building. After the walls had risen to about five feet, two by six timbers with bolts two feet or more long, varying at the ends according to the curve of the roof, were placed all around the top of the wall, and the building continued for two feet more. Space had, of course, been left for the windows and doors and the frames set in as the building progressed. After the walls had been raised to a height of seven feet or more, the rafters were put in place and the board roof put on—not coming to a sharp point, but slightly curved, the rafters, of two by eight material, being sawed to the proper curve and with slots sawed out of them into which the roof-joists fitted; the curve was so slight that the roof-boards easily bent into position. Then two by fours were placed on top of the roof just above the two by six's, the bolts run through the two by fours, and nuts screwed on. We had heard of houses being unroofed and didn't want that to happen to ours. Sod was placed all over the roof and over that was spread unpulverized native lime, in pieces ranging in size from a pea to a walnut, to help take care of the moisture when the rains came. Broad boards were used for the floors. There were three rooms—the kitchen and sitting room, each twelve by fourteen, and the bed room, eight by fourteen. The walls were pretty even and plumb and were plastered with native lime and sand, found in abundance in the bluffs near Spring Creek, without money and without price; they were also whitewashed.

Ours was an unusually fine house, constructed by a "master builder" of sods. The neighbors' houses had dirt floors and brush roofs with tree-limbs for rafters—the brush as fine and uniform as possible, consistent with having strength to sustain the weight of the sod with which it was covered. Once in a while a snake would make its way
into a roof of this kind and come plop, down onto the floor, or perhaps the bed or table. 80

Sarah Comstock's The Soddy was named for this typical dwelling found on the Kansas plains. The novel, said to have been written "after a thirty-day acquaintance" with Kansas, was reported to have occasional errors, such as the hero and heroine breaking sod with one horse and riding as they plowed. 82

A dugout often preceded the sod house on the plains, the sod having to furnish everything except what the covered wagon held. The dugout was a part of the country, being dug out of the earth, and a bit of house being added above the level of the ground. Sometimes the dugout looked more like a cave or a prairie-dog hole than a house. It was the poorest form of permanent shelter for the plains, but many pioneer families escaped the grizzly of the plains—the blizzard—and survived the heat of summer in a dugout. The immigrant often picked "a spot at the head of the prettiest draw" on his claim for his dugout. Then he staked off ground about ten by fourteen feet and dug this rectangle to the depth of about six feet. Of course, the dimensions and depth depended on the wishes of the owner, for the

81 (New York, 1912).
82 E. E. Kelley, "Reflections of a Booklover," Kansas Teacher, XLVI (1927), 34.
Length was determined by the length of ridgepole available. Steps were dug for a descent into the dwelling. The walls were built up from sod bricks.

Then came the ridgepole and roof! After looking at some trees on a timber claim, a fellow might strike a bargain for one 14 to 16 inches through the butt, and about 20 feet clear of branches; ... burr oak—for $1.00 just before sunset," he said, "they got the ridgepole into position on the crotches. They finished the gable ends and put the boards on the rafters, ready for the straw, another day's work.83

At Osborne the boys who were building this dugout got logs, hinges, and nails for the door and bunks. They set a row of gooseberry bushes from the creek on the west side of the house. The next day they

Went over to the dugout, and as Jim had the hinges and screws in his pocket, we proceeded to hang the door. Then we made a wooden latch to fasten the door. It is a masterpiece of lock-smithing. ... I made out an estimate of the cost of our house. This does not include what was paid for in work: Ridgepole and hauling (including two loads of firewood) $1.50; rafters and straw, 50¢; 2 lb. nails, 15¢; hinges 20¢; window 75¢; total cash paid, $4.05. Then there was $4 worth of lumber, with hauling the firewood, 50¢, makes $10.05 for a place to live in and firewood enough to last all summer.83

Other houses might be a composite style of architecture,"

83 Ruede, Sod-House Days, 30.
84 Ibid., 30, 39-40.
85 Ibid., 41, 43.
the half being log and the other half stone with a dirt roof. Imposing was the house of white limestone, "which can be dressed with very little labor, and looks very neat. It hardens by exposure, but can be easily cut with a knife, even after being exposed for a long time."86

Picturesquely, by the end of the 70's the landscape of Central and Western Kansas was dotted here and there with a sod roof rising above a draw, the blue smoke curling from a sod chimney or a few inches of rusty stove pipe. Sometimes wild verbenas or prickly pear, or portulacea were planted on the roof.87

A most natural and sincere tribute to the homes of the plains is found in Sol Miller's poem, "The Homes of Kansas":

The cabin homes of Kansas! How modestly they stood Along the sunny hillsides, Or nestlyed in the wood. They sheltered men and women, Brave-hearted pioners; Each one became a landmark Of Freedom's trial years.

The sod-built homes of Kansas! Though built of mother earth, Within their walls so humble Are souls of sterling worth. Though poverty and struggle May be the builder's lot, The sod-house is a castle Where failure enters not.

The dug-out homes of Kansas! The lowliest of all;

86 Ibid., 126, 15.
87 Ise, Sod and Stubble, 2-3.
They hold the homestead title
As firm as marble hall.
Those dwellers in the caverns,
Beneath the storms and snows,
Shall make the desert places
To blossom as the rose. 88

"My Western Home," written by Dr. Brewster Higley in 1873 at his frontier cabin near Smith Center, Kansas, later became popular under the title, "Home on the Range":

Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where never is heard a discouraging word
And the sky is not clouded all day. 89

All types of houses on the plains were essentially primitive but they furnished shelter, not only to human beings but also to rodents, insects, and domestic stock. Snakes loved to winter in a pile of potatoes or turnips in the cellar below a cabin; however, the cabin with an excavation under it was protected from grass fleas, especially if the cabin had a plank floor. Snakes also were found coiled around the studding in the attic or hidden in the organ corner. Sometimes in the spring the mistress of the house saw a bright fresh streak of color going across the floor and through a crack in the walls, later to find a dry snakeskin, the old robe, left behind in her house. 90

89Bresler Higley, "My Western Home," in Mary Thar-Billa Carl, A Survey of Kansas Poetry, 54.
The dog might locate a copperhead in a fence corner or a
child might encounter a bull snake, a copperhead, or a
rattler in the wagon shed, where children played in the
straw or had a rope swing attached to the rafters. A not
unusual treatment for a person who had been bitten was the
administrating of soda and kerosene externally or raw meat
of a chicken accompanied by a dose of whisky internally. A
Sometimes a farmer blew up snake eggs, the size of large
beans, oval and attached to each other; in these eggs could
be seen little snakes about an inch long.

A continual battle was waged between the housewife and
bedbugs, and everyday someone went over the bed in the
hopes of getting the last of the pests. A Saturday ritual
involved a search of the entire house; a kettle of hot
water was carried in one hand and a can of kerosene and
a long feather for probing and cleaning in the other hand.
Just about the time that the enemy was driven off the front,
mowers would stop and spread their beds on the floor. The
bedbugs were back again. Seldom did the itinerant preacher
fail to leave a copious supply of bugs in spite of his
long graces and harsh doctrines.

In some sections another dooryard pest was the red ant.

91May, "Reminiscences of the May Family and Their
Friends of Pioneer Days"; Ise, Sod and Stubble, 18.
93Ise, Sod and Stubble, 18.
The tenacious mandibles of these ants would tear off and remain in a child's flesh after the ant's body had been brushed from the surface; often these tentacles in the flesh caused poisoning and swelling. They could not be removed by picking with a needle; however, a neighbor in one case brought Smith's Arnica Salve, which soothed the baby better than did the mother's homemade remedy of mud and blueing.94

The settlers did not know about window screens then or about mosquito netting either. So flies had a free entrance. One pioneer woman felt sure that the Kansas flies had teeth—they clung with such tenacity. Stock was bothered also with insects and when possible rushed into the timber where the branches and twigs scratched off their tormentors.95

Dugouts and sod cabins sometimes grew damp and attracted toads. One settler who remarked, "There is also a little toad living with us," added that one of his Sunday evening diversions was watching the toad climb up the sod walls and sometimes fall back again. But at another time the settler was so disturbed during the night that he "murdered the cause of his discomfort...." Black crickets also got into dugouts, but a man could not see

94Ibid., 86-87.
95Bingham, "Sixteen Years in Kansas," loc. cit., 508.
Wolves, skunks, and other animals, while they did not get into the dwelling, often caused terror by chasing and biting people and domestic animals; sometimes wild wolves and hydrophobia skunks endangered the lives of people who had been bitten. When the great herds of buffalo roamed the prairies, packs of wolves followed and killed the stragglers; but as the buffalo were disappearing by the middle 70's, hungry wolves sometimes attacked people. On still nights their lonely howls echoing along the wooded creek made the dog creep close to the door and caused a lone woman's blood to run cold.

A desirable early addition to the claim, if a spring was not near, was a well. Sometimes a round deep hole was dug down on the bank of the creek; but, if the weather became dry, as it did in 1870, the hole had to be dug deeper and finally the family had to resort to the spring some distance from the cabin. In later years the family cemented a partially drilled hole and piped the spring water into this well. At Boston in Howard County a tolerably reliable spring just west of town supplied almost enough water for a dozen families, but water for the balance of the population had to be conserved in rain

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96 Fuede, *Sod-House Days*, 133, 156.  
97 Ise, *Sod and Stubble*, 32.  
Barrels set under the caves, or hauled from Baker's ranch. Some wells drilled to the depth of nearly eighty feet brought in not a drop of water.99

But on the dry plains and above the bottom land, settlers bored for water and kept on boring until they struck water. Often digging a well was a combination of digging with a shovel and boring with an auger.100

Finding the place to dig was determined in several ways. Sometimes the pioneer knew that there was water by the way the water drained from the land. Another means of locating water was based upon superstition; a forked branch of a peach tree was used: "the black shale will draw the switch as well as water. And when you strike shale before you get to water it is no use to go any deeper, but if you strike the water first, go ahead and make your reservoir in the shale and you will always have a supply."

At times the water table was only seven feet deep, and at other times the pioneer found it advisable to go fifty-five feet down, "cut through the rock all the way down," when the well was among bluffs or in high terrain. But the beauty of this rock was that no blasting was required; boring was easily carried on with an auger.101

99 Thompson, "Early Days in 'Old Bozten,'" Loc. cit.
100 Rueda, Sod-House Days, 214.
On Kill Creek near Osborne, it was customary to dip all of the water from the excavation and to wall up the well, thus insuring clean water. This done, three rails were adjusted on a tripod and staked over the well to keep animals and people from falling into the opening. The tripod had a pulley hanging from a peg, and a bucket on either end of the rope and chain saved time and energy in getting water for stock. Stones were placed around the circular opening for some distance to keep the place sanitary. Thus good Kansas water brought joy to the settler.  

Besides farming in the winter the young pioneer might teach a term of school. One young man, after gathering his own corn and pumpkins during the autumn of '72, packed his grip and started east to locate a school in early October. The county superintendent at Seneca located him on Deer Creek, where the new teacher sandwiched in some corn husking at a dollar a day and board before he took up the ferule on December 1 for a few months of teaching from books. During the winter of 1874-'75 school was just 5 miles north of his place; and by the next winter the home school was held in the Smith cellar, but soon a school district was organized.  

One of the early school sessions in Louisville was

102 Ibid., 223-24.
taught by a girl of Pottawatomie and French parentage from the vicinity of Lake Michigan in a small log building where from twelve to fifteen pupils sat on primitive benches and stools to learn readin', writin', and 'rithmetic.104

In Old Boston the first school was taught during the winter of 1873-74 in the new schoolhouse, on which was placed a bell "big and strong tuned enough to be heard several miles away." The schoolhouse was the community building, where all dances, religious services, festivals, and Grange meetings were held. Although one early teacher was "excellent," another who had recently come from Kentucky and had been a member of General Morgan's raiders was "a fine fellow, but not much of a teacher."105

In what became Hodgeman County a woman and her children were able to stay in the West because she had a college education and held a school during the winters. "At her first school she received "$20 a month and 'boarded round.'" As each of her children became old enough, she taught; one girl taught at the age of thirteen and a son kept his one and only term of school at the age of sixteen.106

Another pioneer girl, some years later, recalled the little white schoolhouse in Medicine Lodge, the children standing in a long line, and the individual scholars

105 Thompson, "Early Days in 'Old Boston,'" loc. cit., 481.
reciting with an elbow upon the teacher's knee. "This was the last schooling we children had for about four years, for we had returned to our home on Elm creek," where no teacher had yet invaded the herds of deer and antelope, and wild turkey roamed in droves over the nearby hills. 107

When a community got ready to organize a district or to build a schoolhouse, a meeting of the voters was held in someone's home. There was probably a good representation, for school issues were of great interest to plains citizens. Probably too, "all the business could have been done in 1½ hours, if there had not been so much side talk, such as 'How much spring wheat did you sow?...' When gifts of land were offered, the one nearest the intersection of the section roads and on high land was accepted. "A good deal of wind" was used before decisions were reached.

One of the delegates from Sod Town (Sam Hoot) wanted four acres, on the four corners, one for the house, another for a place to stack hay for the preacher's horse (when somebody comes to preach in the house), a third for a hitching ground, and the fourth for a play ground for the children. ... After a good deal of talk it was decided to build a stone school house, and papers were circulated to see what those present would do toward helping to build the institution. Everybody promised to work; nearly everybody signed for 6 days—some included their teams. In all there were 31 days' work promised. Then a paper for cash subscriptions was circulated, and $18 pledged. 108

108Ruedé, Sod-House Days, 217.
Money needed for other supplies, furnishings, and the teacher's salary was raised by taxation, but since land was not taxable until the government had given a deed to it, and since only the oldest settlers had deeds as yet, the amount to which school bonds could be issued was small. In one district it was $106 as there were only 240 acres of taxable land in the district. Nevertheless, bonds were issued to that amount, and work was given by other settlers to build the schoolhouse.109

During the early 70's when it was, as one pioneer said, "by dint of great labor we kept soul and body together," there were few ready-made amusements.110 The pioneer had to make his own joy as well as his living. The zest for life and abundant outdoor activity obviated the desire for constant petting and pampering of adults and children. Said a pioneer boy who became a doctor and established a hospital in Kansas:

Childish wants as we recognize them now were ignored in that day. The child made his own playthings and his play was the anticipation of the things to come. He made wooden guns and rode stick horses after imaginary enemies. The only gesture toward childish desires was an orange and a few sticks of candy at the church Christmas tree. This state was not a total loss. The child of that day learned many things. He learned to shift for himself, found his own amusements and learned to wriggle out of his predicaments. Every boy had

109Ibid., 224, 227.
a knife and could make willow whistles in time
to signalize the appearance of his first pair of
pants.\textsuperscript{111}

Since life on the frontier was a case of "root hog or
die" for grown-ups as well as for children, entertainment
was bought cheap. When one took a turn at keeping the
hotel desk in a hick town, stripped and topped cane for
a neighbor or for his father until midnight so that the
family might have molasses, built a sod house, went to
meetings, roamed the hills to pick sand plums or to hunt
wild turkey, swam in the creek, carved pipe bowls from
native stone and the stems from box elder--one gave ex-
pression to the new culture of agrarianism that was being
established on the plains. Playing hooky to hunt rabbits
or to go skating on the ice in the creek left the teacher
thankful apparently for an occasional day of comparative
peace.\textsuperscript{112}

Life was hard. Many times there was "so little to
eat or to wear, and so comforts whatever." With Indians,
grasshoppers, wind, dust, floods, prairie fires, just to
be alive was a triumph; and when there was supply of home-
made molasses, some corn ground into meal and some cooking
in lye water, a pail of fresh milk, a crock of clabber on

\textsuperscript{111}Arthur F. Hertzler, \textit{The Horse and Buggy Doctor}
(New York, 1939), 12.

\textsuperscript{112}Ibid., 17. Roach, "Memories of Frontier Days in
Kansas: Barber County," loc. cit., 613; Rude, \textit{Sod-House
Days}, passim; Ise, \textit{Sod and Stubble}, passim.
The table, and a haunch of deer hanging from the uppermost rafter of the cellar, then pioneer life was an exhilarating experience. Besides, there were festive days, such as one wedding anniversary when the husband brought home a half dozen glass goblets, the first glassware the pioneer woman had ever owned.113

Roads began to affect Kansas folks in the 70's. In the eastern section they were rather thoroughly laid out along section, township, and county lines before this time; but farther west, as around Osborne, the prairie was covered with trails running in all directions. It does not take many trips over such a trail to make a pretty good road, and when the track gets muddy, travellers turn out to one side, making a whole lot of ruts and cutting the sod in very bad shape for breaking.114 Keeping on section lines was difficult as people were anxious to take the shortest route to wherever they were going. A "Closed" sign did not keep people off one's property, and a rag dangling on a wire across the track only made matters worse. The best solution seemed to be to draw a furrow or two around one's land and induce travelers to stay along the line.115

It was not long until the supervisor of roads asked

113Ise, Sod and Stubble, 136-37.
114Kuebe, Sod-House Days, 46, 47.
115Ibid., 141.
new settlers to work several days on the road to pay their poll tax. By that means lanes for traffic became better marked and more easily traveled. The work included chopping trees, fixing the ford at the creek, and getting driftwood out of the stream in order to lower the level of the water.

When the time came to run the county road, a real issue arose which often split the feelings of neighbors, threatened to break up the church or school, where the quarrel fell hard on children in the minority who were tormented and even beaten. Neighbors refused to speak to each other; communion had to be abandoned for awhile at one church, since neither faction would engage in this rite with the other. Finally, the quarrel cost one division a year's savings to pay a lawyer and incidental expenses of the trial.

Although in some parts of the Kansas frontier there were few churches, the central and northwest sections of the State—an important frontier of the 70's—were settled by church-loving people who early began having meetings.

The people here don't go to church—they "go to meeting." Services are held in private houses. The various denominations are not exclusive, and everybody is welcome to the services whether he is the particular faith of the preacher or not. A Roman Catholic and a Hardshell Baptist, or a Methodist are on just as friendly terms as though both had precisely the same creed and observed the same forms in their worship. A visiting preacher, no matter of what denomination, is always sure of an

116 Ibid., 144.
117 See, Sod and Stubble, 120-22.
audience in proportion to the size of the house
in which he has been invited to hold the service,
and often the room is full and others unable to get
into the house stand by the door and windows to
catch what they can of the sermon.

At whatever house the services are held all
the people present are expected to stay for dinner,
which follows the sermon. The dinner is usually
substantial and palatable. It seems to be thought
no imposition for fifty or more people to take
dinner at a place, and even sometimes people take
offense if you attend meeting and leave without
partsaking of their hospitality. In some cases those
who attend meeting arrive the night before, coming
ten to fifteen miles to hear preaching by a minister
of their own denomination.118

There is testimony that the preachers on the frontier
were poorly educated and some could read the Bible with
difficulty.119 They were, however, of the same stock as
their flocks and spent their time traveling among the
frontier communities baptizing, holding love feast and
communion, and giving their message in well-worn phrases.

Soon after his arrival a young man professed in the
spring of 1877 that he "would like to hear a real good
sermon again." He did not go to the Dunkard meeting be-
cause their customs, together with the preacher's lisping,
would have excited his "visibilities to an uncontrollable
degree, and that would never do."120 The next week an
Evangelical preacher was at one of the homes in the neighborhood. "He would begin in what he called English but it was
so badly murdered that no one could call it by that name;

118Ruede, Sod House Days, 32-33. See also Ise, Sod
and Stubble, 23.
119Ruede, Sod-House Days, 74; Ise, Sod and Stubble, 23.
120Ruede, Sod-House Days, 86.
By the time he got warmed up, he would spit out Dutch as fast as he could work his tongue,... The next month at a Dunkard meeting in Pleasant Valley schoolhouse, some were amused by Brother Henry Landes' singing. He had "a very strong voice, very rough," and when he sang he put the "ah" on,

"The temple—ah—'s veil in sunder rent,
The solid marbles break—ah—h."

