

## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

### Section 49, Pages 1441 - 1470

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

Item Identifier: 210296

[www.kansasmemory.org/item/210296](http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/210296)

## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

No. 614 Book C Page 77

from Mr. M. Fortescue

Leavenworth K

## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

St Charles Feb 3<sup>d</sup> 1880  
Mr St John Governor of Kansas.

Sir I sent  
you a Draft for Seven dollars. as a  
contribution by the Congregational Society  
of our City to be applied to the benefit  
of the Refugees of your State. Respt Yours  
Jacob Vreder



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Feb. 3, 1880

Hon L. P. St. John

Sir.

Please find enclosed a check for \$25. for the Freedmen. I thank you for yours of the 12 of Jan, & am glad to find, to whom I can send a check the same for the poor abused people, I hope they may each & all escape from the bondage they have endured, I wished to send them a check last summer, but could find no

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responsible person to send to,  
could it not be well to publish  
in our paper, to whom money a  
check could be sent, I doubt not  
it would increase the sum sent.

With great respect

B. E. Boardman,

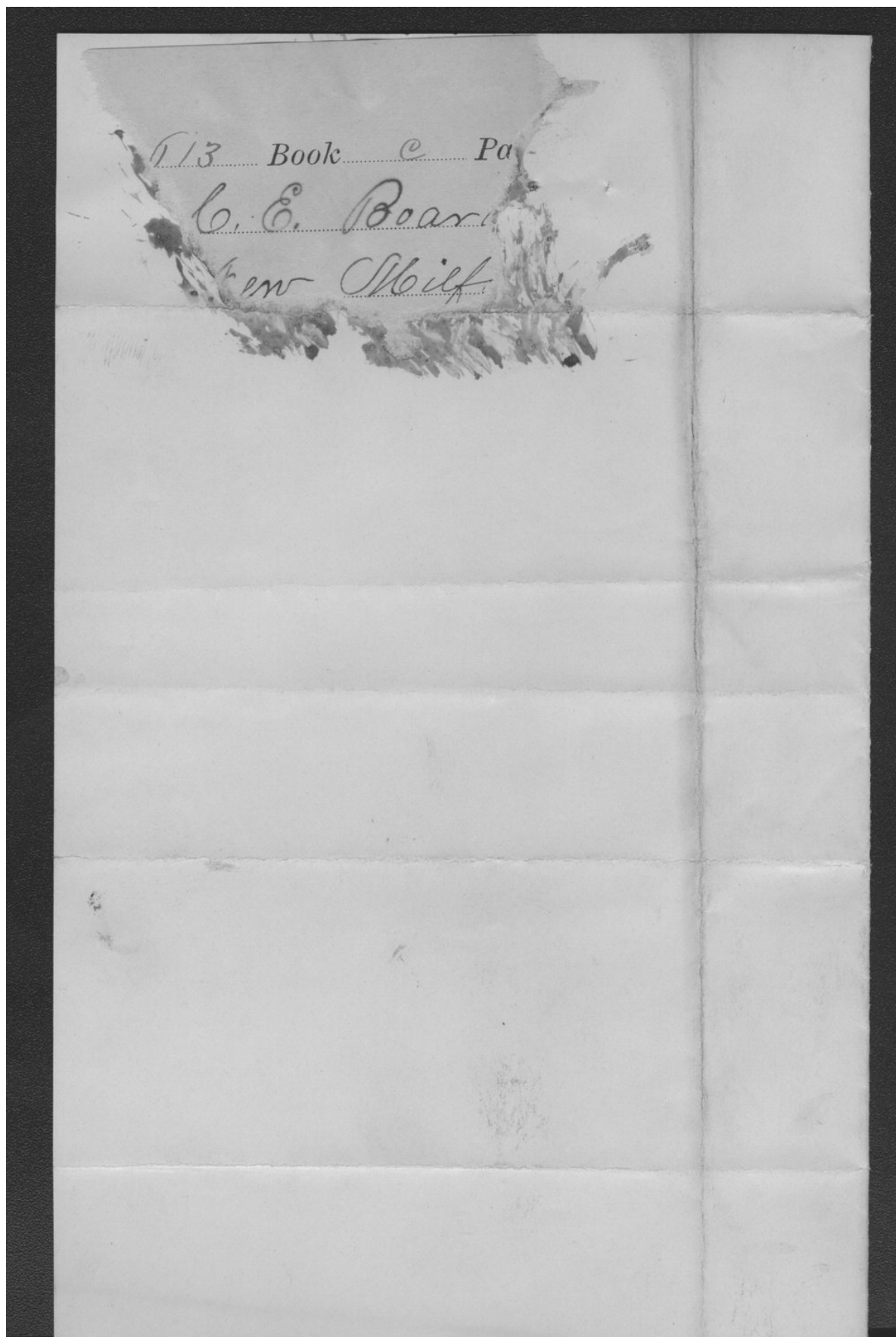
Gov. St. John -

New Milford Conn -

Feb 3<sup>d</sup> 1880 -



## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence





## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

Strawberry Kansas  
Feb 4<sup>th</sup> 1880

Gov. John P St John

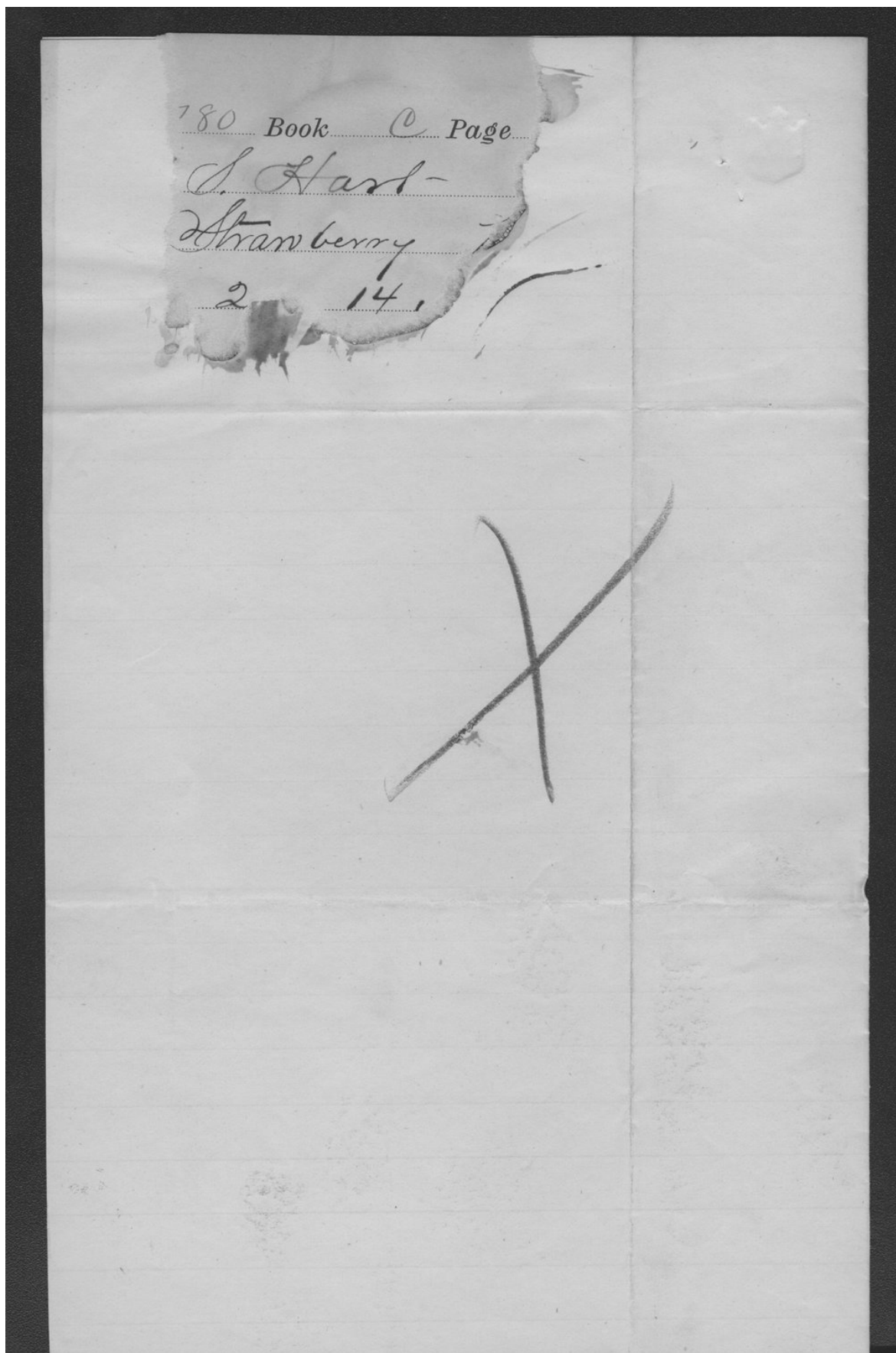
My dear sir.

enclosed find one dollar to apply on the  
needs of the Exodus. Have courage, for  
if the rest of the union turns their  
backs on the colored people we will  
try and keep them some way. There are  
plenty of poor people in Kansas and  
some rich and what the poor cant do  
maybe the rich will help at

Sincerely Yours

Samuel Hart

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EXECUTIVE DEPT.  
RECEIVED  
FEB 5 1890  
TOPEKA, KANSAS.

