

Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

Section 22, Pages 631 - 660

Kansas Governor John P. St. John (1879-1883) received these letters from persons concerned with the migration of southern blacks to Kansas, commonly known as the Exodus or Exoduster movement. The letters come from blacks considering a move to Kansas, persons assisting with or monitoring the migration, officials of cities along the route, and persons providing for the relief of the migrants upon their arrival. The letters proceed in rough chronological order. Most include remnants of abstracts that were attached to the letter and then partially removed. The top of the abstract includes a reference to the letterpress book and page number of the governor's response. The governors' letterpress books are a separate collection. This collection comprises box 13 folders 13-15 and 20, box 14 folders 1-9, and box 15 folders 1-5 of the John St. John governor's records. The 1879-1880 correspondence was filed under "Immigration, Negro Exodus." The 1881-1882 correspondence was filed under "Freedman's Institute, Relief Association." A link to an inventory of St. John's entire governor's collection is available below. A full transcription is also available under "External Links."

Creator: Kansas. Governor (1879-1883 : St. John)

Date: April 1879 - October 1882

Callnumber: Governor's Office, St. John, Correspondence Received-Subject File, Box 13-15

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 210296

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www.kansasmemory.org/item/210296

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relief committee would issue a number of circulars embracing the same ideas contained in your excellency's letter to me and send them to leading colored men through the south with instructions for them to distribute them properly, it would check the massing of destitute freedmen in your state unless this is done I fear you will be overrun with such large numbers of starving colored people this coming winter that the worst of results will happen in spite of all you can do to prevent it. In my opinion, there should be authorized agents to truly represent your interests in this and other southern states, for such agents could select thrifty colored families who would be able by next spring to emigrate and colonize in Kansas without much aid, and to prevent destitute freedmen from massing upon you. This would save our northern friends many thousands of dollars and a great deal of trouble and vexation. I have already been chosen as one of the immigration and colonization commissioners of this State and I shall work diligently and faithfully to do all that lies in my power to promote and

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Advance the best interests of my unfortunate Race, and I earnestly appeal to your Excellency and all other northern friends to advise and counsel with the representative colored men of the South, how to adopt effective measures in securing the best of results by the present Exodus movement, you who have never felt the bitter sting of slavery nor the prejudice, hate and unrelenting oppression of a powerful master element can never know or realize how dearly my race prize the small liberties they now enjoy, and to the proof of this let me say that when I read that portion of your excellency's letter that guaranteed to them ^{the} full and complete protection of their rights under the law, old grey headed men fell upon their knees and prayed that God might spare your excellency life and shower down blessings upon the head that had the manhood to say that a Black man has rights and your excellency has promised that their rights shall be protected and respected, and exacted a promise from me that I would inform your excellency how deadly in earnest they are in trying to escape the evil now confronting and scourging them, there are no words which can fully express or explain the real condition

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of my people throughout the south, nor how deeply and keenly they feel the necessity of fleeing from the wrath and long pent up hatred of their old masters which they feel assured will ere long burst loose like the pent up fires of a volcano and crush them if they remain here many years longer. For God's sake and in the name of the suffering millions of my people do all that can be practically done to relieve them. The people here have regular weekly meetings in their churches and ^{are} obliged to keep armed guards on the outside not only to protect ourselves from threatened assault from the unforgiven white men but to protect our meetings from some of our own race who are known to be in the employ of ^{white} men high in office. Such men come around and circulate reports about hundreds of colored people starving to death under the very eyes of the Kansas Republicans. An officer here went as far as to say that he would like to have me outside of town for a while a person can very easily see that to even ~~a~~ try to better ones condition in this portion of the south is looked upon as an offence against the old master element. I am trying to make some

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arrangements with the land commissioners in Kansas by enquiring if a person can locate for others such land as may be suitable, and if a person having a homestead here that would like to sell them if it could be arranged to exchange or take for security homestead in Texas for Homestead in Kansas, further on a great many here who have Homesteads and who wish to sell them, experience considerable difficulty in disposing of them except at a great sacrifice, and although they would like to get a reasonable consideration for their property yet they are determined to sacrifice them if necessary to procure means to assist them in emigrating. Thanking your excellency for the valuable aid you have already rendered, and the kindness shown

