

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

Section 95, Pages 2821 - 2850

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Creator: Kansas State Historical Society

Date: 1978-2009

Callnumber: SP 906 K13qh

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 217226

Item Identifier: 217226

www.kansasmemory.org/item/217226

KANSAS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Fort Wallace, Kansas
Sunday July 1st 1866
My Dear Brother

Yesterday I received from Father the first letter addressed to me direct at this place. A package of papers in which there were two pairs of stockings also came to hand. The shirt of which Father wrote I did not receive, but expect to do so soon—Father's letters were dated the 13th.

I believe I have received all communications directed to Fort Dodge. My boots have not yet got around, but I have no fear of their not being here soon.

Father informed me that you were to be home by this time, so I am ready to address you at that place. I hope while you are enjoying the pleasures of a visit home you will try and think of me, for my heart will be with you if I am not. I hope you will enjoy the delicacies [*sic*] of civilization this year including strawberries and cherries and I will try and do the same for you in my efforts for happiness and contentment in my wandering over the plains after antelopes and other game as well as minerals.

We are mostly living on game now, and I can assure you the game we have would be considered delicious anywhere else than here—Buffalo have all disappeared from this part of the prairie [*sic*], but we look forward to the fall when we confidently expect their return—This country is infested with more varieties of bugs, insects &c of almost every kind, while rattlesnakes are as common as birds almost in some places.

I have been much interested in some specimens I have collected since I came here. About four miles south of here is a place where are to be [found] great numbers of bowlders [*sic*]. They are very brittle and made of mostly sulphur [*sic*] and its preparations—fissures from the circumference lead to the center where are to be found great things. By means of a pick they are easily broken. We have some monstrous pieces of crystalized sulphur [*sic*], and beautiful specimens of sulphate of strontia (Celestina). Sulphate of Baryta [barium] is in abundance as well as many other impure preparations. I have a collection to bring home. The most beautiful of which are gypsum carbonate and sulphate of iron. I need books on mineralogy, which shall send for.

I am enjoying myself very well. A friend of mine from Fort Dodge has arrived and taken command of the post and things are in better shape than when I first arrived.

Father seems to think it desirable in this country to have force enough to keep off indians. I think there is no doubt about our making a good fight against a large force of indians though I know of no indians near here

and have seen none at the post. In fact I believe there has never been one at the post.

It is very strange that I hear nothing official of my commission, but I have no doubt that it will be here soon....

Love to all
As ever
Your Brother
Thof

Fort Wallace, Kans
Sunday Morning Sept 2nd 1866
Dear Brother

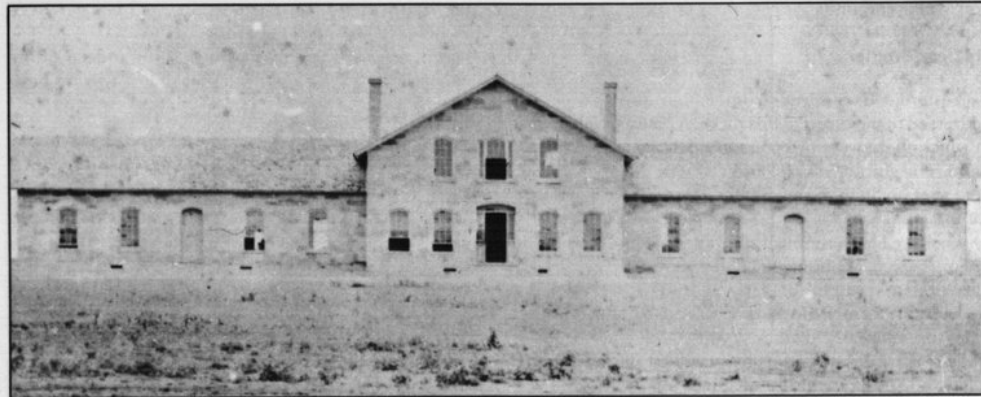
....I am beginning to look out for my trunk and the things which it contained, of which you spoke in your last letter. I can assure you that I have use for many things I have not got. I do not expect however that I will receive it before October....

What did the folks at home think of me so far, in this wild region? I suppose they gave me the credit of being an adventurer unsettled and all that.

I think it would be better for me to accept all the inconveniences and other unpleasant things connected with even a country practice than to have parted from all creation and become an inhabitant of this forgotten region of creation. But that is only in moments of depression for which I think I am excusable considering who my father is. I have almost come to look on life as [a] thing to be born and got through, with much trouble and not much happiness at best. Yet there is much to be striven for, and apparently happy is the man who succeeds in getting what he works for.

At present our pursuits [*sic*] are restricted here: the indians are threatening a general outbreak, with a view to forcing the government to give up this road, through this their country. We go but little out of the Fort and then in parties of six and well armed. It is not improbable that they will interfere with the mails, lest the result will be found to be ruinous to themselves. Another indian war will drive Leo [?], that indian, whose mind is still untutored, from his last hunting ground on the plains. But you need not think that I realize all the romance that is attached to the indian character, for that plays out before a man gets as far west as this. A knowledge of their treachery, cruelty and falseness, generally soon excites a desire for their extermination as the only recourse for obtaining safety.

You would [be] surprised at the number of indians that can be mustered. I suppose to defend this part of the plains could be collected about two thousand indian warriors—If it was not for the present prospects of indian trouble I would start tomorrow for the mountains—yet I do not believe there is going to be any serious



Of the post hospital at Fort Wallace, shown here in July 1868, Turner wrote, "my hospital is an institution for which I have the most ardent affection."

[trouble]. The indians are the greatest blowhards in the world, very little reliance can be placed in what they say: they may kill a man occasionally but they have been doing that all along when they felt like it. Last year however they were pretty bad.

So much for indians. Buffalo are reappearing upon the plains and it is considering the good grass very probable that there will be a great many about this Fall, in which case we will have fair times, if the red men do not interfere with us, in which case again it may be necessary for us to turn our attention to them.

.... We are having an unpleasant change at the post just now. Our commanding officer is going away and another his inferior by far is going to take his place—I would not care if some one would take my place, not that I would expect to get a much better place but in this country one relishes a change. I want to get to the mountains: that is the place for me. You may study your geology from books but I will to study it in the mountains from nature [*sic*].—Did you select me a work on mineralogy—you said in your letter nothing about it.

I am going to invest fifty dollars in a rifle one of Henry's patent¹⁶ that shoots seventeen times without reloading: wouldn't that be a good thing to fight indians with or anybody else—I am already the possessor of a pair of colts six shooters and when I get my glass I will be pretty equipped for the plains.

¹⁶ 16. Rifle made by the Henry family, long-time manufacturers of arms, at Bolton, Pennsylvania. "The Henry rifle of the Civil War was the most remarkable gun of its day." See William J. Heller, ed., *History of Northampton County, Pennsylvania*, 3 vols. (Boston: American Historical Society, 1920), 1:141.

I have yet to buy a horse but for that I can take my own time and that will be when I get more money. I have given up the idea of ever being rich, and do not intend to wait for that however.

Goodbye

As Ever

Your Affct Broth

T. H. T.

Fort Wallace, Kansas.

Oct. 12th 1866

Dear Brother

.... I begin to feel that I have been for a long time without civilization and to long for the good times in Jersey—By cold wind and frosty mornings we are reminded that winter is approaching but other than that nothing exists by which we can judge of change of Seasons—No ripened fruit nor but little change in vegetation. The prospect at best on these pararie [*sic*] is chilling at best—At present buffalo [*sic*] are numerous and the peaceful attitude of the indians allow us to enjoy ourselves to our hearts contents in killing them—During the week we have had an entire change in the garrisons at the post—the new troops seem to be good soldiers—their officers are gentlemanly and kind, and I congratulate myself on being quite as pleasantly located as before—that is one of the most disagreeable features of life in the army and with every change you have to study anew the characters of those with whom you have to associate and there is no situation in which it is so essential [*sic*] to happiness that a correct understanding should exist as in the army. For the present I am doing very well, am living economically and saving a little

money, but it seems a slow process to accumulate a fortune in this way but there may be a better time coming.

I doubt not that you are spending your time pleasantly and profitably [*sic*]—since I last wrote you I have become the possessor of a dog and horse—The dog was given to me and so was the horse—the dog I really believe is the most valuable piece of property, though the horse is a fine riding, little yellow mare, worth about eighty dollars in Jersey—Yesterday I took a ride in the ambulance down the road about twenty miles—saw no indians and had a nice time—Write soon.

As Ever Your Affct Broth
T. H. T.

Fort Wallace, Kansas
Jan 17th 1866 [1867]¹⁷
Dear Brother

Yours of Christmas was received a few days ago and I can assure you that I was as I always am heartily glad to hear from you....Did the "folks at home" know how many lonesome hours their letters helped me to pass they too would write me more frequently. I comparatively seldom hear from them—From Margaret never—How is she and her progeny, Sam, getting along—He doubtless still flourishes. Does he resemble anybody in particular or those mostly whose name he bears?

Since now you have returned I hope you will write long concerning the good times you had....There must have been many things you learned with which I am ignorant—and I hope you will dispense them liberally—my life is now and if I remain in the army for some years yet will be a negative one; in which there is but little to trouble one but there is a corresponding absence of pleasure as you can imagine there is but game and indians to furnish excitement in this part of creation—I thought however it would be preferable to the dogged life of a country doctor—I was once very anxious for you an appointment at West Point—but I would now quite prefer you to pay for your education at Princeton—It is to me a great satisfaction to have you where you are and to know that you are doing as you ought to do. Not then that you are a *shining light* but you are better prepared for anything. I am not one of those who believe that an educated man is necessarily a professional man. You say the world "expects so much of a man who comes out of college." But you must have

found that people are not everywhere as illiberal as they are in Warren County....¹⁸

One part of your last letter surprised me: it was that Father sold the farm—I did not suppose He and Mother would agree to it—I hope however it is all for the best and the many talks and cries over it will now cease.