Another preacher had the "true German opera sing-song" and a sermon made up of "we find," "look around and about you," and other insignificant terms. 121

By the fall of 1878 Mennonite and Lutheran meetings were held the same day in the Kill Creek neighborhood. As the congregation came up for the Mennonite service, they...heard someone speaking indoors, and found that Lutheran services were in progress. The room was nearly as full as it could be, but we managed to find places. The preacher wore a black surplice and white tie, which are not often seen in this part of the world, and attract notice on that account. The service was in German and very long, but that did not tire us, for we were all used to rather long sermons. At the close of the sermon a child was presented for baptism, and the baby surely received enough names to choke it to death: Clara Katerina Henrietta Johanna. About 11 o'clock the Lutherans vacated the room and the Mennonites took possession. Mr. Yoder, the Mennonite preacher, preached a very disconnected sermon in English, at the close of which Bishop Hauschenger made a few remarks in German. After dinner "Bub" and I went to Garnet to eat watermelons and Pe soon followed to help us. 122

121 Ibid., 74.
122 Ibid., 237-38.
And so, religious meetings served as social gatherings since "There was little in any of the new houses to afford interest or entertainment--few newspapers, or books, or magazines, or musical instruments. ...and the people were glad to have a place to go, where they could see each other and forget the tedium of their homes." Sometimes people walked ten or twelve miles barefoot to attend church. 123

Occasionally, there was a county election which brought people together for a chat and a chance to compare notes on crops and children. A year or two after the community had been established there were frequent festivities: taffy pulls, quilting and sewing bees, surprise parties, and kissing games. 124 In 1872 the local Granges began organizing in Central and Western Kansas, and these meetings offered social expression as well as economic and political possibilities. 125 Then there were neighborly visits, literary societies, spelling schools, and in some places lectures about Mormonism. 126

Visiting the neighbors sometimes meant going in the morning and staying all day. A woman who had come from New York to a farm near Junction City thought that the first

123Ise, Sod and Stubble, 22.
126Ise, Sod and Stubble, 22.
visit she received was a "call."

Two ladies came about ten in the forenoon. I was baking bread, and of course in my forenoon working dress. As I thought it was a call, I did not try to change; but they kept staying, and it began to be time to think about dinner. Thinking they might consider it shifty for them to go, I sat still, but when I knew my husband would come expecting to find dinner ready, I had to go to work. They had come expecting to stay to dinner, but as I had been used to making the first acquaintance by a call, I did not understand the Kansas fashion. They stayed until late in the afternoon. In Kansas, in the country, we found that Sunday was the general visiting day and very often the whole family, even to the hired man, "ent."

On New Year's Eve the Ises went up to the Bartsches', who lived two miles up the creek, "to watch the old year out, passing the time visiting, singing, and in prayer." The refreshments at these parties were usually simple and inexpensive, although sometimes fried cakes were served, or even pie or cake. Once when Henry and Rosie had a party at their house, Rosie served blanc mange, which was thought quite an extravagance. At a surprise party at Benders, the hostess was obliged to bake corn bread and serve it with black coffee.

In the wintertime families sometimes went to "socials" in sleighs made of bent sailings. The use of the summer sleigh was recorded in Heritage of the Bluestem:

A Sabbath calm enveloped Pilgrim Valley. Outside the church people lingered, exchanging greetings and the latest gossip. In the inclosure at the rear of the little stone building, each stood patiently in their stalls. Horses stamped impatiently beside the row of hitching posts along the street. Sleigh bells

127 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit., 509.
128 Ise, God and Stubble, 23.
129 Ibid., 22.
jingled as the animals shook their heads in vain efforts to dislodge swarms of attacking flies.

Sleigh riding in the midst of summer had been adopted by the valley as a necessity. August Berkling's wagon had broken down one day when he was hauling logs from the river. He had fashioned a rude sled of saplings and brought his load home.

The idea was seized upon by the colonists. Sleds moved easily over the prairie grass. What had been a makeshift of necessity became a community utility.

Occasionally at a party in the neighborhood the young people

—and they were all young—would prance back and forth to the tuneful melodies of Faevilly Wheat, Old Dan Tucker, Buffalo Girls, Miller Boy, Old Brass Fiddon, We'll All Go Down to Rowers, and My Father and My Mother Were Irish. Dancing to the music of the violin was not deemed a Christian form of amusement by the stricter moralists of the community; but the accordion was not thought to be to the same extent an instrument of the devil...

On Rock Creek, James Limrick, a typical Irish fiddler, played by ear and danced at the same time. Another neighborhood fiddler, "with the soul of an artist and the touch of a master"—one of the strange and unusual types in the incongruous mass which peopled Kansas in its earlier days—could play Schubert, Strauss, and other masters, and got three dollars with his violin and "bull" fiddle for furnishing the music and calls at dances. He did not like farming, which he carried on with a hoe and a wheelbarrow because of his fear of horses. He often set out as early as three in the afternoon for the dance that night and walked home.

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130 Carlson, Heritage of the Bluestem, 125.
131 Ibid.
afterward in the wee morning hours.133

In one community a dance given for the benefit of the library association netted six dollars. "Between periods of drying peaches and asking soft soap the women were trying to get together enough money to buy a few library books. They were always giving socials in the summer and plays at the schoolhouse in the winter for the benefit of the library—admission ten cents." 134

According to one pioneer, a dance was held at the schoolhouse of Old Boston nearly every night during the "stranuous times"—the county seat era period of the 70's—days when the men wore navy-size six shooters while they balanced all and swung their partners.

...Boston had the best crowds of dancers I ever saw in a small town. Of course, quadrilles and square dances always held half the program in those days, in country or town, but Boston could dance the round dances as well as the cotillions and reels, and the way forty or fifty couples would swing down the line and circle around the old Boston schoolhouse was an interesting sight, for the waltz in those days was a steady, continuous whirling, with music at a slightly speedier tempo than of to-day—there was no reversing or cutting the corners, but everything was dignified, and everybody danced alike. And there would be a quadrille, and then a schottische; then a quadrille, and then a waltz, and so on, and practically everybody in the Boston crowd could dance everything on the program. And the town and country was full of fiddlers. At any dance or party, there were sure to be from three or four to a dozen men who could take the fiddle and produce

133Elmer House, At the Grass Roots (Topeka, 1905), 37-38.
134Ibid., 18-19.
Occasionally a dance was interrupted temporarily by an alarmist's announcement of danger. The war for the county seat was between Boston, which had fairly won the election, and Elk Falls, which previously had garnered the county records. On one night during the 70's somebody came running into the schoolhouse while the dancing was at its merriest, and shouted "Elk Falls is coming!" It was said that "instantly every man deserted his partner on the floor and scouted for his position of defense to guard the precious county records and repel any attempt to carry them away." On this occasion, however, the alarm was soon found to be false.

Communities which frowned on dancing often sponsored parties at which kissing games were the "mildly exciting form of entertainments."

One of the games was "Miller Boy," in which several couples marched in a circle with a lonesome lad at its center, singing a mournful ditty about a miller boy who took his toll with a free good-will, and who at the same time kept one hand in the hopper and the other in the sack. At a signal the marchers changed partners, and the lad in the center made an effort to forcibly separate some other lad from his girl. If he were successful the lad bearest of a marching companion paid a forfeit and took his turn as the hub around which the spokes of the wheel revolved.

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136Ibid.
There were several dozen of these games—"Old Dan Tucker," "Weevily Wheat," "Fruit Basket," "Tin Tin," and others,... founded on kissing the girls later on in the evening,... When forfeits had been imposed upon everybody present, they were sold by an extempore auctioneer over the head of one of the participants. This participant named the price which the owner had to pay to again secure possession of his property, but as forfeits were always redeemed by kissing some person of the opposite sex, the price was never considered prohibitive.

In "Postoffice" the person beat on retrieving his property from the hands of the trustee of forfeits went into an adjoining room and sent word to some girl, usually his sweetheart, that a letter awaited her. "Postoffice" was really the ideal form for liquidating one's osculatory obligations, because he was not compelled to wipe out the debt in full view of a jeering audience, and he could pay as much interest as the girl would stand for.

"Building a Telegraph Line" and "Picking the Cherries" also had a strong following among those staggering under the burden of debt, for in each of these popular diversions every lad kissed two girls and every girl was kissed by two young men.137

Albert Bigelow Paine mentioned early day kissing parties:

Say, Joe, do you remember the days we lived on Pollin's prairie,
Content with our simple country ways and our sweethearts Sue and Mary?
And those 'kissing parties' we used to have, and the game about the barley
And weevily wheat, with its queer old song about the cake for Charlie?
"O, I'll have none of your weevily wheat,
And I'll have none of your barley,
O, I'll have none of your weevily wheat
To bake a cake for Charlie."138

137 House, At the Grass Roots, 42-44.
Another form of entertainment was what was called a

dramatic evening, pageants and tableaus. A pioneer who was

ta Osborne, earning some extra cash at the printer's box,
did not go to dramatic entertainments because his "quarters"
were of more account than to fool them away" since he was
saving to buy a cow and a team. However, this young fellow
discovered an "Art Gallery," at which he had a tintype made
of himself for the folks back home. A picture showed the
folks back home, whether in Germany, Bohemia, Pennsylvania,
Michigan, or Nebraska, that all was well. In the pictures
the family were usually a bit long-faced, either because
their store shoes hurt their feet or because tradition re-
quired a serious mien.

Not uncommon on the frontier were practical jokes such
as this one upon a neighboring fellow when he "began spout-
ing" a long and familiar story. Heads began to drop

...till the whole crew had their heads down or
leaning against the wall, apparently asleep....
somebody snored. He stopped talking, but as the
objectionable noise was not repeated, he began
again but before he got a dozen words out, there
was such a chorus of snores that he could not hear
himself talk. ...such a side-splitting laugh as
we had at his expense I have not enjoyed for a long
time.140

This same form of "mild lawlessness" was undoubtedly
practiced occasionally at a preaching:

Once, some of the wilder of the young men planned

139 Suede, God-House Days, 79, 231.
140 Ibi., 208.
to "snore the minister down." Some of their number were stationed in various parts of the house; one pretended to be asleep and snored; this was followed by another prolonged snore in another part of the building; then there were several, as of a mighty chorus in response to the challenge from the first. Then another and another, without intermission, loud and long, until their object was accomplished, and there was too much confusion for the preacher to proceed. As that mode of procedure grew tame other methods were tried, but the preacher, nothing daunted, did not give up, and finally the lawlessness was crowded back and out.141

The charivari or wedding serenade was also celebrated with gusto on the Kansas plains. Grace Galloway's "A Kansas Serenade" was written about the coming of two young ladies to a Kansas community with a croquet set and an organ. The young people loaded the organ into a four-in-hand and called in some newlyweds to charivari them. The gaiety of the party was unbroken although two of the reeds in the organ became stopped with the Kansas dust.142

Newspapers, although they were usually old when they get to Kansas, contributed much to occupying the general public's spare moments. In Osborne, everybody came to the printing office to read the papers from the East, "always ten and sometimes three days old, but the latest news available."143

Sometimes Thanksgiving Day was spent chopping wood, but a Junction City woman said that they "always observed Thanks-

141 North, A Prairie Schooner, 38-39.
143 Ruede, Sod-House Days, 165.
ever ate alone but invited someone who had no relatives near. They had "regulation turkey, pumpkin pie and vegetables for dinner." 144

Christmas was not as rich on the Kansas plains as in Illinois, which one family had left for the father's health out West:

There was a little—a very little—"bought" gift for each child; popcorn balls—an orange; no apples—they were an everyday affair this winter. By next Christmas the Illinois supply would be so far in the past, that an apple would be a real treat. There was a paper sack far down in the toe of each stocking—a hard, knobby, sack, that might be candy. ...TAFFY. 145

At Easter, as well as at Christmas, particularly among the Germans and Scandinavians, there were special feasts and extra preparations. This was true especially when a woman lived in the household. 146

Then there were the Fourth of July celebrations!

The day after the harvesting was done, Henry and Rosie drove to Cawker City to celebrate the Fourth of July, taking their month-old baby for her first ride in the wagon. Everybody was there; and it seemed good to see the crowds of happy people jostling each other on the noisy board sidewalks, talking and laughing, boasting about the climate, the size of the wheat crop and the prospects for corn, and having a good time generally. Some of the men were somewhat the happier for having refreshed themselves from the whisky jug in Parker's store, and there were even a

144 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc.


146 Rudee, Sod-House Days, 226.
few fights, but generally the crowd was orderly enough. Most of the women were red-faced and tired from carrying their babies up and down the short block of sidewalks, and from trying to keep them quiet during the "scooping," but they carried out their part in the celebration heroically, and even cheerfully. After many weeks in the drab little dugouts and cabins they were glad to get out and see the metropolis, as it thrrobbed with the life of the hopeful frontiers. 147

During the 70's buffalo hunting in Kansas was both a popular sport and a business. For the pure and unassailed thrill of a buffalo hunt the Grand Duke Alexis, who was in Canada and United States during 1871, visited Western Kansas with Generals Sheridan and Custer, "Buffalo Bill" Cody, and other notables. Besides killing their allotment of buffalo, the Russian and his party saw the ubiquitous prairie dog, coyotes, a few antelope, and Brule Indians, who showed how they killed buffalo with the bow and arrow. 148 A good many settlers killed buffalo for sent, but still more hunters slew them for their hides. 149 The southern herd was practically wiped out between 1870 and 1875.

About Christmas, 1870, L. C. Fouquet, Captain Van Harter, and a French Canadian went west from Wichita to shoot buffalo. Thirty miles from that little village they saw a few herds, but farther on--out on the upper plains where the animals were grazing upon the country for fifteen

147 Iac, God and Stubble, 68-69.
miles around—the hunters counted sixty-three great bands
with perhaps two thousand animals in each group. And there
were more buffalo along the horizon.

At Sun City, near the mouth of Turkey Creek:

Some of the hunters had made a number of rooms
(homes) side by side by cutting spaces in the creek
bank (east side). They placed logs overhead, then
brush and dirt; also sod on top to a level with the
rest of the land. No buffalo could ever guess that
there was any human around, and they would come some-
times right over to their habitations,...

Those people would kill them, take the skins
and the very finest part of the meat to dry for the
Hutchinson market. They placed poison on the rest
for the gray wolves and coyotes [sic] who had be-
came very plentiful in that land of their
plentiful food. And the first thing after break-
fast the hunters did was to go to their job of
skinning wolves...,

Not far above this cave village was a road
going thro the swampy creek valley, about 7½ yards
wide, and this had been artistically and scientif-
ically paved with gray wolf sic carcasses and Id
rove over this bone road several times.150

Another pioneer who lived near Medicine Lodge spoke of
the value of the bones which lay strewn over the prairies.

The settlers gathered these by wagon loads and hauled them
to Wichita, Hutchinson, and Dodge City—over a hundred miles
to market. ...they brought about ten dollars per load. By
this means many a poor family kept the wolf from the door.151

John R. Cook said that seven, eight, nine, or ten dollars per
ton was realized from the sale of bones. He continued:

...I saw in 1874, the year before the great buffalo

150 Ibid., 344.
151 Poarch, "Memories of Frontier Days in Kansas:
Barber County," loc. cit., 611.
slaughter began in earnest, a rack of buffalo bones, on the Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way, and twenty
miles ahead of the track from Coronado, Colorado, 
piled twelve feet high, nearly that wide at the base, 
and one-half mile long.152

Fourquet said that "Buffalo bones were very thick" all 
over the upper land of his neighborhood and westward; they 
were a nuisance to the breaking of sod.

Those buffalo bones came very handy as the 
settlers hauled them to Hutchinson, where there was 
a firm who shipped them by the car-loads. The side 
tracks were just lined up with long stacks of such. 
They sold from two and a half to three dollars a ton 
for them. And from $6.00 to $8.00 a ton for the 
horns.153

A Kansas Pioneer reminisced:

Yes, I had a hard time, stranger, 
When I first came out to Kansas; 
Thought I'd have to give it up, sir. 
No man knows better than I do 
What we people had to live on.

... 
I have carted loads of dry bones 
Sixty miles across the prairie, 
On the trail from Medicine river 
To the great Arkansas Valley, 
To Wichita, now called a city— 
Sometimes, Queen of Southwest Kansas. 
Then it only was a village, 
Where the white man and the Indian 
Met on common ground and traded.154

Other buffalo hunters were at work in 1872 in Western 
Kansas. Some were about six miles west of Dodge City on the 
Arkansas River. There a group built a sod house 80 feet long,

152 John R. Cook, The Border and the Buffalo, 196. 
154 John F. Beebe, "The Kansas Pioneer," Prairie 
Flowers (Topeka, 1891), 13-14.
20 feet wide, and 9 feet high. The walls of this building were 3 feet thick at the bottom and the last few rounds at the top were about 18 inches thick.

We covered the house with poles, grass, and dirt. I built this horse with the calculation of smoking meat the coming winter and saving hides. We would put up four forks in the ground about five feet high; then we would stick the hides to these forks and let it sag down in the middle and we'd stop the bullet hole up with a pine pot. Then we'd take a buffalo ham and cut it in three pieces, salt it in these hides, put a little saltpeter with it, and let the meat lie there about three weeks in the salt. We'd take it out then and hang it up and we'd smoke it about three weeks.155

During the spring these hunters worked their way north to Fort Wallace, where buffalo abounded. During the winter they cured and sold hides.

In February, 1873, there were few buffalo on the Arkansas River in Kansas; they were receding westward, southward, and northward as the railroad and settlers came in. So from Fort Wallace the group worked northwest to the Arickaree River, where great herds still roamed and were "gentle and easy to get a shot at."

I had four men working for me. I had two two-horse teams, two men to each team. I told the boys to hitch up both teams and they could tell by my shooting where I was, and to follow me, so I commenced shooting before I left the camp fire. The buffalo beat back into the sand hills north. The boys commenced to skin while I was shooting all the time. Finally the sun went down, and I had killed sixty-five buffalo that evening (afternoon). When

I got to camp I busied myself with cooking supper for myself and the boys. Pretty soon the wagons commenced to come in with the hides that had been skinned that evening. They had skinned fifty-one buffalo. They also brought with them about five hundred pounds of tallow that was used to make fires at night. When they would skin a nice fat buffalo they would cut it open and take the tallow off of their entrails. To save our hides of buffalo skins, as there was no wood there. When our supper was eaten we remade our fires and took to adding cartridges for our guns. ... The first evening I hunted there I killed thirty-five at one stand. What we called a stand is when we killed a buffalo the first shot, the others would smell the blood and begin to hook the dead one and paw the earth. Then we would shoot the outside face, and the core blood there was scattered around the better they would stand. I have often shot two belts of cartridges away at one stand. Each one of these belts would hold forty-two cartridges. My gun weighed fourteen pounds; the gun and those two belts of cartridges made quite a load to carry around over those prairies.

The second day I hunted there I killed eighty-six buffalo. The third day I killed forty-five. Then I was getting ahead of the skinners, so I took my skinning knife and went back and helped skin. By this time I got quite handy with my knife. I could skin a buffalo within fifteen or twenty minutes by myself. Some of my skinners could beat that.

Out at Lakin, about the same year,

During the construction of the Santa Fe railroad buffalo were so numerous as to impede work, and on more than one occasion trains were delayed by running into herds. Guy Potter, an early resident of Lakin, was aboard a train which was delayed one hour and forty minutes at Pierceville waiting for buffalo to cross the track. From this arose that day the brakeman shot thirteen buffalo. 156

156 Ibid., 120-21. For a description of killing buffalo at a stand in what is now Southern Oklahoma on Beaver Creek of the Red River, see John R. Cook, The Border and the Buffalo, 236-41.

157 "Sketches of Early Days in Kearny County," loc.
By 1874 one band of buffalo hunters "only made enough to pay ... expenses." By 1875 buffalo were scarce in most of Western Kansas although an occasional Kansan went to the buffalo range to get meat, even in the late 70's and the early 80's. Buffalo runs into Kansas depended upon favorable seasons. Wapato slaughter of this animal in Kansas was leading to extermination. The southern herd was drawing its ranks along the Canadian and Red rivers; the northern herd grazed close to the Platte River. 158

In the 70's, when shooting matches were conducted in the eastern counties, certain young men seldom missed a match. On one occasion when the prize was a beef, some English sportsmen came for the trial. They were equipped with fine guns, trimmed with nickel plating, but most of the pioneers used the single single shotgun for the shooting fracas, the same gun that had served so well during the war. Occasionally, the prize of the contest was a purse. About Christmas time of 1873 at the Louisville mill site in Pottawatomie the winners of the shooting match got turkeys. Shooting matches in any Kansas county were evidence that the frontier had passed farther east, for a free range precluded the necessity of shooting at a stationary "bull's eye." 159

Back in Geary County life was lived more leisurely in the middle 70's than on the frontier in Smith, Ellis, Pawnee, Ford and Meade counties.