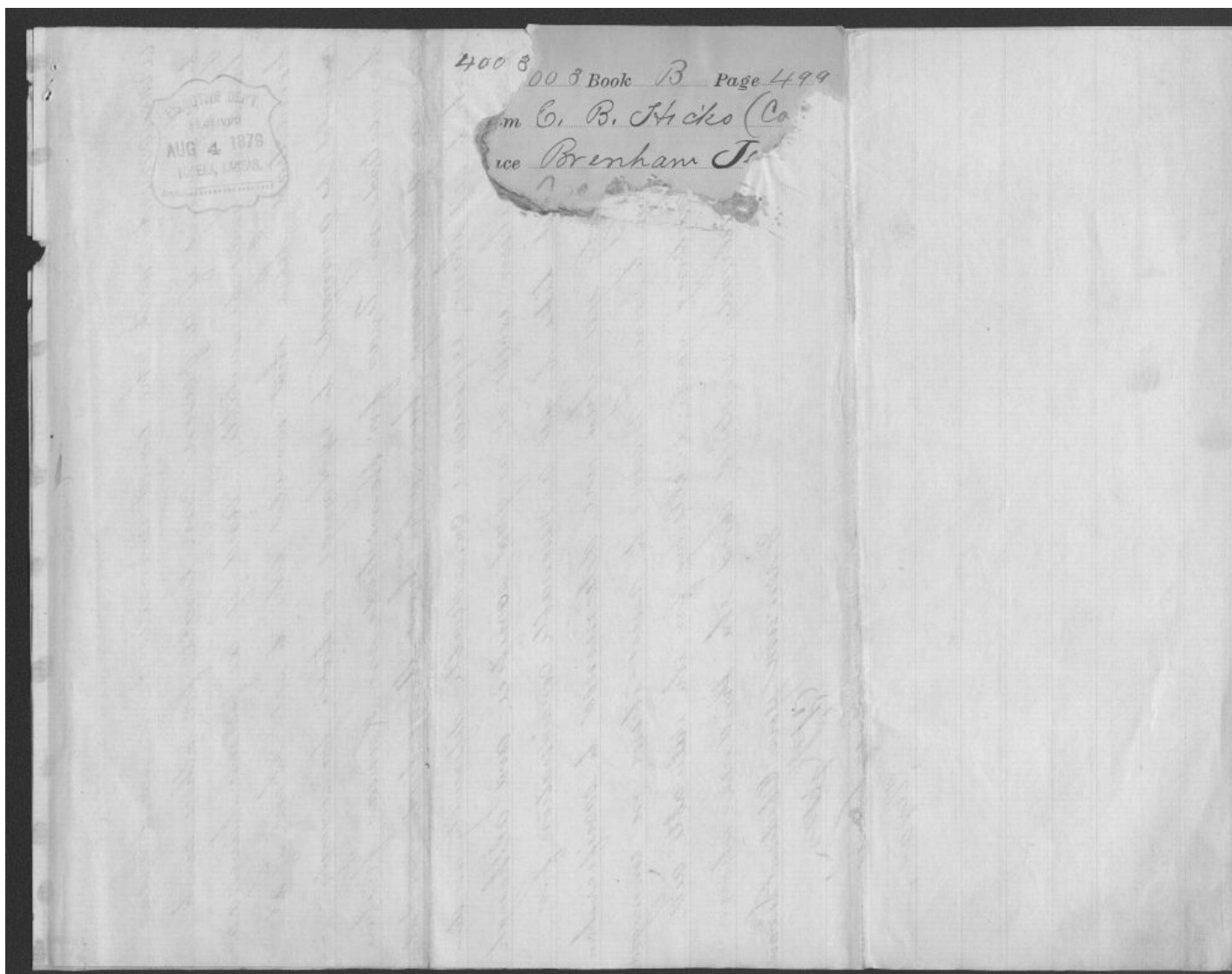
I remain your Obedient Servant

C. H. Johnson,

Brewster

Texas,

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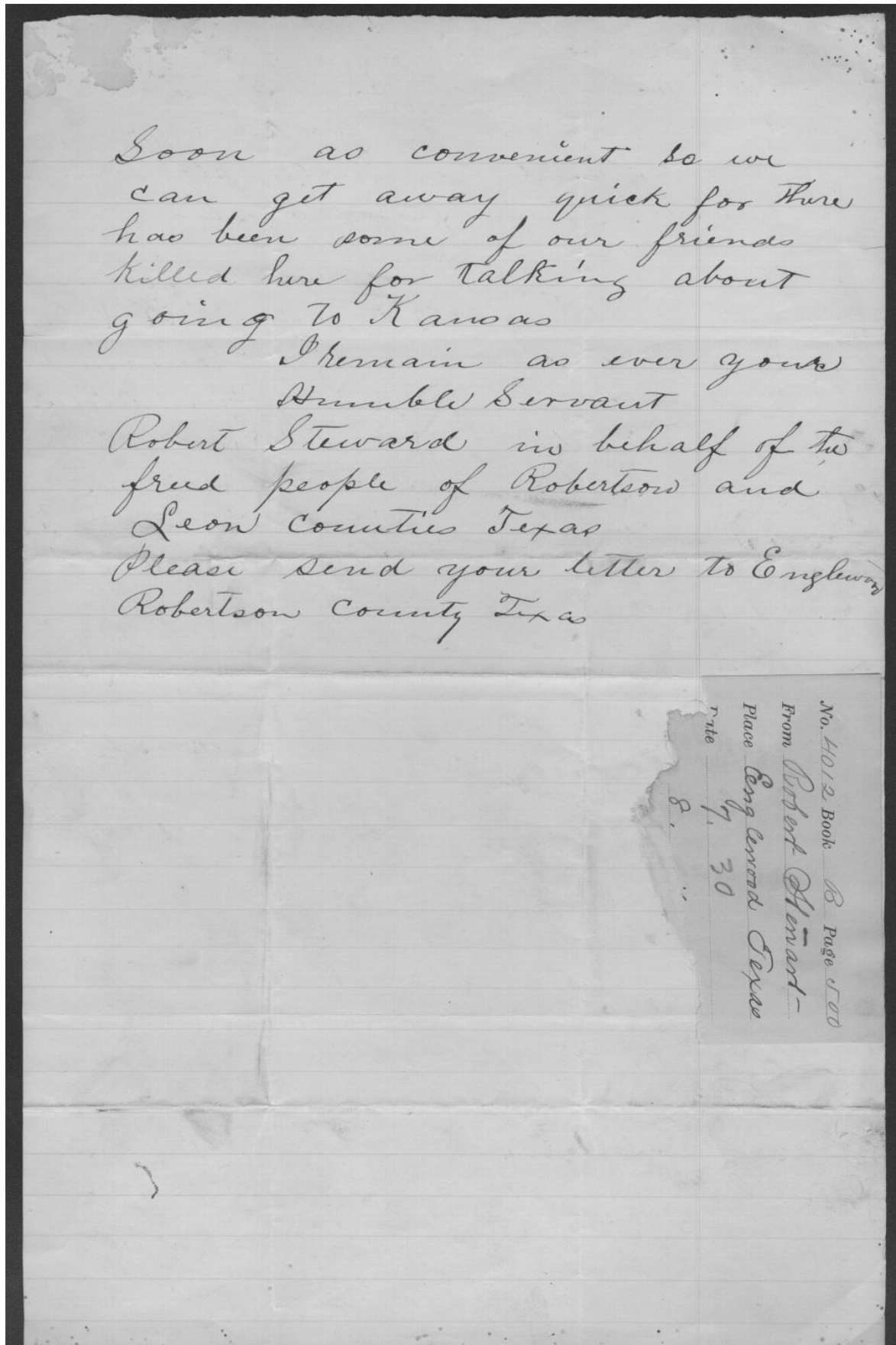
EXECUTIVE DEPT.
RECEIVED
AUG 7 1879
TOPEKA, KANSAS.

Englewood Texas July 30th 1879

Hon St John Gov

You will pardon me for taking the priviledge of asking you a few questions in behalf of some of my friends as well as myself We ~~have~~ have hered so much about your state that we think of come to see it we want to know if there is any Government Land there that we could get and how much would it ^{cost} an acre or would colored people be allowed to take home steads we have been told by a friend that we could but we dont know and how much would it cost us to come by the Rail Road or could you get us reduced rates ~~and~~ or would it pay us best to come in wagons and bring our stock of cattle we all have some cows we have been working hard ever since the war but we get a poor chance like all other freed people and to go where we can get pay for our work how much can a man get a month for work a good farm hand you will please answer these few questions

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EXECUTIVE DEPT.
RECEIVED
AUG 7 1879
TOPEKA, KANSAS.