Our mails are again terribly irregular—no papers for about two weeks. So that we feel very much as if we were in the dark ages. No indian news or any other. You talk of coal; I think there is coal near here. With many wishes for pleasure during the remainder of your Junior year.

I am remain
As ever
Your Broth
Thof

Fort Wallace, Kansas
Feb 8th 1867
Dear Brother

....The best news is that we succeeded during a cold spell two weeks ago in putting up about sixty tons of ice of an excellent quality and I can assure I look forward with great anticipation to next summer when the thermometer shall stand at 125°, and almost wish that the time was here now. The cold time of which I spoke was succeeded by several days of April weather but yesterday it again became cold and snowed and flowed tremendously [*sic*], so that today everybody is housed up and tending to his own business.

We were two weeks without any mail and I can assure you that the mail which arrived last Tuesday was gone through as they seldom are elsewhere. I received the usual papers from home with the usual postscript "all well" upon the margin. In next letters however I think that I shall suggest that "all well" has become chronic.

I have not heard of Edwin's arrival home. From the papers you doubtless see accounts of indian troubles. Indeed everybody anticipates serious difficulties during the spring Summer but their depredations [*sic*] have thus far been confined to the country north and west of here about three hundred miles. There are a great many indians between here and the states¹⁹ but so far they are perfectly peaceable and it is hoped that they will remain so.

I was hunting day before yesterday with the interpreter of the post. He shot what is known as a blacktail deer. It was certainly the prettiest game I ever saw and I

17. Apparently Turner forgot to change his calendar. As the letter is addressed to brother Daniel at college, and at the time he was in his junior year, the correct year is 1867; Daniel graduated in 1868.

18. Warren County, located in the northwest section of New Jersey, was the home county of the Turner family.

19. Although Kansas ceased to be a territory and became a state a few years earlier, in 1861, it is interesting that Turner still referred to the regions east of Kansas as the "states."



would give a farm almost to have made the lucky shot. As soon as the weather moderates I am going out again to try for another.

I see by the papers that they are having great times in Congress and I should judge that politics generally was exciting. I suppose you hear discussed in all kinds of shapes the impeachment [of President Andrew Johnson] and everything else but we are beyond all kinds of excitements of that nature.

Father has written nothing concerning the sale of the farm. I hope you will post me as best you can concerning everything.

As ever Love Brother
Thof.

Fort Wallace, Kansas

Sunday Evening 8 P.M. March 10th 1867

Dear Brother

....There is one thing I want you to help me impress on the folks at home: that is that Fletch goes to school in the Spring without fail. It would be not only cruel, but wicked if he did not.

I was glad to hear that you have taken up German. I know better than you do what an advantage it will be to you if you are ever placed as I have been. To say nothing of the satisfaction it would give me. I would have been worth a good deal to have known some modern language when I was examined, as I would have gotten more rank by it. Your fears that I might be sick of the army are without any foundation, as I am as fondly attached to the army as when I came into it one year ago, and I think I have every reason to be so, as I am doing better on less capital and with less work than I could do anywhere else.

In answer to your request, I would state Fort Wallace is situated on the Smokey [sic] Hill stage route, within two (2) miles of the Colorado line. It is placed on the south fork of the Smokey Hill River, a stream that is by no means a river. I think you will have no difficulty in locating the Fort. The past week has been one continuous storm of snow, rain and wind with a good prospect of no immediate change....

Good night

As Ever

Your Affectionate Brother

Thof

Fort Wallace, Kansas

March 29, 1867

Dear Brother

....I continue to write home as usual without anything in return on their part. Your letter of the 17th inst was received this morning and brought me the only

news I have had from Edwin for a long time. I am afraid that he is not feeling satisfied with the world but as I am powerless for aiding him I shall patiently wait.

....As everybody talks about the weather so will I. I can assure you that its state has been such as to bring about a decided proneness to profanity. Severe cold and snow alternating with wind rain and fair weather have been the order of things for over a month.

Geese and ducks however have appeared and what they have contributed to the pacification of our stomachs has also enabled us the better to bear the ills and evils of the life. That is one thing we do in this country, live well; which is done on about one dollar and a quarter per day. Prices are paid for everything that is not furnished by government, that it would seem to you high indeed. The first eggs we had for about nine or ten months we secured the first of this month at a cost of sixty-dollars for sixty-dozen, and a half dozen of us eat the whole [of] them in three weeks....

Another officer and myself were out hunting and observed a moving crowd on the brow of a hill about two miles off and after considerable looking we discerned six indians advancing toward us on foot—As we were mounted and they were not, we had not much to fear and awaited their approach and had a “pow wow” with them—We learned that they belonged to the tribe Cheyenne which is an ugly tribe to deal with—They informed us that there was a “heap” of Cheyennes over the hill. “Heap” is all the english they know by which to express a great many—They said that they were “good indians” but they were going to do a “heap of fight” this summer. I do not know that I even told you that I had bought the gun of which I wrote you—I can assure you that I like it very much and think I could if necessary do good shooting with it. The last time I was out I shot a duck with it (single ball) at sixty yards.

A man in this country never feels safe without being well armed for there is no trusting indians and when you think there are no indians around, you are in the most danger of meeting them. But since I wrote home last we [had] a little expedition after them—A man reported here last Tuesday morning that the indians had attacked a station twelve miles west of here. One of the officers that was up at the time came in and woke me to tell me the news. As they were so far off and there [was] no danger of being disturbed before morning I “keeled” over and went to sleep again. But after having slept an hour and a half I was again awakened and informed that soldiers were going after the indians and that I was expected to go along. I made ready as soon as I could and joined the party. We reached the scene of operations about half past seven but the indians had disappeared—nor have they been heard of since—It is not

Thof's Dragon

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supposed that there have been in the country over one hundred and fifty of them altogether.

I have no idea that there is going to be any very serious indian difficulties in this part of the country this year....

I remain as ever
Your Affct Brother
Thof.

Fort Wallace, Kansas
April 26th 1867
Dear Brother

I account [*sic*] for having not heard from you by attributing it to irregular mails as they have been quite disturbed for over a week past—I have also been deprived of the pleasure of hearing from home. Our noble red brethren after having kept us in expectation of a breakout on their part for some time have commenced open depredations [*sic*] along the whole road so that the indian war may now be said to have extended over the whole of this country.²⁰ The indians have more powerful alliances among themselves than have ever existed before and to subdue them is going to be attended with great difficulty but that it is going to result disastrous to the red man there is little doubt. Of course it is not going to be finished this year, but the time has come and the interest of the country requires that the indians must leave to the whites what they, the indians, prize so highly—You have doubtless seen by the papers that it is proposed to prevent the indians hunting or traveling between the Arkansas and Platte rivers, and that is what is the matter as that includes nearly all of the best hunting grounds on the plains. The indian thinks that they are going to starve to death and that they might as well die fighting. They have made a good commencement toward using up this stage road, having "run off" all the horses and mules for over one hundred miles. The stage company keep stations and change horses every ten miles, so that you can understand how it effects the time of arrival of our mails. We have seen no indians near here since the outbreak—They murdered three white men about one hundred miles east of here one day last week—You can keep yourself posted as to affairs in this better from the New York papers than from any thing I can write you. Nobody feels at all alarmed about the aspect of affairs but everybody is looking forward to the end of this war, anticipating a long and easy time of doing service on the frontier. I think the army would rather whip the indians into subjection than to secure

peace by forming a treaty with them as they care nothing for treaties but continue depredations [*sic*] afterward without fear of punishment. Within the past five years there have been many treaties made with the indians without any good results—For my own part I am not spoiling for a fight and feel some satisfaction in knowing that I am not farther west than Kansas.

In the last communication from home they spoke of expecting Edwin home very soon. I await news from home being anxious to learn where Fletch is going to school. I think I have written you a pretty good indian letter and shall close lest I tire as well as frighten you.

As ever
Your Broth
Thof

Fort Wallace, Kansas
Sun Even May 5th 1867
Dear Brother

Last Sunday I volunteered to go with an officer, taking troops down the road to be left as guards at the different stage stations. We traveled east over eighty miles making the trip in that direction in two days, that is we marched thirty miles on the first day and over fifty on the second—Our return was accomplished in two days and a half—As I rode my pony I feel quite flattered to know that it is able to make so great a journey in so short a time. I was somewhat surprised that we saw no indians on the road, yet there's no doubt that they saw us everyday and would have given us a fight if they had dared to do so, but we were well fixed and would have made some indians "bite the dust" if they had disturbed us. I enjoyed the trip very much, owing mostly to change it afforded as I had been at this place near a year without having been over fifteen miles away from it. We saw quite a lot of game on the road in the way of antelope buffalo &c but I did not indulge in any shooting—You have no idea what a peculiar class of people is to [be] met with in this country—Nor can you realize till you understand how to conceive of an uninhabited desert, over which thieving murdering band of indians only roam except on the outland routes. It seems that there are men made for everything and it seems that a certain class were made to keep stage stations and be satisfied at sixty-dollars—They have or at least seem to have no fear of death, for to all appearances self preservation. The first law of nature forms no part of their constitution.

General [Winfield Scott] Hancock and Gnl [George Armstrong] Custer are making arrangements to conduct a campaign against the indians.²¹ What it will amount to

20. The "breakout" refers to the Cheyenne leaving land which had been assigned to them south of the Arkansas River in the 1865 treaty. There were also rumors that the Cheyenne planned to attack Kansas settlements and the trails.

21. The Hancock campaign in the spring of 1867 was intended to drive the Cheyenne south of the Arkansas River; Custer was in command of part of the U.S. Seventh Cavalry that gave pursuit.

I do not know but that after a considerable [amount] of fighting the indians will be reduced to submission there can be no doubt.