The months of January and February were my leisure months of the year, when we had no hired man, the butchering was over, hard froze out, sausage made, and I had only the ordinary family duties to attend to. In those months I did my own sewing mostly. ... I had to be ready always for company, for some one from town or from the neighborhood came unexpectedly and always for the day, staying for dinner. I kept fruit cake or cookies on hand all the time, and in the winter I usually made several mince pies and had them frozen to keep. With our fresh meats in winter, our home-cured ones in summer, chickens and eggs always plenty and fresh, I had no difficulty in getting a meal. Before our fruit trees came to bearing the wild grapes and plums were made into jelly for the year.160

Sometimes, when there was snow on the ground, a home-fashioned sleigh, bedded with straw and stocked with several blankets, furnished entertainment on moonlight evenings, reminding newly-arrived Kansans of old days in native New York.161

A trip to town was a change, even if undertaken for business, for in town one saw a higher code of living and more conveniences. If one ate at the hotel, he saw that drummers had a separate table from the town and country folks, paid a higher price for their meals, and did not eat as much as those who sat at the long table.162

161 Ibid.
162 Ruede, Sod-House Days, 167.
were several advantages to being a native of Kansas.

Between 1870 and 1880 when the northeastern section of Kansas was becoming tame, the agricultural frontier was maintaining its interest in Central and Western Kansas—the country west of Concordia, Salina, Newton, and Wichita.

The Farmers soon realized that, in account of alternate seasons of drought, this was not essentially corn country. Spring wheat was no more successful, and diversified and specialized crops were not favored in that day. The country became the wheat experimental plot for Neoshoite, Swedish, German, and first-generation American experimentalists. They tried spring and fall sowing, soft and hard varieties, and out of the crucible came the conclusion that hard winter wheat far exceeded expectations where conditions were humanly possible for a crop.

The testing period of winter wheat was from the early 70's until about '32, and its acceptance was inevitable after the years of proof of its superiority. These years prepared for the boom of the 30's. Not only were the new hard wheats imported from Eastern Europe, but sorghums came in from Africa and Asia for extensive and successful use on the plains.¹⁶³ Alfa alfalfa, coming from either Idaho or California, made its appearance in 1914 at a price of about $56 a bushel.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³William Prescott Cobb, The Great Plains, 319-32; Rude, 86th House Days, 145.
¹⁶⁴Topeka Daily Capital, December 6, 1914, January 11, 1907.
New tillage, harvesting, and milling machines were also gaining acceptance. Kansas became a grain-producing State, and the flour milling industry became characteristic.

During the first half of the decade manufacturing strove to supply the demands of the population. Railroad construction was slow for four years after the panic of 1873 but leaped ahead from 1874 to 1875.

New towns sprang up at railroad terminals and then vanished just as quickly, as was the case with Roan, Kansas. In Cooper's The Last Frontier, two plains speculators purchased what they expected to be a to a site and hoped to sell at exorbitant prices. Said one about the initial rush upon the place:

"Col! Tom! You ought to see it! Must have a thousand people there already. Worked a different scheme. Told 'em they could come on it, pick out their lots—en' pay later. Must be a thousand people there now—th' minute Elks got up that tradin' post an' bar, they swarmed like Buffalos flies on a hot day. Were a new rut in th' plains gettin' there—honest." 167

In the story "Redeemed," Augustus Caesar Buell pictured a boom town that had collapsed:

"But on the Kansas Pacific there is a cluster of sun-browned and deserted shanties strung irregularly along a side street, whose desolation

167 Cooper, The Last Frontier, 159.
now seems doubly clear to those who knew the place when it was "booming," as they say out there. It's the old story of the mushroom border town; a little while ago replete with rude, reckless life and res- sonant with riot and revel, and not all still and cheerless;... A little way out from the main cluster stands the four upright posts and the yellow, warped fragments of weather-boarding that remain of a shanty the squalliest and poorest of its kind. An owl sits blinking his daylight sleep in one corner, and a rattlesnake lies coiled across what was once the humble threshold.168

In 1876 the first coal was shipped from Southeastern Kansas in small quantities, taken entirely by strip-out mining. As its coal was found superior for steaming processes, more shafts were put down in the late 70's at Pittsburg. On a small scale oil and gas drilling was begun.169

Referring to the agricultural aspects of Kansas, one sees that the crops of the period from 1872 to 1880 were unstable. The big corn yield of the first year with its ruinous price was followed by a poor crop damaged by the dry weather of 1873, when peaches were also a failure, apples and blackberries yielded a fourth of a crop, and grapes were plentiful.170 Panic, hard times, and drought "did things" to prices. Cows that had cost fifty dollars

168 Augustus Caesar Buell, "Redeemed," Kansas Mag-
169 Dowglas, "A History of Manufactures in the Kansas
170 James C. Malin, "The Soft Winter Wheat Boom and
or more went down to ten or fifteen dollars. Money was so hard to get on the frontier that one little girl of three or four, when asked what money was for, replied promptly, 

"To pay taxes with."

That corn was an important crop to many Kansas farmers is hinted by the appeal of setting leaves and tassels to the poets. Other boys than the poet Marcy could recall "fighting cockle burs and sunflowers in the corn." Willard Wattles also recalled:

There's a certain day in summer that I always recognize,
Though I'm far from prairie land and sun,
By the pulling at my heart-strings and the aching in my eyes,
And I know that back in Kansas, harvest's done.
The mellow sun is gleaming on the stacks of ripened wheat,
The stubble-field is empty and forlorn,
With a hoe across my shoulder and bare-footed in the heat,
I am off to cut the sunflowers in the corn.

Ellen F. Allerton loved to describe the "miracle" of the corn field:

Enter the field, a forest hangs over;
Seen from above, 'tis a dark green sea,
Gleaming with lights where the sun, like a lover,
Showers his kisses so fierce and so free.

Lo, through the cornfield a miracle passes,
Veinly attempted by magic of old.

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171 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit., 514.
Sunlight and salts and invisible gases
Here are transmitted to bars of gold.174

In "Walls of Corn," she recalled the picture of green
plenty in May and of brown in the fall:

Smiling and beautiful, heaven's dome
Bends softly over our prairie home;

But the wide lands that stretched away,
Before my eyes in the days of May,

The rolling prairies billowy swell,
Breezy uplands and timbered dell

Stately mansion and hut forlorn,
All are hidden by walls of corn.

All hide the world is narrowed down,
To walls of corn, now keen and brown.175

A choice soliloquy on corn conditions is "Farmer Jones
on Corn":

How's corn to-day ma'am? And why should you wish
to know?
Do such things bother a woman? Well, it is low.
It's posted—you see I have seen with a load to
town.
It is weak, as thy say in reports, and it's going
down.

Hard times for farmers hit me—and will rent so
high!
The chinch bugs come like an army, the summer was
dry;
It was scorching or 1th and the chinch bug, and now
it is the beetles;
And that takes to corn to hard war, or but—who
dares?

"Hold on to your corn," say the papers, I would if
I could.

175Ellen T. Allerton, "Walls of Corn," Walls of
Corn and Other Poems, 2.
For those who can take this advice, the advice is good.
But I've got to sell for there is the rent to pay.
And other debts falling due—I've been dunned to-day.176

Frederick Atwood has written:

Upon a thousand hills the corn
Stands tall and rank and glossy green;
Its broad leaves a stir at each moan,
And dewy diamonds drop between.

A myriad banners wave o'erhead,
And countless silken veils fly;
The tasseled plumes bend low, 'tis said,
And only slumber knows they.177

In 1873 Mark Alfred Carleton, "the wheat dreamer," was only eight years old; he had yet to see the "rust year" of 1877 and other wheat pests before he should introduce the
the Kubanka and the Kharkov wheats from the steppes of Russia.178 "In those days wheat-growing upon the plains had not become the science it is today, and many Sycamore
Valley farmers planted their wheat in the fall, and failed to make it pay, and many other Sycamore Valley farmers planted their wheat in the spring, and failed, while others succeeded."179

Two thirds of the winter wheat crop was saved from the
"hoppers" in the summer of 1877, but many farmers had to

176Ellen P. Allerton, "Former Jones on Corn," Falls of Corn and Other Poems, 246.
177Frederick Atwood, "The Growing Corn," Kansas Rhymes and Other Lyrics, 11.
178Paul de Kraif, Hunger Lightens (New York, 1926), passim.
ship their hogs early, that fail in account of the scarcity of feed. The next fall witnessed a scarcity of work, although there were big wheat and corn crops. In 1876 the worm damage to wheat made threshing a disappointment and prices went to $1.10 in some parts of the State. The corn crop was good. The year 1877 saw a few hoppers still around and the drought in the spring, followed by a hot May resulted in wheat rust. Corn was a poor in Saline County that farmers had to buy feed corn before the next crop came on. Despite the rust damage in 1878, there was a record crop of wheat, and some corn. Much of the crop was badly damaged. No. 1 wheat sold in Abilene at 55¢ and 50¢ a bushel. A most unfavorable and discouraging year was 1879. After drought and hot rains in early summer, the latter part of July and August were hot and unwholesome. The turn to the new decade saw more hot corn, rust, and pests.

An interesting and successful experiment with winter wheat culture during the 70's was that begun by T. G. Henry in the summer of 1873 alongside the Union Pacific railway in the Smoky Hill Valley, east of Abilene.

...I broke up 500 acres. This has mostly done with Texas oxen, six, the teams drawing twenty-inch Abilene plows, ridge to self-corn. The hard-law statute

181Ibid., 373-75.
In August the seed, the Early Red, May, or Little Red May, a soft, amber-colored, small symmetrical berry, was broadcasted on the sod and covered by corn. Scotch harrows, drawn by ox-teens. The ground was so dry and hard that each wing of the harrow, in order to get results, was weighted by a moving-machine wheel. When the seeding was completed those harrow-teeth were more stubs, all but worn away.182

Although crops of all kinds were almost a total failure, this wheat field was a veritable oasis during the spring and early summer of 1874.

Two Maran harvesters and a Waylish header were purchased to harvest the crop. The harvesters were quite like the present machines, without the self-binding attachments. Too much rode upon them and, standing, bound the cut grain as it was elevated. But the hay rolls at raised the grain that, in forty-eight hours from the time we began, the brittle straw bunks could break and we could use the harvester no further. There were more than 400 acres still left uncut. I had never seen a header work. I was induced to purchase one.... But for that a male header I should have lost the major portion of that wheat crop. We ran it with team raising night and day for about ten days. At first it happened to be moonlight and we could operate. Later, it was on a white horse, dressed in white, carrying a light just ahead of the machine, one along the edge of the uncut grain to guide the pilot. Finally we rigged a lamp and reflector, fastened to a reel-post, and in that device successfully accomplished our object.

The yield was a trifle under twenty bushels to the acre, and was sold for about ninety cents per bushel. It was threshed by a steam-engine and thrasher. Both that and the header used, so far as I know, were the first brought into Kansas.183

In the spring of 1874 a plot of 700 acres was grazed,
and in 1875 the 1200-acre field attracted nation-wide attention for winter wheat. The price of this No. 1 wheat at the Abilene railroad track ran from $1.05 to $1.12½. By 1876 Kansas surpassed every state in the union in the production of winter wheat. 184

Despite the unseasonable rains, drought, grasshopper, rust, chinch bugs, and occasional disappointments in wheat and corn crops, the "Kansan" lost none of its interest. The Abilene Gazette chronicled a favorite story:

During the blowing of the gentle zephyrs, on Monday evening, a corn stalk blew down on John Leab's farm, striking a Mr. Senned who was passing by, and inquirin him so badly that he will have to cut his foot in five weeks. Merely the tassel touched him, else the consequences might have been more severe. People should keep away from corn fields this growing weather. 185

Other slight exaggerations were reported, as: "While sitting round the red-hot stove at breakfast one's coffee would freeze in a very short time if placed on the table a few feet from the fire. Hot water thrown into the air out of doors would come down as hail," said Percy G. Elibutt, who came to Kansas in 1870 and returned to England in 1876. 186

The cheerful nature of the Kansan was brought out in this passage from Tom McNeal's Fables:

184Ibid., 504-505.
185Abilene Gazette, August 1, 1879.
In a certain market-place was a coop, full of chickens waiting for the executioner. And while they were waiting, developed a game rooster among the bunch flapped his wings as well as his cracked quarters could allow, and gave a lusty crow. "What have you to crow about, I'd like to know?" said a disgusted turkey in another coop; "You will lose your head inside of twelve hours." "Maybe so," said the cheerful rooster, "but I am from Kansas, where we never say die. If everything failed she would at least die crowing about what we were going to do the next year; and anyway, if I have to die, better if I don't intend to enjoy myself as long as I live."  

The snake and the blizzard have been used in another tall tale:

The members of the Loafers' Club were gathered closely about the stove, for outside the night was cold. All were discussing the manner in which the day had passed, from a warm, beautiful morning to a chilly unpleased evening.

"Sudden changes of temperature," said Truthful Jones, "I have seen some mighty sudden ones out in Eastern Kansas. In the winter of '73 I was huntin' buffalo out on the plains. It was just about the middle of January and up to that time it had been as mild as May. I hadn't worn any coat all winter and every evening I would sit out in front of my dugout and fan myself with a wild turkey wing in order to get my skin cooled off so that I could sleep. I had to sleep with the dugout door open and set up a mosquito bar to keep the mosquitoes out. The mosquitoes were powerful bad that winter; along the creek, and it was just out of the question to sleep without setting.

"Well, one day it was powerful warm. The thermometer stood at ninety in the shade up to three o'clock in the afternoon. I was out on a hunt about three miles from the dugout in my shirt sleeves when I happened to look up toward the northwest and I see a blizzard comin' a rollin' down toward me like an express train. I knew that the surest thing to do was to get to cover as soon as possible so I run for the dugout as fast as I could ride. I didn't get

187 T. A. McNeal, "The Kansas Game Rooster," Tom McNeal's Fables (Topeka, 1900), 187.
there any too quick, either, I want to tell you. I didn't have any stable to let my horse in and I didn't want to leave him out in the storm, so I just concluded I would take him into the dug-out with me till the blizzard was over. It wasn't a very big dugout and I had a good deal of plunder in the room, but I managed to get the horse in all but his tail.

"And then the blizzard came a-rowlin'. You may not believe it, gentlemen, but I want to tell you that in less than three minutes that horse's tail, which was exposed to the weather, was froze stiffer than a rock, and then, not thinkin', I suppose, what had happened, he went to switch his tail, it fell off like an icicle and broke into three or four pieces. The rest of the horse which was left, was terribly disfigured, and at a big disadvantage after that, not havin' any tail and besides, it always seemed to me that he felt ashamed goin' around without any tail.

"That same time I had another curious experience. All that winter the snakes had been playin' round on the prairie. Any day you could go out and see three or a dozen snakes gamblin' round havin' fun with each other. A snake is a mighty smart reptile, gentlemen, and, generally speaking, you don't catch even of 'em off his guard, but that storm fooled the best of them.

"After the storm was over and it got a little warmer, I went out to look around. I noticed what seemed to be little stones stickin' up all over the prairie, seemin' to be about eighteen inches or two feet high. I couldn't make out what they could be, as I had never noticed anything of the kind before, and so I went out to investigate. Well, gentlemen, I found that they were frosted snakes. When the blizzard came a-rowlin' down every snake hight for his hole and made a dive to get in, but he wasn't quick enough. Some of them managed to get about half way in, and some not quite that far, so that there was from a foot and a half to the foot of each snake left a stickin' up out of the hole when the blizzard struck 'em, and that part of each snake was froze stiff. I went around and knocked off frozen snake tails and laid 'em up in front of the dugout. I went count of the pile, and there was just 214 frozen snake tails in that pile. The next spring, when it thawed out, I got up one morning and, what do you think? Why, there was a whole bunch of snakes that looked as if they had been cut in two in the middle, lined up in front of that pile, each
one tryin' to kick at the piece that belonged to his. It was certainly one of the most curious and interesting sights I ever saw in my life, gentlemen. 188

In another tall tale, the wonders of the Kansas cyclone were related by a Kansan in New Jersey for a visit:

Said the old man in beginning, "Once a cyclone struck near by
Where I was, and took a straw stack, (Nor this fact none can deny),
And just two miles off dropped it. Then contrary
to the law
Governing all Kansas cyclones there rebuilt it,
straw by straw,
So that not a living person, from appearance,
could have thought.
Even there in windy Kansas, that a cyclone there
had blown.
At another time a "twister" visited a Kansas town,
And before it was noted, it had surely gained renown.
For a hoghead of cheeses had been set beside a
door,
There awaiting some convenience to be taken in the
store;
Tell sir, just as true as gospel, every drop of
trickle went
With that cyclone, to the neighbors, there came
buckets which were sent
To receive the curd's alking, when the milk man
came around,
And dropped down right in 'em buckets, every where
one could be found.
Sitting out beside the building, till the town was well
supplied
From one side unto the other. (Now this fact can't
be denied.) 189

But the need not turn to the tall tale for the phenom-
eon of the 70's—"the flying cavalry"—such written about in
Kansas history, literature, and legend. In August, 1867,

188 A. McNeal, "A Bad Time for Tails," Stories
by Truthful James (Topeka, 1857), 32.
189 Lydia A. Doyle, "Kansas Cyclones, and Other
Marvels," A Medley of Poems, Songs, and Conundrums (1911),
30-31.
grasshoppers had appeared in Harrell County and had destroyed every living green thing. The next year they reappeared "in untold millions" but remained only three days and did little damage. 190

The incursion of 1867 was only a sample of the plague that followed seven years later.

Shortly after harvest he heard rumors of a grasshopper invasion. Strike us it did—good and plenty. The day before they arrived in our neighborhood I was down at the city of White Rock to do some trading and there was a rush there from up creek over in Jewell County. He said that the hoppers were just cleaning the country of every green thing, and so many of them gathered on the cornstalks that they were breaking them down, and he could shovel up a peck at a scoop between rows.... The next day August 12, we were threshing at the Turner place, and about 10 a.m. the vanguard started up and in very short time the air was full of them. They began to drop down and went to work. They, I imagine grain in the shock soon by shelling it out. Old Mr. Turner stood leaning on his fork looking at them and finally blurted out, "Per in tell did they all come from?" He was English. Corn was completely ruined, all garden truck consumed. We had some good sweet corn and I cut it and hauled it, covered with hay, and saved some of it. We had a fine patch of onions. She told me I had bash and pull them. When I got to the patch there was nothing but little round holes where the onions had been. 191

As the posts fell in they made a "rasp, rasping sound," something like the sound of a prairie fire. 192 The pioneer auction is that as she sat eating she

190 Andrews, History of the State of Kansas, 915.
192 Ise, Sod and Stubble, 47.
heard a noise on the roof that sounded like hailstones falling. Stepping outside, she saw the air full of grasshoppers. Others, when they rushed outdoors, saw a strange sight in the distance, coming from the west. High in the direction of the afternoon sun they saw what appeared to be a peculiar hazy atmospheric condition, or perhaps flakes of snow, "eddying and whirling about like the wild, dead leaves in an autumn storm, and soon the flakes came down, circling in myriads, beating against everything animate or inanimate...."