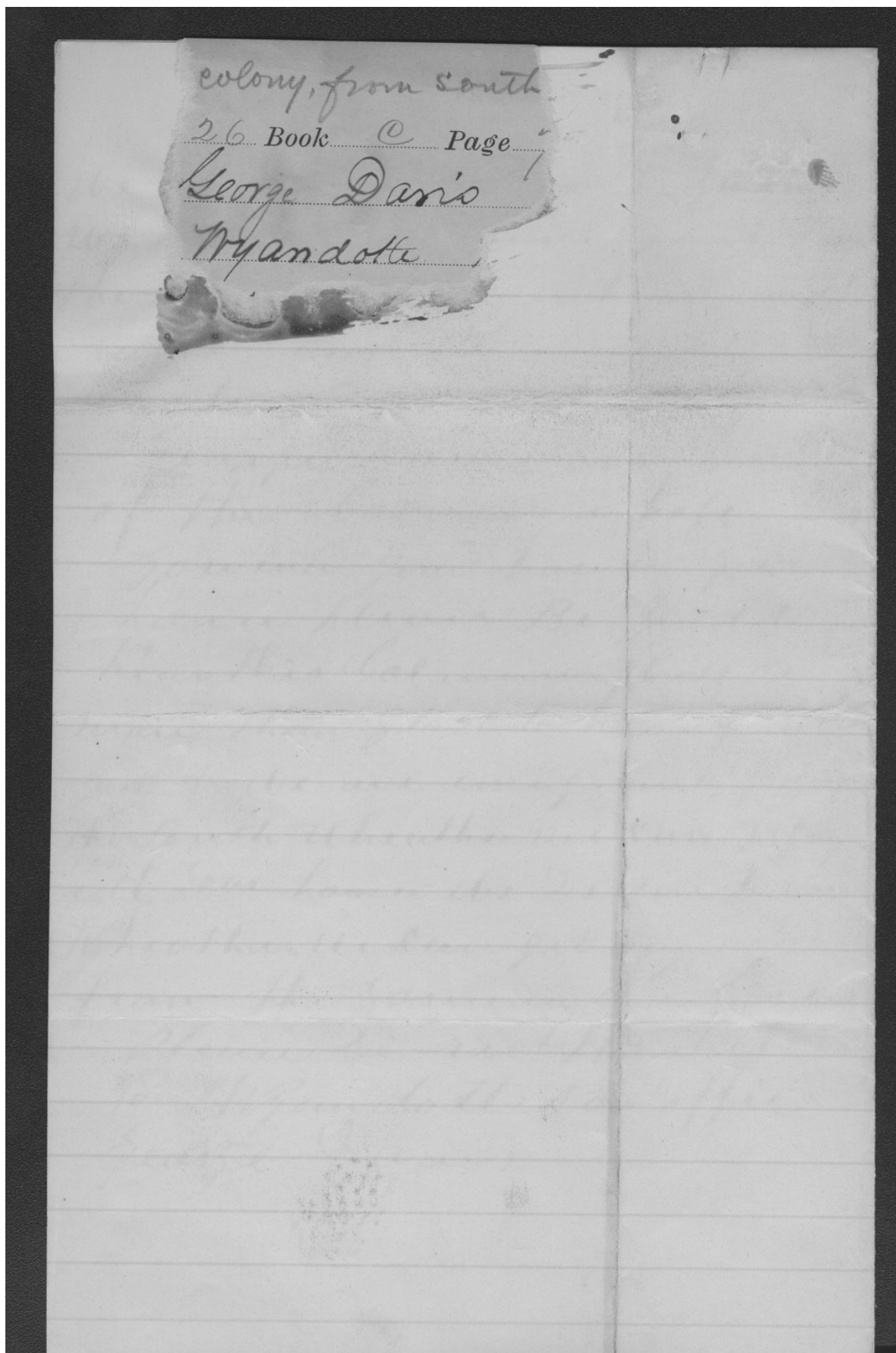
Wyan dots Kansas City Feb 4 1890  
Mr St John I write you a  
Letter state of Column of  
fifty men and family in Column  
to them seems satisfied to  
our seems to come and  
to Government homestead land  
in part of Kansas &  
I would your honor please  
to let us work by this  
Letter if you please whether  
we can take up Government  
Homestead Land we want  
to come out and take up  
Government Land as soon  
as we can hear from you  
& we are take there plenty Government  
Land in the South part of Kansas  
We this Column has desire to send  
a committee to wait on you the



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We are now De sire to Jark  
 we are the poor emigrant from  
 the South & we are hear and  
 suffer and we sir please  
 write soon your Truly -  
 George Davis are one  
 of the Calumnies i hope  
 you are you have you  
 have please Be Glad to  
 hear this Calumnies will Be  
 more than Glad to hear from  
 you & we are emigrants from  
 the South wheather we can stay  
 at your home we De sire to now  
 wheather we can get any work  
 from the Governor of Kansas  
 please direct this letter  
 To Wendells Pas officer  
 George Davis.