With ourselves everything is fair—Weather is pleasant and the prairie is beginning to put on a beautiful appearance—Our mails are running triweekly and as soon as the stock which the indians stole from the road is replaced we will again have daily mail...

If I am not transferred farther west, I intend to try and get home next winter but am afraid I can not accomplish it. I hope Fletcher will be fortunate in the selection of a school—I have written Father repeatedly urging that he go to school this Spring without fail.²²

I am living very pleasantly at present; this post is being rapidly completed.²³

There are making so many improvements as to entirely alter the aspect of the post. If I ever go east I will want to bring with me many things before I again get into this forsaken region [?] as for instance a good shot gun &c.

I hope you will write me soon and regularly—I should [think] you would be in a pleased state of mind as you approach the entrance into your senior year—I look anxiously for the papers you promised to send me.

As ever

Thof.

Fort Wallace, Kansas
Saturday June 8th 1867
Dear Brother

.... Two weeks ago paid a visit to Denver City which is in Colorado Territory about two hundred miles west of here. Being situated at the foot of the mountains, sights truly grand are to be seen, but it is not for my pen to convey to you anything of the beauties of Pikes Peak or any other of the many peaks and things to be seen there.

You can hardly understand how one feels after having traveled five hundred miles over a pararie [sic] which is almost a desert to come suddenly upon a nicely built-brick city of 6000 inhabitants. It is called a golden city and makes good its claim to that title by charging about ten prices for everything, as well as for amusements rational and otherwise. I had taken while there the photographs which I enclose you—I had been

22. Whatever the difficulties had been with the father, they were settled. Fletcher attended Schooley Mountain Seminary, located just outside Hacketstown, New Jersey.

23. The construction of Fort Wallace is fully described in R. Douglas Hurt, "The Construction and Development of Fort Wallace, Kansas, 1865-1882," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 43 (Spring 1977): 44-55.

banished to the pararies [sic] so long that I was satisfied with a three days visit and since my return have persued [sic] the "even tenor of my ways" with unaccustomed satisfaction excepting at such times as when our noble red Brethren perform some of their surprising feats which frequently surprise and may somewhat intimidate—You have of course seen by the papers there is an indian war going on. It is true that the indians are on the warpath throughout the whole country between the Missouri frontier and those on the Pacific Coast.²⁴

I suppose there are not much short of forty or more thousand warriors at work and they work with a vengeance [sic] "you bet"—There are not many in this country at present, though they are scattered in small bodies all over along the road stealing and killing whenever they get an opportunity—Four scalped men have been at this post within the past week. [They] were all citizens—From the last two the indians got among the effects five thousand dollars in money—they were men who had been at work in the mines and were going east to enjoy the fruits of their success.

At the post things have generally gone on quietly. Dangers without keep us within safe distance of the post. Some indians came one night to the yard in which the mules were kept to try and steal some, but in that they succeeded in only so far as to get one mule and having fired five (5) shots left. It made things pretty lively but as I slept all through, it did not disturb me much—What course things are going to take I do not [know]. These fellows all want killings but they are going to get their share of white men before its done—I expect you anticipate a "heap" of good times while at your home in vacation.... Of late I hear very seldom from home.

Write soon—as ever

Your Affct Broth

Thof.

Fort Wallace, Kansas
Sept. 20th 1867
Dear Brother

.... I have not much of an excuse to offer you for not writing. I believe I have succeeded in writing regularly [sic] home, but beyond that I have done little for some time. I have not felt at all well for some time, in fact I have not been exactly streight [sic] since we had cholera at the post when I was worked very hard, and as the weather was very hot and I felt of course a good deal of anxiety, because pretty near played out, so much so that on a couple of occasions I have been confined to my bed for two or three days each. But the cool weather

24. Although Hancock's campaign ended in May that year, the unrest continued.

has recuperated me greatly and I feel as though I was myself again. Of course I have not worried the people at home with anything of the kind, nor do I want you to do so—I suppose of course we are much nearer autumn than you are as the altitude at the place is near 2,500 feet. Yet we beat you on cold as well as hot weather—During the prevalence of cholera the thermometer stood 100° in the shade most every day. One year ago yesterday we had snow at this place—Yesterday it did not snow but we had a cold storm. You must not be despondent for any neglect with which they may treat you at home—I have heard nothing from home for some weeks except a Register and that has been minus “all well” on the margin.

I am going to pay them off in their own coin some of these days—It was a good time to have done it when indian fighting was brisk or even since. Yet I can hardly afford to be cruel to them if they are cruel to me.

...I nearly went wild over an apple today. The first I have had eaten in nearly two years. We have had a few cucumbers this year but with cholera staring them in the face they found few ready customers—If you ever see me in the East you will see me gluttonize, you bet—I am saving up an awful capacity for everything fresh as well as vile—I wonder how a fresh peach would look. But I will not always be in such a land as this and I am living much on anticipation of good times coming. If the cursed indians were only quiet, we would have been hunting and fishing, but I am afraid with all the aid of indian commissioners we are not going [to have] much peace very soon—The indians have of late invented a new dodge and quite an ingenious [*sic*] one—They are cutting down the telegraph line to get the wire out of which they make a very effective and dangerous arrow, far surpassing their old wooden one with ironheads.

You have of course seen how they fire buildings by shooting into them arrows with gun caps on their heads around which is rapt [*sic*] a rag containing powder.

A Lieutenant from this post a couple of weeks ago got into a fight with the indians and they captured from him the fastest horse in all this country—a horse which was worth a thousand dollars—I do not regret I do not own a fast horse as what indians can't steel [*sic*] white men will if they can.

I hope you will not grow impatient waiting for this. But write me soon.

As ever
Your Broth
Thof.

Of the cholera at the post and Turner's work in “arresting” the epidemic, Capt. Miles W. Keogh reported:

Two days before leaving Colonel H. C. Bankhead Comdg 5th Inf arrived at this Post and notified me of his intention of staying here unless otherwise ordered and of course assuming command of this post....

Cholera has broken out very badly in the 5th Inf and I am sorry to say Mrs. Bankhead has died from that disease in fact for a few days it has been appalling.

Thanks to the great energy and professional merits of our Post Surgeon not a single case has proved fatal in this garrison and although fully occupied with his duties here he has also had to attend to the patients of the 5th Inf. Dr. Turner has succeeded in arresting the fearful disease.

I trust the Surgeon General will show his appreciation of the great services rendered by Dr. Turner particularly when he had to take the place of a surgeon rendered helpless either by fear or not of the proper spirit which should activate all medical men under such circumstances. I presume however this has already been reported by the commanding officer of the 5th Infantry.

I have been performing the duties of Post Commandant until Colonel Bankhead got his men into the Garrison and arranged his affairs after his irreparable loss....²⁵

Fort Wallace, Kansas
Sunday Oct 13th 1867
Dear Brother

...Everything with us is exceedingly stale: weather fine and everybody healthy—Today we had a considerable of a scare—The atmosphere had been all day, in fact for several days exceedingly hazy, but was supposed to be nothing more than that condition which always exists more or less and has given to this region the name of Smokey [*sic*] Hill. But at four o'clock fire was observed approaching from the North at a rapid rate—The wind was blowing as winds only blow in this country and for a time things were decidedly [*sic*] lively—It was evidently the work of indians and had run a great ways. To us it is rather a serious event as there being no grass in this vicinity there will be no buffalo about here this winter. The grass having been previously burned south of the river.

25. Report, Capt. Miles W. Keogh, August 16, 1869, Selected Letters Sent, Fort Wallace, Kansas, 1866-1869, vol. 57, Records of the War Department, United States Army Commands, Record Group 98, National Archives, Washington, D.C. For a full report of this epidemic, see Captain Turner's September 1, 1867, report in War Department, Surgeon General's Office, Circular No. 1, *Report on Epidemic Cholera and Yellow Fever in the Army of the United States, During the Year 1867* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1868), 54-55.

There is now going a treaty with the indians on the Arkansas from which it is hoped peace for a while will result....²⁶

Politics do not trouble us much and if we had anything else to do, we would not read [about] them at all. The Railroad is now within one hundred and forty miles of us and advancing at the rate of a mile and a half a day—Next Spring or Summer will see us in railroad communication.

As Ever

Your Affct Broth
Thof.

Fort Wallace, Ks

Dec 20th 1867

Dear Brother

Your last written after you reached home was duly received but found things with us as monotonous as ever—The holidays have been interspersed with the coldest days of the season and the greatest amount of snow but that has not exceeded an inch or so. Christmas was passed pleasantly in due form—Good dinner &c was enjoyed with a relish only equaled by our longing for that which is civilized and as far as I was concerned resulted in neither headache nor heartache.

On Friday last a party of us started on the prairie [*sic*] ostensibly for the purpose of hunting but in reality for the purpose of procuring the skeleton of an extinct monster which is embedded some fourteen miles north of here. It was found to rest in a slate hill similar in appearance to those which are found on the road between home and Newton [New Jersey].

We did a considerable [amount] of digging but the majority of us being constitutionally opposed to hard work we concluded at some future day to secure reinforcements and renew our efforts in that direction which all started in pursuit of a herd of buffalo which appeared in the distance. One of our number having been injured by the falling of a horse, with our game once wounded, we occupied an old indian camp where we were merry for the night though it became cold and snowed.

The day following I returned to the post though the others remained out till yesterday.

In a few days I am going out for the "critter" of which I spoke. If as valuable as it appears, it will be forwarded to some eastern scientific institution. At any rate I will

26. Presumably the Treaty of Medicine Lodge which was agreed upon in October 1867. Several Plains tribes agreed to withdraw to reservations and to desist from attacks on railroad construction workers.

inform you of results. For the present goodnight. Write me upon your return to Princeton.

As Ever

Thof

Turner probably intended to write Dr. Edw. D. Cope²⁷ in Philadelphia. As evidenced by the following letter, Cope had already been in contact with the army surgeon.