A pioneer called these grasshoppers "the perfect representatives of the epicure's maxim, 'Eat and drink, for tomorrow you die!'" They ate everything green but the castor bean, which they did not disturb—corn standing, corn in the blade, in the full ear, and that shocked they gatted. Their consuming appetite is illustrated by the fact that they disposed of the 6th and left stalks standing hollow and frail in the field. Moreover, they ate fast. When they came about ten in the morning, there were no leaves on the trees by noon. In one day and night they practically devastated the section between Old

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193 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit., 515-16.
194 Isc, Soo and Stubble, 49.
Receipt and Independence. For miles the fields and prairies were left bare and brown, as in December, except for here and there a small area of castor beans. After they had eaten their fill, the hoppers laid their eggs in the earth and then died. 197 But before this happened, they had invaded the houses and had eaten holes in the window curtains, gamed on the furniture, fallen into milk pans, flown into the kettles on the stove, and stripped the house plants bare. Out in the stable they had eaten the paint from the wagon, cut ropes in two, chewed off soaking portions of the harness, and etched the bark of the cottonwood trees. 198

The grasshoppers would alight in the middle of the day for their "siesta." The sides of the house and the walls were covered with them. They flew up like a swarm of bees at one's step. They had the most voracious appetites of any living thing. One or two would begin on a melon; as the place grew larger others came, and the melon would soon be eaten down to a shell. Onions and beets were a luxury to them, but my husband saved ours by turning a furrow over them. The corn was destroyed down to the stalk, and farmers began cutting it to save it for fodder. The crop was a poor one anyway that year, for lack of rain. The grasshoppers stayed so long that they destroyed the newly sowed fields of wheat. My husband resowed wheat in November and we had a fair crop the next year. We could get mosquito netting at that time, and we had the windows and doors screened. The netting went, like other things, down the throats of the pests, and I had to keep the windows closed. It was difficult even to save the clothes on the line; anything on the grass would surely go. 199

198 Ise, God and Stubble, 51-52.
199 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit., 516.
A preacher related about the hoppers:

They filled the sky, covered the earth, polluted the streams and wells, stopped trains by clogging the machinery of the locomotives and being crushed in such numbers as to render the tracks too slippery for the ready control of the engines; devoured fruit on the trees and ate onions and turnips out of the ground; blighted thousands upon thousands of acres of growing corn, eating blades, tassels, the young ears and the upper parts of the stalk, leaving only the deadened stalk like so many blackened broom-candles stuck up in the ground, and actually devoured whole fields of wheat, oats, rye and other small grain. The devastation of the grasshoppers cannot be adequately portrayed. I have seen them in such numbers at the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas rivers, and moving in such masses, that men might have shoveled them into trains of freight cars the whole day long without having made a perceptible inroad upon them. They ate the lint off of pin fences and unpainted houses and barns, until these looked as if scraped with knives. They ate the meat off of peach stones as they hung on the trees, until whole orchards were destroyed and the trees looked as if their fruit had been boiled off the pits as the latter were still clinging to the stems. On my way to hold one of my quarterly meetings I met a cloud of hoppers so dense that they darkened the sun at noonday and beat like hail against me and my horse until I was compelled to turn aside till the cloud passed by.

Another family had peach trees bearing for the first time in 1874 and felt fortunate in late July as they saw the peaches blushing in the Kansas sun; but, when the grasshopper plague alighted on their farm, their thoughts of canned peaches almost vanished. However, the farmer and the grasshoppers had a race to see who would get the most of the two-thirds ripened fruit. As fast as he picked the peaches, his wife pickled them with the stones in them.

in her wash boiler. Thus they saved most of the crop, although after the grasshoppers had left many bare peach seeds were observed hanging on the trees. 201

Up on the Solomon River the pests stayed a week, being unable to fly east against the summer southeasterly wind. When the wind turned, the hoppers gave themselves to the higher atmosphere and winged their way westward as suddenly as they had come. 202 The chickens enjoyed eating the hoppers at first, but the oversupply apparently disgusted the fowls and they gave up trying to dispose of such a horde. One pioneer woman reported that not a rooster crowed from the time the grasshopper began their devastation until about a week after the pests had gone. 203

The hoppers ruined the water in wells, which was all there was to drink. To purify it somewhat the settlers boiled it and made a rye coffee; but the grasshopper "flavor" was merely diluted. It was weeks before the well water was fit to drink. In the meantime, drinking coffee was an expensive indulgence, since Arbuckle's "Ariosa" cost 35 cents a pound. 204

Otto Schrag said of the locust invasion into the

201 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit., 516.
202 Ise, Sod and Stubble, 51.
204 Ise, Sod and Stubble, 52; 71; Rude, Sod-House Days, 99.
They [the locusts] came from the west, and the sun stood almost squarely over the center of them. They were like a mist hanging over all the slopes as far as the eye could see; in the middle they seemed motionless, but the edges were in continual, wavelike motion.

A strange pallor had settled over the land. The cloud had passed before the sun, moderating its light to a fantastic sallowness. It was the kind of sun that sometimes appears for a few minutes at twilight, after a thunderstorm. The cloud had widened on both sides as though gradually encircling the entire valley of Gnadenua.

The air grew darker and more disquieting. Besides the roar of the wind the men now heard a distant humming. They set their teeth, clenched their fists and shivered, although the sweat was pouring down their collars. They felt a delicate tickling sensation on the back of their necks down to their shoulders. They could no longer place their feet squarely on the ground, and there was a flickering before their eyes that did not come from cobwebs or drops of sweat. However, they could see that the clouds were dissolving into millions of tiny dots, like drifting snow against a wintry sky.

They shuddered when they saw the first flash of lightning. It was very small, like a spark in the mist of a cloud. Again it flashed. The men passed their hands over their eyes, not certain they had seen anything at all.

They stood still, bowing their heads. Perhaps this was not a locust swarm. Perhaps the heavens were raining fire and brimstone. Perhaps this was the end, the Day of Judgment, when guilty and innocent alike would be judged.

The humming in the air had become a deafening, incessant buzzing. The tiny dots had increased in size and the miniature lightnings were more intense. They flashed here and there, in a thousand places at the same time. The flashed came and vanished so swiftly that the men were never quite sure what they were seeing.

Schermer started back as the first insect struck his head. It felt like a hailstone. But at the same time he had had a sensation of fluttering that made the contact utterly repulsive. It
was so dark now that the sun seemed to have set. All around them the grass moaned with a pattering sound. In spite of the wind they heard blades of grass snapping as the insects hurtled against them. Defries was struck; he shook himself, feeling that the insect was still clinging to him. His hand darted to his hair, and for the first time Scherer heard the sound of locusts make when they are crushed between the fingers. The flickering in the air and the flashes of lightning increased; a ripple of light seemed to pass through the entire swarm.

They closed their eyes when the swarm descended, and bent low. They made themselves as small as possible, but they could not crawl into holes in the earth like the field mice, and so they were struck on chest and head and legs and arms and hands; no part of their bodies was spared. And each time the locusts struck, it was not only like the impact of a hailstone, but a repulsive contact with a crawling, fluttering thing. So long as the wind howled tempestuously, it hurled the locusts against the men with such force that the creatures could not cling to them. But as soon as the wind abated for a moment, the insects held fast to their clothes and crawled under their coat collars. The locusts were dazed at first but as soon as they recovered they began to crawl cautiously. They crawled over the men’s necks, into their shirt sleeves and trousers. Their bodies were cool, their legs stiff and skeletal as bits of straw. The men crushed them between thumb and forefinger when they caught them. Their skin grew uncomfortably greasy from the gut they squeezed out of the insects’ abdomens. Sometimes they swatted them; then parts of the crushed insect remained hanging on the spot where they had struck.

Kettler whispered almost inaudibly, “Dear Lord in heaven, what will happen to us? Dear God, we haven’t a loaf of bread in the house. Dear God in Heaven, our fodder is still in the fields. We have only one cow in our barn and father is sick and mother ailing and Louis is only ten and Catherine five.”

The ground changed. It had turned greenish-brown in color and was moving like wind-blown water.
Clusters of locusts hung on everything green, or flew with fluttering wings from blade to blade.

It was a faint clicking, like the crackling of a distant fire or the bursting of a sea pod; or like the sound of autumn leaves falling on one another.

Schermor stood motionless. The sound grew louder. It came from all sides. From the bushes, from grass and fern, flowers and moss. Now it was like grinding teeth. Like the sound one made chewing radishes, or crumbling a slightly stale crust of bread. It was a disgusting, repulsive, uncanny sound.

And yet it was only something perfectly natural. The locusts had begun to feed.

Schrag's novel has given a thorough treatment of the 1874 plague in Central Kansas: the wholesale destruction by the insects; the horror of the pioneers at the loss; the dispirited and discouraged attitude of some; the stable courage of the Mennonites; the descent of money leaders; and finally the passing of the locusts.

Various means of destroying the locusts were tried. One Mennonite family went to the garden.

...the women with leaf rakes and Miller with a spade. In the center of the vegetable garden he began digging a hole. The women started at the corners and moved toward the center, burshing the rakes over the plants. They brushed carefully, so as not to injure the leaves; but between the rows they whirled their rakes as if they were sweeping a room. The dust flew up, and when the sun rose there seemed to be a fiery cloud hanging over the Millers' garden. A few of the locusts began flying, but most of them remained on the ground, and after only a few minutes the women had thick clusters of locusts in front of them, which they slowly and steadily swept to-

205 Schrag, The Locusts, 305-10.
ward the hole. The heap of locusts was gray, and often it was hardly visible because the dust was so thick. The dust settled on the locusts, piling their brown and green bodies until they looked like leaves on a busy street.

The work went faster. Many of the locusts were already in the pit. It was half filled; and they would not be able to empty many from the sacks. All the rest were in the billowing burlap bags, which gave no hint of their contents. But when it was quiet they could hear the insects crawling inside, and here and there a twig of a locust leg peeped through the weave.

Miller emptied the sacks until the pit was almost brimful. Then he took the can and poured kerosene into the hole. He waited a while until the oil had trickled deep down. The top layer became dark and gleaming. The creatures were moving sluggishly now. The smell was horrible; Lydia walked around the pit to the side where she would have the fire in front of her and the wind at her back.

Miller bent down and lit a match. The flame took hold greedily on the kerosene, and then the locusts' bodies began to crackle. The horny parts burned first; then the fire attacked their soft abdomens. There was a sharp hissing, like the sound of water falling on a hot stove. The sound began at low pitch, then grew louder and higher; it reminded Lydia of the sound wet oak chunks make when they are put in the fireplace. The air was filled with a peculiar, sweetish smell. When the flames, too, had shrunk, Miller began throwing in dry brushwood. Again the flames leaped over the rim, and Miller emptied the rest of the bags into the hole. He poured carefully, so as not to smother the fire. It took time, but finally the last of the bags was emptied. The hole still smacked and hummed. Perhaps the lowest levels of the locusts were still alive...

Some farmers tried to save their gardens:

Between them the Parkers carried a tub of water and a pair of towels. They dipped the towels in the water and whipped them sharply across the plants.

The locusts fell to the ground like ripe fruit. They fell on their backs and on their bellies, singly and in clusters, half stunned and in no way damaged. Then the Parkers' heavy boots hovered over them, came down and crushed their bodies between the soles of the boots and the dry, crackling earth.207

In the spring of 1875 when the hopper eggs hatched out, the young destroyed early planted crops; but one day in May they suddenly took their departure and farmers put in new corn crops which produced a good yield.208 It was said that in some places hoppers were thick enough in sheltered places to get a pint at a single grab. This was before the freeze.209 Others reported that the spring rains had ruined the eggs before the drilled spring wheat appeared above the ground.210

In her story, Heritage of the Bluestem, Carlson pictured the plague of 1874 as follows:

All over the valley the grasshoppers were settling. The leaves of the trees were covered. Every field was a living, seething mass; the entire landscape was changed. Already the hungry insects had stripped the corn and were now attacking the stalks.

The colonists gazed anxiously at the low hung cloud. It was like no cloud they had ever seen. From it tiny particles like snow were falling. What kind of phenomenon was this? Did snow fall during the heat of summer in this strange land?

But the snow did not melt. The white flakes moved! They were alive! They covered the ground. They swarmed through the open doors and windows

207 Ibid., 347.
210 Ise, Red and Stubble, 64-67.
into the dugouts and log cabins. They were everywhere. It was like one of the Egyptian plagues, but there was no Moses to stay the ravages of the pest.

The next day the wind blew a gale over the valley, sweeping relentlessly over the devastation. The insects clung tenaciously to the ground, to the trees, and to the weeds. They were unable to fly in the strong wind.

The females of the species burrowed in the soil and deposited their eggs. This function performed they sought to allay their hunger. What little vegetation had survived the onslaughts of the previous day disappeared as if by magic. Not a blade of grass remained.

Everywhere the insects nestled. It was impossible to walk without stepping on them, and night closed down upon the restless, seething mass. Cooled by the night wind the grasshoppers hugged the ground, benumbed and sleepy.

The third day the wind went down and the grasshoppers headed north, leaving a trail of devastation behind. The country everywhere presented the appearance of having been burned by prairie fire. The trees were stripped of every vestige of foliage, the crops had disappeared, not a blade of grass remained. The fertile valley, which a few days before had given promise of bountiful crops, was a barren waste. Everywhere the sod was honeycombed, where the female grasshoppers had deposited their eggs and provided for the propagation of their kind.

Once more, Kansas had been tried and proved erratic, like a child—happy and laughing one minute, hateful and contrary the next. The characteristic element of uncertainty had not passed entirely from the Kansas frontier.

As though to add to the Egyptian plague, the weather continued hot and dry that autumn.

Day after day, with scorching ray,
The burning sun has risen and set.

No cloud on high in all the sky
Protects us from the dreadful heat.

The wells are low; springs cease to flow;
All nature droops in the terrible dearth;
The dust, in clouds, like vast gray shrouds,
Envelops and hides the suffering earth.212

Those who had shallow wells found themselves without water
and many were forced to haul water from the nearest creek
or river. It was too dry even to plow. The soil was
turned over in great dry chunks and the farmer could hardly
hold his plow in the ground.213 When running his homemade
barrow over the ground, one farmer found that the clods were
simply rolled over, and the sparrows picked up the seed
wheat before the rains came. However, some communities
were able, on account of local showers, to plant winter
wheat late.214 Figs went down to twenty-five cents each
and chickens sold for a penny anice. A lot of movers
were headed eastward, and some bemoaned that although
they had come to Kansas one or two years before with
several hundred dollars in cash, besides their team, now
they were going back to Illinois or Iowa with nothing.215

The lean sharks appeared on the scene and spoke in-
gratiatingly, like Darley Champers in McCarter's Winning

212Frederick Atwood, "The Hot Winds," Kansas Rhymes
and Other Lyrics, 12.
213Ise, Sod and Stubble, 52-53.
214Swehla, "Bohemians in Central Kansas," loc. cit.,
478.
215Ise, Sod and Stubble, 57-58.
*Gentlemen, I know your condition just as well as you do. You're in a losing game, and it's stay and starve, or—but they ain't no 'or! Now I'll advance money tomorrow on every claim held here and take it and assume the mortgage. Not that they are worth it. Oh, Lord, no. I'll be landlogged, but it's out of kindness to you that I'm willing to stretch them fellers I represent in the East. But I'll take chances. I'll help each feller of you to get away for a reasonable price on your claim. It's a humanitarian move,..."216

Companies like the Golden Belt Wheat Company in White's

A Certain Rich Man took over section after section of land while

disconsolate settlers, hollow-eyed, sat in the doorways of their prairie homes and gazed in dumb amazement at the havoc wrought.

And so began the exodus. Again the white-covered wagons dotted the prairie, this time headed back to the old homes in the East. There was nothing to stay for now. Therefore those who could get away, left promptly.217

Movers with a sense of humor scrawled on their wagons:

"Soim' Back to the Wife's Folks," or "In God We Trusted; in Kansas We Busted!"

Finally came the breaking of the drought:

Listen!—it rains; it rains! The prayer of the grass is heard; The thirsty ground drinks eagerly As a famished man eats bread. The moan of the trees is hushed, And the violets under the banks Lift up their eager heads so gratefully,

216 McCarter, Winning the Wilderness, 90-91.
And smilingly give thanks. 218

But there were those who stayed. Relief supplies came into the stricken counties. From Quakers in the East, Cloud County received box after box of antediluvian dresses, swallow-tailed coats, flap pants, Quaker hats, low-cut vests, and outmoded but carefully made and preserved shoes. 219 These afforded plenty of chit-chat and fun besides much material and occupation in making things over for the family. At times the distribution was mismanaged: supplies were taken entirely by those who were in charge of the distribution; money which had been appropriated by people in the East was used for personal gain. Settlers saw here and there evidence of prosperity in spite of the common lot of poverty. A hotel keeper built a new stone hotel; a preacher erected a roomy stone house of which any settler could have felt more than proud; others invested in large herds of cattle—

all after their return from the East where they raised relief funds for the stricken settlers. 220

Honest pioneers became disgusted when they saw new-comers, who had emigrated after the departure of the keeper, gobbling up relief. The deserving settlers some-

220 Ise, Sod and Stubble, 60-61.
Some dropped out of the relief line in order not to enrich themselves by being in company with spongers. Some of the settlers starved; some contracted scurvy and showed signs of debility, intense discouragement, and dire bitterness. Those who could not or would not patch their clothes wore two sets to cover the holes. Patches of every imaginable color appeared in all kinds of cloth. Shoes were tied on with twine. Children went without underclothes, coats, and mittens throughout the entire winter. 221

Livestock suffered intensely, and in many cases barely survived the winter until grass came. The weather was bad; a blustering and heaping snow fell in December, and a blizzard howled over the prairies during January and crusted the prairie grass with ice. 222 For want of other fuel some families burned corn that winter. With the farmer selling butter at five cents a pound and bartering a load of corn for a sack of flour, the pioneer had little in the immediate future to look forward to except a bare existence. 223

But the late-sown wheat came out fine in the early spring. Hope revived and farmers looked for timely rains and good crops in 1875. During the summer farmers bar-

221Ibid.
222Ibid., 61-64.
wasted excellent wheat and corn crops in many sections of
the State; crops were generally good.

In the summer of 1877, Kansas wheat fields saw more
binders than ever before, for increased acreage called for
more machines to get the wheat when it was ripe but before
it had been shattered by wind. Out near Osborne the Marsch
Harvester was used:

It was steady work for 2½ days to cut the 20 acres.
The wheat was very heavy, and had got rusty, which
made our eyes sore, and our clothes were covered
with the rust, which is of a red-brown color. We
made four or five rounds with each team and changed,
so as not to bring too much work on either. ... The
harvester cuts a swath about four feet wide, and
the wheat was so heavy that we could not take more
than two or three feet at once, and then the grain
was delivered on the table in front of the binders
so fast that we had to stop two or three times on
a side to enable them to get the table clear.

The advantages a Marsch harvester has over the other
machines is that when you have driven around the
field, all you have to do is to follow the machine
and shock the grain, while the other machines drop
the grain on the ground, thus making it necessary
to have four or six binders, while on the harvester
only two are required, but when the grain is heavy
they have all they can do.

Where fields of grain were small, the farmer used a
cradle to cut the grain, raked it together, bound it, and
shocked it—sometimes all by himself. Then the wheat was
hauled several miles to bunch it with the neighbors' wheat—
this in order to get a machine to come into the neighborhood

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224 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc.
Lit., 518; Malin, "The Soft Winter Wheat Boom and the Agri-
cultural Development of the Upper Kansas River Valley," loc.
Lit., 372.

225 Ruede, Sod-House Days, 112.
Threshing, as one pioneer in Western Kansas said, was different from what it was "in the East." The machine required ten horses for power to run it. Grain was fed in at one end, straw came out at the other, and the clean grain came down at one side through a sheet iron spout into the measure bucket.

The machine owner furnishes three teams for the power and the farmer supplies all the other teams needed as well as the helpers. ...

When the machine pulls in to a set all the neighbors have been notified in advance—for they go with the machine while it is in the neighborhood. Every man gathers up all the sacks he owns and takes them along, for the grain being sacked when it is taken to the granary, many sacks are in use for a short time and no one man has enough for the occasion. After the rounds are made, it takes a lot of sorting to get each man's property out of the pile, often considerably the worse for wear.