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## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

Leggsville Pike Co. Lee Feb 4/80  
 Gov John St John  
 Topeka Kan Dr Sir  
 Enclosed  
 please find a money order from  
 our P O for \$2135- which you  
 will apply to relieve the colored  
 refugees now in Topeka Kan As  
 I have col a part of this money  
 from my neighbors please acknowl-  
 ledge the receipt of it. I have some  
 good neighbors that do not read papers  
 much that promise me they  
 will contribute for the relief of

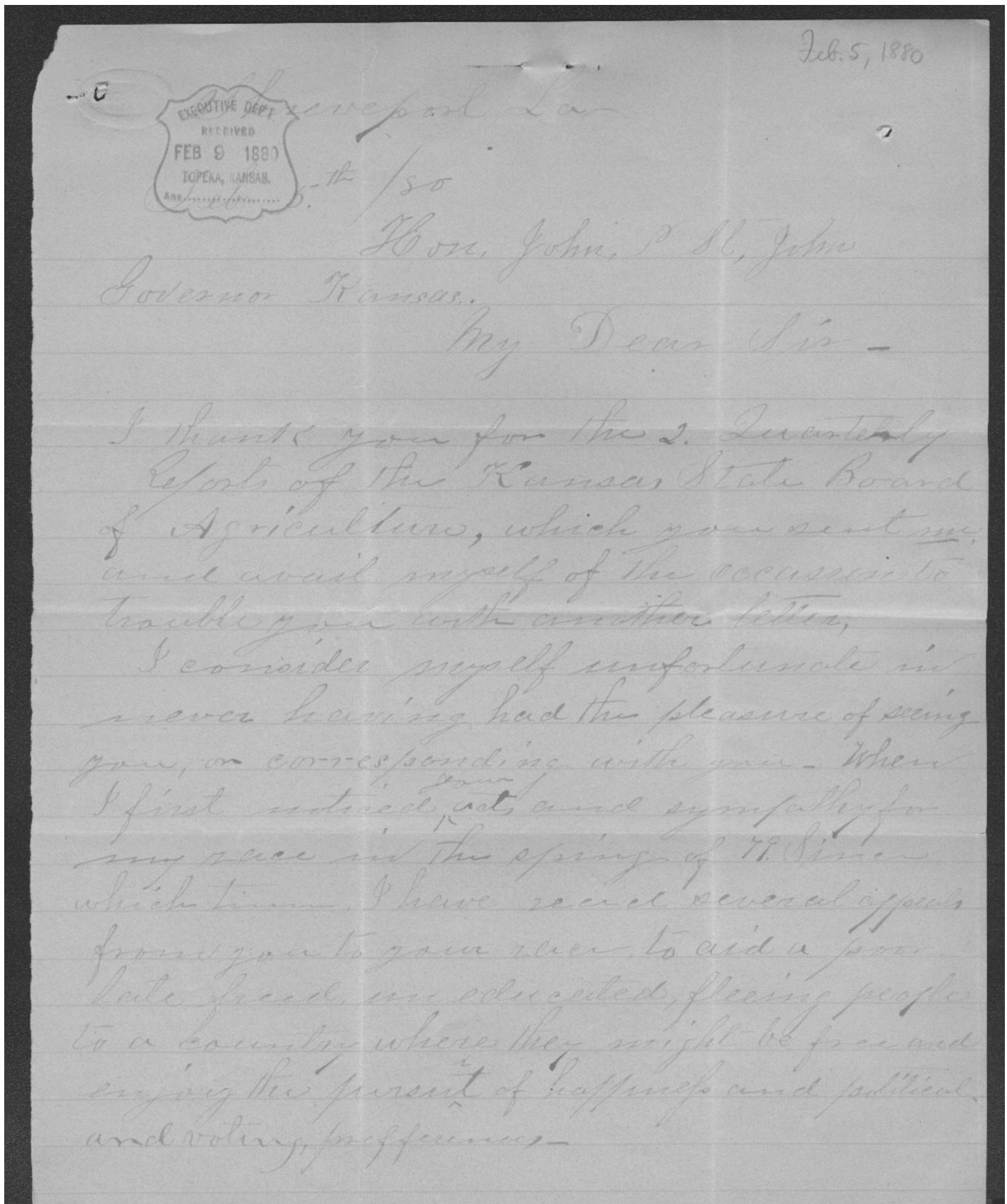


## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

These supposing Colored People  
as soon as they are convinced there  
is no Political or selfish trick-  
ery about it. Please send me  
some Printed articles such as you  
can handily to enlighten these  
persons on the subject and I  
think they will cheerfully hand  
me the money for that very  
worthy humane object  
Very Resp Yrs Samuel Reynolds

No. 617  
From S.  
Place W.  
Date

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2)

I am compelled to love you as my  
Countryman. Now, you as a Statesman,  
and trust you as a good Republican.