Richmond July 30th 1879
Gov. St. John—

Enclosed find
a check for \$50.00. The money
comes slowly, and by the
hardest. I send all that
I get except actual expen-
ses. I can give my time, to
help in this work, and if I
could reach the purses of the
people so as to get the funds
needed, I would not grudge
my time; but it seems al-
most thrown away.

Did you get \$180.00 from the
Committee at Philadelphia?
Have you ever heard from
West Chester Penn?
Since I was
there? I had great hopes
that you would get some

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thing nice from John Hall
Did you write to him?
I wish you could send
them over to Indiana, The
people talk very loud about
what they would do for them
if they were only here, and
I would like to have
try it with a few thou-
sand. I believe there would
be civil war, there is such
a dislike, such a bitter preju-
dice against them here.
Old time abolitionists that
boast of their devotion to the
cause will give .25 to .50 after
I have walked a mile to
get to them. But the good
Lord will rule and over-
rule, and the rights of these
people will yet be vindica-
ted. I want always to be so

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guided as to be found on the
side of right.

What of our camp meeting?
Is the prospect good for a grand
time? I had hoped to have
met Bro. Shelton this week
as he wrote me he would be
in this state. He promised
to send me transportation
from Indianapolis home. I
want to start early in Aug.
so as to be at home a few
days before the camp meet-
ing begins. If I can have
a pass and save \$2.00 I
would be very glad.

I have been trying to talk
up our camp meeting every
where I have been, and in-
terest workers, and have sent
the names of a great many
who will add very much

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3972

3972 Book B Page 4

1895

Amanda Way

to the interest not only as speak
ers but singers, among others
Mrs Annie Reichman of Phila
delphia.

Are the Lawrence people tak
ing more interest this year?

I do hope that it will do
much for our prohibition
campaign.

Write to me ^{Indianapolis} ~~at~~ as
I shall make that headquarters
for a week or 10 days, then
~~to Indianapolis~~ ^{and} on home.

Yours for the Right
A. M. Way

Direct in care of Samuel Ban
ister Indianapolis.

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Grand Rapids Mich. July 31st /79

Hon Gov. St. John

Dear Sir

Inclosed

please find exchange for five
dollars to be used under the
direction of the board of which
you are Pres., for the benefit
of the colored refugees.

Please send postal to let me
know if you receive this.

Very Respectfully yours

Mrs. E. L. Furness



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No. *3993* Book *B* Page *498*
From *Mrs E. G. Furness*
Place *Grand Rapids Mich*
Date *July 31*
Rec'd *E. 4*
Ans'd *E. 79*

ABSTRACT.

1 freedmen,

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Washington County, Texas.

Brenham, July 31st 1879.

Gov John St John.
Topeka, Kansas.

Dear Gov. Your favor of the 28th inst came to hand yesterday. I was fearful lest I had written so often to you, that you were becoming tired of reading my lengthy communications, and sometimes I have thought that perhaps I have been too persistent and extreme in trying to force my views of the necessity of Northern Republicans, organizing thoroughly to aid the colored people in migrating from the South. I have never been a halway man in anything I undertake to do, nor have I stood by as an eye witness, and seen wrongs without speaking plainly and boldly against them. Like most of Southern men, I am impulsive, and suppose if I had been a Democrat, I should have ^{been} among the worst of "fireeaters" and "irreconcilables." As it is, if I have gone into extremes of any kind, I have the consolation of believing, that it has been done on the right side of Humanity, and in the right direction. It is high time that an organization of Northern Republicans, was effected, for unless some practicable plans are speedily adopted, many thousands of destitute freedmen will pour in upon you by the latter part of next Oct. I know that at least 1000 families would have left this and ad-