A threshing crew, besides the machine men, consists of two or three pitchers, generally three. The sheaves are bound with straw bands. Three boys are out at the end of the ten-foot carrier to pitch the straw away from the machine, and it is no snap, for the straw rolls out fast enough to keep them very busy. There is the measure man, who sees the grain does not slop over the edge of the half-bushel measure. The grain comes out of a V-shaped sheet iron spout slipped through the wheel, between the spokes. The measure man has to keep his wits about him, to keep track of the bushels. He has a bit of board filled with gimlet holes on each side of the machine, and with little pegs keeps count of the number of bushels. There are four rows of holes, ten in a row. The upper row is for half-bushels: when the peg has been moved, a notch at a time, from the left end of the row to the right, five bushels have been tallied.

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and the peg in the right hand end of the second row is stuck in the first hole on the left, marking five bushels. The same process is used in the other two rows of holes, only in the third row a tally stands for 50 bushels, and in the fourth for 500.

The measure man has an assistant, whose duty is to hold sacks for the grain—considered an easy job. ... The grain hauler has an assistant too, because the granaries are small and unhandy to fill. When the bin is nearly full the sack emptier has to wriggle along on top of the pile of grain and empty the sack as best he can, which under the circumstances is no easy task.

The band cutter, an important member of the crew, stands on top of a pile of sheaves placed at the table on which the bundles are pitched. Sometimes the grain is stacked, but when it is not, two pitchers are needed in the field, to pitch the sheaves onto the wagons, and two men with a wagon each.

We had nine teams and thirteen men at work—five teams attached to the horsepower, three hauling grain from the field, and one hauling the clean grain to the granary....

It took two days threshing to get all Henry's grain away, and we threshed nearly 1000 bushels altogether.227

Said James Horace Marcy of threshing time:

It's threshing time in Kansas, the grain shocks far and near
Are standing guard like sentinels amid the stubble sea,
The zig zag lines are countless the number yet untold,

We hear the steamer whistle its echo loud and clear,
The bundle wagons rattle approaching far and near,
Each friendly farming neighbor of muscle, brawn, and tan,
With one accord has joined the Kansas threshing van.

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We hear the rumble grumble the mighty hum and roar;
The engine once more whistles, the wheels are turning o'er,
The mighty din-like chaos is heard upon the air,
The separators running the men are here and there,
Then bundle after bundle the pitchers pitch, I say,
Until a team is frightened and tries to run away.
At last the team is halted and backed into their places,
And on each side, each pitcher seems trying for a race,
Then chug! chug! all is quiet, we hear the whistle blare.
The clogged machine is helpless the man in charge does swear.
He pulls away and tussles to get the blower clear,
And then he gives the highball unto the engineer.
He opens wide the throttle the wheels begin to roll,
The smoke stack seems a choking by freshly burning coal.
Once more the separator just rumbles and it roars,
The grain that it is threshing into the wagon pours,
While dust clouds are ascending amid the clouds of smoke.228

Vachel Lindsay wrote of harvesting in Kansas:

O, I have walked in Kansas
Through many a harvest field
And piled the sheaves of glory there
And down the wild rows reeled:

•••

Straight overhead the orb of noon
Beat down with brimstone breath;
The desert wind from south and west
Was blistering flame and death.

Yet it was gay in Kansas,
A-fighting that strong sun;
And I and many a fellow-tramp
Defied that wind and won.

And we felt free in Kansas
From any sort of fear.

For thirty thousand tramps like us
There harvest every year. 229

Although work in the harvest field and on the threshing
mow was hard, Kansas housewives already had the reputation
of setting a "first rate table." Besides chicken, mashed
potatoes, gravy, vegetables, pies, and coffee ad libitum,
sometimes there was young jack rabbit which the men had
chased down in the wheat field or killed with a stick.
There were eggs, fresh milk, and boilers of fresh bread to
be spread with golden butter--and ice cream too. 230

Wheat in 1877 was selling for $1.25 a bushel around
Abilene; and if it was good enough to sell as seed wheat
it brought 75 cents more. 231

By the spring of 1878 it seemed evident that dry
summers, like that of the grasshopper year, were not likely
to come again. Streams flowed deep and fish were plentiful;
the subsoil was storing moisture and life was worth
living again. The country, in fact, was booming. Settlers
poured west into Rooks, Phillips, Graham, and Norton counties.
They even ventured out on Sappa Creek in Decatur and Rawlins
counties. At Downs settlers held meetings and voted bonds
to extend the route of the Rock Island and the Santa Fe rail-

229 Rachel Kindley, "Kansas," in Wattles (comp.),
Sunflowers, 15.
230 Rueda, Sod-House Days, passim; ise, Sod and
Stubble, passim.
231 Rueda, Sod-House Days, 112.
Blogs and waged community fights about where the county
road should run. 232

In the fall of 1878, the farmers' wallets were bulging with greenbacks. These the farmers stored into crannies
and cracks of the sod walls of their homes—no banks being
near—against the day when they would build additions to
their houses and buy new stock. The Russian-Turkish War,
concluded by the Peace of Berlin on July 13, 1878, had
pushed the price of No. 1 wheat to above a dollar. No
one thought then of going back East. Rather, all vowed
they would stay and subdue the West. Already it was
beginning to blossom. As George Graeber expressed his
feeling: "When we have rain and crops, we don't want to
go, and when there ain't no crops we're too poor to go;
So I reckon we'll just stay here till we starve to death."233

In the meantime, babies kept coming into the homes of
the West, and beds were added to rooms and to lofts to
take care of the growing families. Children slept four
in a bed crosswise. When evening came, families re-
turned home and the cabins were crowded. Women demanded
additions to their houses. Children were in the yard,
more children were underfoot, and there were babies in the
mothers' arms. Husbands acceded to requests for additions,

232Ise, Sod and Stubble, 74, 120; Street, "Cheyenne
Indian Massacre of the Middle Fork of the Sappa," Top. cit.,
277.

233Ise, Sod and Stubble, 76-79, 112.
insisted that a good barn should precede a dwelling for the family. The money was produced by selling the eggs just after New Year's, or by drawing forth some of the greenbacks tucked away from the wheat crop. The new portions of their houses finished, there was sufficient room in which to turn around—for the first time in years.

Having babies on the frontier seemed to be no burden at all. A week out of the wife's spring or fall with a hired girl at $4.00 a week did not greatly affect the budget, and everyone seemed glad to welcome another member into the family. Certainly a baby was worth more than the hired man, who was often on the budget at from $15 to $20 a month with board and washing. Because a prairie housewife liked to see the farm work done promptly, she might help her husband husk corn, finishing the job just a week before the child was born. But that was not all: she washed and ironed the clothes for the family; baked a boiler full of bread before "the event"; and had the house in perfect order. Wood was stacked behind the stove. A barrel of hard water was "breaking with

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235 Bingham, "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," loc. cit., 511.
236 Pioneer women softened hard water with wood ashes.
All ashes so that the family would have soft water until
the good wife was up again. A layette for the expected
child was ready and laid on the top shelf in the cupboard.
When it was time for the baby to arrive, no one thought
of calling a doctor. It was too casual a matter. The
neighbor girl came in for a week; she was quite handy and
maybe she would tell the younger children some Bible stories
and fairy tales while she was in the household. She might
take the little children out for a picnic or a visit with
a neighbor on the day of "the event"; then all took on a
season of awed good behavior and quietude for several
days. In a few days the mother was up and busy—too busy
to be concerned with herself. 237

Amid the other chores one of the children might get
pink eye and then all the youngsters took it. 238 In the
spring or fall, scarlet fever or malaria—the ague and
fever of the 60's—visited the Kansas plains. Sometimes
a little oval-shaped box was fashioned of cottonwood
boards; the coffin was tapered at the foot and the outer
surface scraped with glass until it was smooth. For lining
the mother tore up a white underskirt and placed the pieces
in the coffin. The neighbors gathered, said a prayer, sang
a hymn, and placed the little coffin under the sod on the

237 Ise, God and Stubble, 40, 72, 73.
238 Ibid., 109.
out south of the cabin. This was another tie that
bund the family to their claim; they stuck tighter than
ever because little Henry or Alice or some unnamed baby
lay out there alone on the prairie.

When the preacher came to a cabin that had lost a
child, he often talked to the rebellious young mother of
the "inscrutable ways of God," and added, "...we might
get proud and stiff-necked if we had everything we wanted.
The Lord has a purpose in visiting trouble upon His chil-
dren, and it is not for us to question His purpose." Religion
was harsh—as harsh as the country. If there was
a disturbance at church in the "devil's corner," where the
older boys sat in the rear, laughing, snickering, retting
desk, shooting paper wads, then at the quarterly meeting
of the church members the preacher might hope that these
boys would land in everlasting fire.

Ed Howe in his bleak novel, The Story of a Country
Town, took from his boyhood memories many features of his
story, such as the picturesque setting of the neighborhood
church of this period.

On the highest and bleakest point in the
country, where the winds were plenty in winter
because they were not needed, and scarce in
summer for an opposite reason, the meetinghouse
was built, in a corner of my father's field. This was called Fairview, and so the neighborhood was known. There was a graveyard around it, and cornfields next to that, but not a tree or shrub attempted its ornament, and as the building stood on the main road where the movers' wagons passed, I thought that, next to their ambition to get away from the country which had been left by those in Fairview, the movers were anxious to get away from Fairview church, and avoid the possibility of being buried in its ugly shadow, for they always seemed to drive faster after passing it.242

The tenacity of purpose of the preacher and his flock at conversion time was also a vivid recollection of the pioneer novelist.

As soon as a sufficient number of children reached a suitable age to make their conversion a harvest, a revival was commenced for their benefit, and they were called upon to cling to the cross for safety with such earnestness, that they generally did it, and but few escaped.

If two or three, or four or five, would not relent within a reasonable time, the people gave up every other work, and gathered at the church in great alarm, in response to the ringing of the bell, and there they prayed and shouted the livelong day for the Lord to come down among them. At these times Jo and I were usually left at home to work in the field, and if we heard the people coming home in the evening shouting and singing, we knew that the lost sheep had been recovered, and I often feared they would form a ring around us in the field, and compel a full surrender.243

The years had climbed the last rungs of the 70's when one mother and her brood of four youngsters who were not old enough to pay railway fares took the Santa Fe Rail-

243 Ibid., 32-33.
to Holton in Eastern Kansas for a two weeks' visit with relatives and friends. They came back with presents and maple trees, and were glad to be out West again. Things seemed so small and cramped in Eastern Kansas or Missouri; visitors to Illinois or Indiana wondered how people in those states could put up with such close neighbors. 

The next spring, when the pioneer proved up on his claim and got his patent, the signature of President Hayes was on the patent. He might have done this two or three years earlier, but had delayed as long as he could because when he got his title he began paying taxes on the land.

In the spring of 1879, Henry and Rosie Ise bought for $700 the Frank Bagel quarter, adjoining them. Bagel was an impractical fellow who nearly starved on the frontier; he tried to write a love story to earn money for a team, and he also took organ lessons. A railroad ran diagonally through his land. That was an asset and then, too, this addition would keep the neighbors from encroaching so easily upon the Ise family. That summer self-binders came into use; and, although the machines

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244 Ise, Sod and Stubble, 30.
246 Ise, Sod and Stubble, 31; Rusde, Sod-House Days, 224.
did not tie all the bundles perfectly and the wire was expensive, the farmer saw that machinery was a great time and labor saver.247

Down in Meade County, the Pearlette Call commented on how wives had changed in their attitude toward handling buffalo chips:

It was comical to see how gingerly our wives handled these chips at first. They commenced by picking them up between two sticks, or with a poker. Soon they used a rag, and then a corner of their apron. Finally, growing hardened, a wash after handling them was sufficient. And now? Now it is out of the bread, into the chips and back again—not even a dust of the hands!248

A great storm tore down the Solomon Valley on the last day of May, 1879. It was a sultry and still afternoon, and a dark blue bank of clouds loomed up in the west, a promise of rain in the prairie country. One housewife, busy with her ironing, did not notice the clouds until she heard the rumble of thunder and noticed that the room was growing dark.

She opened the door for more light, and looking out, saw above the cottonwood grove a mighty cloud drama that for a moment almost made her heart stand still. The great black cloud masses in the background were moving forward heavily but rapidly sending out intermittent flashes of lightning that made the background only darker. Fleecy clouds beneath raced along madly, dipping low and rising again, twisting and whirling and scurrying this way and that, as in a veritable panic. . . she saw Henry hurrying in from the

247Ise, Sod and Stubble, 104-109.
248Pearlette Call, April 15, 1879.
"Better get to the cellar with the children!" Henry exclaimed, quite out of breath.

While Rosie poured water on the fire in the stove, and took the children to the cellar, Henry closed the windows, then stood on the doorstep watching the coming storm with his arms folded. The rain curtain beneath the scurrying clouds presently turned a luminous green, against which the trees stirred tremulously, in weird contrast to the vast commotion overhead; then the clouds over to the northwest circled and rushed together, and a black funnel dropped toward the ground—the dreaded cyclone!

A few great hailstones came hurtling down and bounced along the ground, vivid streaks of lightning flashed from the scurrying clouds, while the great, black cloud stalactite moved relentlessly forward, writing and bending sinuously, reaching down menacingly toward the ground, then rising again, as if loath to begin its work of desolation.

Rosie was calling insistently from the cellar, and Henry closed the door and went down to join her. He gathered the family together on the lower steps of the outside cellar entrance, where a collapse of the cabin would be least likely to crush them; and there they sat waiting for the blow to strike. ...A long wait, it seemed to those huddled together in the darkness. The wind suddenly struck, the cellar door creaked, and the cabin shook above them. Henry hugged the children closer to him as he peered up at the cracks in the cellar door. For a few minutes the wind raged, and then slowly died down. Henry climbed up the steps, lifted the cellar door and looked out. The sun was shining bright and serene! He threw the door wide open and stepped out. The stone house was still standing, and the stable, and the chicken house. The storm had missed them! ...they stood about the doorstep watching the towering black mass of clouds, capped with billowy white, as it retreated slightly north of eastward with vivid flashes of lightning and steady, sullen rumble of thunder.

Half a mile on their way to the neighbors they found the ground white with hailstones, trees stripped of their leaves, and even of branches, wheat was completely ruined by the hail, dead chickens lay scattered about the yard, and the
back*  •  mf < * f  bis horses ana cattle sare
covered with blood; but Chris's smile was un-
changed. ...The next day came news that the
cyclone had left a ghastly path of ruin east-
ward. Irving, a hundred miles away, had been
torn to kindling.249

Social reform was stirring in Kansas during the
70's. The most prominent movement culminated in leg-
islative enactment in 1879 with verification by the
people at the general election of 1880—prohibition of
the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors in
Kansas. This was no sudden and chance decision. Nation-
wide discussion of temperance reform began in the early
70's. The church had held revivals throughout the
country. Murphy or Blue Ribbon Workers increased. And
the Women's Crusade, inaugurated at Hillsboro, Ohio,
in 1873, launched a crusade of prayer to drive saloons
out of business.250

Temperance lecturers were scouring the country,
exhorting frail men to sign the pledge and vote
for prohibition. ... Prohibition was debated
at every country schoolhouse, and when debate
failed to bring a satisfactory meeting of minds,
the debaters occasionally proceeded to fight it
out with bare knuckles. Downs was splitting
into two factions on the question, while Cawker--
"ancient cesspool of iniquity," as one of the
temperance lecturers called her—had two brew-
eries, and drank their product without serious
qualms.251

249 Ise, Sed and Stubble, 102-104.
250 Connelley, History of Kansas, I, 690.
251 Ise, Sed and Stubble, 108.
Even during the Civil War, social consciousness had asserted itself against the selling of spirits in Mound City:

It has been an unwritten law that no saloons should exist in the town. But an enterprising individual, seeing what he thought a good opening on account of a command of soldiers stationed near by, came into the village and started a barroom. It of course became an intolerable nuisance to the citizens. Drunken soldiers were a common sight. Practically all of the able-bodied men were in the army, so the women undertook to cope with the situation. One morning a wagonload of women from the direction of Moneka, a village a mile and a half northwest of Mound City, drove into town. They carried with them hatchets and axes, and were soon joined by a squad of the Mound City sisters. The company marched straight to the open door of the saloon and filed in. Some one made a move to intervene, but was promptly stopped by a revolver in the hands of a bystander, who told him he would shoot if he attempted to interfere with the women. The women drove out the barkeepers and the loungers, and they deliberately broke every bottle, glass and decanter in sight and knocked in the heads of every barrel and keg. Having completed their work, they filed out and went to their homes, and a saloon was no more in Mound City, for the result was a prohibition that prohibited for many years without assistance of law or courts. The women saw a number of years of threshing over the question after the war—in newspapers, on the stump, and in the legislative branch—before she became the first State to incorporate the reform amendment into her Constitution. Twenty years before Carrie Nation began her "hatchetations," Kansas had a prohibition amendment.

252Clara A. Francis, "The Coming of Prohibition to Kansas," Collections, XV, 201.
253Ibid., 192.
The prohibition agitation gave rise to this anecdote about the Kansas politician:

A Jack-rabbit which had been captured in its infancy, afterward escaped and returned to its native haunts. It was noticed thereafter that no other jack-rabbit on that stretch of prairie was in it with the first-mentioned when it came to dodging and doubling and getting out of tight places. An interested contemporary called on the first-mentioned rabbit and besought him to tell where he had acquired his skill. "That is easy," said the first jack-rabbit as he gently fanned himself with his left ear, "I was captured while young and trained by a Kansas politician, who tried to keep on both sides of the prohibition question." 254

During the 70's a few magazines were established in Kansas. The Kansas Magazine, a monthly, ran from June, 1872 to October, 1873, and was edited by James H. Steele at Topeka. It published a number of worthwhile essays, some of which were literary essays about early days and others were travel sketches. The Kansas Spirit was published in Lawrence on Saturdays as "A Journal of Home and Husbandry." The Rural Kansan, "A Monthly Paper Devoted to the Material Interest of the State" was published at Humboldt by D. B. Emmert. The subscription price was one dollar a year. The Eastern Homestead, edited by W. S. Burke at Deaverworth, was first issued in May, 1878. It contained articles on travel, art, literature, science, and agriculture. Henry King wrote for it.

The years from 1870 to 1900, during which the sod shanties dotted the plains of Central and West Kansas so numerously, have been fully portrayed. Many of the sketches written during and about this time by pioneers have some literary value. Narratives include those of Allen, Cook, Edson, Fisher, Hertzler, House, Ise, Henry King, Lynn, Prentis, Porter, and other pioneers who witnessed the growth of these years.

The novelists who have written about this period have usually treated some special phase or a set of immigrants or peoples. Carlson, Cretcher, Cooper, McCarter, North, Robinson, and White have written of the developing central and western portions of the State, dealing with the American settler in general. Friersen and Schrag have pictured the Minnolite; Graham, the Negro; the Haldeman-Juliuses, the bitter and hard pioneer; Howe, the hypocritical and hard-hearted preacher of the frontier community; and Charles King, army life in the extreme western part of the State.

Among the stories the most worthwhile—because of their realism—are those by Buell, Galloway, McDaniel and McNeal.

The poetry about these years of settlement is spontaneous and natural; among the writers are Allerton, Atwood, Beebe, Doyle, Harper, Lindsay, Marcy, Miller, Paine, and Wattles. The ballads, "My Western Home" and "The Little Old Sod Shanty" sprang from the heart of
common men and are indicative also of what is characteristic Western Literature.
A QUARTER CENTURY OF STATEHOOD

On October 2, 1880, appeared the Cheyenne News, the first newspaper published on the western border of Kansas. By April, 1886, every established county in the State had given birth to at least one news sheet. Western Kansas was showing definite signs of a civilized life—activity of the press.

In 1880 the Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office pointed out that land in Kansas was being taken up rapidly. The census for that year showed also that 996,096 people lived in the State. By March, 1885, more than 1,268,000 people dwelt in Kansas, practically all having come into the State since May, 1854. The flood of humanity into Kansas had been something of a mass migration. The State's growth was without parallel, and 1886 found Kansas no longer the western frontier of the middle plains. The pioneer was to continue his struggle for refinements and culture, but the Kansans no longer staked claims at the edge of the advancing frontier, for it had moved on.