I shall instruct the emigrant from  
North La to go prepared to open farms  
and go to work. North La emigrant, will go to  
Southern Kan, there has a colony gone  
to Montgomery County near Independence.

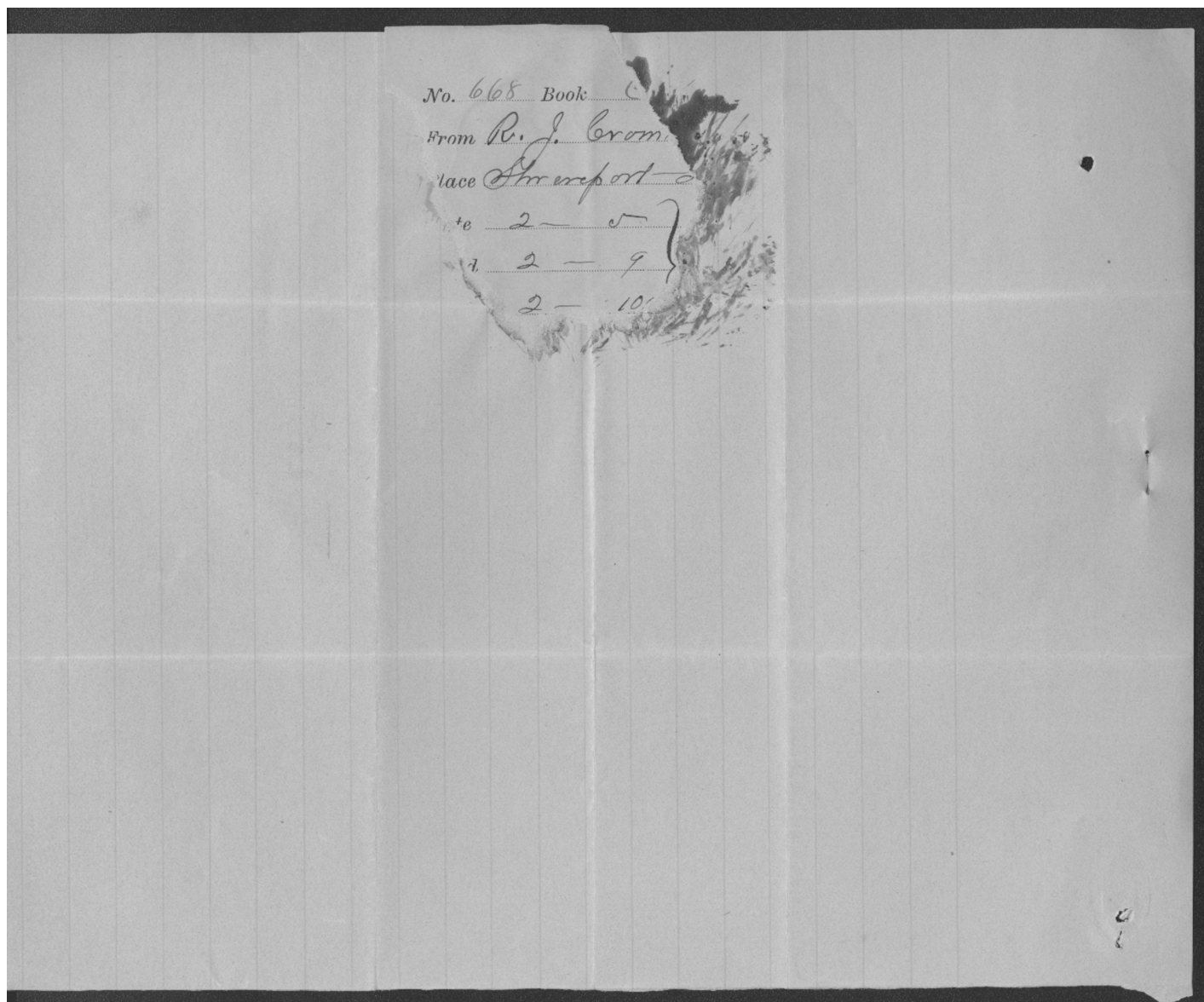
There is a matter or, a proposition before  
Congress that we are all interested, and I  
call your attention to it, that you may  
say something to your representatives in Congress  
about it, The \$5.00 unclaimed pay of  
the Negro Soldiers. It should be appro-  
priate, to help the freed people upon  
the public lands in the States and Territories.  
I have written to Senator Winslow on the subject  
yours truly

R. H. Ormswell

Frank St. John Pres. & Vice Pres.