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joining Counties during the past three weeks, but for the prompt action of C. P. Hicks & Co. and other leading colored men in checking the movement. I have been busy myself in not only writing letters to colored men, and talking with numbers of them who often come long distances to see me; but I have ^{also} attended their Exoduster meetings and left nothing undone to encourage them to organize in accordance with the resolutions adopted by their recent State convention. I have no trouble with the thrifty intelligent classes, but even with their aid, it is hard to control the ignorant and destitute classes, for not only ignorant colored men, but many of the laboring classes of white people circulate the report that all colored people who go to Kansas, will get free homes, and one years supply of clothing and provisions. They further report, that thousands have already been thus provided for in Kansas, and you have no idea how difficult it is to argue them out of such conclusions. While in other Southern States, the whites will generally combine to prevent the Exoduster, yet in this State, ^{except} in a few localities, there may be such opposition, the great masses of laboring whites, will encourage and promote it. White labor, very sensibly argue that the Exoduster will eventually give them control of the South, and make their labor more val-



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noble than it has ever been, or can ^{ever} possibly be, so long as they have to compete with colored labor: for without colored labor the cotton crops and supplies would decrease at least one half, which of course ^{would} make the price of that staple largely increase etc.

Not only this course induces white people here to encourage the movement, but as the freedmen own a large amount of valuable property here, and the crops of this season will be cut short by our long continued drought, by inducing the freedmen to believe they will get free homes, etc. in Kansas, they will of course throw their property upon the market which will be thus sacrificed for a mere song. On yesterday I was informed that circulars had been sent from Ohio, to leading colored men here, and elsewhere informing them, that lands would be given them in Ohio and Kansas, in exchange for their homes here. I have sent some of my colored friends in search of one of these circulars, and hope to get one in time to forward you enclosed with this letter, but if not I shall get one, if such documents are really here, and send you ^{one} at an early date. Of course if such arrangements could be made it would be a great help to the colored people, but this may possibly be a swindle. I have heard of other men offering to sell land certificates and Railway tickets to colored



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men, and have but little doubt, that many of them in their eagerness to get to Kansas, will be swindled in various ways, unless an organization of Northern friends is effected, and the Blacks given to understand that all information and aid in colonizing them must come through this organization: and that any other counsel or offers made them is bogus. I have taken the liberty of writing letters to Col John W Forney, Hon Wendell Phillips, James A Garfield, Senators Blaine, Windom and Conklin, in regard to this matter, because during the past two or more years, I had from time to time wrote them several communications in regard to the real condition of the colored people. I have now fully explained to these gentlemen the magnitude of the Exodus movement, and as they are no doubt well posted by information from many different sources, I think that if your Excellency would follow ^{the} ~~up~~ line of argument and evidence I have adopted ^{and offered} in urging them to lend their aid and influence to secure an organization of Northern friends, it would have much greater weight with them, than anything I have done or could do to secure their cooperation etc. The reason why I suggest a secret conference is because it is likely that plans will be adopted - if anything is done in that direction - which



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should not be made public, for if an enemy knows your plans to defeat him, he is quite certain to resort to some means to thwart your intentions. I would suggest some summer resort or fashionable watering place for such a conference, because that would excite no suspicion to see a number of friends gathered at such points. Whatever is done, should be done by the latter part of next month, for I assure you that you may expect the destitute freedmen to pour in upon you by the thousands unless some wise measures is adopted to either prevent it, or else to provide for them when they begin their steady migration in Oct. In this warm climate ordinary log or box cabins, with a scanty supply of clothing and food will enable them, as they have always done, to live through our mild winters; but with your climate it will be quite different, and I apprehend that it will be quite impossible to prevent great suffering if several thousands of half naked and utterly destitute freedmen should throw themselves upon your State during the coming winter. In this state there is seldom a week in any of our winter months in which ^{the} laboring classes are prevented by cold weather from performing steady outdoor labor. but in the Northern states, I learn that there are four ^{winter} months in which but little of such labor can be done. It would certainly be



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testing the patience and charity of Northern people ~~to~~
beyond their endurance, to ask them to support hordes
of destitute people, when such an emergency, may with
a little foresight and careful management, be prevented.

If an ordinary crop can be made the first season upon the
raw lands of your State, five or more thousand families could
leave here ~~in~~ by the latter part of Next Feb. and get to Kansas,
in ample time with their waggons, teams, etc. to make
good crops, for with good tents and by breeding cattle
away from their crops, they could do without houses and
fences untill they harvested their wheat. If good crops
of wheat were made the first season, they would then have
means to buy material for building houses and fences
by the next winter. By such management as this, the
Blacks, would be no expense whatever, and could be
made self supporting at once. If I had only the proper
backing, I would like to take about 10,000 ⁹⁰⁰⁰ freedmen
next spring, and show Northern people what Negro labor
can do when it is properly directed and protected.