Edw. D. Cope to Turner

Hall of Academy Natl²⁸

Sciences, Philadelphia

12/3 1867

Respected Friend

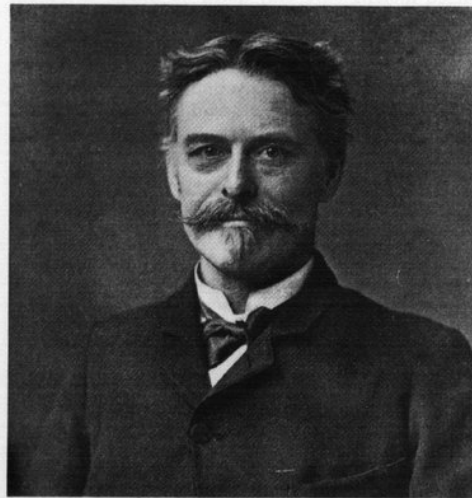
Dr. Turner

Dr. Jn L. LeConte²⁹ who has just returned to this City from the West brought with him from Fort Wallace

27. Edward D. Cope (1840-1897) was curator of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from 1865 to 1873. Information on Cope courtesy of Carol M. Spawn, manuscript/archives librarian, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

28. The Academy of Natural Sciences, now located at Nineteenth Street and the Parkway in Philadelphia, was established in 1812.

29. John Lawrence LeConte (1825-1883) had evidently visited Turner to examine his discovery. LeConte, an entomologist and physician, was one of the incorporators of the National Academy of Sciences. See Allen Johnson, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*, 20 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), 11:89-90.



It was Edward D. Cope who studied Turner's scientific finds and who kept a correspondence with Turner in which Cope, a native of Philadelphia, used the pronouns "thee" and "thou" which are often associated with a Quaker background.

portions of two vertebrae of a large vertebrate, perhaps a reptile, from the [?] Cretaceous formation perhaps 12-15 miles from the Fort. He states that the greater part of the creature could be obtained in a more or less perfect condition, as it was to a considerable extent exposed. He states that the Indians prevented his procuring it when there. As the few remains brought indicate something of considerable importance to paleontology and geology I enquired of Dr. LeConte as to the possibility of procuring the remainder. He advised me to write to thee on the subject, a liberty which I now take.

It would be important to procure all of the remains if possible—but especially portions of the cranium with teeth, the feet or limbs, scapular and thoracic [sic] elements and portions of the pelvis; of as many vertebrae as possible. If the pieces cannot be extracted without breaking, let it be so, as they can be readily mended on reaching the Academy.

The Academy will pay all expenses, though we would request that as little of the mineral matrix, as may be convenient may accompany the bones.

Hoping that the examination may result in a discovery of some value to science and interest to both of us. I remain truly thy friend

Edw. D. Cope

Curator Ac. Nat. Sci.

P.S. Dr. LeConte is anxious to have the results of the examinations included in the report of the geology survey of the Pacific R. R. Route.

In February 1868, John L. LeConte, M.D., published his survey notes, a portion of which gave mention to Dr. Turner and Fort Wallace.

....June 24. Arrived at Fort Wallace....I received from Dr. Turner, U.S.A., the medical officer of the post, several fine crystals of sulfate of baryta, found in geodes, with calcite and selenite, about seven miles west of the fort. The hostility of the Indians prevented a visit to the locality. Dr. Turner had found in the same ravine with the geodes some irrecoznizable fragments of fossil bone.

I obtained, while at the fort, three imperfect vertebrae of a large reptile, pronounced by Professor E. D. Cope to be of Dinosaurian or Plesiosaurian affinities. Mr. Comstock, the guide and scout attached to the fort, informed me that almost the whole skeleton of this animal is exposed in a ravine fifteen miles northwest of the post....On the termination of the Indian war, Dr. Turner explored the locality above mentioned, and recovered about 35 feet of the vertebral column, with fragments of the extremities and head of this gigantic reptile: He has liberally presented these valuable specimens to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Phila-

delphia, and they are now on their way to that institution.³⁰

Fort Wallace, Ks

Sunday Jan 19th 1867 [1868]³¹

Dear Brother

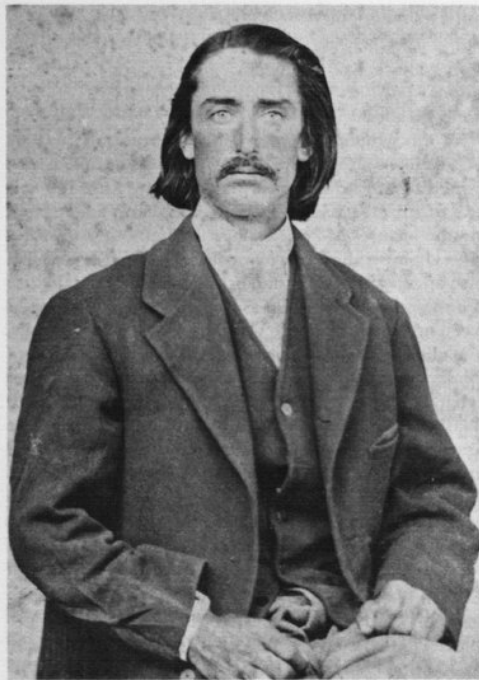
Yours written after your return to Princeton was duly received as was also the book which was of little use to you. Indeed I would be surprised to have known that it was of any great use to any body. It is simply a note book on the lectures of Prof. Bache.... When one knows but little chemistry he wants to recollect it as long as possible. As you must be aware [one in] my position has little use for the practice of it. I do as well as conveniently can to keep up with the outside world in knowledge generally, but quite as much on political views as another. I do not understand the course of things with you and wonder what kind of an affair they are trying to get up in Washington. I suppose you are taking however little interest in it. I suppose too that at your say you are feeling unsettled over the terminus now of your course.... Finish your course well and come out of college with good habits and the world, if there [is] any left after the Congress and President get through their quarrel, will find you a place. There is a surplus of inefficient men but not of good ones.

A letter from Ed was received.... To which I have just replied. Though I could only reiterate the same old news that I have been relating to them ever since I came to this country, with the exception of a few particulars I gave him of a murder which was committed at this post on Tuesday last. It was done by our guide and interpreter³² of whom I have written before and of whom I thought so much. I have been all over this country with him warming over and sleeping on the prairie with him little thinking him apt to such an act as he has [committed] but people in this country, none of them, has regard for life and he being probably a half breed Indian and having lived among them for a good part of his life, would have true the circumstances which have surrounded him, was a worse man than he is. It would seem that he considered the man whom he killed owed him \$2,200, twenty-two hundred dollars which he

30. John L. LeConte, *Notes on the Geology of the Survey for the Extension of the Union Pacific Railway, E. D., from the Smoky Hill River, Kansas, to the Rio Grande* (Philadelphia: February 1868), 10-11.

31. Another date confusion. The letter is addressed to brother Daniel at college and there is reference to his completion of schooling which occurred in 1868.

32. Presumably this refers to William Comstock (1842-1868) a scout and interpreter at Fort Wallace who killed a contractor when he refused to pay a debt. See Mrs. Frank C. Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and Its Relation to the Frontier," *Kansas Historical Collections* 1926-1928 17 (1928): 226.



This carte-de-visite of William Comstock was found among the Turner papers.

seemed unwilling to pay and therefore his life was taken in a most cold blooded manner. It was a Colorado affair done up in perfect style. I hope you will write soon as you said you would all about affairs at home.

As Ever

Your Brother

T. H. Turner

Fort Wallace, Kansas

Sunday Evening Feb 2nd 1868

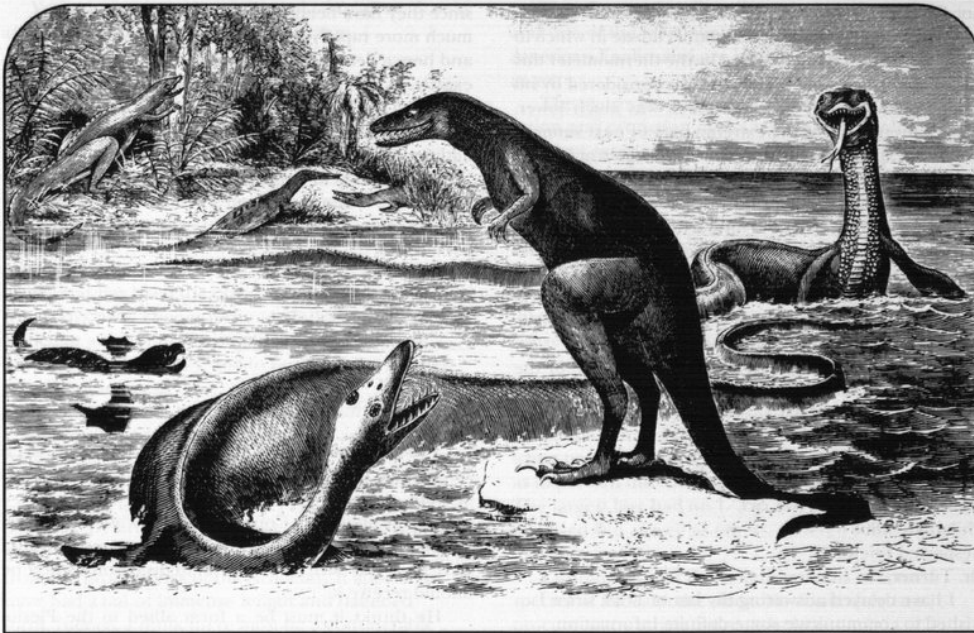
Dear Brother

.... The murderer of whom I wrote you in my last—has made good his escape from justice and is now doubtless as much at his ease somewhere in Colorado only one among the host of his class who go to make up so large a portion of this country's society. The man "who did the killing is by means a noted character among so many of his cast[e]." This man was discharged by the civil authorities at Hays City, the advance tower on the line of the Pacific Railroad, for the want of evidence though a witness swore that he saw him commit the deed. Hays

