[In Progress] Kansas history: a journal of the central plains

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Maxine Benson, *Editor*
Dot E. Taylor, *Associate Editor*
Bobbie Pray, *Associate Editor*

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[In Progress] Kansas history: a journal of the central plains

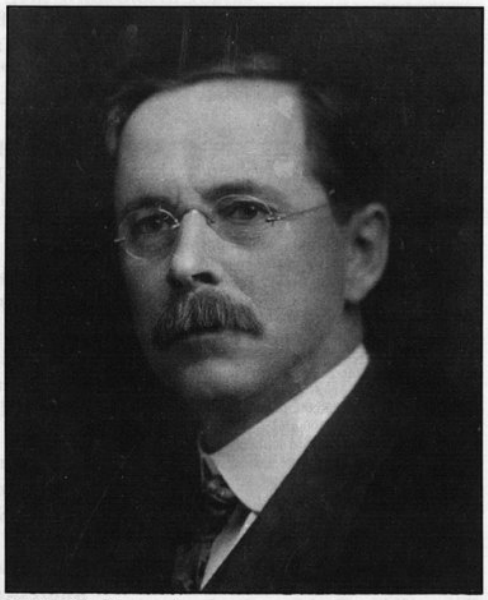
On the Home Front, 1918: English Professor Frederic N. Raymond Inspects Kansas Waterworks

edited by Elizabeth Raymond Raymond

THE summer of 1918 was the second summer for Americans of what has been known since 1945 as the First World War. During the period after its outbreak in 1914, Americans, though shocked, had hoped to stay clear of the "European entanglement," but by June of this hot, anxious summer, the war had come home to Kansans, as to the rest of the nation.

The United States had declared war on Germany in April 1917, but the country was ill prepared in almost every way. On April 1, for example, the army had only two hundred thousand officers and men. The Selective Service Act of May 18, 1917, required all men twenty-one through thirty years of age to register, and by June 5, 1917, 9.6 million men had been registered. In 1918 the age limits were extended to eighteen and forty-five; many more were registered, and 2.2 million draftees were inducted. "By the end of the war," writes historian Samuel Eliot Morison, "the United States had created an army of 4 million men, transported more than half of them to France, and placed about 1,300,000 on the firing line."[1]

As in all wars, the work on the home front had to be taken over by men under or over military age, women, and men exempt from military service because of physical disability. Farms, shops, factories, offices, schools—all had to be manned, and often the "folks at home" added second jobs to their own work. Owing to these circumstances, such government agencies as the Kansas State Board of Health found themselves bereft of staff members, even those whose duty it was to safeguard the well-being of the citizens.



Frederic N. Raymond

The Kansas State Board of Health was a department of the state government, its chief being the secretary, Dr. Samuel J. Crumbine.[2] Its divisions were Vital Statistics, Child Hygiene, Food and Drugs, Communicable Disease and Sanitation, and (with laboratories

Elizabeth Raymond Raymond, *the daughter of the late Prof. and Mrs. Frederic N. Raymond, has A.B. and A.M. degrees from the University of Kansas and an M.A. from Radcliffe College. Married to Dr. Robert S. Raymond, who taught at Ohio University, Wichita State University, and Washburn University, she has been a teacher and a librarian. The Raymonds recently returned to her native Lawrence after his retirement.*

1. *Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 865–66.

2. Kansas State Board of Health, *Ninth Biennial Report, 1916–1918* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1918), 3. Samuel J. Crumbine is listed in the 1918–19 catalog of the University of Kansas as dean of the School of Medicine and professor of preventive medicine. University of Kansas *Annual Catalog, 1918–1919* (Topeka: State Printer, 1919), 307, 319.

located in Lawrence on the campus of the University of Kansas) the Division of Water and Sewage.[3] This division had the responsibility of insuring that drinking water in the state met the official standards of purity and that sewage systems did not endanger health. Regular inspections were absolutely necessary and could not long be postponed, war or no war.

In early June 1918, this division had a new, acting, engineer, Francis Montgomery Veatch, because its chief engineer, Charles A. Haskins, was now an army captain on military leave. In the *Tenth Biennial Report* from the Division of Water and Sewage for the year ending June 30, 1919, the acting engineer reported that during the summer of 1918 he carried on his division's inspection program with a crew of three temporary, inexperienced assistants.[4]

Ida Raymond

F. M. Veatch had been graduated in civil engineering from the University of Kansas in 1914. He taught sanitary engineering there briefly and, between 1914 and 1922, served as engineer for boards of health in Kansas and Nebraska and as chemist of the East Saint Louis Water Company. In 1923 he joined the Kansas City, Missouri, firm of Black and Veatch, consulting engineers. This firm, internationally known in the 1980s, had been formed in 1915 by his brother, Nathan Thomas Veatch, and Ernest B. Black. F. M. Veatch was project engineer in charge of many water purification projects for the company and became a partner in the firm in 1950. During World War II he was special consultant to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in designing water and sewage facilities for military installations. He continued to work with Black and Veatch until his death in 1969.[5]

Two of the three assistants were undergraduate students in the KU School of Engineering when appointed by Veatch. Claude K. Mathews was to graduate in 1919. He eventually became a partner in the engineering firm of Barnes and McDonnell. George E. Nettles would not get his degree until 1921. He later belonged to an engineering firm in Omaha.[6]

The third assistant was an unlikely choice for the job, illustrating how necessity was altering customary roles in the nation's work force. Frederic Newton Raymond was a native Kansan, born in 1873 in Kanwaka Township, west of Lawrence. His parents, who had come to Kansas in 1868,[7] returned with their two small sons to Ohio after the grasshopper disaster of 1874. Fred Raymond's early schooling was obtained there and in Bolivar, Missouri, where the family lived a few years before returning to Kansas. He attended KU's preparatory classes for a short time, entered KU, left college for a year to earn money by working as a secretary to J. D. Bowersock in his mills and opera house, returned, and graduated in 1896. The next year he did graduate work at Columbia University in English, receiving his M.A. degree in 1897. He then worked in New York City as agent for the Chicago and Alton Railroad until he returned to Lawrence because of his father's illness. He joined the faculty

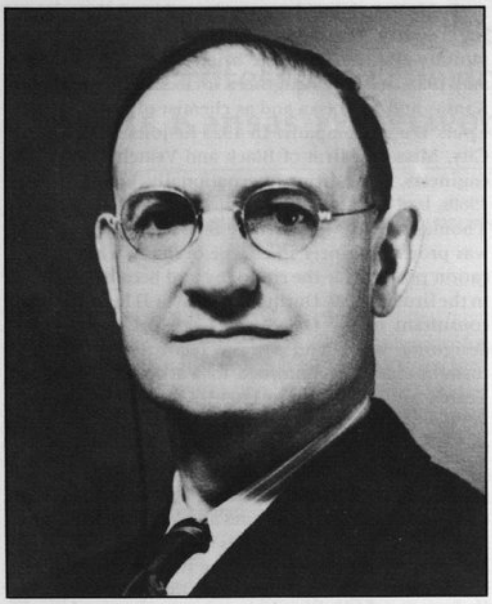
3. The university's 1918–19 catalog, p. 37, contains the following statement: "The University in cooperation with the State Board of Health maintains laboratories for the chemical and bacteriological examination of water. The special purpose of this examination is to assist Kansas communities to secure and preserve safe supplies of water."

4. Kansas State Board of Health, *Tenth Biennial Report, 1918–1920* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1920), 207.

5. The facts of F. M. Veatch's life were supplied by Jean Gerweck of Black and Veatch, Kansas City, Missouri.

6. Information given here about these staff members comes from the University Archives and the Alumni Association, University of Kansas.

7. Joseph Murray and Hila Raymond, just married, came to settle on land which he and his brother, W. J. Raymond, bought from the family of an Ohio friend killed in the Civil War. Knott Crockett, who had acquired the claim in or before 1857, was killed in the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee.



Francis Montgomery Veatch

of KU's English department in 1901. Except for a year's study in Europe, 1905–6, Lawrence was his home for the rest of his life. He died in 1961.[8]

In 1918 Fred Raymond was forty-five years old, at the top limit of draft age, and he wanted to be of some use in the war effort. Fairly early in his long teaching career at KU (1901–44), he had been persuaded by Dean Frank Marvin to provide English courses for engineering students, and he never returned to literature classes in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Until he retired, he devoted immense effort and genuine interest to training his engineers to think and to write clearly. He was therefore well acquainted with men trained in the "Engine School," including his colleagues of the summer of '18, but he was the first to admit he was himself wholly unschooled in technical work.

After the end of the spring semester in June 1918, Raymond took his wife and infant daughter by train to stay with relatives in Upstate New York. He had hardly arrived when he received a telegram from F. M. Veatch asking him to return to work for the Board of Health. Back in Lawrence on June 20, he wrote to his wife Ida to explain his plans for the summer. She was an easterner who had come to Kansas only three years before as a bride and knew nothing of the state outside Lawrence. It was because of her absence that he wrote a series of descriptive letters, a probably unique account of an untrained water engineer's adventures as he leaped on and off dusty railway trains with his water bottles through a long Kansas summer.

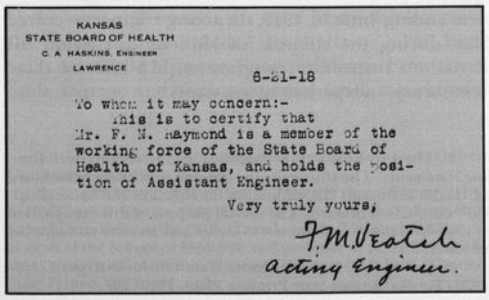
His introduction to the work was hasty. Veatch handed him one page of instructions typed on the back of a sheet of Board of Health stationery, a sample of which demonstrates that trains were the only means of transportation then available for state employees. Fortunately Raymond was also accustomed to walking, eight or nine miles when necessary; he did not himself own a car, and obviously the state provided none. He was told to go from Lawrence to Topeka by the Santa Fe, thence to McPherson by the Rock Island.

> At McPherson make a thorough inspection of waterworks and sewage disposal plant and make an inspection of the private well used by the U[nion] P[acific] for filling drinking tanks on coaches. Also take a sample of the water used by the M[issouri] P[acific], which is the city supply. At the sewage plant take bacteriological samples of raw sewage, septic-tank effluent, and contact-bed effluent; into each of these samples put one bichloride tablet; and ship them in the same container with the water samples.

He was to go on via Ellinwood to Great Bend to spend the night and drive to Hoisington the next morning.

> At Hoisington inspect the city waterworks, the sewage-disposal plant, and the private supply of the Mo.Pac., taking samples as before. In the afternoon work Great Bend, inspecting the city waterworks, sewage-disposal plant, and taking a sample of water used by the Santa Fe, which is the city supply.

Proceeding by way of Larned, which he was to "work," he was to go to Jetmore, "work" it, and go on to Dodge City.



KANSAS
STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
C. A. HASKINS, ENGINEER
LAWRENCE

6-21-18

To whom it may concern:-
This is to certify that
Mr. F. M. Raymond is a member of the working force of the State Board of Health of Kansas, and holds the position of Assistant Engineer.

Very truly yours,
F. M. Veatch
acting Engineer.

8. Professor Raymond's hobby was historical and genealogical research, and he was for many years a member of the Kansas State Historical Society; he was also one of the organizers of the Douglas County Historical Society.

At Dodge inspect the city waterworks and a private Santa Fe well. Get a complete list of equipment at the city waterworks and see attached letter in regard to the wells (Surface drainage—has it been corrected?). [Next were Bucklin, Greensburg, and Pratt.] Inspect city waterworks, sewage disposal plant, and Rock Island private well. Also take a sample of the water used by the Santa Fe, which is the city supply. Find out where the Anthony and Northern get the water for their coaches. See about the new suction line at the waterworks plant—report how it is built.

Reproduced here is a section of the official 1918 Kansas state road map showing the area of Raymond's first inspection trip. Other sections, also reduced considerably from the original scale (1 inch = 10 miles), follow at appropriate points.