I shall keep your Excellency well posted and properly
advised of all matters of interest that comes to my knowl-
edge in regard to the Exodus movement here, and hope that
you will consider well all I have said in regard to the ne-
cessity of prompt action to meet the coming tidal wave
of the Exodus, which will soon rush headlong upon you.
Yours obt. servt.
S. A. Hackworth.

Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence



Washington County, Texas
Bretham July 5th 79.

Gov John P St John.

Topeka, Kansas.

Dear Sir, In my two last communications, - to which I have not as yet received any reply - I virtually finished my explanations in regard to the real condition of the colored people of the South, and my plans or suggestions as to how they should be colonized etc. During the past 14 years, I have worked so diligently among the colored people to encourage their colonization, and warned them so often of the great evils that has since befallen them, that today they regard me as a real friend. In my last letter I sent you an article written by Mr. C P Hicks, in relation to the real causes that force his Race, to migrate from the South. Since then a convention has been held by the leading Representative colored men of this State, at Houston. There was 130 delegates present, who represented 38



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of the most populous counties of Texas, and these men have in a fearless manner, expressed the general feeling and purposes of of their Race throughout the South. I aided Mr. H. Hicks, who was a delegate to this convention, in drafting an Address, to the Country, in which they boldly declare the many oppressions and grievances to which ^{they} are subjected by the old master class of the South.

This Address, ends in a strong appeal to the colored people to prepare for a general Exodus from the South, and to send forward their thriftiest and most enterprising classes first to colonize and open up the way for their less thrifty classes. It also returns to your Excellency, an expressive vote of ~~the~~ thanks for the aid and sympathy extended to their race fleeing from oppression etc, and a vote of confidence ~~to~~ myself for the untiring efforts I have made in encouraging colored emigration and colonization. The address was adopted by acclamation and was

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ing cheers. Arrangements were made to secure its publication in the "Galveston News" at an early day, and it will also be published in pamphlet form for general distribution.

I will send your Excellency, a number of these Addresses, and I hope you will secure their publication in all of the leading Republican papers of the North, and West. It will shake the South, to its center, and begin a new era, in behalf of Liberty and Justice. All that is now needed, is, for the leading Republicans of the North, and West, to unite in well directed efforts, and plans, already explained and suggested by me, to make this great movement a final and complete success.

If this ^{is} done, and I am selected and ~~and~~ appointed as an Agent to aid in this great work, and sufficiently backed by capital and influence, I shall organize the leading colored men of Texas, and other Southern States, thoroughly, and work vigorously to make the Exoduster, a reality and a success in every



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particular. I hope that you will not think or regard me guilty of egotism, when I declare that my life long knowledge of the general character and condition of the colored people, my experience gained by my own limited and unaided efforts to colonize them: together with their almost universal ~~of~~ confidence in me: will enable me to be of great service in this movement.

Again I hope no one will think for a moment, that I am actuated by selfish motives. You, nor no other fair minded gentleman, could expect me to devote my whole time and work diligently, faithfully and honestly for the successful accomplishment of this great work, without a fair and a reasonable compensation. I have a large family to support, and am in duty bound to look out for their best interests.

If I am properly employed and authorized to work in this important movement I will prove by my acts, and by my active and diligent work, that I am a faithful

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and an earnest worker, and rightly consider and understand how to perform, what I undertake to do. Of course if I am not employed and compensated for continuous and active work in this movement, I shall throw no obstacles in the way of others who work honestly for its best interests, but will gladly aid them so far as I am able to do so.

Rest assured that this great movement has my hearty approbation, and sincerest hopes and wishes for its complete success,

Hoping that my several communications - upon which I have bestowed much time and careful explanations - may be of great value and aid to your Excellency, and that all of your noble work and untiring efforts may be crowned with the best of results.

N.B. Since writing the above, I have obtained a copy of the Address, which I enclose with this to your Excellency.

I remain

your obt. servt.

Stephen A. Hackworth.

P.S. Please let me hear fully from you at your earliest convenience.

S. A. H.



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No. 3748 Book B Page 468

From S. A. Hackmott

Place Brenham Texas

Date 7. 5

Rec'd 7. 10

Ans'd

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TROY DAILY TIMES,

RECEIVED

AUG 4 1879

TOPEKA, KAN.