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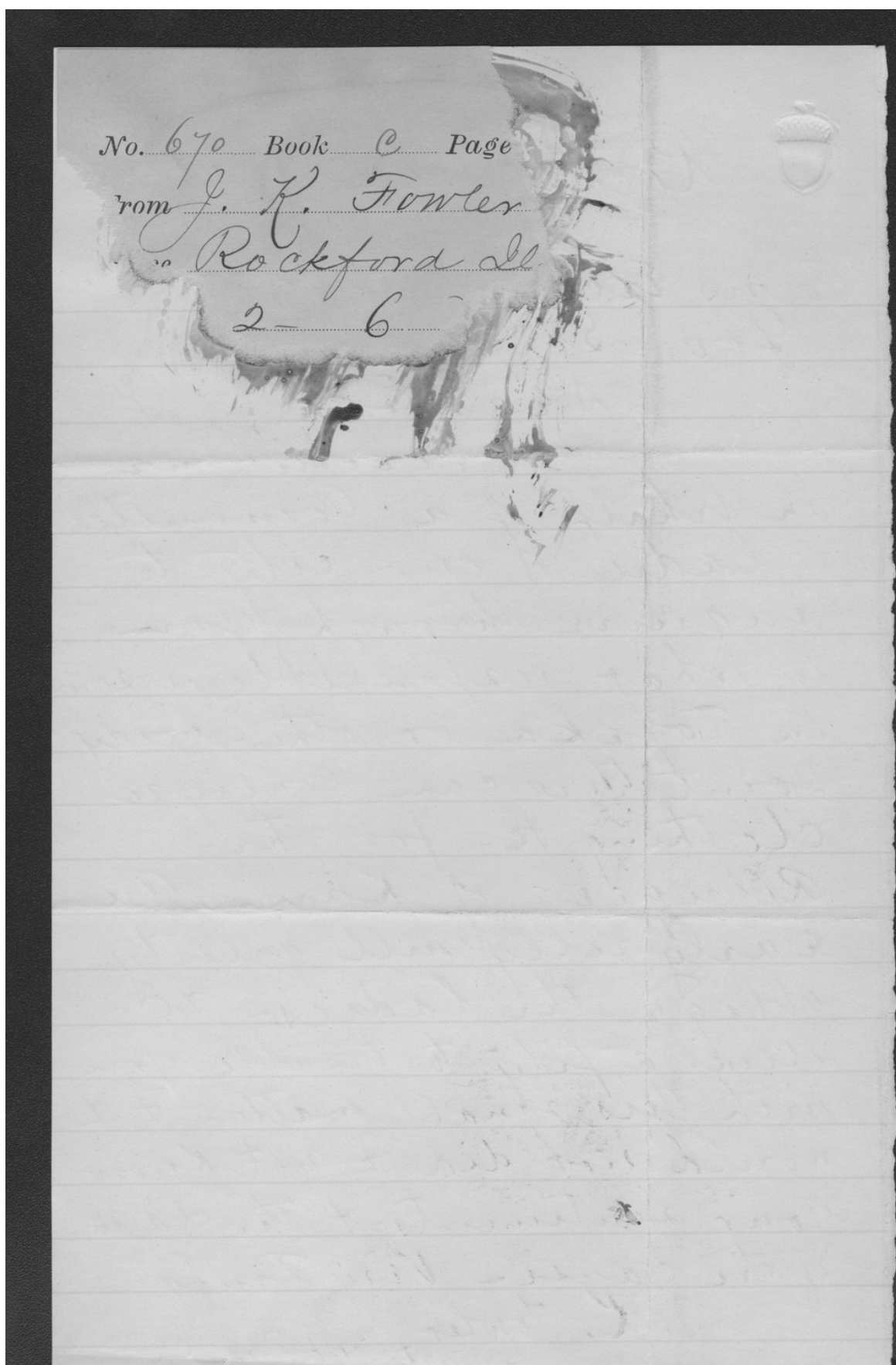


## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

Rockford Ill -  
Feb. 6. 1880  
To his Excellency  
Gov. St. John  
Dear Sir  
Permit me  
on behalf of a Committee  
of ladies of our city to  
inquire through you  
to what responsible person  
in Topeka or other needy  
point they can consign  
clothing &c. for the  
Refugees of Kan. An  
early reply will greatly  
oblige the ladies. It  
seems a pity to trouble you  
with this small matter & I  
would not did I not know  
your sentiments & the claims  
of the cause. Very Truly  
J. K. Fowler  
Pastor 1st Pres. Ch -

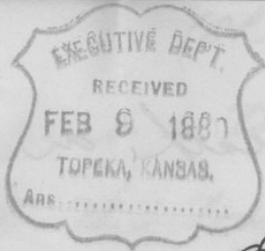


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Frederonia, Kansas

Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> 1880.