It is true that dozens of towns like Rome in Ellis County, Republican City in Clay, Montezuma, Runnymede, Sidney, and the legendary Aqua Pura, founded by honest
Add ambitious men and women during the early years of the
"Boomers" were too far out in "the treacherous wilder-
domestic life could possibly continue. Some of the towns were aban-
doned, but others survived. Long after 1886 it could be
said: "Eastern Kansas is a finished community like New
York or Pennsylvania. Central Kansas is finished, but not
quite paid for; and Western Kansas, the only place where
there is any suffering from drought or crop failures, is a
new country—old only in a pluck which is slowly conquer-
ing the desert."^2

There was much talk in Kansas of "Our Town," and, as
the inimitable White said: "Ours is a little town in that
part of the country called the West by those who live east
of the Alleghenies, and referred to lovingly as 'back East'
by those who dwell west of the Rockies."^3

In the 1880's folks were much employed with the routine
of life, such as transplanting asparagus in the spring,
cradling wheat "nearly all day" during harvest, and dress-
ing stone on rainy days. They were breaking the prairie,
threshing, attending township and municipal elections, and

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2 Some of the Lost Towns of Kansas, Collections, XII, 426-71.
Occasionally, a

Kansan now had time to write an essay, as this one about

the State's gorgeous Indian summer of 1882:

The Indian summer, the halcyon season of the year in all its dreamy beauty, has been with us for many weeks. We had the premonitory touches of it early in October, when many golden mornings lent a rare charm to the magnificent days. The very air appeared in a reverie, and a spirit of contemplation brooded over the landscape. Some of the finest atmospheric effects were presented for a few hours on each of those days. The mirage wove its weird and illusive pictures on the distant prairie, and the hills were wrapt in a soft amber mist. The distant 'divides' north of the Kaw, were bathed in a soft warm light, which transformed their rounded contour into lines of rugged beauty.

An author by the name of Crane had time to write a play about Senator Preston B. Plumb; the play has been lost, but it was evidently a product of the 80's, for an item about it in the Kansas City Star, December 25, 1891, was headlined "The Senator and Actor. How Crane Met Plumb and the Friendship That Followed."

These were the years when men felt that it was "morning" in Kansas, as Walt Mason declared:

There are lands beyond the ocean which are gray beneath their years, where a hundred generations learned to sow and reap and spin; where the sons of

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5 "Private Diary of Elam Bartholomew, "1871-1886, Kansas State Historical Society Vault.


Shem and Japhet wet the furrow with their tears—and the noon tide is departed, and the night is closing in.

...There are long deserted homesteads in this country of the free—but it's morning here in Kansas, and the dew is on the grass.

...It is morning here in Kansas, and the breakfast bell is rung! We are not yet fairly started on the work we mean to do; we have all the day before us, for the morning is but young, and there's hope in every zephyr, and the skies are bright and blue.

It is morning here in Kansas, and the dew is on the sod; as the builders of an empire it is ours to do our best; with our hands at work in Kansas and our faith and trust in God, we shall not be counted idle when the sun sinks in the West.

These were the years when people in Osborne and Smith counties indulged in a few luxuries. Neighbors gave parties—oyster suppers even—and bought sleighs with innumerable sleigh bells. New houses were begun. Little towns like Downs put on an atmosphere of dignity with their additions of new buildings, the traditional wooden boxes with roofs sticking out in front of the plank sidewalks. Downs had a hotel, a lumberyard, barber shop, dam, grist mill, two wagon makers, and a lawyer. Two churches, a new schoolhouse, and incipient lodges provided instruction and entertainment.

"Land lookers" came in on every train, seeking relinquishments or scattered, unoccupied land up.

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8Walt Mason, "Morning in Kansas," Fippling Rhymes (Chicago, 1914), 1-2.

9Ise, Sed and Stubble, 107.
Men like Farmer Doolittle in the story The Kansas Farmer in Politics ran for county office. They spoke of Kansas with pride:

...your mother and I loaded our few belongings into a 'prairie schooner' and pulled out for Kansas and settled on this homestead; and we have lived through grasshopper years and dry years in Kansas, but—thanks to old Kansas—she has stood by me. It is only idle and imprudent and unfortunate speculators that decry the good name of Kansas. Stick to Kansas, Jake, and she will stick to you."

"Do you think Kansas better than Ohio?"

"Opportunities are greater in Kansas; therefore chances for success are greater. Why, Jake, I was back in Ohio last fall to see your uncle; he still lives on the little old homestead and works very hard to make a living, while here in Kansas we have doubled and trebled our wealth."

Picturing a story town in Western Kansas, John A Martin in The Jayhawker said that Paradise City in 1882 "boasted a baker's dozen of cottages, church, hotel, and one other indispensable Kansas institution. Standing out on a knoll a half mile to the south was the district school, the best sod

10 Ibid., 108.
11 Nick T. Hunt, The Kansas Farmer in Politics (Kansas City, Missouri, 1899), 9.
house in the valley, and a structure of which the settlers
thereabouts were duly proud.\textsuperscript{12} In this city the school
yard covered one hundred and sixty acres of sunflowers and
bluestem. Nevertheless, the city lots brought fancy figures.

"I'll only let the insides go at one-twenty-five," ruminated
the boomer in the story, "while corners will be one-fifty."\textsuperscript{13}

A young lady who was applying to teach the district
school was surprised at the school board members, but her
ability to listen sympathetically won her the position.

"I am Miss Laura Bayard," began the girl; "is
this Mr. Hardin?"

"This is ol' man Hardin, if it's him you're
looking for," replied the drawer of water, never
ceasing his labors.

"I am told you are the chairman of the school-
board in this district," continued the visitor.

"Sometimes I am, and sometimes I'm the whole
board, when the other two get unreasonable."

Mr. Hardin was hanging over the top of the
wooden curbin, jerking the well-ropes so that the
bucket would fall side-wise and fill in the shallow
pool at the bottom, and he accomplished the feat
before replying. Then as the pulley creaked under
the upward strain, he asked:

"What's your qualifications?"

"I have a second grade certificate and am
qualified to teach the common branches."\textsuperscript{14}

It was in the 80's that the more prosperous and thrifty
districts decided to build fine new schoolhouses,

...with two cloak rooms, green blinds and a tower

\textsuperscript{12}John A. Martin, The Jayhawker (Boston, 1908), 1-2.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 21, 5.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 41-42.
for the bell. The furnishings were of the latest, including a handsome desk and chair for the teacher; maps, globes, charts and dictionary. Two-thirds of the district were in favor of progress, but there were the usual number who objected to progress of any kind.\(^\text{15}\)

When the boys of this neighborhood heard that a new teacher was wanted, they advertised in the next week's edition of the county paper, with these specifications:

\textit{Wanted---a Teacher for district 91. Don't envy one need to try to git the place, less you can whip the meaness outen Dick Smith. And make him let us boys alone and shake Jim Gould, when he trips us when we are running for the base. You must be capable of doin' this and more, besides Teachin' the school. Sary Gould, Jim's sister wants to study Algebra and Astronomy. And you're to sweep the school-house & build yer own fires, cause we boys ain't got no time to help. P.S. You'll git 40 dollars a month for a 9 months term.}\(^\text{16}\)

Jennie Small Owen has described the Kansas country schoolhouse of the latter part of the century, one of which she attended:

\begin{quote}
It stands on a bleak, treeless hillside, a rectangular, boxlike schoolhouse with three uncurtained windows on a side. We wonder why so often the hill of knowledge is bereft of trees. ...

We have not seen the interior of the building, but we are sure that in it is an ugly rusty old stove around which the children huddle on cold days, that the benches are old and hacked, and the windows rattle. We wonder, too, if the ceilings are not dotted with paper wads and slippery pellets of elm bark and if the boys nowadays throw hackberry seeds on the floor.

Perhaps, too, they walk a mile and a half to school, puffing and wheezing, with cheeks as red as
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\texttt{15}\textit{Mavis Parker-Hays, The Schoolmates of District 91 (Emporia, 1903), 4.}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\texttt{16}\textit{Ibid., 5-6.}
\end{flushright}
apples, priding themselves on not missing a day. Maybe they play "Dare-base" and "pom-pom pull away" and "fox and geese" at recess, as we called it, and come in barking like dogs, and scuffling childlabor feet until study is impossible for several minutes after the bell rings.\(^7\)

Miss Owen has also contributed an interesting sketch, "Hiring the Teacher," inspired by the county school meetings each spring.\(^8\)

Rose Speer's "On the Claim" told of early attempts at education in Finney County, when mere existence was difficult. In digging a soddy, the settler found the snow blowing in as fast as he dug it out. Efforts to erect a schoolhouse, examine a teacher, and establish the district were beset by many inconveniences.\(^9\)

During the term, when the teacher could be arbiter and judge, the young people had spelling matches and literary societies. At a spelling match a dictionary was sometimes given as the prize. Lectures, tableaux, and games were played during evening entertainments at the schoolhouse. Playing "Weevily Wheat" was still common:

Usually the young people sang the accompaniment to this dance, or "play," as most of them termed it for the sake of those to whom dancing was tabooed, but they "played" it very much as the "Virginia Reel" as danced.

They took their places now, in a long row down the middle of the big kitchen--partners opposite each other--and the song began, accompanied by the

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\(^7\)Jennie Small Owen, "The Country Schoolhouse," 
*Fodder* (El Dorado, 1925).

\(^8\)Jennie Small Owen, "Hiring the Teacher," *Fodder*, 16.

We won't have any of your weevilly wheat,
We won't have any of your barley,
But we'll have some of your best of wheat,
To make a cake for Charley.
Oh, Charley, he's a nice young man,
Charley, he's a dandy,
Charley loves to treat the girls
Whenever it comes handy.  

Kissing games were still numerous and much enjoyed.
And then came the "Well game," at which many declined to play. It consisted in one person going into a corner and proclaiming himself a well. "Who is to pull you out?" "Ten feet"; and each foot represented a kiss. Then the puller out was in a well, and the same thing was acted over again until all those playing were in a long line across the room, and the depths grew marvellously—and the laughter too.

As characteristic of the 80's as the spelling bee was the literary society, which occasionally ran into difficulties after the debates began. When matters ran along smoothly, "the attendance was large, the ladies were enthusiastic, the tea was delicious, and the beaten biscuits and the macaroons transcended criticism." But should the word "rebel" be mentioned, or should someone tell of the Red Legs leaving Kansas to murder "Uncle John," who was then living on a plantation in Missouri, the "literary" might break up. Typical of the comment which followed as "I am not ashamed to say that I am descended from rebels, or whatever you choose to call them, ... My grandmother ...

20 Eva Morley Murphy, Louis Morton's Investment (Topeka, 1912), 51, 101.
21 Youngman, Gleanings, 89.
hung a Confederate flag out of her window in full sight of the Yankee troops, and my father chased a Yankee ten miles into the next county." And, "I have often heard about plantation manners, and have been anxious for an exhibition. My curiosity is satisfied." Thus did the word "rebel" break up one literary society.22

Sometimes a more harmonious evening was spent in singing ballads and sentimental songs. Frank Baker's song about his sod house, composed in the 80's near the Ness County line, became popular at these meetings and at other meetings. The song was sung to the tune of "Irish Musherwoman."

Frank Baker's my name and a bachelor I am,
I'm keeping old batch on an elegant plan.
You'll find me out west in the county of Lane,
I'm starving to death on a government claim.
My home it is built of the natural soil
The walls are erected according to Hoyle.
The roof has no pitch but is level and plain
And I always get wet when it happens to rain.23

In the 70's and 80's there were paradoxes such as the frontier poet, Scott Cummings. He was known as the Pilgrim Bard and was a unique character.

He kept a little tavern at the edge of Medicine Lodge called "The Last Chance"—the inference being that it was the last chance for a square meal between Medicine Lodge and the Rocky Mountains. He was very prolific in his writings. Being almost altogether uneducated, a great part of his pro-

22 Roswell Martin Field, In Sunflower Land. Stories of God's Own Country (Chicago, 1892), 46.

ductions were of course worthless. But he had a keen mind and real genius. He was a dreamer and visionary, and with the proper background, would have gained much fame. Some of his works are worthy of real note for feeling and eloquence. 24

During the 80's mechanical equipment came into the homes and onto the claim outdoors. 25 Windmills were bought on borrowed money, but they put some of the Kansas zephyrs to work instead of the Kansas wives having to draw bucket after bucket of water while freezing winds whipped their skirts and slashed water into their faces as rough red hands lifted the buckets from the well curb to the cattle troughs. 26

To further meet the needs of the housewife, canned lye and water mops made their appearance at grocery stores and were sold to the farmers. These things opened a new era for wives, who no longer had to break hard water with wood ashes or scrub their floors on their knees. 27

The coffee mill, common in Kansas kitchens of the 80's, has been described by Mrs. Owen:

We remember the very spot on which it was kept on the long, narrow board shelf over the old cook stove. Long before we had been promoted into the potato-peeling class, we were allowed to grind the coffee for dinner. Mother put the brown berries in the hopper for us, two or three handfuls, depending upon the number of hired men she had to cook for,

26 Ibid., 195.
27 Ibid., 113.
and bade us sit down on the door step. We placed the old coffee mill between our knees and ground jerkily. Every few seconds we stole a peep into the drawer to see how much coffee we had ground and some times we let its contents spill on the floor.28

The country store also came in for description in literature:

The country store at the cross-roads, down on Walnut Creek,
Where you'd leave word for the doctor if some of the folks got sick;
The old mill and water wheel, not very far away;
The old dam where we used to fish and spend a happy day.
When the bank was robbed at the county seat they caught the robbers here,
For a long time the countryside was awed and filled with fear.
The store always had an odor, peculiarly its own,
Oil, onions, dry salt pork, mackerel and yeast foam,
Sassafras bark and dill pickles, syrup and kerosene,
Rubber boots and sisal rope, corn meal and paris green.
There we bought sulphur, and molasses, 'twas the proper thing,
To give it to the children, and we got it every spring.
Here we could buy Sloan's Liniment and Saint Jacob's Oil,
Flax seed for the plaster to put on Johnny's boil,
Rock candy and stick licorice, absolutely pure,
Hillside Navy Tobacco and Kendall's Spavin Cure.
The sea would buy Hostetter's Bitters—they were not hard to take;
Castoria for babies when they had the stomach ache.
The farmer's wife would bring in eggs, white as the driven snow,
Get a plug of Star for her old man, and a few yards of calico.
Oft-times she'd meet some neighbors from across the section line,
Then they'd gossip all afternoon, until it got milkin' time.

They were just plain common folks, free from hypocrisy,
With honest hearts they lived and passed into eternity.\(^\text{29}\)

The store at Spring Hill, which was familiar and beloved to the dwellers in Johnson County, has been described by Ed Blair:

The counters were not polished (only where the loafers sat),
But little light shone through the window small,
A sack of Rio coffee made a snug bed for the cat,
The shelves extended halfway up the wall.
'Twas just a "general" country store, at least they called it so,
Perhaps because they generally were out
Of what the people wanted, and the customer must go
With things with which they often were in doubt...

Some groceries and hardware, just enough to load a dray,
Was largely then with what the shelves were lined.
But there was more than merchandise dispensed there ev'ry day,
When settlers from the Nea and Ten Mile,
And roaring, raging Bull Creek, and the Blue, ten miles away,
Sat on the stove and visited awhile.

The stories of the growing corn ("High on to boot-top high")
The planting of the hedge (the future fence).
The digging of the spring and well and finding water nigh,
Were stories then of interest intense,
And sandwiched in with others was a yarn from Uncle Dan
Of yesterday when crossing at the ford,
He caught six cats with just one bait, the way his story ran,
The least of them as long as Berkshire's sword.\(^\text{30}\)

\(^{29}\) Clarence Price, "The Country Store," The Old Home Town and Other Original Rhymes (Fort Scott, 1924).

\(^{30}\) Ed Blair, "The Pioneer Store at Spring Hill, Kansas," Sunflower Siftings (Boston, 1914), 133-34.
Agriculturally, the southwestern section of the State developed a bit more slowly than Northwest Kansas, for Texas cattle had the priority of the region and Dodge City was at her height as the cowboy capital from 1880 to 1885.

By 1881 the entire area of Comanche County had been preempted and taken over by fifteen cattlemen, who had organised the Comanche pool, which held cattle there on the range ready for the market. Barber, Clark, and Masde counties were occupied and parceled out for herd ground by cattle barons during the 70's and 80's. Some of this terrain was rough and good only for grazing land, not corn land. Later, parts of the country were developed into wheat fields, but at this time the tenacity of the cattlemen offered no inducement for small farmers to come into this section. In 1887 deer, antelope, and wild turkey in Clark County were seen among the timbered creeks and hills.31

Up near Russell, Francis Balcomb kept a diary. He reported in the spring of 1882 that he had among other things, finished fixing a bridge, "set out cottonwood cuttings on the timber claim," and attended "a very good Literary and spell."32 During the 80's he worked at the odd jobs which a pioneer husband found at hand: repaired the coffee mill.33

33 Ibid., June 15, 1886.
engaged the community school, at thirty dollars a month, for a term of sixteen weeks.\textsuperscript{34} For leisure he read the \textit{Youth's Companion}, Dante, and the New Testament.\textsuperscript{35}

With the passing of the buffalo passed also the common fuel—buffalo chips. The sunflower and corn stalks standing in cultivated patches of the West furnished fuel for fires.\textsuperscript{36} The Indian too did not appear in Kansas often during the 80's. However, an occasional Indian scare, running through the Southwest, would drive people as far east as Kingman for protection.\textsuperscript{37}

Said one writer:

Most of us had never seen an Indian, and what was more we didn't want to. They was kept down on their reservation in the Cherokee Strip and in the Comanche and Arapahoe country, which was a long ways from us, and we didn't think nothing about them. It was the direct rustle for grub that worried us.\textsuperscript{38}

When the settlers got to Kingman and the soldiers investigated the rumor of oncoming Indians,

There warn't no Indians. More than a hundred miles west of us—at Comanche Pool—the cattlemen and cowboys started the scare to check the influx of settlers; and sir, as I said before, they come

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}, August 16, 1886.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, January 25, 1883, January 31, 1886.

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}, January 7, February 1, 1887.


Lulu R. Fuhr told a story of an overwrought, lonely pioneer woman who was much afraid of Indians. Left alone with her babies, she felt that she had reason to be cautious. Settlers were leaving Meade County at the time on account of the rumor circulated by cowboys in the neighborhood that Indians were preparing for an attack.

She placed the ax and gun within reach, and took a position near the door; and then she began to pray. ... She went to the trunk stealthily, as if savage eyes were already watching her, and drew a blanket out, which she spread upon the floor under the bed. Then she took the babies from the bed and laid them side by side upon the blanket, covered them and smoothed the bed, that no intruder might know there were other occupants in her home.

Thus the fearful woman watched the night out.

The elements were not completely subdued during the 60's on the Kansas plains. Said one dweller in Western Kansas: "It is a land of sand burrs, soap weeds, cacti, badgers, owls, and coyotes—everything out here needs thorns, claws or some kind of stickers. Sometimes I think we need fish hooks to help hang on with when the wind blows. This here country is the 'American Desert.'"

Night after night the skies were lighted up, because of a dry spring, with prairie fires in one or more directions.

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39Ibid., 65.
40Lulu R. Fuhr, "A Battle with the Indians," Tenderfoot Tales, Number Two (Topeka, 1916), 17.
41Lowther, Dodge City, Kansas, 48-49.
Along the Solomon River Valley. The man of the house, although he had fire breaks plowed and had burned the grass around his home and near the haystacks, always kept the water barrel full and studied the sky with apprehension before he went to bed. Several neighbors had been out and had lost all their cows, pigs, chickens, hay, corn, and even provisions and clothing.42

About ten o'clock, as Rosie stepped out to the well for a bucket of water, she saw a brownish, copper-colored cloud rolling in from the hills to the southwest, boiling up for an instant at one point and then at another, rolling like a mighty wave over the quiet landscape. For an instant she stood awe-struck by the spectacle. ... Henry had seen the cloud too, however, and soon appeared around the stable with his team on a trot, hanging to one handle of the plough, to keep the nose out of the ground.