Then Raymond was to go to Englewood, Belvidere, Harper, and Argonia, where he was also to report on equipment, mains, and water rates, because the division office had no data on that plant. These instructions from Engineer Veatch were for his assistant's first week on the road.[9]

Excerpts from the Letters

Thursday, June 20

My Wife and Baby—

Pa is safely at home and found everything ok.... The weeds and grass have not grown much—even the thistles have been scorched. Roper's yard is the only place that shows rank vegetation. McCone's potatoes look ripe but are really baked.... Official heat record, I believe, is 104....

The job looks pretty good. Welker[10] has gone, Mathews[11] has gone, all the other men who are available for the draft are likely to be gone. Young[12] and I are superannuated, and Veatch is too deaf to be of any army use, so we probably will be left here to safeguard the state's health. Young and Veatch are capable and well liked—can tell me what to do. Today I've been reading up the records and next week will go to Kiowa, Attica, Comanche, &c., where the water supplies have not been reported upon for six months or so. I'll report on how well the pumps are working &c. and will send samples to the laboratory to be tested for typhoid germs &c.

The same letter, continued June 21, adds background.

Harvest is in full swing. Akers (postman) told me to come to the office and go out with the gang (city men, responding to a statewide call, going after their day's work to help in harvesting on nearby farms) at 5 oclock yesterday. He's been going out 'most every evening—one of four or five—to set up wheat for a man some 10 miles south of town. That's the extent of the great harvest army we heard so much about.... He said Willard Brown [elderly and long retired] went and worked right through day after day—in bearded wheat without gloves at that.

From McPherson's Union Hotel on June 22, the traveler wrote to his wife in New York about his initiation into water inspection.

9. Veatch's instructions, along with the Raymond correspondence, are in the possession of the editor.

10. J. E. Welker had been assistant professor of sanitary engineering at the University of Kansas and in 1917–18 chemist for the Water and Sewage Laboratory of the State Board of Health. He was away for military service in early 1918. Kansas State Board of Health, *Ninth Biennial Report, 1916–1918*, 101.

11. Although Raymond says here "Mathews has gone," the inspection records of the division indicate he worked part of the summer. Kansas State Board of Health, *Tenth Biennial Report, 1918–1920*, 208–13.

12. In 1918 Clifford C. Young, assistant professor of chemistry, was director of the division's laboratories at KU. He is listed in the university's catalog for 1918–19 (p. 111) as being absent for military service during part of that year, in spite of Raymond's saying he was "superannuated" (*see* below, excerpt from letter of September 1).

Professor Raymond often collected and dated postcards to show his family the sights along the way. Illustrating the letters are a few of the many views he sent home.

My business this trip is to look over the water supplies from which the railways get drinking water for passengers. I'm to collect samples for examination and ship them in iced cans to Lawrence.[13] For example, this town has four railroads, two of them fill their drinking water tanks here—one uses city water from a 140-ft. well, the other uses water from its own well. Both supplies are good.... Besides the railway drinks I am to look over the city water supplies and sewer systems, especially to find the answers to certain questions that have been up—for example, here at McPherson they have had trouble with the sewage-disposal plant, which empties into a little creek. I'm waiting now for the city engineer to come home from somewhere to tell me about it—the other people say he has got it fixed up right.

This is a beautiful section of country, almost as flat as Illinois, in a sort of secondary river valley between the Kansas and Arkansas river valleys. It has plenty of rain, and is now harvesting immense crops of wheat, oats, & alfalfa. The town is nearly empty—even business men go for a few hours early and late, to help harvest. Wages 45¢ per hr. for shocking. The street corners full of tractors, harvesters, threshers—one sample wheat-shocking machine ( ).

13. Where the laboratories were.

The next morning from the Mazda Hotel in Great Bend he dashed off a note to his mother, Mrs. Hila B. Raymond, in Lawrence.

I guess I'm going to need your money after all—$10.00 or whatever you can spare. Veatch apparently did not calculate on the increased rates. Railway fare fairly burns up the money.... I have only $35.00 left, for the week.... Great Bend is a surprise... The town is worth the effort—large spread out, in high, fairly flat country, with wide streets paved with asphalt, fine homes, a really gorgeous courthouse about half

finished, and ripe wheat fields stretching away on every side. The main streets were packed with motor cars last evening, not a horse in sight. The side streets were lined with farm machinery—tractors, headers, &c.&c.

From Dodge City he wrote June 25 to his wife on the letterhead of the Santa Fe Eating House and Dining Car System (Fred Harvey Manager).

SANTA FE
EATING HOUSE AND DINING CAR SYSTEM
FRED HARVEY MANAGER
GENERAL OFFICE
UNION STATION KANSAS CITY MISSOURI
DODGE CITY KANSAS

I wrote you from up the line somewhere when I was just starting out. It's been going some since then, believe me. Perhaps after a fellow gets used to the business he speeds up on the little things and saves a lot of time, but I've had to hunt out not only how to do but also what to do. For example, I have learned to spot the express office first thing, and when the agent will be there—have been bothered a lot by wandering express men.

If you have a Kansas map, follow my wild flight—McPherson, Great Bend, Hoisington, Larned, Jetmore, Dodge. From here to Bucklin, Pratt, Englewood, Belvidere, Kiowa, Harper, Argonia, & home Saturday morning.

Great Bend is the center of big wheat. I never saw any wheat before. The train ran miles and miles along flat high ground where you saw nothing but wheat & sky, with a few houses. Then came a big cattle country—beyond Larned, not the old cattle range, but pastures and corn fields with fat white-faces and mammoth twin silos. Then we ran into rough country, where there has been two years of drought—At Jetmore the people are dismal, but they're building and buying automobiles. They complain that they can't raise wheat and oats—seem to be one-idea people like the rest of us. Their corn is good, and they are selling cream. . . .

Dodge City is what's left of the prize bad town of cattle days—now a railroad division station on the Santa Fe. I'm at the famous Harvey House, at the station & hear soldier boys yipping on the trains. . . . Later—I've explored the Santa Fe railroad yards in

Chestnut Street looking east in Dodge City.

search of wells—found five deep ones (140 ft). Then hunted up the city engineer and pumped him about his pumps. He has seven 140 ft wells. Talk about a dry country! They hitch a 9-in. steam pump to a well 140 ft deep and pull four hours with the effect of lowering the water about 18 inches. This country has three water beds in that 140 ft., so I reckon the people won't choke.

His next letter was from the Elmore Hotel in Kiowa ("All outside rooms. Good sample rooms").

Thursday, June 27, 1918

Dear Girls—I have an hour to wait for my train—almost the first chance to draw a free breath since I was interrupted in writing you at Dodge City—and every breath has been like one from an oven. I did have to wait for my train at Dodge, too—in a little box of a station down behind a big mill, with the thermometer near 110 deg. Then I rode south through burnt-out wheat fields to Bucklin—had 15 minutes, so left my luggage to care for itself, grabbed my tin cans from a hurry-up express man, and ran through scalding heat about two blocks to a produce store, drove the boy to get me some ice and filled one can, then found the bottle in the other can broken and spilled the glass all over the floor—but dodged and ran back to the station, wrote labels for my bottles but put them into my pocket instead of the can, then took time to sweat. The train was a few minutes late so I had a chance for the sweat to dry. Next Pratt. I found my bottles all right and started to hunt up the water plant—after dark; met the engineer on the street, a K.U. man of about 1915. We sat in the gutter and talked things over, then I went to bed—too late for supper here, but got milk and shredded wheat at a lunch table and slept like a log. Pratt is the very picture of a prairie town, in rich wheat country, flat as a floor, wealthy and well built up with both private and public buildings. The water is fine, but the main pipe leaks and may cause contamination—as the Pratt city water is used for many purposes it has to be examined all along [the line]. I sent in four samples. Then, out of a routine sense of duty I went to look at the outlet of the sewers, and found the sewage in bad shape—made a pretty serious report. Afternoon I hired a jitney to Coats and caught the freight train for Englewood (away in the southwest corner of Kansas).

At Pratt I took a little side trip—to the Fish Hatchery—wish you had been there—it's beyond expectation—especially the white double water lilies.

From Pratt to Coats, Ashland, Coldwater I traveled through the big wheat country—trains crowded with harvest hands—headers working in the fields—a long story—Then suddenly into the burntup country again, and so to Englew——train time.

Kiowa yet. It wasn't my train. Englewood is sand hills and sage brush. We got in about 6 p.m., with 110° of heat, and were told the only hotel had quit business and no train until morning. Sand hills, in sight south of town and a stiff wind making a regular halo above them and sending the fine sand down our necks and right through our clothes. I caught my grip, which is heavily loaded, and hiked up the side track to the water plant. The water man happened to be present and knew his business so I did my work quickly. Then I found the brakeman fixing up his train for the night and found a little cottage hotel.

The little cottage stands near the station, far from other buildings and surrounded by low trees, vines, etc. A pleasant faced, pink little woman met me and told me to come right out into the kitchen and wash up and she'd find me some supper. One man was eating—proved to be the brother-in-law of the house, and sister and kiddy were helping. Rice stewed with tomatoes the first dish, then *chicken*—regular farm dinner, and cooked to the queen's taste. After supper I went out on the porch to talk with the boy (10 yrs?) and discovered a mocking bird in the trees—that would make your best canary turn green. I've heard them in many places today, too.

Went to the postoffice and back to bed about sundown. The little house is about 16 by 40 ft., and partitioned with four bedrooms. Some old traveling salesman friends turned up—it rained—and we had a picnic—but had to [be] out at 5 a.m. Train coming.

By June 30 Raymond was in Lawrence, ready to leave again. He wrote on the letterhead of the University of Kansas Department of English Language and Literature.

Am off tonight, by sleeper to ElDorado with Mr. Veatch for an investigation of I-don't-know-what; leave him there and swing up to the north and home by the Union Pacific. I rather expect to be at Army City (Camp Funston) on the Fourth of July. My route is: Lindsborg, Marquette, Abilene, Enterprise, Chapman, Junction City, Army City, Wamego, Rossville, St. Marys—out until Friday night, I think.

The last of my story to you was about Harper, I believe. It's a dingy little place, with lots of wheat but ramshakle [*sic*] as an old town in Southern Indiana—then Kiowa, more ramshakle yet, what's left of an old border town of the Indian Territory days. These places are the scene of Carrie Nation's operations, and they have a national highway called the 'Carrie Nation Highway' as her monument, marked with signs of

the hatchet—e.g. [illegible] All that country is rich and developing in some ways, but not up to date. The Medicine River Valley, above Kiowa, is a picturesque stretch—a flat river valley some 150 ft. below a flat prairie, with the sides cut into sharp bluffs of strong red clay—sometimes streaked with white limestone and more or less patched with dark green vegetation.

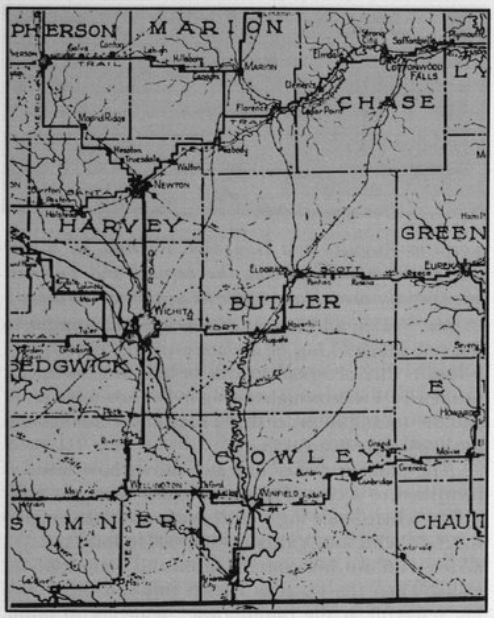
From Harper I came up the line fast—stopped at Argonia and Conway Springs for water samples, then to Wichita for supper. I had to get across on the northern main lines of the railroads but could not make it before about midnight, so looked about Wichita. Wichita impresses me as like Rochester [New York]—all spread out with lots of people and lots of business but with lots of dooryards too. Worse luck, there are no restaurants, just lunch rooms ("cafes" & "cafeterias"). I had a rather poor supper for 50¢, and took the trolley for Newton, arrived after dark in the rain, got me some milk and shredded wheat, took a midnight train, and slept (chair car) from the moment of starting until the brakeman called Topeka. Then I turned over and slept until near Lecompton, and came into Lawrence at the beginning of daylight.