TROY, N. Y.

Aug 1 - 1879

His Excellency
John St. John
Sir:

On behalf of
Mr. Francis I enclose herewith a
draft on New York for \$30 - Thirty
Doll's the contribution of the colored
people of Troy to the Southern Refugee
Fund. Please acknowledge

Respy.
W. B. Wilson



Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

No. 39,92 Book B Page 498

From M. B. Wilson

Place Troy St. Y

Date Aug. 1.

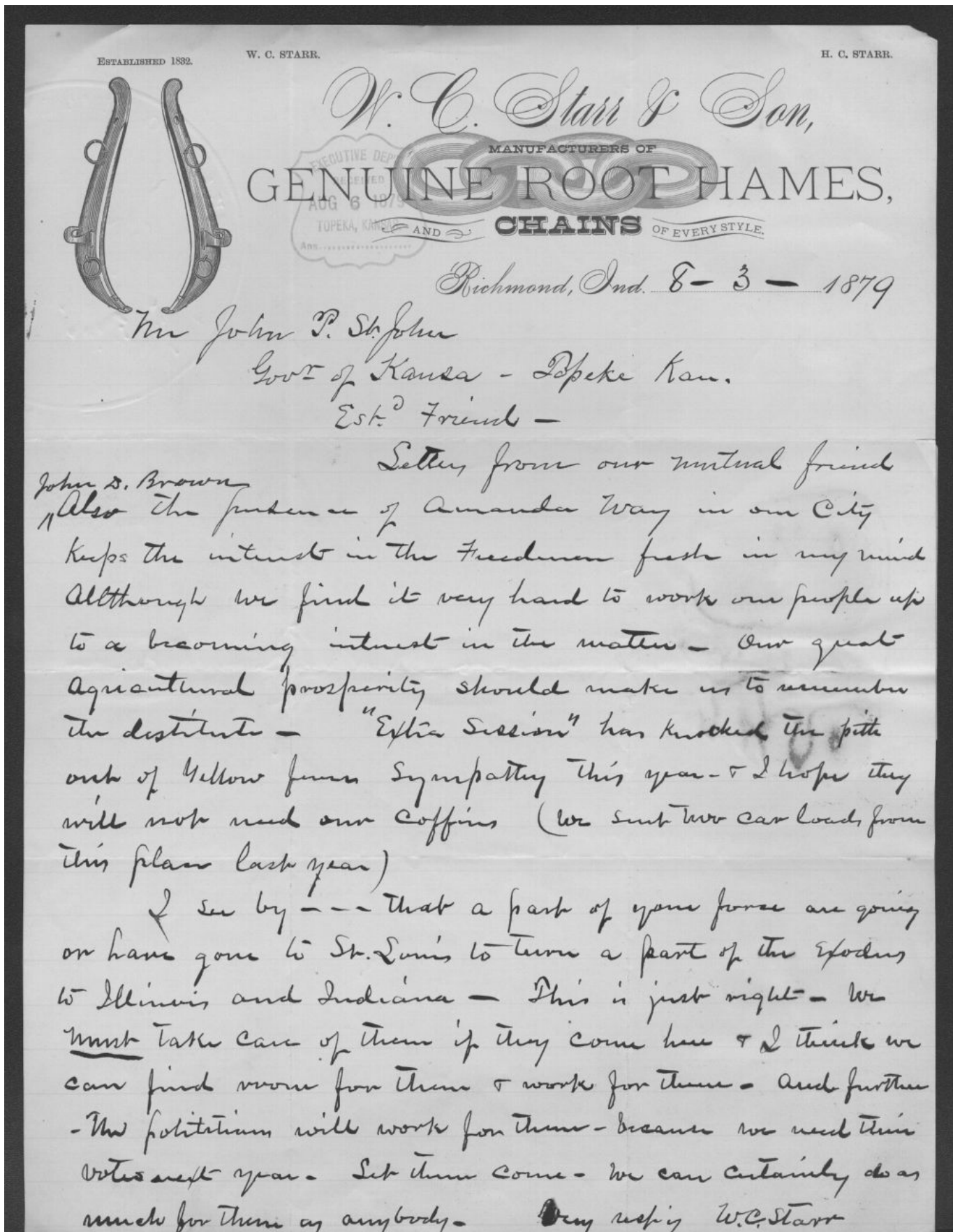
Rec'd E. 4

Ans'd E. 4 1879