"To the cellar! Get the children to the cellar!" he shouted. He rammed the plow into the ground, and started the team in a circle around the stable. A few furrows of fresh earth might mean a great deal in a prairie fire.43

As soon as the children were in the cellar with the oldest in charge, water buckets were filled, hogs were turned out into the open lot where there was not enough grass to catch fire. The smell of burning grass grew strong in the air and the storm increased. The teams, trembling with fright from the smell of fire and smoke and the roar of the rising wind, strained at their harness; cows bellowed; other horses snorted and chewed nervously in the pasture.

42Iseg., Sod and Stubble, 114.
43Ibid., 115.
The sun grew dim in the flying dust and smoke. A sudden gust took Henry's hat off, and an instant later he saw the roof of the chicken house torn from its supports, to crash to the ground fifty feet away. He turned to see if the fire was approaching, but the dust and sand blinded his eyes. When he could open them again, he saw the house still standing. A guarded look into the wind proved the fire was not yet upon him, so he plowed on, back and forth until he was sure no fire could cross. The straw stable would not be a safe place in a prairie fire, so he unhitched the horses and led them behind the stone house, where he stood holding them, waiting for a lull in the wind.

Rosie sat on a bench in the cellar beneath the log house, with the baby in her arms and the other children clinging to her, listening to the din and clamor of the wind, and the creaking of the joints in the cabin above her.

For an hour the wind blew with little abatement. Occasional lulls were followed by renewed blasts that made the house quake and tremble; but then it gradually subsided into fitful gusts, as if in sullen resentment at the resistance the sturdy little cabin had offered. By two o'clock it was quiet enough for Rosie and the children to venture out of the cellar.

Smoke there was certainly, and an unmistakable smell of burning grass, yet there were no signs of fire near. Later in the day, as the air cleared, the hills to the south appeared black. The fire had stopped at the river.

It was past dinner time, and the children were ravenous, but the problem of getting dinner was no easy one. Dust was everywhere. Every dish in the cupboard was full of it, and had to be washed before it could be used. The table and chairs and bed were covered, and, through the cracks around the door, piles of dust had shifted like so much snow. In the cellar the crocks of milk were powdered so thickly that they had to be shined before the milk could be used. Nevertheless, Rosie soon had bread and butter and milk on a clean table; ... she spoke with feeling: "Oh, how many poor people there are up in those hills who haven't anything like this to eat!"

44 Ibid., 116-17.
Robinson, in *Immortal Dream Dust*, told how a lone
woman dreaded the possibility of being burned out. "Ma
had learned the awful significance of those two words;
and learned how much more they were to be dreaded in a
new prairie country than in the prosperous timbered country
of the east." 45

And then, quite without warning, it was upon
them. Frank saw it first, as he went out to the
barn, after dinner. He and Larry took matches,
buckets of water, sacks, and started out bravely
to do their best. In a short time there was a
line of men scattered at intervals along the road.
The school house was safe—Ma felt sure of that—
but could they keep it from jumping the road?
There was no plowing between the road and the house.
She watched them back-firing, beating out stray
little wisps of blazing grass that blew across the
road farther down, running, now here, now there,
beating, stamping out a spark with a boot—she
couldn't even see where her boys were. 46

Finally, having delayed as long as she could without help-
ing, Ma put a wool skirt over the cotton dress to keep the
fire off; then, leaving the youngest child in the plowed
potato patch with the steel safe box which had the deed to
the farm and the notes of two men in Illinois, she went out
to help fight the fire. After much effort, the flames were
whipped and the defenders straggled back to their homes,
tired and worn. 47

Spring floods, although not as regular and widespread

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But we retired as usual with no thought of what the night would bring forth. About two o'clock we were awakened by lightning and great peals of thunder. These mingled with gurgling of water, rushing up through the floor of the house. From my bed on the floor I jumped up screaming to my parents, "The water is coming into the house!" They leaped from their beds. But the water came too quickly for us to get out to a higher elevation of ground, though it was only a few feet away from the house. My father opened the doors of our house to let the water pass through. We climbed to the loft as quickly as we could, snatching a few quilts to take up with us as we climbed. By this time there was four feet of water in the house, and every loose thing there was sailing about, and out, through the doors and windows.

The roaring and rushing of the storm and water was a terror to all of us. As we gazed down from the attic we could see the little clock on the fireplace mantel calmly ticking away. It marked the hour of two a.m. A few minutes more and the water ceased to rise.

We all settled down nervously to wait for morning and for the rushing of waters to recede. This latter happened about eight o'clock. We waded out of our home never more to live in it again. For it was almost a wreck, although it had been strong enough to withstand the flood. As we came forth we heard our neighbors' voices calling to us from the banks above the trees.

In this flood, one family of six members was carried away, house and all. The bodies of the mother and children were soon recovered near the house, lodged in the bushes against the trees. The head of the family was found, after several
days of searing, in the sand at the roots of a tree, with only his hand uncovered. "Many home seekers—something like twenty-four people in all—were drowned in this same quack bottom" where the pioneer family had first camped ten years before.49

Blizzards got in a few last licks before civilization and quiet came to reside in Western Kansas. William A. Makeever has written of the pioneer's struggle with winter weather:

Now came the winter on, like the shadow of some mighty demon; Over the open plains all bared by the fires of the Indians, The unchecked northwind swept with its missiles of sharp piercing arrows; And driven before its force, the fleet hare, the prowling coyote, The swift-flying plover, the quail, and numberless flocks of wild chicken, Alike to some sheltered nook or glen withdrew for protection. Anon the drifting snow lay deep in the valleys and gulches; Anon the sun peeped out and briefly enlivened the landscape; While closely housed in their caves dim-lighted, or in their cabins, The few homesick settlers passed the wearisome days in seclusion, Tending their smoking fires, or chinking up cracks with mud mortar, Or heaping the turf around to keep out the cold and moisture. Simple indeed was their fare, but the meat of the hare and the sage-hen Was added to what meagre store they had; and with any who lacked, Provisions were shared by the neighbors; and finally

29 Ibid.
Suspended hopes now returning—was brought alive through the winter.\textsuperscript{50}

The winter of 1880 came in early, a week before Christmas, with a blizzard that drove the temperature twenty-two degrees below zero. Schools were closed. Even with shoes, flannel underwear, and mittens, the children could not stay outdoors long to play. The floors of the houses were cold, and the families had to sit by the stove and toast their faces much of the time. This situation complicated housekeeping and was a strain on the mother who had to find employment for a houseful of children.

It was too cold to cut wood, and the wood that Henry had stacked up in the yard was used sparingly, with cow chips gathered in the pasture. Thin, hungry cattle, with snow melting on their backs, stood hunched up on the south side of the stables and straw stacks, in dumb and stolid misery, which for many of them ended in the snow drifts that the next blizzard piled around them. Henry's cattle lived, but they grew thin on poor fodder and straw. He butchered his little pigs because he had nothing to feed them. They were so thin that, as Rosie said, "You could almost hang them on the clothes line."\textsuperscript{51}

Wolves again committed depredations—raiding poultry and stock yards; and busy thieves escaped with horses and cattle.

Of the suffering on the plains during the dead of winter, another pioneer of Hodgeman County wrote:

One of the coldest days ever experienced in Kansas I was out all day hunting for stock which

\textsuperscript{50}William A. McKeever, \textit{The Pioneer. A Story of the Making of Kansas} (Topeka, 1912), 30-31.

\textsuperscript{51}Ise, \textit{Sod and Stubble}, 135.
naturally I believed had drifted with the storm. There were milk cows in the bunch, and they had to be found and milked or they would be ruined, so I rode all day. Once a man told me my nose was frozen, so I applied snow to it till it thawed out and then resumed my hunt. When I got home that night my nose, cheeks, and lips were frozen; my eyes alone escaping. Immediate applications of snow and ice water, until the frozen parts thawed, kept me from serious injury; but during the winter I froze my feet to the insteps and they thawed before I knew they had been frozen and I came near losing them. They became gangrenous and the flesh sloughed off until the cords stood out like white strings. We did not call a doctor, but I applied Sloan's ointment, which we kept for use on the horses, and wearing a pair of my grandfather's boots I kept going, and in the course of about a year my feet became as well as ever.52

The blizzard weather following December 31, 1885, has been recorded as the worst in the history of Kansas. It not only slaughtered stock wholesale and wiped out entire families but changed the history of Western Kansas. It bankrupted cattlemen, put an end to wintering cattle on the open range, and opened Western Kansas to the careful agriculturist. The storm showed ranchmen and settlers the necessity of making proper provisions for such winters. This meant that the ranchers must fence, gather hay, and provide cteen seed or grain for the animals' winter consumption and that the settler must build more than a cheap, rickety ten by twelve shack for his domicile. Furthermore, he must provide adequate food and fuel close to his house and not depend upon picking up a few chips for a fire and catching a

Jack rabbit in midwinter for provender. It meant that weather conditions must be watched and reported. The building of roads and the installing of telephones, and telegraphs, would mean carefully planned lives in the western part of the State as well as elsewhere.

The autumn and early winter of 1885 was resplendent beyond description. Indian summer spread an enchanting haze of beauty over all the landscape. The morning of December 31 dawned mild and clear—with "a peculiar yellowish purple bordering the northern horizon."

Early in the forenoon a single fleecy cloud from the northwest and a very rapidly rising barometer foretold a coming storm. By noon a light rain was falling. The temperature in a few hours had fallen below zero. The storm, gaining force hourly, continued throughout the night, and by morning it might very truthfully be said the state was frozen solid.

This in itself was not unusual, nor was it seriously feared, but as the storm did not abate during the second or the following night the situation became alarming. The temperature continued to fall until it then reached twenty degrees below zero. Neither had the terrifying wind abated in the slightest. The atmosphere had assumed a peculiar blackness characteristic of such storms, and the fine, driven snow made breathing most difficult. Day after day the storm continued, each cessation quickly followed by another storm, making it practically continuous. The temperature did not rise to zero from the first night to the last, the latter part of the month, and generally ranged from fifteen to thirty below.53

Evidently, this is the Kansas blizzard which North described in *The Prairie Schooner*:

New Year's Eve opened pleasantly; the morning was mild, and in the middle of the day fires were hardly needed. Late in the afternoon there was a change; the sky became threatening and towards night betokened a storm. Just as some of the young people drove up, there was a fierce flash of lightning, and an ominous roll of thunder, which warned them that the storm was near at hand. Soon rain began to fall, and the weather rapidly grew colder, as it often does in Southern Kansas. About nine o'clock sleet fell and the wind veered, until a furious gale was blowing. At midnight a blinding snow storm was upon them, and a regular Kansas blizzard had things its own way.\(^54\)

Mrs. I. W. Hudson wrote a story-episode about the 1885 blizzard and a brakeman on the line through Western Kansas into Colorado. In it she spoke of the blizzard as "Howling like a legion of beasts, and hissing like a plague of serpents, on it came fiercer and fiercer. Every swirl of the wind was magnified a hundred fold, and given voices innumerable by the rushing train."\(^55\)

Allerton described a tragedy of the plains. A family was on its way across the State in a prairie schooner when they got caught in a sudden storm:

The wind blew soft and balmy, the day was bright and fair; The spring was stealing northward and her breath was in the air. Like starting on a picnic—so high their spirits rose Seemed that journey's fair beginning—could they have seen its close!

Slow crept the wagon westward. A week of pleasant days,

\(^54\) North, *The Prairie Schooner*, 73-74.

Then came one dark gray morning. A strangely brooding haze
Hung o'er the lonely country, its curtain vague and dim,
And hid the palid sunlight and hid the prairie's rim.

Unfortunately, the family journeyed on, despite a farmer's offer of shelter.

Cold blew the wind, and colder, like bits of sharpened stone,
The fine snow pierced their garments and chilled them to the bone.
Out on the lonely prairie, that seemed of life bereft—
Alack! and O! alack for the shelter they had left.

One stony-hearted farmer, from whom they sought shelter and fire, sent them on with, "I don't keep tavern, stranger, and spare room have we none." Into the darkness and cold pushed the disheartened family. On the next morning

On hard drifts, sure and sparkling, the sun shone calmly down,
When a chilling, startling item was wired from town to town,
"A family found frozen." Then later, it was told how a farmer had refused them a shelter from the cold.

In blizzard temperature anyone on the prairie was doomed except when impregnable courage and persistence sustained an occasional pilgrim. The safe places were dugouts and stone houses, stocked with provisions and fuel. Too often settlers had not much of either. After fuel was gone, furniture was burned, and then, exposure to the elements being dangerous, entire families retired to their beds in the hope of keeping comfortable until relief could come to them.

But not all reached shelter or remained where protection was most likely. "A well-known case of an entire family perishing was that of a farmer who started from the little town of Oberlin in northwestern Kansas, for his claim, with his wife and six children in a wagon. A few days later all were found on the prairie frozen to death." 57

Escape was sometimes by a hair's breadth:

One evening a man was reported lost at Wallace. A coil of rope was secured, one end tied around the body of a volunteer, who made a circle probably two hundred yards. The other end of the rope was held inside the building. Fortunately the lost man was within this radius, and was brought in almost frozen stiff; in fact, amputation of a limb was afterwards necessary. The searcher knew that without this rope, if he got ten feet away from the building he would never find it again. 58

Many people, attempting to reach home or a neighbor's house, were unfortunate in the direction they took. One homesteader in Northwestern Kansas and his team of horses were found frozen to death within fifty feet of his dugout. Animal instinct had guided the horses home but the teamster believed himself yet on the prairie. "His family, in the dugout only a few feet away, knew nothing of his presence for two days." 59

Another settler in Clark County was returning from...

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58 Ibid., 102.
59 Ibid., 101.
Ashland on January 8, 1886, to his claim. He had been duck hunting along the Cimarron, took off his shoes and waded across to a friend's house on the south side, where he took supper and visited until 11. They were in a dugout and heard no storm, but when his host looked out and reported a bad storm blowing, Mr. Miller started for home in spite of his host's protests, and, arriving at his 10 x 12 sod house nearly frozen from facing the icy gale from the north, built a fire in the stove and turned in after he was thoroughly warmed. He put his clothes in bed to keep them warm, so dressing would not be so chilly in the morning. Sometimes in the night he was awakened by an unusual noise, and found that the roof had blown off his sod shanty and the snow and crumbly dirt from the sod roof was sifting in in great style. He got into his clothes and reached for his woolen comforter to wind about his neck, and found it had gone with the roof. He started for a neighbor's house, and that was 200 yards distant in a protected place, and lost his bearings in the flying mist of dust, ice-like needles, and a wind that hurt every breath he took. He finally groped his way back to his house; then he got down on his hands and knees, groping with his bare hands in the blood-congealing darkness for the little path worn in the buffalo grass that led to the neighbor's house. He found it and crept along it to light and warmth. His left cheek and ear were badly frosted and it was a long time before they were healed.

Twenty-four people were reported frozen to death in Clark County that night. Other partial reports of loss of life in western counties were four in Thomas, four in Greeley, seven in Wichita, four in Sherman, and several cases of "Doubtful Where He Died." And at Dodge City an arrival from Iowa wrote on January 2 after crossing the street from the railroad station to the hotel: "After two or three trials

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60 Anthony Republican, January 19, 1912, quoted ibid., 101.
We get started, and soon find ourselves in a drift waist deep, but finally get through safe. But my! how it snows! and the wind—well, I have lived twenty years on the prairies, but never saw anything to approach this.  

Almost every town was destitute of fuel. Corn soon became the substitute for coal, and toward the end of the storm even that was becoming exhausted. It finally became a question of provisions. Business was suspended and schools dismissed almost the entire month. Waterworks systems in the various cities and towns were frozen and useless; newspapers published could not be delivered by carrier, and even the post offices were idle. Telephone systems were at that time confined to cities entirely, and were practically of no service. Families huddled together in one room, with the balance of the house battened in every way possible, against the raging storm, passed anxious days in isolation. From the third day it was realized live stock on the wind-swept plains would be almost a total loss.

The "norther" was not confined to the western limits of the state although there it reached its greatest severity, for railroads over the entire State were paralyzed. Gates were drifted full of snow and as trains stalled, crude appliances removed the impediment to travel only to be followed by another storm blockading the way. Men became exhausted working day and night.

Old engineers, who had for years passed over the same track daily, became lost before they had gone five miles from their starting points. Not a marker could be seen in broad daylight. In numerous cases they ran by the stations, unable to

61 Diary kept by E. D. Smith, Mead, in 1886, quoted ibid., 108.

see the depots twenty feet away. Because of the
great danger of running by or the impossibility
of seeing signals, the dispatchers were obliged
to abandon the telegraph as a means of moving
trains. It became a custom for the engineer to
ride facing the rear, and through the vacuum
created by the movement of the train, locate
themselves by some familiar telegraph pole. They
had no other means of forming any idea whatever
as to where they were.63

The lives of passengers en route across Kansas were
endangered, for when a train stopped on the level prairie,
snow began drifting around the wheels and in a few hours a
solid drift reached up to the coach windows the entire
length of the train. The wheels froze to the rails and
the cars had to be uncoupled and broken loose one at a
time. Stock on its way to market was hastily unloaded at
feed yards and often was found frozen by the next morning.
The railroads issued orders on the third day of the storm
that no freight of any kind must be taken for shipment.
The order was effective during almost all of January.64

Several stages were in operation when the storm hit.
"A number of stages became lost and wandered miles from
their routes. A stagecoach came into the military post of
Camp Supply, Indian Territory, with the driver sitting on
the box frozen to death. The passengers inside knew noth­
ing of the death of their driver until after they had a­
lighted at their destination."65

63ibid., 103.
64ibid., 104.
65ibid., 104.
Animals on the prairie were swept ruthlessly before
the blasts. Over the prairie Jack rabbits and birds of
every description were found frozen to death. Range cattle
drifted hundreds of miles with the storm. The entire
country south of the Platte River was open to the line of
the Union Pacific Railroad, running across Kansas from
Salina to Ellsworth, Hays, Wallace, and Denver, so cattle
wandered blindly southward until they reached the right-of-
way and froze in drifted gullies along the fence west of
Ellsworth for four hundred miles. In a cut through the
Barker Hills a dozen full-grown steers, frozen on the
track, stopped a snow plow.

South of the Santa Fe Railroad, which followed the
Arkansas River from Great Bend to Dodge City, Garden City,
Syracuse, and into Colorado, there were no fences, so many
cattle drifted from Southwest Kansas into Mexico and were
never recovered; but others took refuge en route in canyons
where they starved or smothered. Other cattle, wolves, and
antelope were driven into a common grave. And so an un-
precedented loss of livestock hit the cattlemen hard.
Fortunate was the man who did not lose more than half of his
herd. Many farmers were kept busy trying to preserve their
teams and cows in their stables. The farmers reversed the
positions of animals several times during the day to pre-
vent one side from freezing. With all the protection, the
eyes, nose, ears, and hoofs of the animals were often affected.
It was difficult to get feed to the sheltered stock and to
But some settlers lived to be rescued and tell the tale of the "accidental" weather of the last day of 1885 and the first month of 1886 and to recount their "perilous experiences." 67

It was said, and generally believed by people situated in fairer parts of Kansas in those times, that there was not much chance for a man west of Dodge. Based upon appearances, this seemed a conclusion well grounded, for it was a land of emptiness; bald, bleak, swept; in winter the storm pounced with untempered strength upon a land that offered no shelter of forest or wooded brake, except the thin line of cottonwoods and willows along the meandering Arkansas and its feeble, far-spaced tributary streams.