Saturday we had a caucus and made out expense accounts. My expenses were more than twice my salary [twenty-five dollars per week], but my work was all approved. Next time I'll do it a little easier. This first trip was very hard because the first and so long.

The next night, July 1, he wrote to his mother from the Hotel McConnell in El Dorado that he and Veatch had arrived and would stay a day to test out the new water-purifying plant. He commented on the oil fields of the region, from there west to Wichita and south to Augusta and Douglass. Wichita, he noted, was without oil but was the capital and business center of the area. To his wife he explained further.

Mr. Veatch and I came out here Sunday night to test out the working of a waterworks filtering plant before its final acceptance from the building contractor by the city. I was brought along to be shown the plant and the testing in order that I may know more about the workings of such plants. . . .

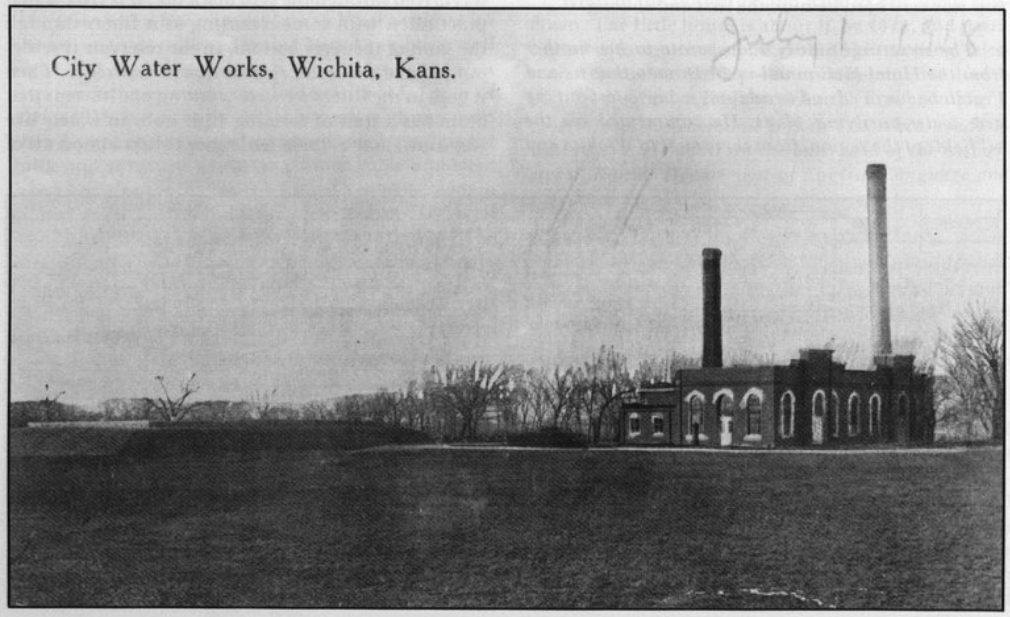
The plant is a nice one and shows how water is furnished to a city. The water comes from the river valley, where some big wells have been sunk down to the rock, with long galleries—say 600 ft. long and 6 ft. across, run out horizontally from the bottom of the wells. Then the water is drawn through pipes to a big reservoir at the pumphouse, treated with alum, run through filters, and treated with chlorine, before it is driven through the system for use. It is river water, practically, with some cleansing as it filters through the sand of the river bottom. In the reservoir it settles out most of the mud, as does that at Lawrence. Then it goes to the filters we were working on. It seems that alum has a trait of forming little gobs in water, like wet snow; and as these settle they collect almost all of



the impurities—even the smallest germs. The water is dosed with weak alum and then turned into the filter tubs. These are wooden tanks, 11 ft. across and 7 ft. high, almost full of gravel and fine sand. The sand catches the floc, or alum gobs, and lets the water come through clear as crystal. Then, to make sure that no germs get away, they pump in a germ poison, chlorine. The system delivers about 90 gallons per day to every person in the town—about 40,000 gallons for some 3400 people.

The town is a very curious place. Three years ago it was a sleepy country village of about 1300 people, in a not-very-rich farming section. Now it has more than 3000 residents and hundreds of floaters, and probably the biggest oil production in the world.[14] The people all look like sports—the pump man at the waterworks, who has been tinker man on city jobs for twenty-five years, drives a high-power car—said he built a modern one-room mansion on a left-over corner of his town lot and sold it for $4500. Lee Bryant, who runs that little students' restaurant at the foot of 14th Street in Lawrence, has a lunch counter here as

14. The population of El Dorado was 7,154 in 1917 and 16,246 in 1918; El Dorado Township was 1,149 in 1917 and 3,222 in 1918. Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Twenty-first Biennial Report* (Topeka: State Board of Agriculture, 1919), 384.



City Water Works, Wichita, Kans.

[In Progress] Kansas history: a journal of the central plains

big as Newmark's store, and it's crowded.[15] 'Most everybody has lost a lot of money in gambling in oil stocks. If you have enough to keep on losing you may strike it rich. Meanwhile the city is getting paved streets, 4 to 8 story buildings, marble fronts, automobiles and trucks to burn, big waterworks, &c. The oil wells here are deep ones—half a mile or so down, and mostly have to be pumped by big walking beams hung in the drill derricks. These derricks stand in groups that look like orchards, scattered about the country. The biggest "orchard" is just west of this town—some nine miles irregularly north and south, by 5 miles east and west. The wells stand in rows 300 ft. apart each way.... There are several refineries—banks on 'most every corner in town.

These oil wells, in being drilled, pass through beds of salt, and as a consequence, spill salt and oil into the whole surrounding country. These make trouble in the water. And the whole fuss and crowd of strangers make more. The county has a health department that spends about $100,000 per year—more than the Engineer's department, at least, of the State Board of Health. They police the whole county, test every farm well, and if necessary forbid its use.

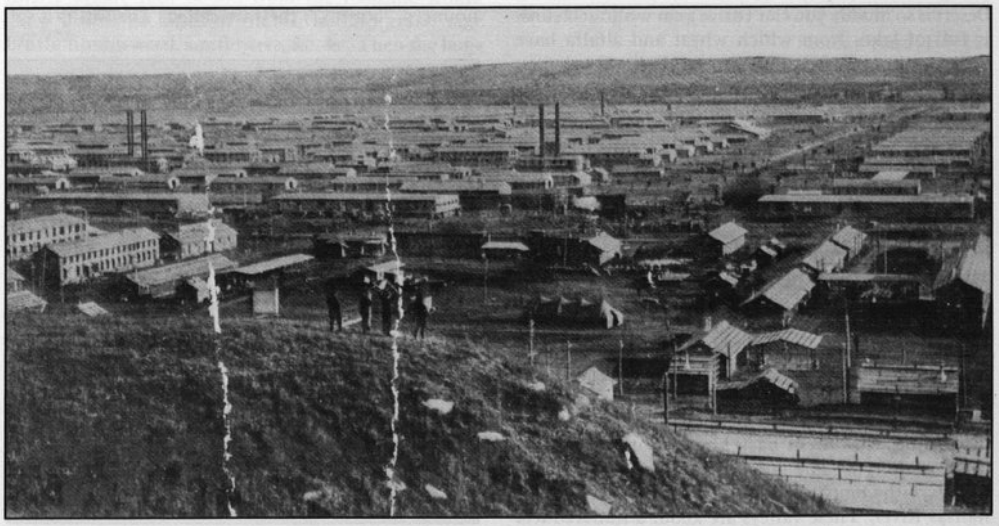
On a now battered postcard postmarked July 5 from Army City, Kansas, Raymond reported spending the Fourth of July there. This card pictures a broad valley filled with barracks, Camp Funston, Fort Riley, Kansas. The weekend of the sixth he was cutting weeds at his neglected home in Lawrence, after a big July 4 rain had cooled the weather. July 9 he left for Yates Center, Madison, and Marion, returned to Lawrence, and on July 13 commented about life on the home front.

Things here are frightfully scarce and costly. No potatoes, no berries, few apples, onions, eggs, and other fruits expensive. I've got to keep on the road as much as possible to let the State pay my board. Still, I'm getting rather used to the notion, since being at Funston. Somehow it seemed to me as if we stay-at-homes ought to do something.

Monday, July 15
On the train again
....am started for the farthest corner—first jump 391 miles, to Sharon Springs, then to Oakley, Colby, Goodland... St. Francis (the northwest corner town), Atwood, Oberlin, Wamego, St.Mary, Lawrence about Friday night if lucky....[Remarking on the exodus of fellow faculty members from Lawrence after summer school, he added,] some 350 soldiers will come the 15th of August, so the streets will not be altogether empty of a Saturday evening.

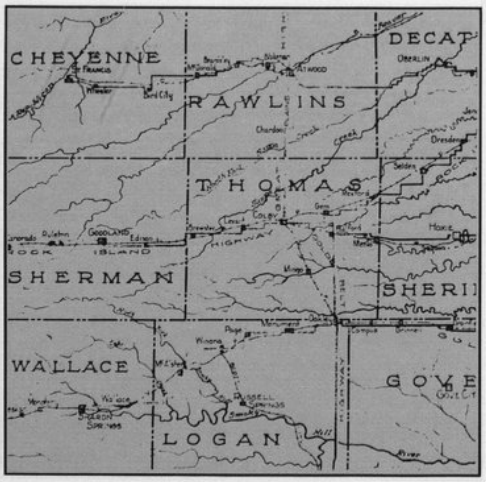
Colby, July 17, 1918
Dear Folks—This is from away out in the dry-farming country, which is full of the wettest farms I ever saw.

15. Bryant's restaurant was located at 411 West Fourteenth; Newmark's, which sold "dry goods, suits, and coats," was at 809 Massachusetts. *Lawrence City Directory, 1917* (Lawrence: R. L. Polk and Co., 1917), 67, 168.



27. PUBLIC LIBRARY, JUNCTION CITY, KAN.

The people here say it seldom rains, but it's rained every day I've been here, and the ground looks as if it had rained every other day, too,—The Great American Desert is so muddy you can't drive a car without chains, is full of lakes from which wheat and alfalfa have been partly removed, and the people have web feet. Moreover, I find, this same Great American Desert is underlaid, about a hundred feet down, with an ocean of water that seems to be inexhaustable [*sic*]. This is old cow country. Yesterday, at Wallace, I saw a real cowboy—long lank skinny leatherfaced chap with jingling spurs and lariat rope, loping by on a cayuse and stopping to sit sidewise while he man-howdy'd his friends. I saw, too, a ranchman in muddy yellow denim and sagging straw hat—old pot-bellied Frenchman who owns 35000 acres of land along the Smoky Hill valley and aims to feed about 2000 head of thoroughbred white-face cattle. He came to western Kansas 48 years ago, landed at the end of the railroad without a cent, and went to work by the day—later kept the saloon—later picked up cheap land left by the people who "went back home" during the hard times of 1891-6. The country is rough—cut by the valleys of the Smoky Hill and other tributaries of the Kansas River. These valleys are about a hundred feet below the prairie level, and from five to twenty miles apart. The high ground between slopes up gradually, for the most part, with a few bluffs—buttes (pronounced "beaut's") they are called. The soil is a sort



of sandy clay, in the wide valleys it is sand. These valley bottoms are full of water, although the actual streams may be dry. The water follows the sand from the mountains, mainly. Below the surface and below the sand is the sandy clay for many feet, then comes a layer of coarse gravel—looks just like the red and streaked gravel found at some places about Keuka [the lake in Upstate New York where his wife was spending the summer on a lakeside farm]—and these beds are full of water—about 150 ft. down from the prairie level.