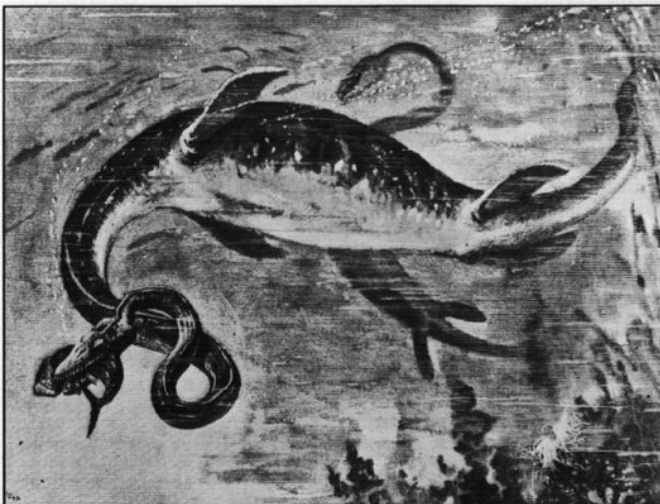
City by the way is a fair sample of railroad towns in the far west at present—It is said to contain two thousand inhabitants but they are of the most transient character—The town is made up mostly of houses framed in eastern cities and brought out and put up wherever they are required—Most of buildings at present at Hays were formerly located at a temporary city some seventy miles east of Hays.³³ At a point about forty miles west of Hays, the present terminus of the Rail Road, a new land office has been opened and it is most probable the city will again be retransported westward. Wither the star of empire takes its course. During the summer or Spring coming the Rail Road will probably reach us when we expect to see Hays City located near us—It will probably be of a more permanent character than the others as this is most probably the point from which the R R will turn its course toward New Mexico; a branch extending toward Denver with a view to intersecting the Pacific road which is to run through Nebraska—whether I will be at this point to welcome the arrival of the locomotive, I cannot tell. Though it may possibly be to my interest to do so—I do not recollect that I ever wrote you concerning the fossil skeleton which I have been for a long time trying to secure. It proved to be a huge affair and was located in an almost perpendicular bank of slate hill which made up one side of a ravine. It was located near its bottom and required no small amount of labor in its excavation—It is probably a reptile of the cretaceous [*sic*] formation. I have in my possession boxed ready for transportation to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences something over thirty-five feet of its vertebrae with about four inches of the anterior portion of its head with imperfect teeth; imperfect because at the sockets—I can assure I sincerely regret this imperfection. There is however enough of this to lead me to suppose that the critter had a head little short of four feet in length. We also secured part of one of its jaws containing teeth—There is a large amount of bony matter contained in a very hard stone matrix, some of which retains its connection with the backbone. Among the rest is a portion of a limb, a perfect bone eight or ten inches in length, which will assist in no small way toward its identification. The whole, stone and all, weighs about eight or nine hundred pounds, on which the Academy will have an express bill of no small proportions to pay. What is it?—a senior ought to know—

Weather with us is lovely though much colder than you are used to is by no means so severely felt—were it

33. As the Kansas Pacific (the Eastern Division of the Union Pacific) neared Hays, many of the buildings that had served as temporary structures at the previous construction sites were moved to Hays. The "town" moved west with the railroad.



Cope wrote Turner that he was preparing illustrated plates of the *Elasmosaurus*, but in his haste to present this find to the scientific community, Cope transposed the creature's head and tail, as evidenced in his woodcut of *Elasmosauri*. Unfortunately for Cope, the mistake was discovered by his rival in paleontology, Othniel C. Marsh of Yale University. (Marsh, however, was not infallible; it was he who attached the wrong head to *Brontosaurus*.)



Nov.
1897
In 1879 Century Magazine recounted Cope's work and presented this artistic rendition of *Elasmosaurus platyrus*. The article also noted that remains of six species of fish, new to science, were found under the "Fort Wallace skeleton."

not for the absence of rain and the presence of high wind, this would be a most delightful climate in which to live—The lowest point reached by the thermometer this year was 15° below zero and that was considered by no means extraordinary—as last year it was much lower. We are preparing for the extreme heat of next summer when we expect to see the thermometer again at 125° by laying in a large amount of ice.

I congratulate myself on having done a pretty good days work, having written a long letter to Father, one to Fletch and others and as my room is at present occupied by two New Englanders who are discussing Bowdoin, Yale and Dartmouth in anything but a puritanical style—So I shall close fearing if I continue I shall make confusion more confounded.

Goodnight—Be assured of the continuance of the love
Of your Brother
Thof.

Edw. D. Cope to Turner

Hall of the Academy Nat. Sci.
Phila 2/13 1868
Respected Friend
Dr. Turner

I have delayed answering thy last of 1/28, since I wished to communicate some definite information respecting the means made of transportation. On this head I can only say, as the result, send it on, addressed E. D. Cope, Academy N. Sci. Phil. Penna. etc, by usual express, and the institution here will be of course at risk and expense. It is very desirable that the specimens should be packed in such a way as to avoid friction or breakage in case of sudden jars. To accomplish this each single piece or mass, should be so surrounded in the hay or other packing as to allow of some elasticity of contact with the next. It is also important that any box should not be too large to bear the rough handling of so much weight: otherwise it may be broken, even much lost.

Thy account interests me much, and thy discoveries will no doubt furnish another valuable page for the book of nature, and a source of instruction in Science. The fragments I have seen indicate a form allied to Plesiosaurus, but for its explanation we must await the arrival of the specimens. It is to be hoped that further examinations may bring to light some perfect teeth or crowns at least, as they are very important to the determination of the closer grades of affinity.

I hope thee will not fail to continue the explorations into the vertebrate and other extinct faunae of the neighborhood of the post. Discoveries among the fossil vertebrates are always of the highest interest,

since they have been replaced by successive types much more rapidly than any other group of animals and hence determine the successions of periods more exactly, as well as geographical distribution.

I read thy letter to the Academy and lent it to Dr. LeConte. The Dr. was much pleased to see some additional results of his visit.

Hoping to hear from thee at thy early convenience I conclude. When the season will admit of it, we hope to hear of thy further successful explorations in the Cretaceous.

With esteem
I am thy friend
Edw. D. Cope
Corr. Sec. Ac. Nat. Sci. Phila.

Fort Wallace Kansas
Feb 22nd 1868
Dear Brother

....I assure you with truth that I would have been horrified at your state had known what my "confounded serpent" was.

I wrote about it to Cope Curator of Academy Natural Sciences at Philadelphia giving about the same account I gave you. Was sure however not to disappoint when he should receive it.

He thinks it must be a form allied to the Plesiosaurus though he preferred awaiting its arrival before giving a definite [*sic*] opinion—though as to its worth he was freir [*sic*] in his expressions. He wished me to express it through from West, a procedure which would cost about one hundred and fifty dollars. To save the institution expense I shall keep it for two or three days and forward by government train to the Railroad which is about one hundred miles—By express it would cost about 12cts per pound and the critter weighs near half a ton.

Goodbye
As ever
Thof

Hope New Jersey³⁴
Saturday March 21st 1868
Dear Brother

Your last was received—If you cannot without disadvantage to yourself in the closing up of your course, visit home I certainly shall see you at Princeton—Father desires that all or as many as possible should be at home together before I return....

34. Apparently Turner visited his home while on leave. A letter from Edwin Turner to his brother Daniel, not reprinted here but dated March 16, 1868, remarked: "Thof has come home very unexpectedly—for about 2 weeks."

You are aware my time is limited—We all await your answer as it will influence my own action....
As ever
Your Brother
Thof

Edw. D. Cope to Turner

Philada, Pa.

3/25 1868

My respected friend

Dr. Turner

The invoice of fossils has been received in good order, and has been the object of my examination for some days past. Thee is fortunate in having sent a sufficient amount of surrounding matrix to secure protection to the bones, and to furnish some smaller remains of interest.

There appear to be two species of Saurians both Enaliosaurus and allied to Plesiosaurus as I concluded from LeConte's fragments.

The bulk belongs to a large species of genus different from Plesiosaurus, which I call *Elasmosaurus platyurus*. Its structure is in many respects interesting, and I will shortly send thee a preliminary account of it from the proceedings of the Academy. It appears to have had a tail of immense length and flattened form. Indeed, I think there must be a considerable number of vertebrae of the dorsal and cervical series remaining in the cliff. I have no doubt the remainder of the cranium is there and can be recovered. This will be a most desirable [?] to be restored.

I wish to ask, whether the small rounded vertebrae came from the same line of skeleton & whether they were nearer to the muzzle or whether the small flattened vertebrae were from that region. I doubt much whether the former belong to the large species, & if not, the muzzle adjoining is not likely to either. I doubt the connection of some of the pieces with the same as some very small vertebrae sent. A statement by thee of the relative positions of the rounded small, the very small vertebrae, & the muzzle will be of value.

We are taking out the elements of the pelvic & scapular arches which will be almost perfect. Let me ask thee to look near the position where the belly of the animal may have been & see whether there are any slender bones, such as occur in Plesiosaurs. They are arranged thus



Thee has made a fine discovery in paleontology, and one of the most important in this country, since American Enaliosaurs are known from fragments only as yet.

The matrix is remarkably favorable for the preservation and extraction of the remains, and holds out excellent prospects for future explorations. It is quite possible that thee has found a bone bed which will have a great horizontal extent, and produce the remains of the Cretaceous fauna as remarkably as the Bad Lands of Nebraska do the Miocene. I would encourage thee to give what time and attention thee can to it, as possibly being the basis of fine results for thyself and science. Write me word as to thy needs & convenience in the matter.

The fossils were sent with about the right amount of matrix to prevent breaking by the men. I would suggest an improvement in the packing. Each mass should have had a thicker wrapping of hay (still more when paper is used) & the box should be so packed as to prevent the rubbing and moving of the pieces. The largest box had on 1/3 to 1/4 vacant space when it arrived & it as well as others, suffered some injury on that account.