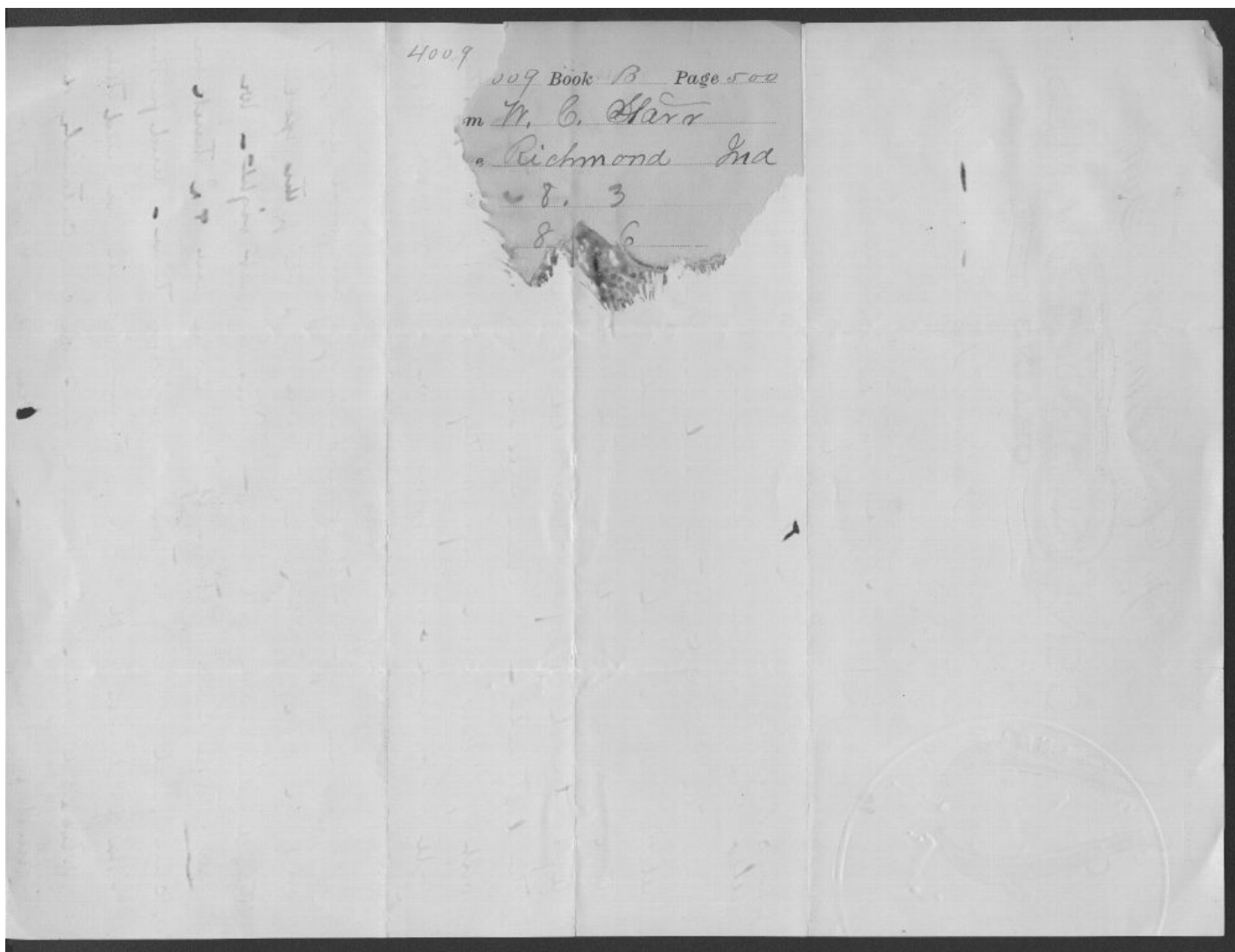
ABSTRACT.

30.00 for freedmen,

Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence



Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence



Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

Kiuston,
Lenoir Co., N. C.,
Aug. 2, 1879.

Sir:

Please send us a true
statement, as to the assistants
allowed emigrants to your State.
Let us hear from you as soon as
possible, (citizens of Jones & Lenoir Co.)

Yours &c

Henderson Williams.