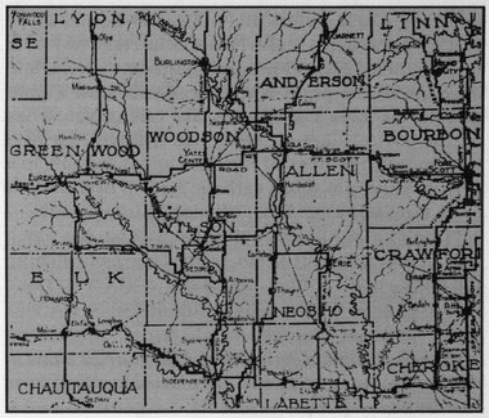
This rain is making pasture and corn in the cow country—but the cow men talk very discouragedly. One said he sold a bunch of 2-year-olds last spring to a neighbor and estimated that now the same cattle will not sell for enough more to pay for feed and interest. Worst is, they don't know what to calculate upon—and probably will sell this fall to reduce their herds with the result that the cattle will be too few in the country next year. But the country is prosperous. The farmers are building good homes, have automobiles, and money to work with—a good many have big barns and silos. The range is used for dairying somewhat.

This town is in a wheat district. It has a big electric power plant, city waterworks, miles of concrete sidewalks, etc. The trees everywhere out here are few and carefully coaxed—cottonwood, elm, soft maple, locust, catalpa—about half as tall as the buildings. The animal and vegetable life of smaller things is wonderful. A square foot of sod from the roadside would show dozens of kinds of plants, buffalo grass, sage brush, tumbleweed, sunflowers, &c. &c. Then the bugs that fly by night are innumerable—and prairie dogs, gophers, snakes, ants.... Small boys seem to be pretty thick, too, I'm glad to see.

From Lawrence on July 21 he reported the week's work had been strenuous, and on Tuesday he prepared to start south—La Cygne, Pleasanton, Mound City, then west to Eureka and Towanda. From the Hotel Brooks (rates two dollars per day), Mound City, he wrote briefly. "This is a rather rough-surfaced country, more like Missouri than Kansas. It's been very dry for two years, and the water problem is serious. At Pleasanton, it is almost desperate."

Hotel Greenwood
C.N. Shambaugh, Proprietor
Eureka, Kansas
July 25, 1918

We moved again since we were interrupted at Mound City. This is another oil-boom town, like ElDorado. The hotel is swarming with fat men in



shirt sleeves and big cigars, buttonholing one another in corners and letting each other in on the ground floor.... This has been one old trial of a day—tonsillitis last night and no sleep, up early and hurry to catch the train, then the train late and a freight—all day on that freight train with no dinner. I got here at about 6:30 and got some throat tablets and a good beefsteak supper, and feel better.

Two days later he was still there, preparing to board another freight. "I'm mighty glad you're out of this heat," he told his wife. "P. Connor[16] says it's going to be cooler, but it isn't so yet, over 100°, I guess, every day. Yesterday it was so hot I quit."

Sunday June [July] 28

I'm home again, at our house—came at 9 oclock this morning, after riding all night from Moline 11 pm, Independence 1 am, Ottawa 6 am. Carried a 50 lb. can of water samples as far as Ottawa before I could get an express man to bill it. Have had a bath etc. and slept a while, and feel vastly better—only sort of wooden. It's been the hardest trip of all, but I'm awfully sorry for some of the people in that Southeast country. They are going to be pretty thirsty before this year is over unless the Lord finds them some rain. It's dry here and very hot, but trying to rain; & I guess it will do so.

Tuesday, July 30

...I'm off again tonight—to Crawford County (extreme southeast) to investigate an outbreak of typhoid. That's about all the instructions I've had,

16. P. Connor's name was a household word for many years in Kansas. He was the weather forecaster whose prophecies appeared in the newspapers.

and I've got to learn how and what and who and where and why and when and whichever in every way after getting there. Today I'm reading up on typhoid, and have got to the point where I can't see how a poor mortal ever lives a week—Do take care of yourselves [is the advice]—Keep a cloth wet with vinegar over your mouth and nose all the time, and if you talk to a person make him squirt carbolic acid all over himself every three minutes. Above all, don't kiss anybody.

Don't know how long this trip will be. Anyway it will be interesting (I'll not be in danger of catching the fever—don't worry), and makes a fellow feel he's on a real job—that is, if I can find the cause—& may save lives.

When Raymond returned to Lawrence, it was 110 degrees on August 3, but he was pleased to report some success from his trip.

The Girard job has been a pretty busy one, but not unpleasant altogether. I found the people who had been sick were in the habit of eating ice-cream from one factory, so reckon something is wrong at the factory—sure enough, at Topeka I find that a girl who worked at the creamery was sick with a kind of dysentery that was much like typhoid and died. That seems to cinch the matter. I told the ice-cream man not to sell any more until he had permission from Crumbine's office and Sippy[17] is sending a medicine man down[18] .... This good-of-the-human-race job may take away some of the guilty feeling but it isn't all beer and skittles....

The war probably won't be over for two or three years yet, and even a college professor has got to do something useful part of the time. Hood[19] is making telephones at Topeka, Shaad[20] is at Schenectady, Sibly[21] is acting dean, Goldsmith[22] is building barracks for soldiers, Sluss[23] is breaking his back to teach them to run motor trucks. The first bunch of rookies (student soldiers at K.U.) goes next week, I believe, and some 280 more come, then in September we get 500. Apparently they'll bilk me out of my classroom.

The landscape, he noted, smelled scorched, and he warned his wife not to return too soon to Kansas, although he was beginning to give her advice about train schedules and reassurance about the help she could depend on from redcaps and porters.[24]

On the stationery of the Lamer Hotel in Salina ("85 all outside rooms—42 with bath"), Raymond wrote on August 13.

Another stop along the road—have upset my schedule muchly by the Herington trip—Mr. Veatch was at Herington to fix a water-purifying machine, but found a delicate piece of glass in the machinery had been broken in shipment and telephoned for me to bring a new one. I got there late last night, watched him fix the machine this morning, and so set out on my travels of the week wrong end first, as 'twere....

Salina is a mighty pretty town and about as self-satisfied as any place you'll find. The population is about 10,000 and yet it is a great flour-milling town and puts on the airs of a large city—fine buildings, broad sleek asphalt streets, &c. &c.[25]

August 14 was a busy day as he "worked" the Army City, Junction City, Ogden area.

17. John J. Sippy, M.D., was in 1918 associate professor of preventive medicine at KU and epidemiologist of the Division of Communicable Disease and Sanitation of the State Board of Health. Kansas State Board of Health, *Ninth Biennial Report, 1916-1918*, 29.

18. Many years later, during another world war, F. N. Raymond reread his own letters of 1918 and wrote a marginal comment, dated May 7, 1944: "A weird experience. I made an extensive survey of conditions with reference to possible sources, with Dr. _____, health officer, and by myself; ordered the local ice cream supply stopped until further orders. Somewhat later (I don't know how long) the Topeka office of the State Board of Health sent an army officer to investigate. He released the ice cream supply and charged the infection to a common use of hot water from a power-plant tank. I have never believed that source was possible for what happened."

19. George J. Hood, professor of engineering drawing. University of Kansas, *Annual Catalog, 1918-1919*, 189.

20. George C. Shaad, professor of electrical engineering, was acting dean of the engineering school during Dean P. F. Walker's absence on military leave (and would become dean some years later after Walker's death), but apparently Shaad was also away during the summer. University of Kansas, *Annual Catalog, 1918-1919*, 189. Schenectady, New York, was a center of the electrical engineering industry.

21. Frederick H. Sibley, professor of mechanical engineering. University of Kansas, *Annual Catalog, 1918-1919*, 189.

22. Goldwin Goldsmith, professor of architecture. University of Kansas, *Annual Catalog, 1918-1919*, 189.

23. Alfred H. Sluss, associate professor of mechanical engineering. University of Kansas, *Annual Catalog, 1918-1919*, 189.

24. Many years later Ida Raymond was still talking about the help she did get from them during a rather nerve-wracking trip on crowded wartime trains with a six-month-old baby.

25. The population of Salina was 13,278 in 1918. Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Twenty-first Biennial Report*, 538.

I came into Junc. town at about 2 p.m., found my man had gone to Colorado, found five water containers at the express office to be carried around (about 125 lb.) with my satchel and coat on a hot day—slighted the work and got rid of 2—hired a taxi to the first plant—failed to find my man—got my sample and caught a trolley car at the water plant door—at Army City didn't expect any luck but inquired at the first door from the station and was answered by the man who knew most about the business (He built the plant.) and with him was the mayor. We went to the plant and were driven back by a storm before we'd seen more than the outside. My bottles had to be filled from a garage faucet. I caught a trolley to Ogden and lugged my cans across toward the railroad (They weighed about 150 lb. now), ran onto the water plant with the mayor sitting on the bank.

I got my data and samples right there—then loaded up & trudged to the station—found it locked. I dumped the freight on the steps and went uptown to supper—had chicken—came back and found only the telegraph operator, who could not ship my cans.... I've been out amongst the US army today, and sweethearts—Saw two train loads starting off for somewhere in some country—all yelling and waving all their arms.... They seem happy at getting action.

Downs, Kansas

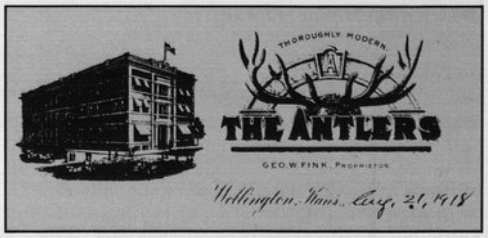
Got in here about 11 a.m.—trains had gone that might have carried me on, so I have to hire a jitney.... My jitney boy took me down the track, 16 miles, with cutout wide open, had an Allen car—much like an Empire but on a 112-in. wheelbase and hung low—did split the wind, about 50 minutes going and 35 minutes coming. Tipton is a Dutchy town.... I left the boy at the garage, asked a man on the street, found the contractor at the hotel—he had a car and took me and the city clerk down to where the plant is being built. The State Board expert [himself] gave things the once over, shook hands all round, and hiked it back to Downs.

Tuesday 8/15/18

Courtland More luck today, of some kind.... This is a poky old corner of the country—a Swede colony—small houses, no barns to speak of, silos, fat cattle, big automobiles, two banks, two hardware stores, one drygoods, and one each of other kinds. The town has about 500 population.[26] Other towns around belong to the Swedes, too. It's a corn country, but the corn is pretty badly dried out—seems about ripe—is being cut up and shocked more or less, cut into silos, &c. The blades are breaking off in the wind a good deal.... I'm having lots of trouble with my express shipments just here in Kansas since Uncle Sam took over the job. (The reason is, no doubt, that the railway men are trying to show Uncle Sam that the service is better conducted under private management).

Bower's Tavern
Norton, Kansas, Aug. 16

... The hotel was full and the landlord walked the late comers across town to a boarding house. They called me for last chance at Breakfast at 8-9 oclock, waking me out of sound sleep.... I went to the city clerk's office, found the clerk a new appointee—the water supt "at the plant" away out south of town—walked out to the plant and found he had gone to town—telephoned to the office and was told he would come down again. He came in his jitney and then took me right along everywhere. The express man gave me three big cans. On the way up town I was saying I should telephone to the State Hospital[27] to have a car sent for me—"There's the doctor now." He called a big fat man in a tin lizzie—the director of the hospital. He came along to the hotel, waited for me to pay my bill, then took me rattling down the road four miles, showed me the waterworks and sewer plant, gave me my dinner, and took me on to this town, 12 miles [Almena]. Here the city clerk is sick abed, the mayor out of town, the waterworks man wrastling with a brokendown machine. But I "inspected" and got samples of water—found they won't ship my samples, so I've left part of the load to be shipped and carry one can full of bottles to the next town.



The hot weeks of August wore on. Letters from the Antlers in Wellington August 21, the Eaton Hotel in Wichita the twenty-third, the Hotel Leatherock in Cherryvale August 27 report more inspections. Raymond remarked in one of them on his assignment. "Trouble is I've rather too many jobs to do well—

26. The population of Courtland was 400 in 1918. Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Twenty-first Biennial Report*, 526.