I would add that there were remains of some 5 species of fishes in the shale. No doubt thee can procure many others more complete.

Hoping to hear from thee at thy convenience
I remain with regard

Thy friend

Edw. D. Cope

Corr. Sec. Acad. Natl. Sci. Phil

Edw. D. Cope to Turner

Hall of the Academy Philadas

5/3 1868

My esteemed friend

Dr. Turner

I have had the pleasure of reading thy last in reference to further explorations in the neighborhood of Fort Wallace. It is a matter of regret that the Indian disturbances render it unsafe to pursue investigations in the beds of the region, but no doubt the time will come ere long when such examinations can be readily made.

I will send thee a copy of the Proceedings containing a diagnostic account of the *Elasmosaurus* in a short time, and later a 4 to [?] of the Fossil Reptilia of North America with 4 to [?] plates of various species including thy discoveries. This is nearly ready for the press. In the meantime, any additions thee can make to the record will be gladly received and pub-

lished. If it is thy design to forward specimens thee writes about, the Academy as heretofore bears all expense. Anything throughing [*sic*] additional light on the structure of this singular reptile is very desirable; and any remains of fishes molluscs or other organic remains, contribute to our knowledge of the stratigraphy of the region, and its parallelism with other beds of other regions. They are therefore also much desired for the museum or autopsy.

I recently made the curious discovery of some extensive fresh water beds of the lowest cretaceous series in New Jersey. They had been marked on the maps, but their age has not been well known nor any fossils found in them. I found four sp. *Unio* [?] and 2 *Anodonta* [?], all fine large sp. and probably nine. I hope yet to find terrestrial sauria in it at a future time. I have also just found another remarkable saurian from the N. J. Cretaceous, which approaches closely to the snakes, tho much larger than any serpent known. I call it *Pythoguornan Depressum* [?].³⁵

Hoping to hear again at thy convenience I remain as ever thy friend.

Edw. D. Cope
Corr. Secr. Ac. N. Sci.

Fort Wallace Kansas
May 9th 1868
Dear Father

You may feel alarmed that I have not written you for the last three weeks—but I have been extremely busy—for a week or ten days I was confined by a slight attack of Erysipelas which I caught from one of my patients.

You have no idea of the changes being made in the army by recent army orders. I am left with a good many sick and a large hospital which is in constant use many thousand dollars worth of property for the care of which I have got to get an entirely new and untried set of men. That is one of the troubles of the army—I am keeping a sharp lookout but fear I can not keep myself from being robbed—Everybody in this country you know is to be considered thieves and murderers.

Last night at the end of the track one man killed another and was himself hung by the vigilantes and all done in less than a half an hour.

I am now in good health and am waiting patiently for orders as to change of station but would not wonder if I remained at this station during this summer.

35. In this letter, some words, including the scientific names, were difficult to read in the original. Both *Unio* and *Anodonta* may be correct since they refer to genus and family of fresh water mussels, which could have been uncovered in the New Jersey discovery. Cope's name for the saurian was also difficult to read.

I shall write soon for a bill of clothing for the summer.

We are now having quite hot weather—with an occasional snow storm.

Love to all
As Ever
Your Son
T. H. Turner
Asst. Surg. U.S.A.

Fort Wallace Kansas
Monday Even. May 17th 1868
Dear Father

....At present we are delapidated [*sic*]. We have only about forty men left in garrison out of the original four hundred—Very few of the soldiers whose term of service expired are willing to reenlist owing to the fact that enlistments are for five years instead of three years as formerly—We are now expecting reinforcements in the course of a couple of weeks. They are consolidating infantry in this Department as fast as possible much to the disgust of those officers who are thrown out and put on waiting orders—I need hardly mention everybody anticipates rough legislature on the army next winter.

I still hold out at this place and am surprised that I have not been relieved. I do not desire it as I know not what is best for me and do not intend to attempt to control my destiny—my hospital is an institution for which I have the most ardent affection and have heard it pronounced many times one of the best west of the Missouri River, but it is all going to "*pot*" now. As it takes so long to get a good set of men around and now being without a steward it is so much worse. Yet I am getting along much better that I expected though I have to work very hard.

My steward³⁶ who recently left the service is an irishman. At the present time not over twenty-one. I formed an attachement [*sic*] for him during the cholera epidemic of 67 where I found him sober and steady nursing sick men in the Quarantine hospital—and I subsequently made him a steward which is the highest rank a soldier can get without a commission.

He of course felt very grateful and wished to stay with me without pay till I could get another steward. Of course I could not sacrifice so much of his interest to my own—I secured him a pass over the Pacific R.R. to the Kansas state line and he goes to Chicago to commence a new life. You can hardly realize how scarce good honest sober men are in this country—When you find one you

36. A reference to David B. Long. See War Department, Surgeon General's Office, Circular No. 1, *Report on Epidemic Cholera*, 55.

prize him as you would a jewel. He deserves success and I hope he may reach it—It is a fault of mine that I always do better for other folks than I do for myself. The steward to whom I refer was the youngest steward in the Army.

My additional horse is doing finely. I bought more than anything else for an object upon which to bestow my affection. There is so little in this country to love—Besides I am about to commence next year the stock raising business—and if my pony does not produce the finest colt ever born west of the Mississippi I will be disappointed. The horse is of a famous North Carolina stock (running) and cost in that state at the close of the war, five hundred dollars.

I neglected during the week to carry out my intention to forward you a list of clothing—At which you may be surprised.

My last suit of clothes has not worn equal to my expectations; In fact they are about gone up now and I would like a pair of pants and coat of similar material. My boots have gone up and I need another pair—before I forget it I would state that my last pants were too short by about 3/4 of an inch. For hot weather, I would like two pair of white pants. What I have are worn and short—and to correspond with them a couple of white shirts—and a duster.

Though at present I have a fair hat I would like a white felt hat—a light one for summer and a black one—You know my size. Either a large 7 1/8 or a small 7 1/4. I am getting out of pocket Handkerchiefs and neckties as well as towels. Also let me have a supply of note and letter paper. I have no pen knife and so you had better put one in—also some paper collars.

I can afford to pay expressage on these things—everything is so high here. I neglected to state that I am entirely out of socks.

I hope you will not think I am imposing by asking you to send these things as soon as possible as I am liable to leave here and may not get them.

If I want anything more I will write tomorrow—I have written this in great haste as I begin to realize that delays are dangerous.

As Ever Your Son
Thof

Post Hospital
Fort Wallace Kansas
Sunday May 24th 1868
My dear Brother

.... I think I shall do no more for the fossil till the working party of the Rail Road reaches the spot as the present survey runs directly to the hill and it is very probable opportunity will then offer for a full exploration.

I have received notification that I have been elected a corresponding member of the Academy of Natural Science[s] of Philadelphia which is an honor barren. I suppose of profits generally yet by no means to be discarded as the association may at some time be of advantage.³⁷

Silliman³⁸ informs me that they are still at work cleaning up the bones in Philadelphia. If you again visit that city do not neglect to visit the Academy on my account.

We have the result of the impeachment trial but hardly know whether to be satisfied or not—For my own part I was disappointed.³⁹

The selections made at Chicago are also known to us: in that we have no opinion.⁴⁰

Since I last wrote we have had a visit from General [Philip H.] Sheridan.⁴¹ He messed with us and was our guest throughout his visit—so we all became well acquainted with him. I can assure you that he lost no admirers while here. He is certainly possessed of the power of being the most affable of our great men—all that force of his character which he has so often displayed is entirely concealed. He speaks and acts with the gentleness of a woman though he simply impressed you by his ideas and conversation that he is a great man. His head is the biggest part of him and sits on his shoulders without any neck appearing to intervene. Should you see him in ordinary dress with his sunburnt swarthy face you would select him as a man whose life had been a hard one.

I hope to hear from you soon. Love to all.
As Ever
Your Brother
Thof

Frederick Beecher to Turner⁴²

Ft Dodge Ks June 7 1868
Dear Turner

I am as busy as can be. Have seen lots of Sioux
Cheyenne Arrapahoe and Kiowas. Tomorrow I

37. Turner was proposed for membership in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia by John L. LeConte and Edward D. Cope. He was elected for membership on April 28, 1868. His membership signature card is on file in the Academy's library.

38. This was possibly Benjamin Silliman (1816-1885), a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and a professor of chemistry at Yale University.

39. Although in the army and in the West, Turner maintained his interest in politics; in this case, the impeachment proceedings against President Andrew Johnson.

40. This would appear to be the national convention to select a presidential candidate in 1868.

41. Sheridan, famous Civil War general, had been posted in 1867 to the Department of the Missouri, replacing Hancock.

42. Lt. Frederick H. Beecher was a very good friend of Turner. Beecher served with distinction on the western borders. On Septem-

am going into their camps and may be away from the smoky [Smoky Hill Trail] several days. If you can tell Comstock⁴³ to send any important news he may get to Genl Sheridan direct, until the 13th inst when I will return to Hays. I suppose Keogh⁴⁴ has taken his departure and is jolly. Dr. De Graw sends love and so do all that know you. I shall see Wallace again and before the month passes, I hope. My love to Wiggin,⁴⁵ I wish to embrace him with shoulder straps on.
Yours &c
Beecher.

Fort Wallace Ks
June 14th 1868
Dear Brother

... We anticipate none of the evils of last year during the summer—In every respect we are better prepared for a cholera campaign in every way than we were last—Everybody being better fixed and the commands more healthy.

There is a regiment of negro cavalry encamped about three miles west of here and very orderly good soldiers they are.

You may be aware that that there is a prospect of a town near us. I can assure you it is progressing favorably but its very existence is very uncertain. Cities as they are called in this country are exceedingly short lived. The necessary fixtures and appertinances [*sic*] for a western house of prostitution are now on the ground. The prospects for a number of Gin shops as soon as the Rail Road reaches are good to say nothing of gambling holes.