Gov. J. P. St. John

Topeka, Kans.

Dear Sir:

It may seem presumptuous in me to assume the role of correspondent upon so slight an acquaintance with you, but you know that Governors are a sort of public property upon whom the people feel authorized in inflicting no end of opinions and advice.

You perhaps do not remember that when I had the honor of an introduction to you at the Cong<sup>l</sup> Church in Topeka I told you I had had in mind to call on you that day to talk about the "refugees" — just as if you had not already been

## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

Talked nearly to death on that subject!

Well, what I have to say can be put in writing & it will have at least two conspicuous merits - viz.

1<sup>st</sup> It will afford me no opportunity to exhaust your patience or consume your time in "arguing the case" after I have said my say.

2<sup>d</sup> If what I have to suggest is worth nothing to you, neither does it cost anything.

As near as I learn, the question "What shall we do with the great influx of refugees which will inevitably pour in upon us the coming season?" is still an unsolved problem.

That the people of Kansas shall bear the whole burden is impossible. To depend on private charities from abroad is, to say the least, unsafe.



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These people are properly the wards of the general government of the nation, & should be cared for as much as much as the Indians.

But, not to discuss the sources of relief what I had to suggest was simply a plan of applying what ever means might be received.

It is not sufficient to give these people a temporary stopping place on their arrival in our State.

Places must be found for them to live and among the thousands that will come ~~there~~ will be very many who will have to be helped again and again through a series of years.

In short this whole people have to be educated up to the capability of self-support & that work is not going to be accomplished in a day. We must calculate upon this.

## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence

In view then of the proportions & the continued character of the work ought not that plan of operation be entered upon at once which shall be the permanent one?

In other words, is it best to make the main points of rendezvous at our cities? Can we, ought we with the multitudes who are almost at our threshold now?

Let me make a suggestion wh. I believe to be practicable, & which I believe if carried out will meet all the wants of the case.

Take one or two points on the lines of our railways where there is plenty of wood, water, & coal accessible (or at least the first two) and establish colonies on the following plan:

Secure, for instance, a township of territory in a place, and then lay off



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(Sheet 2)

first a town site,

In this town site build barracks sufficiently large to temporarily accommodate any number which will be likely to need such accommodation at one time.

In connection with these barracks have a storehouse where supplies shall be kept.

Lease lots to good men for store buildings & sell or give lots to such of the refugees have means to build themselves houses & live in town.

Divide up the land around the town into small farms of 10, 20 or 40 acres each & get the refugees on to them as fast as possible.

Provide a certain number of agricultural implements to be loaned or let to the people until they are able to buy for themselves — one plow could be made to do service on

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a great many farms.

A few farms should be provided for the same purpose.

Then over all this there should be a good capable superintendent who with the help of a steward and a physician could successfully "run" the community.

In this way, those who would fail if set down on a piece of land left to themselves - would be helped & educated to self support.

Vacant lands, all around, could be turned over & put in cultivation by those "in barracks" under charge of the Supt. & made a contribution to the general support of the land at the same time would be subdued for the future tenant.

It would require somewhat of an outlay at first to start such a colony but the economy would be man-



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ifest in the fact that every dollar expended would be of a perman  
ment instead of Temporary value.

Government ought to establish some  
thing of this kind & issue both food and  
clothing to the refugees until they get  
to work. But if government will  
not I believe the people of the east  
would contribute very generally & very  
generously for this purpose.

Then the refugees instead of swam-  
ing into Dodge & Parsons could  
be sent straight through to their  
quarters at the Colony & be put  
on the "highroad to fortune" at once.

I say these things because I have  
been told that Colonization has  
been tried & does not amount to  
much because the negroes "stove  
out" when put upon the land.

By this plan they could be kindly  
& carefully held to their work until

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They would get a good start,

Now, as I said before, if all  
this is useless to you my inten-  
tions are good & I ask pardon for  
taking your time to read this.

But I trust it may not be wholly  
in vain.

"All of which is respectfully submitted"

Yours truly

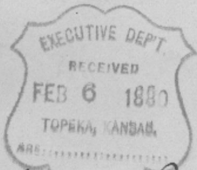
T. M. Griffin

(P.S.) With this "Exodus" question & the  
Amendment to the Constitution before  
the people we must certainly retard your  
~~Excellency~~ <sup>Excellency</sup> in the gubernatorial chair un-  
til they are adjusted at least for  
as Mr. Lincoln said - "It is not best  
to swap horses while crossing a  
river."

T. M. G.



## Governor John St. John, Exoduster received correspondence



Atchison Ks.

Feb 6, 80.