27. The Kansas State Sanatorium for Tuberculosis.

nearly 50 samples to collect. So far the waterworks men have been very nice, carted me around in their automobiles and spent lots of time with me."

Then a new alarm was sounded about typhoid. From the Hotel Booth in Independence on August 29 he wrote about his arrival in Fredonia on the twenty-seventh.

... Found the county health officer almost at once, and went with him in his whoopy (new name for Ford) to New Anthony and visited eight or ten typhoid victims.... Next day rode over again and visited swimming holes, barnyards, and other plague spots, caught flies, collected samples of water, etc., etc., and back to Fredonia again—riding with the local bigbug—a farmer who has made his fortune in oil. Last night I went to a show (Charley Chaplin as a fireman) and then wrote my report.... We visited Neodesha... and there we found a regular nest of typhoid. We pumped the doctors and learned nothing, then went to pump the victims but learned little more. Something is queer because the town seems unusually clean.... I can't do much more for the poor typhoid victims until my samples are analyzed to show whether the wells are guilty. So on we got to the usual water business from here to Moline and Cedarvale.

On September 1 in Lawrence, the inspector paused to take stock of the situation.

My job's played out, I guess. Young has gone to the war—or closed up his work preparatory to go, and Veatch is going for a month's vacation. Welker is coming back for while Veatch is away, but they'll probably quit field work.... I'm to work in the office for a day or two, finishing up—then probably go at my own work, which is likely to keep me busy 26 hr. a day until school begins. [In another note:] The Government is trying to have as many young men go to college as possible and has made some kind of reserve service for them—I don't know just what, and of course we can't tell what effect it will have on the number of students here. It may swamp us. I look for more women in the School of Engineering, and more younger boys, anyway.[28]

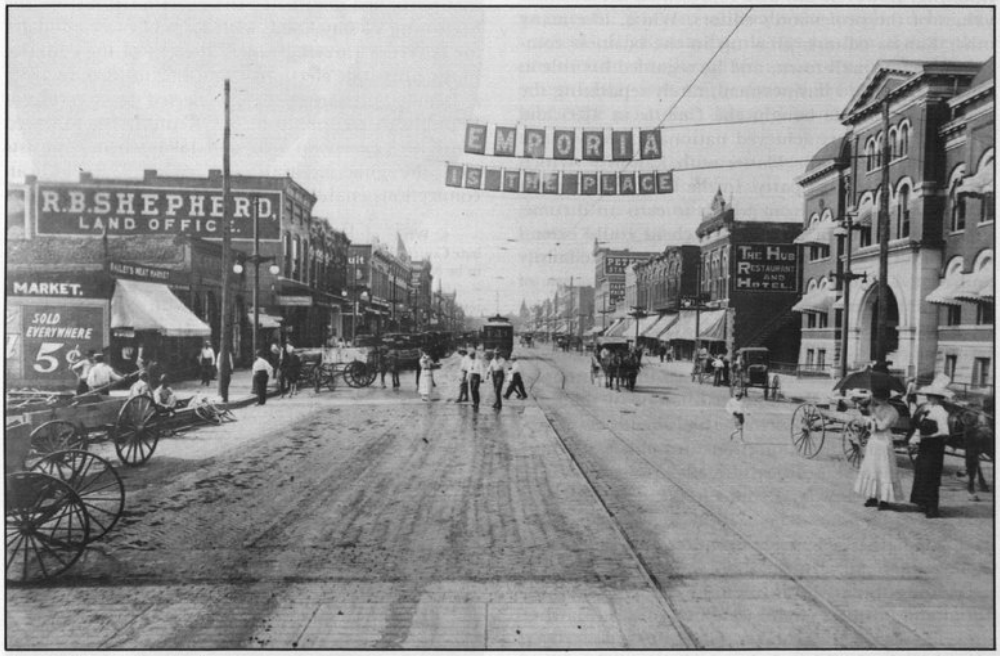
So came to an end Fred Raymond's summer as an assistant engineer on the Kansas State Board of Health's water inspection team. Probably the express agents of big and little Kansas towns never again saw a long-legged, bespectacled college English professor running up the road with his tin cans of water samples, trying to hop a freight. But other amateurs were also working hard at other tasks that summer, so that life could go on, on the home front. KH

28. Before November 11, 1918, brought the Armistice, the great influenza epidemic closed KU for the month of October. Ida Raymond spoke in later years of half-sick boys drilling in the streets near KU's athletic field, which was full of barracks, and of giving them water to drink while anxiously sterilizing the tumblers to prevent spreading the flu. Sara Laird and other women of the faculty nursed the sick recruits. When KU reopened, Fred Raymond found himself teaching surveying to the Students' Army Training Corps.

[In Progress] Kansas history: a journal of the central plains

William Allen White: Editor and Businessman during the Reform Years, 1895–1916

by Jean Folkerts



Turn-of-the-century Emporia

IN the early 1900s, editor William Allen White of the *Emporia Gazette* spelled out his newspaperman's business philosophy. He said that a successful newspaper must be run by a man with character who never pandered to special interests but who said what he thought to be right. Such a position would bring a newspaper financial stability which, in turn, would give the newspaper standing in its community.[1] He wrote:

> No newspaper can make money or do any good in this world, till it convinces its readers that their senti-

Jean Folkerts *is assistant professor, Department of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin. On leave of absence during 1984–85, she currently is adjunct assistant professor at Mount Vernon College, Washington, D.C. Formerly on the faculty of Washburn University, Topeka, she received her Ph.D. in American studies from the University of Kansas in 1981 with a dissertation entitled "William Allen White: A Study of the Interrelationship of Press, Power, and Party Politics."*

The author wishes to thank Dr. Rita Napier of the University of Kansas, who directed the dissertation from which this article was adapted.

1. William Allen White to E. W. Allen, November 5, 1914, William Allen White Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

ments and views and opinions will not influence the attitude of the paper against what its owner thinks is right. . . . As a cold blooded business proposition, it pays to be honest with one's self. When newspapers are poor, they are known as cowards.[2]

White regarded himself as a businessman as well as an editor. He expressed a philosophy being developed by editors of his time that newspapers should be independent of party politics, financially secure, and oriented toward an entire community. This philosophy not only was the outgrowth of journalistic thinking, however, but also represented the business values of the profession's editors. White, like many other Kansas editors, grew up in the business community of a small town, and he regarded his role as one of editor and businessman, rarely separating the two functions. He bought the *Gazette* in 1895 and within a few years achieved national fame with an editorial, "What's the Matter with Kansas?," which derided the Populist party. In the *Gazette* he sought not only a property from which to earn an income, but also a platform through which he could extend his own value system, adapted from friends and family and rooted firmly in a business-oriented concept of harmonious community progress.

Born in 1868, White acquired his idea of community progress from family and acquaintances who represented the business segment of the community and the dominant Republican interests of the state. When he bought the *Gazette*, he had already developed extensive, statewide connections through his father's professional and political friendship network. Although his father was a Democrat, White learned early that power in Kansas lay within Republican ranks, and his father's business connections often were Republican.

Among those who introduced White to state editorial and business circles were two editors, Marshall and Thomas Benton Murdock. The Murdocks were close friends of White's father, and when Allen White died, leaving his fourteen-year-old son, the Murdocks assumed the paternal role, training White as though he were a son being trained to assume the family business. Thomas Murdock, El Dorado editor and director of a Santa Fe branch railroad, hired White for his first major newspaper job. When Murdock died in 1909, White wrote that he could not remember a time when Murdock was not an important part of his life.[3]

2. *Emporia Gazette*, December 27, 1902.
3. White, *The Autobiography of William Allen White* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1946), 89. *See also Gazette*, November 5, 1909.

Other Republicans also visited the elder White. Republican senators Preston B. Plumb and John J. Ingalls; Susan B. Anthony, the famous suffragist; and John P. St. John, the ardent prohibitionist and Kansas governor (1879–83), were guests at the family home when White was a child. Cyrus Leland, Republican boss from Doniphan County, was a witness to the elder White's will and was long identified with William Allen White, having played no small part in helping to establish his reputation.[4]

Republican connections were important because that party had dominated the governorship since the beginning of statehood, with Republican candidates for governor carrying ninety percent of the counties in the nine state elections from 1862 to 1880. In 1882, a Democratic governor was elected as a result of Republican factionalism, but Republicans followed until 1912 except in 1892 and 1896, when Populists won the gubernatorial race.[5] White's Republican connections enabled him to move easily within state

4. White, *Autobiography*, 62. *See also* Allen White will, Probate Court, Butler County Courthouse, El Dorado. The date appears to be November 22, 1882 or 1883.
5. O. Gene Clanton, *Kansas Populism, Ideas and Men* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1969), 20–21.

Marshall Murdock

Thomas Benton Murdock

political, business, and editorial circles, and at the age of twenty-seven he confidently assumed the role of owner and publisher of a Kansas newspaper.[6]

White used his newspaper, as did most Kansas editors of the time, as 1) a promotional tool for booster projects, 2) a platform for promoting his own political status and for selecting Republican candidates who best represented his values, and 3) an editorial voice for defining attitudes toward diverse social interests he believed would contribute to a unified society. In promoting booster projects for community development, White denied the economic plight of farmers in order to encourage the investment of eastern capital and the resulting industrialization; he supported local business and local business control. He pressured businessmen to define themselves as "for" or "against" the community. Afraid complaints made by the Farmers' Alliance would drive away eastern capital, White blamed the farmers' adversity on poor business management and lack of crop diversification, all the while ignoring their very real economic plight. In Kansas, the 1890 census showed that more than fifty-five percent of owner-occupied farms were mortgaged, the largest ratio in the United States. Including mortgage payments, taxes to alleviate the public debt, and interest, each Kansas family owed a debt of more than one thousand dollars. This was a considerable burden when wheat was thirty cents a bushel, particularly when the price had dropped seventy cents a bushel since 1879.[7]

White's opposition to the farmers reflected not only his fear of losing eastern capital, but also his desire for community adoption of unified values and goals. Before buying the *Gazette*, White worked as a capital correspondent for Charles Gleed, a Republican editor in Kansas City. White had accepted the position from Gleed despite a more prestigious offer from the *Kansas City Star*. He knew Gleed's *Journal* was a party organ and that Gleed was a director of the Santa Fe, but he thought he would be "happier writing for the Republican organ than for a mugwump Independent newspaper that had supported President Cleveland." White quit the *Journal* in anger, however, after one of Gleed's wire editors buried his story on the nomination of Lorenzo D. Lewelling on the Populist ticket for governor in 1892. White then moved to the *Star*. He later admitted that in reporting from the Republican point of view and against the Populists, he "colored the news" but did not know that was what he was doing.[8]

By voicing the same political views as community leaders, White said he "acquired some distinction with the ruling class."[9] During the post-Populist years, White claimed business values pulled the farmer out of the depression, and the building up of the prairie exemplified the theory of the survival of the

6. For biographies of White, *see* Everett Rich, *William Allen White: The Man from Emporia* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1941); David Hinshaw, *A Man from Kansas: The Story of William Allen White* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1945); Walter Johnson, *William Allen White's America* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947); and John DeWitt McKee, *William Allen White: Maverick on Main Street* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975). Rich's biography masses detail but includes little analysis. Hinshaw was a country correspondent for the *Gazette* and was White's right-hand man in organizing the Progressive party in Kansas in 1912. "Undoubtedly I have gilded the lily," he wrote in reference to his book. Probably the most authoritative account is Johnson's biography, which emphasizes the midwestern, grass-roots-editor, folk-hero aspects of White's life. For more information about White's political and friendship networks, *see* Jean Kennedy (Folkerts), "William Allen White: A Study of the Interrelationship of Press, Power, and Party Politics" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1981).

7. Charles F. Scott, "The Pioneer Press of Kansas," *Kansas Historical Collections, 1886–1888* (1890), 4:259, cited by Raymond Miller, "The Economic Basis of Populism in Kansas" (Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1923), 35, 50.