Thus progress the minor items incident to the growth of a western town which in point of pretensions successfully rivals New York.

We are now anticipating a visit from Genl [William Tecumseh] Sherman which upon a recent visit of Genl

Sheridan gives us an opportunity of seeing another of our great men.

I hope you will write me soon as to how you and Blackstone⁴⁶ get along.

As Ever
Thof.

Fort Wallace Kansas
July 1st 1868
Dear Brother

.... We are today comparatively comfortable. We are having a nice breeze which is cool in the place of the hot suffocating winds so common in this part of the country and the thermometer is only 97° in the shade at this time viz 3 P.M. Nobody however seems to be injuriously affected by the heat and there's no sickness in the garrison. For one I would dislike to see a repetition of last year's epidemic and do not expect to do so. For one I am thankful that the indians are giving us no trouble. We have about four miles west of us a camp of negro cavalry. I can assure you I am well pleased that I am not with them. The aroma during this weather would surely give me cholera.

I do not recollect that in my last I mentioned Sherman's visit. He was here three days and I got well acquainted with him. He is a queer old cock. Talks all the time and rattles off a good deal that is sense and a good deal that is not.

I do not doubt that you have in Belvedere all the advantages that you would have anywhere and I really believe your associations there will be of advantage to you. I believe I would have been better off if I had stayed nearer home myself. ...

Things at the post are very dull and the associations in the garrison are not as pleasant as they usually have been. At the present writing I am alone, my assistant having gone to New York to be examined for the Army. I had a letter from him last night and he informed me that he was all right. I expect him to return in about ten days. I am anxious for his return.

I hope you will write soon.
As Ever
Your Broth
Thof.

ber 8, 1868, scouts under Col. George Forsyth left Fort Wallace to pursue Indians believed to have attacked a wagon train. This led to Arickaree Creek in northeastern Colorado. On September 17 the troops were attacked by Cheyenne and Sioux and the following siege is known as the Battle of the Arickaree or Beecher's Island, in honor of Beecher who died there. See Montgomery, "Fort Wallace," 228-32.

43. As his photograph is in Captain Turner's album, it seems that William Comstock and Turner were good friends.

44. Miles W. Keogh, a captain at that time in the U.S. Seventh Cavalry, was born in Ireland, had enlisted in Washington, D.C., and had been Captain Turner's superior officer at Fort Wallace. See *Official Army Register for August, 1868*, 35. Keogh later died at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

45. Correspondence from A. W. Wiggins, found among Captain Turner's letters, indicates a friendship starting at Fort Wallace. Wiggin's letter was posted from West Point, New York. While in the medical department there, he was awaiting his commission in the army.

46. Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780) was the author of the commentaries read by American law students. Daniel Turner was reading law after his graduation from the College of New Jersey.

Edw. D. Cope to Turner

Hall of the Academy
7/17 1868
My Respected Friend
Dr. Th. H. Turner

Thy letter acknowledging election etc. has been received and recorded. Thy offer of assistance is gratifying to the association.

In view of the latter, I take the liberty of suggesting whether thee would be willing to forward to us the remains of *Elasmosaurus*, fishes, etc. procured lately as announced in a recent letter. The reasons are as follows. Some parts of the structure of this remarkable animal are obscure as yet. My monograph of Extinct Reptilia of North America is in the hands of the American Philosophical Society for publication. It will not be out for 2 or 3 mos. but every addition to perfect it is desirable. I am to have 10 lithogr. plates of which 2 woodcuts will be for *Elasmosaurus*.

Mind. The New York Centr. Park Commissioners have employed Waterhouse Hawkins of London to restore such of our fossil Reptile as can be for a large group in their Geological Hall. Waterhouse Hawkins is well known as the restorer of the great monsters at the Sydenham Palace near London.⁴⁷ He is at work now on *Laelaps* *Hadrosaurus* and *Elasmosaurus* and others in our Academy as there is no other material elsewhere. Thy monster will thus be exhibited to the public in a more than usually short time from its discovery. On this account we are desirous of procuring any additional fragments thee may have found.

I will write more in future; till then believe me thy sincere friend.

Edw. D. Cope Corr. Sec. ANS

Fort Wallace Kansas
Aug 13th 1868
Dear Mother

Enclosed I forward myself.⁴⁸ Revived if not improved—I hope you will not fail to recognize them. We are having fine weather, cool and pleasant.

News of indian deprivations are received and I would not be surprised if before winter sets in, we had a considerable of trouble.

As Ever
Thof.

Fort Wallace Kansas
Aug 23rd 1868
Dear Father

.... Of course you have seen by the papers, we are very unexpectedly in an horrible indian war. The actions of the indians have as usual taken everybody by surprise. Among the first victims was our guide Comstock whose picture is in my album at home and I know of no one whose death would have produced so wide felt an impression—He is certainly a great loss—He was shot while talking to indians who professed to be well disposed. There was another man with him who was also shot,⁴⁹ but who is now in my hospital with a good prospect of getting well. He was shot through the lung—Like it always is when an outbreak first occurs they get a good many by professing to be friendly. They have killed a good many near here. One died in my hospital yesterday.

At the post we feel perfectly at home and I am prepared to take care of all they bring.

I will try and write during the week if anything occurs.

Thof

Fort Wallace Ks
Sept 13th 1868
Dear Brother

.... The present indian troubles however are well calculated to infuse some little life into a man—or at least one would so infer from the fear expressed by all eastern people we have an opportunity to meet in this country at the present time.

Some two weeks ago a large party was here going west of which Senator Conkling of New York was chief.⁵⁰ They certainly showed more consternation than you would have expected from the brave manner in which they discuss indian affairs in Congress.

Prof. Aggazis [*sic*] was of this party.⁵¹ Of course he was searching after bugs, fish and fossils. He is certainly a very funny old fellow and afforded us much amusements by his jokes and quaint manners.

Not long ago I forwarded to Philadelphia the balance [*sic*] of my big fossil. It added a good deal they

49. The man with Comstock was scout Abner Sharp Grover. See Montgomery, "Fort Wallace," 225-26.

50. Telegram, Col. H. C. Bankhead to Gen. Sheridan, August 28, 1868, Selected Letters Sent, Fort Wallace, Kansas, 1866-1869, vol. 57, RG 98, National Archives. The telegram reads, "Infantry escorts will be ready for Hon. Roscoe Conkling's party at Sheridan and Fort Wallace tomorrow."

51. Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz (1807-1873) was a Swiss-American naturalist. See Allen Johnson, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*, (1928), 1:115-22.

47. Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins was a well-known restorer of the "great monsters"; this refers to the dinosaur exhibit at the Crystal Palace, London, in June 1854.

48. Presumably this refers to a picture, found in Turner's album, of his likeness not long after his bout with erysipelas.



This sketch, "The Indian War—General Custer's Scouts," includes the likeness of William Comstock (left). While on a scout, Comstock was killed by Indians, and of his death, Turner wrote, "I know of no one whose death would have produced so wide felt an impression."

say to the perfecting of the skeleton and they were exceedingly glad to secure it. If it were not for the indian difficulties I think I could secure others of a similar kind.

We are having throughout this country a repetition of last years horrors. Gen'l Sheridan is trying hard with the force at his disposal to drive the indians out of the country, but it is a hard thing to do, and can not be done on short notice. There is a fair prospect of a winter campaign which if not interfered with will most probably end indian difficulties in this section.⁵²

I received a letter from Ed this morning. You doubtless however have all the news from home.

52. There had been relatively small encounters, but Sheridan did not have enough troops that summer. He did, however, mount a winter campaign in November 1868 with Custer commanding at the major campaign engagement, the Battle of Washita.

We watch politics earnestly and we have our doubts as to the results as I suppose you do also.

I have a new assistant at the post. He is older and I expect he is in everyway a better man than myself except in rank, which you know in the army is everything.

Write soon to your

Affct Broth.

T.H.T.

Fort Wallace Kansas

Sun. eve. 29th 1868⁵³

Dear Brother

....I have just finished a letter to Father in which I very confidently entered into the state of my finances, which I am sorry to say, though not altogether hopeless,

53. Unable to ascertain month for this letter; it has been inserted where it fits into the continuity.

present little that is very consoling. But so far as the world has wagged, I have wagged a little ahead of it. If I am not making much it is some consolation to know I am not wearing myself out very fast at it.

As at present things here are settled down to the usual way as far as indian troubles are concerned, though of course as usual at this time we are busy. My sick list is at present large, owing to the number of sick left at the post by passing detachments.

I should love dearly to have you visit this post and see me and my hospital. I think I could give you an insight into the way people die as well as live.

Our post is at this time somewhat desolate as more than half our strength is gone. A hard time too they have had, as you may imagine. They went out on a three weeks trip expecting to march at least four hundred miles before their return—most of the time however has been pleasant since their departure though they have experienced at least two severe snow storms.

General Sheridan has this year inaugurated an entire new mode of fighting indians. His are the first campaigns ever made against indians in winter—and there seems to be every reason to expect that success will attend it, as if he can succeed in finding them and forcing them from their villages in cold weather. He will have little difficulty in winding them up in some way or other.

It is to be hoped none of the usual useless treaties of peace till they are made to understand that they can not keep the whites out of their country by fighting them and they must submit wrongfully though it be.

I suppose you are tired hearing anything more of this business but it is all we have in this country.

We are waiting anxiously for the meeting of Congress that something of interest may be found in the papers and in anticipation I have subscribed to a Cincinnati daily—a luxury which I hope I may always afford.

As Ever

Your Broth

Thof

Edw. D. Cope to Turner

Academy of Nat Sciences

Philada 12-21-1868

Theo H. Turner M.D.

Respected Friend

At a stated meeting of the Academy of Natural Sciences held 12mo. 15th 1868 the following resolution was on motion of E. D. Cope unanimously adopted.