My dear Sir: My brother writes to me from Wash<sup>t</sup> that the Republican members of the Committee on the Exodusters wish to be put in communication with witnesses from Kas. from among the refugees from the Southern States. who can tell in a straightforward way the causes of their discontent and the real reasons that induced them to migrate. You have probably talked with their leaders more than any other man in the State, and are personally acquainted with the best people among them. I have referred him to you among others, and have also advised him that I would communicate with you. Will you give your personal attention to the matter at once, and write to him or to Senator Windom stating what witnesses you would be able to supply. The Committee would like



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15 or 20 witnesses in all - from the various  
Southern States - The Democrats on the  
Committee are endeavoring to show that the  
movement was instigated by Republicans for  
political designs, and they are anxious  
to fix the facts in the case.

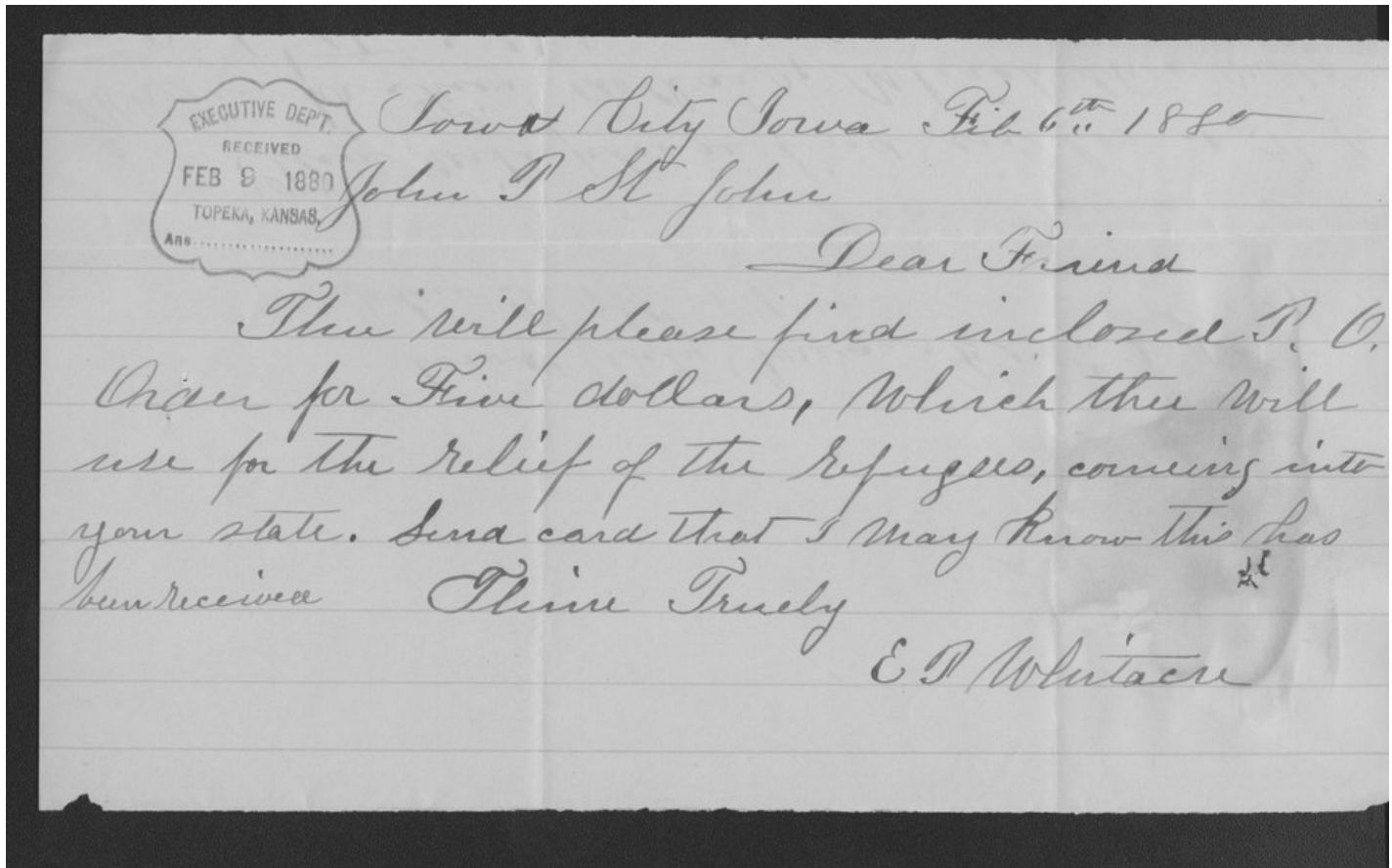
Very truly Y. T. Dyar.

To Hon John St John  
Topeka Kas.

Book 6 Page 82  
F. T. Dyar  
Oct 1892



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