8. White, *Autobiography*, 198–99, 214. *See also* Terry Harmon, "Charles Sumner Gleed: A Western Business Leader, 1856–1920" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1973). Gleed and White later became political adversaries, with Gleed remaining with the standpat Republicans and White moving into the Progressive group.

9. White, *Autobiography*, 183.

William Allen White inscribed this portrait on April 30, 1914.

fittest.[10] It was through enlightened business leadership, not radical action, that society was being improved. "It was a Republican administration," White said, "that conceived and executed the idea of brightening the home of the farmer, educating his children, increasing the value of his land . . . and bringing him news of the markets and of the weather. . . ."[11] In the *Gazette* White supported free enterprise values rather than the cooperative structure farmers attempted in the 1890s. White urged farmers to act as capitalists, to be "daring and resourceful," and to be businessmen first, "tillers of the soil" afterward. White urged mechanization, noting that the successful farmer was the one who could get the most work out of a machine without damaging it.[12]

The center of White's concept of community progress was the local businessman, who was encouraged to support industrial development and community improvements. White's first major promotional event as publisher of the *Gazette* was the 1899 Emporia street fair. White used his connections to attract promoters of the latest technological devices in the hope of creating the largest and best street fair in the state.[13] When plans to have a fair were announced in May, White told his readers that in this endeavor the Young Business Men's Association could consider the *Gazette* its property. In June, during the campaign for contributions, the *Gazette* used its power of the front page to pressure businessmen to support the fair. Throughout the summer the *Gazette* published on page one the names of firms and/or individuals and the amounts they contributed to the street fair subscription fund.[14] Those who contributed money clearly were "for" the community and received recognition for their contributions, while those who were "against" the community were conspicuously absent.

Throughout his editorship, White continued his campaigns for business contributions to the community. In 1900, White urged townspeople to vote for bonds for the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railroad Company which was planning a road through Emporia and which would locate shops there. While White claimed the *Gazette* had no side to champion, but just printed the facts, he said it was a pure business proposition: rates would become more competitive, population would grow, property would rise in value, and business and wages would increase. White campaigned daily through November and December and printed a special railroad edition.[15] Because the time limit on the bonds ran out, they had to be voted again in 1905, and White conducted a similar campaign. The bond issue passed the second time.

White also actively solicited funds in 1900 for the College of Emporia and published the list of donors in the *Gazette*. In 1911, when the college began negotiating with other cities for relocation, White began a front-page campaign to retain the institution, claiming that its loss would cause property values to decline by ten percent. As a New Year's proposition in 1912, White asked for a new YMCA to promote moral development; a packing plant that would bring industry to the town; a new county home for care of the poor; a new high school; and a variety of measures, including a street car extension and more paving, that would attract population and industry to the town.[16]

10. White, "The Building Up of the Prairie West," *Collier's* 29 (May 10, 1902):10. *See also* White, "Fifty Years of Kansas," *World's Work* 8 (June 1904):4871, and *Gazette*, January 12, 1905.
11. *Gazette*, October 24, 1900.
12. White, "Business of a Wheat Farm," *Scribner's Magazine* 22 (November 1897):531–48; *Gazette*, October 2, 1896.
13. *Gazette*, May 8, 1899.
14. Ibid., June 29, 1899.
15. Ibid., November 15, 17, 1900; June 13, 1900.
16. Ibid., June 15, 1900, and March 16, 1911. For YMCA activity *see* White to Amos Plumb, January 8, 1912, White to Charles F.

White's concept of business involvement in community growth did not rest purely on contributions by businessmen. He viewed the businessman as a natural leader and therefore supported local business control as well as local business contributions. White urged residents to support local business and local merchants to support the *Gazette*, saying, "the newspapers of this town are here to help you win this fight for home enterprise and investment of your capital. The entire patronage of Emporia belongs to the home merchants." White denounced traveling salesmen and mail-order stores as a "wolf in Emporia's fold." He described mail-order items as shoddy and pointed out the safety of trading with home merchants.[17]

In early 1903, White and local businessmen agreed to cooperate in eliminating out-of-town advertising from the pages of the *Gazette:* White would discontinue advertising from Emery Bird Thayer and Company, a large Kansas City, Missouri, department store, and install the Associated Press report, hoping to discourage Emporians from buying what White described as "foreign" newspapers. In return, merchants agreed not to protest if White raised the advertising rates.[18] This action limited the information about out-of-town products that Emporians could receive, particularly for those financially unable to travel. While White and his friends traveled freely throughout the nation and often purchased household items and clothing when away from Emporia, those less fortunate were restricted to locally carried products. In addition, White's attempts to discourage out-of-town newspapers also limited the diversity of local, national, and international news. Further, they clearly illustrated that White considered himself a local businessman and merged that role with his role as a journalist.

White's reform measures, or desire for progress, were firmly grounded in his belief in a natural business leadership. As early as 1897 he advocated governmental control of public utilities and cautioned Emporia citizens to seek a maximum rate clause in the ordinance to protect the people. But he was also interested in protecting local business, and he wanted to ensure

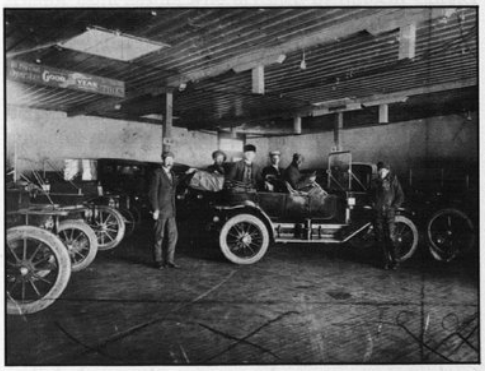
Weller, January 30, 1915, White to W. Y. Morgan and David Hinshaw, May 21, 1914, White Papers. *See also Gazette,* June 6, 1912; May 14, 1914; June 6, 1914; November 27, 1911. For New Year's program *see Gazette,* January 1, 1912. For high school *see Gazette,* April 3, 1912. White wanted an out-of-town architect for the high school, despite his trade-at-home philosophy. He argued that "no" great architect would be living in Emporia, just as no great newspaperman would be living there. White to Charles Dabbs, June 1, 1912, White Papers.

17. *Gazette,* February 25, 1896; February 16, 26, 1901; March 2, 1901.

18. Ibid., April 1, 1903.

Typical Emporia Businesses

Reeble Grocery



The Central Motor Car Company

The J. C. Dumm Furniture Company delivery wagon

that the Kansas and Missouri Telephone Company would not be granted any favors a home company would not enjoy. He also considered Emporia's municipal ownership of the waterworks to be a successful experiment, which he attributed to the high average intelligence of a community which kept party politics out of this branch of municipal affairs. He encouraged the city, which had just purchased an electric light and power plant, to put the employees on a merit system, because to function well they would need security in their jobs.[19] This philosophy in regard to municipal affairs reflected the thinking of other businessmen from as near as Wisconsin and as far away as New York and was easily compatible with progressive thought as it developed after the turn of the century.[20]

White's 1896 editorial, "What's the Matter with Kansas?," earned him added political status within the party, and he lost no chance to promote himself and the *Gazette*. In 1897, he was on the platform at the Lincoln Day banquet of the Ohio Republicans and had an invitation from Mark Hanna to President William McKinley. On the front page of the *Gazette* in June of 1899 he wrote that the newspaper had arranged for Theodore Roosevelt to stop in Emporia on his western tour, and he exhorted the citizens to turn out. "Let him remember this town. Cast bread upon the waters, and when Roosevelt is president it will return after many days."[21]

By 1899, White's political connections had rewarded him financially, and he was printing pension blanks shipped to him by Cyrus Leland. White said at the turn of the century that the pension job produced three thousand dollars in income for him when his total income was eight or nine thousand dollars annually. White was actively Republican at this time, working hard to help elect the county Republican ticket and attending meetings of the Republican State Central Committee.[22] This activity continued throughout the decade.

During the early part of the twentieth century, White used his newspaper to support candidates for political office, hoping to increase his own prestige in Republican circles and to further his reform goals, which were tied closely to his commercial interests. White viewed editors as part of the elite business class. While he never argued that newspaper editorials would generate enough support to elect a candidate, he recognized the importance of the state press in creating grass-roots support for select candidates within a range of Republican choices. White worked within the Republican party except for his experiment with the Progressives, but he claimed to be an independent voice. Republican papers were not the same as party organs, he said. "Now this does not mean," White wrote in a *Gazette* editorial, "that these editors will not support the Republican ticket, from top to bottom when the time comes." Independence, White continued, meant that the Republican press of this country "says what it thinks; that it is fearless, intelligent, honest and unsubsidized." A press that would turn from its party "because of one mistake in a minor matter, would deserve no credit for its sanity and should have no following." The Republican party "is a party with too great a future and too formidable a past for one mistake to defeat it."[23] Most editors maintained concrete party identities well into the twentieth century, and many were either candidates for election or involved in precinct-level caucusing. White's claims to an independent Republican press may well have been propaganda rather than fact.

White's relationship to Cyrus Leland indicates the difficulty of using the term "independent journalist" to describe an editor like White. Clearly, Leland had some influence on White; whether this was in return for pension printing, a result of Leland's position in the party, or because he was an old family friend can only be surmised. In 1899, White wrote to Leland that he would "make a few remarks along the line you suggest" and "put his spirit into the work," in regard to the "Coulter matter."[24] White described the Coulter matter in the *Gazette* as involving claims by a disappointed office-seeker, O. H. Coulter, that Pension Commissioner H. Clay Evans was treating "old soldiers" unfairly. White painted Coulter as a bounty man who had not enlisted in the Civil War until 1864 and now was acting as a professional "old soldier." White claimed that Evans was merely trying to check the "schemes" of swindling "old soldiers" like Coulter. He told Leland that he mailed the article to a variety of editors, asking them to print it, and that most had responded favorably.[25] The response of an

19. Ibid., October 1, 1897.

20. Martin J. Schiesl, *The Politics of Efficiency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). Schiesl traces the history of municipal reform to mugwump reform.

21. *Gazette*, June 22, 1899.

22. Mark Hanna to White, November 14, 1898, William Allen White Collection, William Allen White Library, Emporia State University, Emporia; White to J. Leland, Jr., October 24, 1899, White to Cyrus Leland, September 8, 1899, White Papers; Johnson, *William Allen White's America*, 86.

23. *Gazette*, April 6, 1900.

24. White to Cyrus Leland, n.d., probably between July 15 and 20, 1899, White Papers.

25. White to Cyrus Leland, n.d., but about July 20 and during August 1899, White Papers; *Gazette*, July 25, 1899; August 1, 4, 15, 21, 1899; September 20, 1899.

Cyrus Leland

editorial network to Leland's request indicates a good deal of loyalty to either person or party.

Another of White's major efforts to mobilize editorial opinion within the state came in 1906 with the organization of the Kansas Civic Voters League, a group which supported railroad regulation and political reforms attractive to commercial interests. Local businessmen believed changes in discriminatory railroad rates and the prohibition of overcapitalization would allow them to retain control over commercial transportation and to create a rate structure favorable to commercial interests. White often claimed that discriminatory rates had hampered the industrialization of the state and had forced it to remain agricultural.[26] Political reforms also were aimed at eliminating powerful corporate interests from controlling elections. When the commercially oriented Voters League organized in 1906 to promote railroad regulation, White organized Republican editors in Kansas. He wrote to the president of the Kansas Federation of Commercial Interests that he "had schemed to push the organization of the Civic League just a little further than it went":

> It seems to me that there are a dozen papers in Kansas of somewhat more than local influence who would be willing to publicly support the League, and to pledge themselves not only to print the League's estimate of the candidates before party conventions and before the people, after the convention, but to give no candidate for office active support who is opposed by the League.