A land filled from horizon to horizon with endless hilps of morose gray billowing hillocks, all after swell, naked of tree and shrub; a land in its very configuration suggestive of the vast vanished herds of buffalo that once fed upon its meager succulence. It seemed that nature had fixed their likeness there in everlasting earth, prophetic, before their time, of their coming, reminiscent of their presence long after their vanishment. 68

So another exodus eastward began; settlers were forced back by fires, floods, blizzards, drought, and cyclones. William Carey Campbell told the story of "A Kansas Emigrant" moving back to Arkansas because, as the old man said,

"One summer's afternoon what should come a-moseyin'"

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 George W. Ogden, West of Dodge (New York, 1926), 2.
'Long over the prairies an' light right down in my paster but one o' them dod-blasted an' double-an-
twisted six-shoos th' which wallop ed th' fence six-
ways fer Sunday, an' then galvanized right on till
it reached our ole house, which th' same it took,
you understand? Me, in less'n a holy minute, an'
turned inside out an' wrong side up, an' scattered
along through Harper an' Sumner counties, an'
Oklahoma Territory, for all that I knows. Reckon
'twould hev lifted th' mortgage too ef it hadn't
been held down east!*69

But the old man was not discouraged as he viewed the ocean
of grass and sky:

"Ya-a-s, she's great, haint she? Bluestem is
awful hard ter beat. I reckon as how God never made
nothin' no finer'n bluestem, 'less 'twas a girl
baby with blue eyes an' flax hair. Stranger, did
yer never take notice that ther's nothing in this
heath old world that's extra gorgeous fine but what's
set in blue? ...No! since, blue is all right,—
blue anything!"

"Blue's all hunky, is it? Wail, ef yer want
ter see a blue female, yer don't hav fer ter go!"
observed a woman who h ers crowded out her head from
the flaps of the wagon-cover, disclosing a pinched
face that was tanned and prematurely wrinkled.70

But the old man continued:

"Wail, stranger, I'll jest make free ter tell
yer plain. Me an' th' ole woman an' th' kids is a-
movin' back ter Arkansas ter her folks. ...Th' ole
woman had heered tell that ther wasn't no red licker
ter be had in Kansas, an' so she kinder made up her
mind that ef she could git her ole man out hesh
she'd hev a great cinch on him. So nothin' ud do
but ter sell out, an' pack up, an' come on, ..."

"How, jest betwixt me an' you, th' ole woman
an' th' kids 'ud ruther—I'm a-thinkin', ef they'd

69William Carey Campbell, "A Kansas Emigrant," A
Colorado Colonel and Other Sketches (Topeka, 1901), 383.
See also Bell M. Wurger, The Wind Before Dawn (Garden City,
1912), 182, for a description of a tornado.

70Ibid., 380-81
talk serious—live in Kansas en' chance th' slycoons
'rn steady stay back in Arkansaw an' hev pap drunk
perty much all th' time. ...So, I wouldn't be
'sprised ef, mebbe, you'd see us a-movin' back with
th' grass;..."71

Another Ozark Mountain native gave his excuse for
leaving Kansas:

"Don't tell me of your corn and wheat—
What do I care for such?
Don't say your schools is hard to beat,
And Kansas soil is rich.
Stranger a year's been lost by me,
Searchin' your Kansas siles,
And not a pawpaw did I see,
For miles, and miles, and miles!"72

Another author wrote of the return to Western Kansas
during the prosperous years of just such fellows as the
Arkansawer and the Missourian:

They're comin' back to Kansas
From downs in old Missoo,
They're comin' back I reckon
To live with me and you.
They left this land of Kansas
About a year ago
But now they're turnin' backward
Just as folks will, you know.73

Sarpy also wrote of the return of stovers to the Sun-
flower State:

Back to Kansas they are coming,
See them coming o'er the hill;
Oh, sweet Kansas land they're humming,
Peace on earth to all good will.

Once a motley lot of schooners

71 Ibid., 382-86.
72 Sol Miller, "Pawpaws Ripe," in Wattles, Sunflowers, 43.
Bade adieu unto their state,
They were branded well as sooners
To a new sought land of fate.74

People gave as their reason for coming back to the
plains: "It's great to live in Kansas,—our state is on
the boom."75

Another poet wrote of the better years:

O, the Lord's come back to Kansas and will start
the brooklets flowing,
Put new life in the people, keep the vegetation
growing.
So just keep the hoe-a-shining, put your muscles
into gear,
For the Lord's come back to Kansas and 'twill be
a Kansas year.

Yes, the Lord's come back to Kansas; 'twill put
blue stem in the sod;
And the humming bird will flutter midst the autumn's
goldenrod;
So get out the scythe and whet it, hayseas season's
almost here;
For the Lord's got back to Kansas and 'twill be a
Kansas year.76

Frederick Atwood expressed renewed hope for those who
had endured the bad years:

It's true sometimes things worry,—
Sure, the outlook's mighty blue
When the wind gets sou'-sou'westward
And blows hot a whole week through;
When the chinch-bug gets his work in
And the 'hoppers take the rest;
When a cyclone or a hailstorm
Knocks the wheat-fields gully west,
But we soon forget these trifles,

74 James Horace Marcy, "They're Coming Back to
Kansas," Kansas Ballad, 108.

75 James Horace Marcy, "Kansas on the Boom," Kansas
Ballads, 115.

76 J. B. Edson, "It Will Be a Kansas Year," in Bottles,
For we know we'll be on top
When we gather in the shekels
From the
Next
Year's
Crop.77

Although there were many hard years in Western Kansas after 1886, the illusion of the "Great American Desert" was passing from the State. When Kansas celebrated the quarter centennial of statehood on January 29, 1886, her citizens rejoiced that since 1861 a new Kansas had developed.

The youth of 1875 has grown to the full stature and strength of confident and intelligent manhood. The people have forgotten to talk of droughts, which are no more incident to Kansas than to Ohio or Illinois. They no longer watch the clouds when rain has not fallen for two weeks. The newspapers no longer chronicle rains as if they were uncommon visitations. A great many things besides the saloons have gone, and gone to stay. The bone-hunter and the buffalo-hunter of the Plains, the Indian and his reservations, the cowboys and the Wild Bills, the Texas steer and the cowboy, the buffalo grass and the dug-outs, the loneliness and immensity of the unpeopled prairies, the infinite stretching of the plains, unbroken by tree or shrub, by fence or house—all these have vanished, or are rapidly vanishing. In their stead has come, and come to stay, an aggressive, energetic, cultured, sober, law-respecting civilization. Labor-saving machines sweep majestically through fields of golden wheat or sprouting corn; blooded stock lazily feed in meadows of blue-stem, timothy, or clover; comfortable houses dot every hill-top and valley; forests, orchards and hedge-rows diversify the loveliness of the landscape; and where isolation and wilderness brooded, the majestic lyric of prosperous industry is echoing over eighty-one thousand square miles of the loveliest

77 Frederick Atwood, "After Next Year's Crop," Kansas Rhymes and Other Lyrics, 14.
and most fertile country that the sun, in his daily journey, lights and warms. 

Although John's vision of Kansas was still ideal, part of the design for Kansas, presented in Fannie McCormick's *Kansas Farm*, had been wrought:

John beheld a great plain four hundred miles long and two hundred miles wide—a great agricultural state covered with farmers tilling the soil and with here and there a city or village. On every farm stood a beautiful house. ... Brussel carpets covered the floors, upholstered furniture and pianos ornamented the parlors, ... Reservoirs carried the water into the houses.... The door-yards consisted of nicely fenced green lawns, wherein not a pig rooted nor mule browsed on the shrubbery nor hen wallowed in the flower-beds. 

In place of the Indian tepees which dotted Quivira, when the Spaniards came in search of gold, in the fall there stood round throughout the fields the wigwams of the plains:

We have crushed the warrior's spirit, Confiscated home and all; We have changed his "fields of battle" Into farms—some large, some small; Yet, in memory of the Indian, In each cornfield still remains, True to life, in size and outline, The real wigwam of the plains.

The poets have been generous in praise of the pioneers, who wrought the changes on the prairie and plain: Andrew Downing said of them:

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79 Fannie McCormick, *A Kansas Farm or the Promised Land* (Topeka, 1892), 97-98.
These are the heroes who triumphed o'er fate;
These are the toilers who moulded the state;
These are the soldiers who laughed at defeat;
This is the army that did not retreat!

Carleton Everett Knox has written a toast to the pioneers:

Hats off to the early pioneers,
Who conquered our prairies broad,
It took a lot of stick-to-it-iveness
And a heap o' faith in God.
When drought and hoppers and wind and sand
Came to try out their mettle and worth,
These pioneers stuck in spite of it all,
Hats off to these Kings of the earth.

Of the Yankee characteristics in the makeup of the early Kansan, Meridel Lesueur mentioned these:

the loose frame, the slight droop, the acrid, bitter power and tenuosity, the sense of hanging on in bad seasons, of despondency from lack of nourishment, that well-known Yankee form and the mystery of it, the strong, deep, lanky chest, so powerful but so withdrawn and gnarled, and the sudden tenacious sentimental sympathies, that would start wars from quixotic idealisms, provoke assassins' bullets and leave a wife embittered and maddened a little, left out always, never wholly armed at that breast, the flesh never really warm and hanging from the tree of life, always a little acrid and ghostly, and the tenderness not enough to warm; and the anxiety always cooling the blood, making it spectral, the Yankee anxiety about something that leaves its mark on the face, on the skeleton, in the blood.

By the end of a quarter century of statehood, the count-

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81 Andrew Downing, "The Pioneers," The Trumpeters and Other Poems (Washington, 1897), 136.
82 Carleton Everett Knox, "A Toast to the Pioneers," Kansas Land from Day Dreams, 21.
Chance of Kansas had brightened and softened. No longer was she reckoned as a part of the Great American Desert or as the edge of the western frontier. Her land had been found rich and willing to yield an abundant harvest. Her harvests were piled high in granaries, cellars, and storage pits. Moreover, her future appeared crowned with the brightness of Kansas sunshine. Her sons and daughters were saying:

Kansas! I love thy sacred name,
As o'er my memory sweeps the past;
From thy dark, deep trouble thou hast
Now come to glorious peace, and vast
Domain, and everlasting fame. 84

The years from 1880 to 1885 have been adequately pictured by writers. Diaries and sketches by pioneers show developments of the years. In the essay, Field, Hudson, Lesueur, Owen, Speer, Turner, White, and others have pictured the Kansas scene and character. Campbell, Fuhr, Hunt, and White have delineated the years by means of the short story. Novelists, such as McCormick, Martin, Murphy, North, Ogden, Parker-Mays, and Robinson, have told the hardships and triumphs of the 80's. Among the poets who wrote of the Kansas scene are Allerton, Atwood, Baker, Blair, Downing, J. B. Edson, Knox, Jacobus, McKeever, Moody, Miller, and others.

84 Joel Moody, "The Song of Kansas," Song of Kansas and Other Poems, 93.
CONCLUSION

The primary contribution of this study is the story of Kansas from 1540 to 1836 as found in the writings of Kansans and a few other authors who were interested in the experiments going on there.

From 1540 to 1820 the central plains which later became Kansas appealed to the Spaniards, the French, and finally to the Americans, who began to explore the region. Although Quivira was thought to be rich in gold, Casteleda's "Relación del Sueceso" and Coronado's letter to the King of Spain show that the Spaniards were not well pleased with the plains prospect. French traders followed the tributaries of the Missouri River but made few attempts even to establish forts in what was to become Kansas. The Americans came into possession of the central plains in 1803; the Lewis and Clark expedition was even then preparing to ascend the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean. In 1806, Montgomery Pike trailed the full length of the State—from Bourbon County to Republic County, down to the great bend of the Arkansas River, and westward. He is said to have bestowed the ill-conceived appellation "the Great American Desert" on the Kansas plains. In 1819, Stephen H. Long and his band of scientists visited the Kaw
Indians in the northeast corner of Kansas. Other explorers and traders skirted Kansas, but few wished to investigate what appeared to be a barren desert. For this reason not many primary sources exist for information on these early years; hence the treatment of these three centuries has been primarily romantic. Robert Ames Bennet, Noah Brooks, Margaret Hill McCarter, and G. G. Price have written of this era in novels; in verse the period has been pictured by Ellen P. Allerton, George T. Edson, C. L. Edson, Lincoln Phifer, and Eugene Fitch Wave.

The era from 1820 to 1854 was one of thorough exploration west of the Mississippi River. This was a period of many sketches and realistic accounts by outdoor men and travelers, such as William Becknell, Captain Bonneville, Thomas J. Farnham, John Charles Frémont, Josiah Gregg, Joel Palmer, Francis Parkman, Alexander Ross, John K. Townsend, John B. Wyeth, W. E. Youngman, and other sturdy pioneers. The plains environment and culture were investigated and endured. The flora—prairies and plains grasses and perennial prairie flowers—were found to be succulent and nourishing for animals. The plains fauna—turkeys, plover, water fowl, prairie dogs, coyotes, wolves, antelope, deer, elk, wild horses, and buffaloes—were encountered in vast numbers. The plains Indians were found to be hardy, warlike, tenacious—eager to take a toll of white men. Storms, droughts, floods, fires, and mirages taught the white
man that the Great Plains held a new culture that must be conquered through hardihood.

During the years from 1820 to 1854 three great trails were marked out across Kansas: Santa Fe trail, Oregon Trail, and California Road. Travel along these routes led to realistic and romantic novels, ballads, and songs. Emerson Bennett wrote romantic novels about the West, one set in Kansas near the trails, in the 1850's. Other tales and novels, written since the wagon trails were abandoned, are by Kate A. Aplington, John Bowles, Camille de Cendrey, John Dunloe Carteret, Emerson Hough, Henry Inman, Margaret Hill McCarter, and William Kennedy Marshall.

The poets—Ellen P. Allerton, Frederick Atwood, Ed Blair, Jesse Applegate Ebie, Esther Clark Hill, Harry Kemp, Carleton Everett Knox, Celeste May, Sophie Melk, George P. Morehouse, Albert Bigelow Paine, Duncan Phifer, C. P. Slane, Kate Stephens, Albert Strood, Clara Catherine White, H. Rea Woodman, and Iari Zumwalt—have pictured the plains environment, culture, and the emigrant roads in Kansas. A few Indian harvest songs and trail ballads also remain from this colorful era. Verses on the prairie chicken, tumbleweed, drought, prairie fires, the stage driver, dried apple pies, and the call of the Kansas prairie show the scope of homely topics which appealed to the poets.

Territorial days extended from 1854 to 1861, wherein the slavery question in Kansas was propounded extensively.
Propaganda literature of these years includes works by
El Douglas Brewerton, Thomas H. Gladstone, Horace Greeley,
Edward Everett Hale, T. R. Mason and C. B. Boynton,
William Phillips, Sara T. D. Robinson, Hannah Anderson Ropes,
and other pioneers. Further background material was
written in the 1830's and 1840's by Hugh Dunn Fisher,
Charles Robinson, L. F. Spring, and Eli Thayer.

No years have appealed so extensively to the novelists
as the time from 1854 to 1865, the years of the Territory
and early statehood. Novels, likewise, show bias and the
domination in Kansas of the abolitionist spirit and New
England conscience. Fanny Hunter in 1856, Stephen Holmes,
Jr., in 1864, and the French writers, Henri Emilie Chevalier
and F. Pharaon, published novels on the question. Anti-
Slavery fiction in Kansas flowed from the pens of novelists
with regularity from 1831 until 1937: works by Mary E.
Jackson (1881), Mary A. Humphrey (1883), Noah Brooks (1891),
T. B. Ferguson (1892), Arthur Paterson (1896), Elbert
Hubbard (1899), William R. Lighton (1899), Ruth Cowgill
(1904), William Kennedy Marshall (1904), William Allen
White (1909), Margaret Hill McCarter (1910-1914), Margaret
Lynn (1920), Ray Strachey (1923), and Charles Henry Lerringo
(1937). Dagmar Doneghy's novel, The Border (1931) and
Caroline Abbot Stanley's Order No. 11 (1904) have a Southern
bias; the writers are Missourians. Many of the foregoing
novelists have dealt with John Brown, the demigod in sev-
eral Kansas novels. Mrs. J. C. Slay's Osawatomie Brown
was played in New York fourteen days after Brown's death; Kirke Mechem's John Brown appeared in 1939. These are two significant dramas about Kansas.

Warfare and slavery propaganda appealed to few poets. Lucy Larcom, Richard Reslf, and John Greenleaf Whittier wrote in behalf of the Free-State Cause. Joel Moody wrote a poem on the bitter fate of Lawrence in its territorial destruction. Muriel Culp, Henry Inman, and William Calfax Markham wrote storylike sketches on the period. Adequate manuscript material and recollections add to the store of pioneer literature available on these critical years.

The years from 1860 to 1865 were treated by many novelists who set their stories in the territorial years. Mark Cretcher's treatment of war days extends into peaceful episodes beyond Appomattox. A few ballads grew up about the period, and Thomas Peacock wrote his unique epic about the border war. Muriel Culp's short story, "Myra," was born from a war episode, and Henry Inman's tale, "A Race for Life," is set in Central Kansas near Fort Zarah on Walnut Creek. Manuscript material and reminiscences by pioneers add to the informal writings of the period.

The quinquennium from 1865 to 1870, a period of expansion westward, is well portrayed in the reminiscences of pioneers—Union soldiers and nurses, Iowa farmers who had come West, Bohemian landseekers, Swedish and German

From 1865 to 1880, cowboys, cow trails, and cow towns affected the life of Kansas. Historical and descriptive sketches include those by Andy Adams, John R. Cook, Edward Everett Dale, W. H. Donoho, Emerson Hough, Wilson Howard, Charles C. Lowther, Joseph G. McCoy, Tom McNeal, Victor Hurlock, and James W. Steele. Novels written by Dora Aydelotte, Courtney Ryley Cooper, Zane Grey, Thomas Clark Rinkle, Emerson Hough, Mary W. North, George W. Ogden, Arthur Paterson, and Frank J. Wilstach include sidelights on the cow industry in Kansas. Cowboy ballads celebrate the trails and towns. In verse A. D. C. McLeod, Duncan Phifer, and Albert Stroud have also written about these days.

The 70's presented a decade of robust, rowdy growth in Central and Western Kansas. Emigrants continued to flow into the State and go west. Sod shanties overlooked protected draws and rectangular plots of overturned sod appeared here and there to break the monotony of the plains. The grasshoppers and drought came in 1874, followed by
better years and the new crop of Western Kansas, hard winter wheat. Henry Ware Allen, J. M. Cook, Elmer House, John Ise, Henry King, Margaret Lynn, Tom McNeal, Noble L. Prentis, Howard Rudee, and William Allen White have pictured realistically these years. In short stories Augustus Caesar Buell, Grace Galloway, Edith McDaniel, and Tom McNeal have made contributions.

The period has been utilized by novelists. Anne Matilda Carlson, Mack Cretcher, Margaret Hill McCarter, Mary M. North, and May Griffes Robinson treated the opening of the West, the coming of the railroad, and the hardships of the pioneers in West Kansas. Gordon Friesen and Otto Schrag pictured the Mennonites at work; Effie Graham, the Negro; Edgar Watson Howe, the hypocritical preacher; and Mr. and Mrs. E. Haldeman-Julius, the hard-bitten, health-seeking emigrant. Charles King has delineated army life at the forts in Western Kansas.

Besides such songs as "The Little Sod Shanty," "My Western Home," and "The Lane County Bachelor," verse by Ellen P. Allerton, Frederick Atwood, John W. Beebe, Lydia A. Doyle, Charles Moreau Harger, Vachel Lindsay, James Horace Marcy, Sol Miller, Albert Bigelow Paine, and Willard Wattles told the story of the pioneers of the 70's.

During the decade magazines with cultural intent were established in Kansas.

The frontier passed beyond the Kansas line in the 1880's. Sketches about Kansas and her pioneers were written

It is apparent that Kansas writers have preserved, both romantically and realistically, the story of their State in sketches, short stories, novels, dramas, and poetry. Kansas literary works, however, are not sophisticated; they use much local color. They may fall short of high literary expression, but they picture the sod house, the locusts, the drought, the cyclone, the flood, and the beauties of the Kansas prairies and plains. If any heightening of goodness and keenness is found in characters, it is in the portrayal of the Northerner and the Southerner of Civil War days and of the settler and the cattleman of the 1870's and 1880's. The language of the Kansan is the speech of the wide-open spaces touched by the refined background of an intelligent people--the language of common people who toil ad astra per aspera.
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Major Field: English

Title of Thesis: Kansas as Depicted in Literature from the Beginning to 1886

Approved:

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Date of Examination:

May 7, 1945