White suggested the *Gazette* and newspapers in Topeka, Atchison, Parsons, Salina, Wichita, Ottawa, and Iola. Many of the publishers were White's friends: Arthur Capper of Topeka, who became governor and senator; Ed Howe of Atchison, author of *The Story of a Country Town;* Joseph Bristow, later a Progressive senator from Salina who defeated incumbent Chester Long; Victor Murdock, family friend and editor of the *Wichita Daily Eagle;* Henry Allen, who went to Europe with White in 1918 and returned to become governor; and Charles F. Scott, Iola publisher.[27]

During the U.S. Senate campaign of 1908, White relied on his influence as an editor to secure favorable publicity for Joseph Bristow in his bid against incumbent Chester Long. Publicity was essential because the campaign was the first statewide preference primary for the Republican nomination and because Bristow was not well known. Long had been active in Republican politics since pre-Populist days. White attacked Long on a variety of issues but primarily on his reluctance to support railroad reform. While Long had been instrumental in getting Roosevelt to compromise with railroad interests to achieve passage of the regulatory Hepburn bill, White accused him of remaining silent until the battle was already won.[28]

During the campaign, White acquired Long's voting record from Robert La Follette's staff and wrote columns of copy which he stereotyped and mailed to other editors. White scathingly attacked the longtime officeholder, claiming his voting record was squarely with Wall Street and against the people. White achieved the publicity Bristow needed, and when Long and the Emporia editor debated at Emporia's Whitley Opera House that summer, the columns of type became more heated and less objective. Long accused White of printing three errors in his voting record, but after White admitted in the *Gazette* to being

26. For more information on discriminatory railroad rates, *see* Fred A. Shannon, *The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860–1897* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 296-97. *See also* Robert Sherman La Forte, *Leaders of Reform: Progressive Republicans in Kansas, 1900–1916* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1974), 3.

27. White to J. S. George, January 13, 1906, White Papers.
28. *Gazette*, April 16, 1908.

The Emporia Gazette Building

"peeled and bathed in salt by Long," a *Gazette* story claimed that Long's defense of his record presented a "curious combination of error, self-deception and bluff." For days following the debate, the *Gazette* carried editorials from other newspapers supporting its own position.[29]

Another tactic White used was to print letters to the editor supporting Bristow and the reform candidate for governor, Walter Roscoe Stubbs. Among the letter writers were Progressive James Troutman, former Lt. Gov. D. W. Finney, and J. S. George, former head of the Kansas Federation of Commercial Interests. To add polish to the campaign, White again stereotyped plates and mailed them to editors. He asked La Follette to come to Kansas and circulated his speech in advance to a variety of newspapers.[30]

In 1909, White used the *Gazette* in his attempts to get Attorney General Fred Jackson to run against the Fourth District longtime incumbent, J. M. Miller. White mailed an editorial to a variety of editors who also were friends, asking them to use the facts he reported as a basis for an editorial, since he believed Jackson would announce if properly urged. If enough newspapers used the editorial material, White could argue to Jackson that there was a ground swell of opinion promoting his candidacy. White then wrote a letter to Jackson, suggesting the *Gazette* run this notice:

> Attorney General Jackson has been resisting considerable pressure to enter the congressional contest in

29. Ibid., May 1908; White to a variety of editors, including J. W. More, *Marion Headlight;* A. P. Biddle, *Minneapolis Messenger;* T. B. Murdock, *El Dorado Republican;* Gomer Davies of Concordia; Harry Woods, *Wellington Daily News;* Charles Vernon, *Manhattan Mercury;* A. L. Opessler of Hutchinson; John Junking, *Sterling Kansas Bulletin;* and S. C. McCollum, *Lincoln Republican,* White Papers, *See also* White to J. N. Dolley, May 29, 1908, White Papers; *Gazette,* June 11, 12, 24, 1908.

30. *Gazette,* June 10, 24, 25, 1908; July 7, 18, 1908. Other newspaper tactics were used. In 1908, White entertained editors at the state meeting of the Kansas Editorial Association in Emporia. In usual fashion, he did not miss the chance to promote the town, and the Business Men's Association awarded a prize for the best write-up of Emporia by the editors who visited. For a week after the event the *Gazette* printed the laudatory notices. *See also* White to La Follette, July 1, 1908, White Papers.

> the fourth district. He has believed all along that it is too early to enter the fight. He has told his friends that he believes that developements [*sic*] at the beginning of the coming session of Congress will largely determine his course.

White said if matters continued to grow worse in the state, there seemed to be no doubt among Jackson's friends that he would make his announcement on Kansas Day. Jackson ran and was elected.[31]

These examples show that White used a variety of techniques to encourage the selection of particular candidates. He mobilized editors to support candidates who were endorsed by the Voters League, which in turn supported commercial interests in the state. He stereotyped plates, sending them to smaller newspapers which could not afford a wire service; he printed guest editorials and solicited letters to the editor; he provided editorial material for other editors; and he used his own newspaper to solicit grass-roots support for candidates. White used similar techniques to organize newspapers in support of the public utilities law and to advance Walter Stubbs' candidacy for governor.[32] After the 1910 state congressional campaign, J. N. Dolley, chairman of the Republican State Committee, told White that he was "the backbone of the Republican party in this state." Recognizing the power of the *Gazette*, Dolley noted that White gave not only his time to the cause, "but also the valuable space of your newspaper."[33]

White's identification with business was apparent not only in his promotional activity and in his attempts to influence the selection of candidates within Republican circles, but also through turn-of-the-century *Gazette* editorials which blurred distinctions among

31. White to Arthur Capper, about November 1, 1909, White to Stubbs, October 2, 1909, White to Jackson, October 5, 1909, and November 26, 1909, White Papers.

32. *Gazette*, August 19, 1910.

33. J. N. Dolley to White, November 8, 1910, D. O. McCrary to White, November 19, 1910, White Papers.

"Red Rocks," William Allen White's home in Emporia

diverse groups. As he had denied that farmers' interests were distinctly different from town interests, White also did not recognize that other political forces were in reality competitors with conflicting vested interests.

White supported unionism as long as it represented a cooperative brotherhood among workers and businessmen. Not recognizing that labor's problems might be systemic, White separated good workers from bad workers. Those who did not work in harmony for the good of all were termed "low grade men." He compared the organization of labor to that of the medical society, the bar association, and the federated women's clubs, again assuming all groups had the same interests and values in society and ignoring the difference in the social and political status of labor compared to that of the other groups.[34]

In 1900, White noted increased unionism on the local level and stated that the feeling of brotherhood that was the strength of the unions should be expressed not only by laboring men but by the whole town. He opposed class lines. It was through the union movement, White argued, that strong men could help the weak excel.[35]

Like many men of his time who joined the Progressive cause after the turn of the century, White had a vision of the perfect society, a society based on equality of opportunity and equality before the law. Richard Resh described White's vision as one of "a society untrammeled by greed, of an America dedicated to a higher purpose than the churlish squabble over the rewards of capitalism." According to Resh, White addressed himself to the task of "creating a viable moral order that would provide the nation with a sense of community."[36] But for all of White's hope for a unified nation, his vision was centered squarely on a value system based on a stratified society.

White's efforts to promote a booster culture through the encouragement of community development, the selection of candidates, and the harmonious interpretation of the goals of diverse groups clearly indicate that the *Gazette* did not simply reflect events. Instead, its content represented the value system of its editor, which he developed within his middle-class social context.

The concept of an elite business class was deeply ingrained in White's value system. This concept pervaded his attitudes toward government regulation, political corruption, progress, industrialization, the distribution of wealth, the labor movement, and the farmer. His religious and moral views did not conflict with his business values because his belief in cultural evolution and his sense of obligation to take care of those less fortunate than he were an integral part of his value system. To White, business people espousing business values were simply better. They managed better, they thought better, and they ran the country better.

In addition to his business values, the Emporia editor had distinct journalistic values, particularly on matters of style, pointing out to his readers in an editorial that the "Gazette never speaks of a dying person as 'lying at death's door;' it never lets a boy who has rustled for a job on a grocery delivery wagon 'accept a position.'" The *Gazette* abandoned euphemistic language and refused to print details of bizarre murders because White believed such details helped "breed crime."[37] But although his editorial, "To an Anxious Friend," in 1922 earned him the reputation as a crusader for editorial freedom, he also said that every "decent newspaper would hail a law with joy that prohibited newspapers from printing the details of murders, lynchings, assaults on women and children, and all crimes where the element of sex motive enters."[38] His was a philosophy derived from his own value system rather than from a consciously developed concept of press freedom.

White believed society as a whole would progress if it held the same values he held. Refusing the concept of special interest groups, White viewed labor and capital, shippers and farmers, as having the same interests. To allow special interests would have been to create divisiveness and halt the order of progress, just as divisiveness had halted the flow of eastern capital to western towns.

While discussing the lack of trade among Emporia retailers one Christmas, White clearly reflected his own belief in the importance of combining business values with religious and social beliefs to create stability in the nation. He editorialized: "We need to believe more firmly in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, to restore trade and to bring faith in civilization to the hearts of American people." Morality, unified values, business orientation, and cultural and spiritual evolution would continue, from White's point of view, to make America a country "blessed by God."[39] KH

34. *Gazette*, January 29, 1903. *See also* October 1, 1900; November 20, 1900; December 11, 1900; October 4, 1904; and December 7, 1911.
35. *Gazette*, April 25, 1903, and January 29, 1903. *See also* October 1, 1900; November 20, 1900; and December 11, 1900.
36. Richard W. Resh, "A Vision in Emporia: William Allen White's Search for Community," *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 10 (Fall 1969):19–35.
37. *Gazette*, January 24, 1901; March 9, 1901.
38. Ibid., March 9, 1901.
39. Ibid., December 19, 1914.

[In Progress] Kansas history: a journal of the central plains

The Political Roots of City Managers in Kansas

by H. Edward Flentje

IN 1917, the Kansas legislature initiated a bold experiment in municipal reform by allowing Kansas cities to adopt the city manager form of government. The new law authorized cities to place the administration of city government in the hands of an appointed manager who was to be chosen solely upon the basis of administrative ability and without any requirement of city residence. The 1917 law envisioned the city manager as a genuine chief executive with statutory powers similar to those constitutionally granted to state governors or the U.S. president. The city manager, for example, was to see that the laws were enforced; hire and fire all department heads; prepare and recommend an annual budget; inform the public as to the financial condition and needs of the city; and make recommendations on all matters concerning the welfare of the city.[1] While many chief executives in U.S. governments would be envious of such powers in their own jurisdictions, a key difference was that the city manager's tenure of office was in the hands of an elected city governing body. The manager could be removed by a majority of the governing body at a moment's notice.

Dennis McKinney, Brian D. Harrigan, Scott B. Rothe, and John Deardoff, graduate assistants in the Hugo Wall Center for Urban Studies, assisted in the research for this paper. Professors Jimmy Skaggs of Wichita State University, David Katzman of the University of Kansas, and Naomi Lynn of Kansas State University, as well as Marla Mack from the Hugo Wall Center for Urban Studies, reviewed a draft of this paper and gave particularly helpful editorial suggestions.

1. *Kansas Laws, 1917* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1917), 123–27. In terms of executive authority outlined for the city manager, the 1917 Kansas law followed a national pattern that became a defining standard for an authentic "city manager." The nomenclature in the Kansas law was somewhat confusing, however, as the terms "commission" and "commissioners" were used to describe the elected governing body and its members. In Kansas, the city manager form became known as the commission-manager plan, while nationally, city manager government was commonly labeled the council-manager form. The commission-manager plan was sometimes confused with the commission form. The latter form of municipal government, often termed the Galveston plan because of its founding location, became popular in the first decade of the 1900s and was authorized for Kansas cities in 1907. The commission form melded executive and legislative authority in the hands of elected commissioners, while the commission-manager plan assigned legislative authority to the elected commission and executive authority to the manager.

H. Edward Flentje *is associate professor of public administration and urban affairs in the Hugo Wall Center for Urban Studies, Wichita State University. A native of Harper County, he has a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Kansas and was director of state planning and research for the state of Kansas from 1975 to 1979. He is the editor of* Selected Papers of Governor Robert F. Bennett: A Study in Good Government and "Civics Book" Politics *(1979) and has written numerous works in public administration and political science.*

STARTING OFF WITH AN EASY ONE

Eagle, *January 12, 1917*

The origin of the 1917 law and its initial implementation have not been carefully explored. Official public records give a simple, straightforward account:

In his message to the 1917 legislative session, Gov. Arthur Capper recommended that cities be authorized to adopt the city manager form of government. By February 16, a city manager bill introduced by Sen. Frank Nighswonger of Wichita had passed both houses with slight amendment; Capper signed the bill the next day. On March 9, after quickly and successfully petitioning for an election, voters in Wichita adopted the city manager form of government.[2] Within the next month primary and general elections were held and five new city commissioners were elected. By June 18, 1917, the first city manager in Kansas officially began work in the city of Wichita. In less than two hundred days, Wichita had junked its existing governmental structure, unceremoniously dumped the incumbent mayor and commissioners, and inaugurated a new regime. A revolution had occurred without firing a shot.

Official public records do not tell the full story of the politicking that brought city manager government to Kansas. Concealed are the campaign tactics, the charges and countercharges, the media barrage, the issues of "good" and "moral" government, the organizational work of groups, and the key leadership of individuals that carried the plan from idea into reality. This article explores the political roots of the city manager law and its initial implementation in Kansas and focuses upon the political forces behind the successful campaign to bring the first city manager to Kansas.

National Context

City manager government was not invented in Kansas but emerged from the forces of change associated with the Progressive Era—rapid urbanization and growing demands for public services, the application of scientific methods to government, and political reforms grounded in business values and progressive ideals.[3] The Progressives advocated reforming the structure of government, and municipal government became the principal laboratory for their ideas.

The first concrete experiment in a city manager form is most often traced to Staunton, Virginia, at the turn of the century a town of ten thousand population with a bicameral, twenty-two-member city council. In 1908, the Staunton council named a "general manager" to "have entire charge and control of all executive work of the city in its various departments."[4] The Staunton experiment was noticed by Richard S. Childs, a relatively obscure political reformer, who in 1910 melded a city manager into the existing, and at the time increasingly popular, commission plan of municipal government to form the "Lockport Plan"—named in recognition of its sponsorship in the New York legislature by the Lockport Board of Trade. While the Lockport Plan did not take hold in Lockport, the concept received favorable press coverage and was disseminated nationwide. In 1912, Sumter, South Carolina, a town similar in size to Staunton, adopted the Lockport Plan and inaugurated the first city manager government in the United States. A critical breakthrough for city manager government occurred one year later when Dayton, Ohio, became the first large city to adopt the manager plan.

Beyond the impact of the concrete experiments in city manager government, a number of national organizations became important vehicles for advocating and disseminating information on the city manager plan. For example, the National Short Ballot Organization, organized in 1909 and headed by Childs, the intellectual father of the city manager plan, actively publicized the Lockport Plan as a model city charter throughout the 1910s. The National Municipal League, a citizens' organization formed in 1894 to fight boss rule and machine politics in city hall, began to look approvingly at the city manager plan in 1913. The league had in 1898 adopted the "strong mayor" form in its Model City Charter and had in 1911 given support to the commission form. In 1915, after some study, the league formally adopted the city manager plan as a part of its Model City Charter and championed the plan in the pages of its journal, the *National Municipal Review*. Also during this time, the American City Bureau of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce aggressively pushed the city manager plan by providing speakers, advising on city charters, and managing local campaigns for plan adoption.[5]

Kansas Context

On the surface, Kansas surely did not appear in the early 1900s to be fertile ground for the city manager idea. Authority to install a city manager in Kansas required action by the legislature, for Kansas cities had no independent power to adopt the city manager form prior to the enabling legislation of 1917. Even by 1910 the rural population was more than twice the urban population of Kansas, and the legislature, com-

2. El Dorado voters adopted the city manager plan under the new law on the same day and installed the second city manager in Kansas on July 1, 1917. Wichita operated under mayor-council government from the city's founding in 1872 until 1909 when Wichita electors adopted the commission form.

3. For this national history *see* Richard J. Stillman II, *The Rise of the City Manager* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 5-27.

4. Quoted in ibid., 14.

5. Ibid., 31-32.

posed largely of farmers during this period, was not particularly responsive to municipal concerns or urban problems. Legislative procedure in Kansas laid a minefield for the enactment of innovative concepts, particularly for city government. Those groups satisfied with the status quo for Kansas cities, such as incumbent city officials and their allies, local utilities, and others enriched by existing practices, would have multiple opportunities to defeat legislative action. Anyone seeking reform in the municipal establishment, particularly change which would give an appointed manager far-reaching powers over budgets and appointments that not even the governor of Kansas was granted, would be seriously disadvantaged by the legislative process.

In the face of this inhospitable environment, some of the same forces behind the city manager movement nationally were at work in Kansas. Urbanization was under way, and while Kansas cities were still subordinate to rural interests in terms of numbers, they were growing and in many cases rapidly. In the first decade of 1900, the urban population of Kansas increased forty-nine percent, from 330,000 to 492,000. By 1920, another 125,000 persons had moved into Kansas cities, an increase of twenty-five percent over 1910. During the same period a few Kansas cities, such as Wichita, were growing at twice this statewide rate.[6]

Evolving ideas for municipal reform at large in the nation, reinforced by urban growth in Kansas, created the context for organizing Kansas cities. In 1909, the University of Kansas hired Richard Price, a school superintendent from Hutchinson, to establish an extension division at the university, and after visiting the newly created municipal reference bureau at the University of Wisconsin, Price set up a similar operation in Lawrence.[7] Working in consultation with Price, Charles T. Davidson, William Green, and Frank L. Martin, mayors respectively of Wichita, Topeka, and Hutchinson, joined in a call to all Kansas cities for an organizational meeting in March of 1910. Fifty-two delegates representing thirty-two cities met in Wichita, founded the League of Kansas Municipalities, and elected Price as secretary-treasurer. During its first decade the League was essentially an arm of the Lawrence campus, as the university housed the League offices, provided staff to serve League members, set up a reference library, and later published a League journal. League membership grew from 31 cities in 1910 to 123 cities in 1914.

Kenyon Riddle

While the League was in its formative years, the city of Abilene gained some state and even national attention as having a city manager. The Abilene experiment may have been more form than substance, but it did yield the first instance of a Kansas official carrying the label of "city manager." In June of 1913, as a result of a local political squabble, the Abilene city commission employed Kenyon Riddle, Abilene's city engineer who had formerly worked for the community on a project-by-project basis, to supervise public works projects and personnel.[8] Riddle apparently undertook this managerial assignment with vigor, but eighteen months later Abilene's fragile arrangement with Riddle was dissolved. Riddle later commented that "the commissioners became a little jealous of their

6. *Kansas Statistical Abstract 1978* (Lawrence: Center for Public Affairs, University of Kansas, 1978), 18.

7. *See* John G. Stutz, "Brief on the Organization and Some of the Achievements of the League of Kansas Municipalities," *Kansas Government Journal* 36 (September 1950):13–15.

8. *Abilene Daily Reflector*, June 4, 1913.

prerogatives and decided the thing should discontinue."[9]

More important than what Riddle accomplished in Abilene was the publicity he generated for the city manager idea. He was the first Kansas resident to write on the subject, publishing articles in national journals in late 1913 and early 1914.[10] He took to the road advocating city manager government in speeches before various groups across Kansas, and these talks often generated local press coverage.[11] In December of 1914, Riddle was one of eight people nationally to attend the first annual meeting of the City Managers' Association, becoming a charter member of the group.[12] Riddle may not have been an authentic city manager given the standard definition, but because of his enterprise, Abilene was being recognized beyond its boundaries as a city manager city.[13]

Riddle's work in Abilene, although short-lived, caught the attention of the reform-minded elements of the League based largely at the University of Kansas. University staff used the Abilene experiment to publicize the city manager plan. Early in 1914, for example, University of Kansas professor Charles H. Talbot announced from Lawrence that in Abilene "during the first eight months under the commission manager plan there was a savings . . . of over $1,000 . . . due to careful and efficient planning and supervision of the work by the city manager."[14] Later that year at the annual meeting of the League, Riddle, along with Clarence A. Dykstra, a thirty-one-year-old professor and head of the newly created Department of Political Science at the University of Kansas, appeared prominently on the program to promote city manager government.[15] Riddle told delegates of the "success of the commission-manager plan in Abilene," citing grand total savings of $2,647.34 in sixteen months.[16] Dykstra's argument was more eloquent and incisive:

> Although commission government in American cities has been a relative success, proving itself more sensitive to public opinion, more ambitious for the general welfare than orthodox mayor and council plan, . . . ten years of experience with it have made evident certain weaknesses in the system. . . . It is one thing to represent public opinion. It is quite another to carry out public demands wisely, economically and and continuously. . . . The commissioner-manager plan, now being tried out in a score of American cities, adds to the conspicuous merits of commission government, adds to the conspicuous merits of modern business organization. Under this system the commission scours the country for the best available man to act as city manager. He is given authority to run the city, to appoint department heads and be responsible for their efficient service, to make out the city budget and oversee the spending of the money. He is a trained, experienced official who may expect to spend his life in municipal administration.[17]

Dykstra followed his speech with a carefully written and reasoned case for state legislation authorizing the city manager plan, which was published as the lead article in the second issue of the League's new journal, *Kansas Municipalities*.[18]

The efforts of the state's municipal reformers, Riddle, Dykstra, and Talbot, succeeded in placing a proposal to authorize the city manager plan on the state's legislative agenda. The League had formally endorsed enabling legislation for the city manager plan at its annual meeting in October of 1914. This endorsement was limited, however, for issues such as home rule and municipal ownership of local utilities, not city manager government, were clearly the top priorities of the League.[19] Once the 1915 legislative

9. *Seventh Yearbook of the City Managers' Association* (Clarksburg, W. Va.: City Managers' Association, 1921), 144; *see also Second Annual Report of the City Managers' Association* (Niagara Falls, N.Y.: City Managers' Association, 1915), 63.

10. Kenyon Riddle, "The Town Manager as City Engineer," *The American City* 9 (December 1913):523–25 and "The Manager Plan of Municipal Government," *Engineering News* 71 (April 16, 1914): 831–32.

11. *See*, for example, *Abilene Weekly Chronicle*, January 28, 1914; *Lawrence Daily Journal World*, October 10, 1914; and *Wichita Beacon*, January 30, 1915.

12. *Proceedings of the First Annual Convention of the City Managers' Association* (Springfield, Ohio: City Managers' Association, 1914).

13. *See*, for example, "The Coming of the City Manager Plan," *National Municipal Review* 3 (January 1914):48, which notes that Abilene has "changed from the Des Moines type to the city manager type of commission government." The "Des Moines type" is a variation on the commission form. *See also National Municipal Review* 4 (January 1915):102, which lists Abilene as one of twenty-three cities nationally under the commission-manager plan. The National Municipal League was no doubt more interested in promoting than in reporting accurately on the manager plan.

14. *Abilene Weekly Chronicle*, February 11, 1914. Talbot was employed by the University of Kansas to replace Price as secretary-treasurer of the League and head of the Municipal Reference Bureau, responsibilities he assumed from 1915 through 1918. During this time he also served as editor of *Kansas Municipalities*, the League journal which began publication in December 1914.

15. Dykstra was at the time serving as Kansas correspondent for the *National Municipal Review;* he was just beginning a distinguished career as municipal reformer and public servant which included executive secretary of civic associations in Cleveland, Chicago, and Los Angeles (1918–26); commissioner of water in Los Angeles (1926–30); city manager of Cincinnati (1930–37); and president of the University of Wisconsin (1937–45). He also served as president of the International City Managers' Association (1932) and president of the National Municipal League (1937–40).

16. *Lawrence Daily Journal World*, October 8, 1914.

17. Ibid.

18. C. A. Dykstra, "The Commission Manager Plan of City Government," *Kansas Municipalities* 1 (January 1915):13–19.

19. *See* R. J. Higgins, "Kansas Municipal Legislation," *Kansas Municipalities* 1 (December 1914):6.