Resolved—That the Academy of Natural Sciences present their thanks to Theophilus H. Turner M.D., U.S.A. for his very valuable gifts of the skeleton of the great extinct reptile—The Elasmosaurus Platyurus—

from the neighborhood of Fort Wallace, Kansas.

With much respect etc

Edward D. Cope

Corr. Sec. Academy⁵⁴

Charles Beecher⁵⁵ to Turner

Georgetown Feb. 5. '69

Dr. Turner

Dear Sir

We received Fred's rifle yesterday—or day before—No it was Tuesday—(how time slips by). I thank you most sincerely for sending it—tho it seems to bring up the dreadful scene of his death afresh.

I wonder why he should have been hit so late in the battle. Col. Forsyth⁵⁶ says at about 10. By that time I should think he could have dug his pit deep enough

54. See *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia* 20 (1868): 314.

55. Charles Beecher was the father of Frederick Beecher. It would seem from the letter's contents that Turner had sent Frederick Beecher's father a rifle owned by Frederick after he was killed at Beecher's Island. Interestingly, Turner made no mention in his extant letters that he had been a part of the relief column which arrived at the battle site on September 26, 1868. Turner and a Dr. Fitzgerald "made all necessary arrangements for the wounded." See Col. H. C. Bankhead to AAG, Department of the Missouri, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, October 15, 1868, *Selected Letters Sent*, vol. 57, RG 98, National Archives.

56. *The Official Army Register for August, 1868*, 39, lists George A. Forsyth, Ninth Cavalry. A description of a battle he was involved in which required support from Fort Wallace can be found in *Selected Letters Sent*, vol. 57, RG 98/113, National Archives.



A photograph album was referred to in the Turner letters, and it evidently contained images of Turner and friends at Fort Wallace. This photograph, from the album, shows Turner with Frederick Beecher.

for protection—[Maybe] his Stiff Knee prevented—[maybe] he was obliged to expose himself. But on all these points—and so many we should like to know—the veil of silence has fallen till we also cross the river.

In one of Fred's letters to his brother of Jan 4 '68 he gives a list of guns owned by him. (1) A Henry rifle, (2) A Sharpes rifle, (3) A Star Carbine, (4) a muzzle loading rifle, (5) 1 double gun 14 guage [*sic*] 32 in, (6) 1 double gun .2 [?] x 36 new and splendid, (7) A Roper shotgun, (8) pistols in profusion.

The Roper was my New Year's present from Lee Soldiers [?] the big double gun (6) a present from Citirous [?].

Of these we have Nos 1. 2. 5. 7. and one Colt revolver. No. 3 4. 6. and the other pistols we do not hear from. Can you give me information about them? We should be glad to get them. Especially (6) as it was a present.

Please present my kind regards to Col. Forsyth—Lt. Wood—& other friend[s] of Fred. Also particular to Scout Sharp, or Grover if he is present.⁵⁷
Very truly yours
Charles Beecher

Fort Wallace Kansas
Sunday Even. March 14th [1869]⁵⁸
My dear Brother

A day or two ago I had occasion to clean out my desk and accidentally found your letter of January 21st—It had been received while I was away on the twenty-five day march and had been misplaced so that I never saw it or had the pleasure of hearing from you. . . .

Our people from home have no doubt written you of my last trip—It doubtless seemed to you a hard one yet I can assure you it was attended with little suffering and I came back in better spirits and health than I left—yet a march of four hundred miles on the prairie at this season of the year is an undertaking of no small magnitude. On one day we traveled at one stretch over fifty miles without water but there is no use of my attempting to give you an account of the trip but will leave it till I have the happiness of seeing you when I shall tell you much of life on the plains.

I would have liked very much to have had you come out and see me before you settled yourself as I have two good horses and know I could have made it pleasant for you but of course that was impossible.

57. Some words were difficult to read in the original letter and may be incorrect interpretations here. The reference to "Scout Sharp, or Grover" probably refers to Abner Sharp Grover, a scout under Beecher's command who was severely wounded at the time Comstock was killed. See Montgomery, "Fort Wallace," 225-26.

58. No year was given; contents of the letter indicate that it be placed here.

For my own I have learned that I will probably be relieved from this post but where I will go I have not the least idea—You may well believe it is to me an interesting subject of contemplation—I think it is more than probable that I will go farther west down into New Mexico and if so I will probably not see you for a long time—Perhaps not till you have decided your own fate. You have no idea how I long to see the folks at home again—Nothing but poverty keeps me in this wild country—and I would detest most horribly the idea of practicing my profession in civil life.

I suppose you have received so much good advice at home that there is no use of my saying anything on that score. I hope you have a good christian boarding place—as long as your associates are correct you are all right—It has always surprised me how scarce good men are in all walks of life. Any young man with good morals, good and industrious habits is always in good demand. . . .

But I must close or I spin this out too long. At this rate I will not answer Nellie's⁵⁹ letter tonight. I found a letter from her at the same time I found yours. Also one from Rev. Charles Beecher the Father of Lieut. Beecher who was killed by the indians. . . . Beecher's Father is greatly depressed over the fact that the indians stole the remains of his son. His Mother also wrote me a very pretty but sorrowful letter. . . .

It is not long ago that I received a very nice long letter from Mary.⁶⁰ How she must have changed since I knew her last.

Hoping to hear from you soon with much love I close
As ever
Your affct Brother
Thof.

Fort Wallace Ks
Sun. May 23rd 1869
Dear Brother

Yours of the 16th inst came to hand yesterday with a package of Registers and an Observer. Your anticipations of seeing me home were I can assure you without the least foundation whatever. Indeed unless Uncle Sam discharges me I do not expect to see Jersey for some time to come. . . .

This Spring I find myself in good condition. In fact I have been better situated than ever before. I found and hired an excellent servant. He was a good cook and

59. Leonora Turner (1843-1925) was Turner's younger sister. See *Denison Genealogy*, 471.

60. Mary Turner (1856-1926) was another of Turner's sisters. She married Abraham Cooper of Chester, New Jersey. See *Denison Genealogy*, 471.

knew how to take elegant care of my two horses. More than that, I never saw a woman who could keep a house cleaner. Today I learned from him that he was to leave me to go home.

I regret it exceedingly. You may think it extravagant to have a man at so considerable expense but it is not only a convenience but a necessity. The last man I had was a negro soldier who showed his appreciation of my kindness by stealing from me about fifty dollars, though I can not tell the exact amount. Since I have been in this country I have fortunately always enjoyed good health but hereafter I do not intend to be, if I can avoid it, without some reliable help in time of need. My present boy goes to his home at the earnest request of his sister who lives in Wisconsin.

As to local news, we have little that is reliable though all indulge in a good deal of speculation. Railroad matters are uncertain. The road will doubtless go but the route is undecided upon.

There seems to be little doubt in the opinion of most everybody that the indians are going to make another fight for this country the coming summer.

I can assure you it is a dismal prospect for me, as I have for three years gone through the same thing. I do hope this business will be better understood. If I was an indian and preferred fighting and stealing to working, I would do as the indians do.

Our post was never as pleasant as now. Our new Post Comdr. is all anybody could desire. During this Spring we have had an unusual quantity of rain and the prairie looks finer and greener than I ever saw it before.

In addition to my clothing list already forwarded, I would like a pair of gloves for riding purposes.

With love to all, Your Brother

Thof

[Do] not neglect to inform me at the time you send the box. Ask Father to let me have a statement of my account as I have lost all trace of it.

Theophilus Hunt Turner died unexpectedly at Fort Wallace on July 27, 1869. The "Post Return" for that month read: "Commissioned Officers, Present and Absent, accounted for by Name....*Died* T. H. Turner Capt. Med. Dept. Died at Fort Wallace Kas, July 27. 69 of *acute Gastritis*."⁶¹

Thus ended the life and career of Thof Turner, abruptly and too soon. In his last letter home, May 23, 1869, he wrote that life on the prairie had never seemed so good, that he was in "good condition," striking an

optimistic note not often found in his early correspondence. The lonely, dedicated medical officer had been swept up in the history of our country's westward expansion, performing dutifully and well. Because of his innate inquisitiveness, he happened on a significant paleontological find, in a ravine in Kansas. This event lifted his life out of the ordinary. He was recognized by the scientific community as the discoverer of the fossil remains of the *Elasmosaurus platyrus*—his "critter." The honor bestowed upon him by the members of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, which he referred to so lightly in his letter of May 24, 1868, as an "honor barren," has finally accrued to him in 1986 at the Academy in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The letters that follow are exchanges among those who for either professional or personal reasons were trying to resolve his affairs.

Bvt. Maj. Gen. Chas. R. Woods to George Turner

Fort Wallace Kansas.

August 3rd, 1869

George Turner Esq.

Hope

N.J.

Dear Sir:

I herewith enclose letter of Dr. Shearer in reference to the death of your son Asst. Surgeon T. H. Turner, and also an Inventory of his effects liabilities &c.

The Doctor's Servant had, I believe, a few days pay due him at the time of the Dr's death. He has been retained to take charge of the Dr's horse, at the same rates he received, (\$25) Twenty five dollars per month, which would probably be in excess of the amt stated by Dr. Shearer. There may also be some other small bills due, that have not yet come in.

A copy of the enclosed Inventory has been forwarded to the Adjutant General U.S.A. and unless Dr. Turner's heirs should wish any of the property, it will be sold, and the proceeds of sale deposited with the Adjutant General U.S. Army, to the credit of his heirs. Should there be any of the articles mentioned in the Inventory that you would wish sent to you, it can be done by express.

Should you wish to have the remains of your son sent home, I think you could by application to the Adjutant Genl. U.S.A., have it done at Govt expense. The remains could not well be removed until cold weather.

Please let me know at your earliest convenience, what disposition you would like made of the property, what portions sold, and what portion sent to you. I

61. Post Return of Fort Wallace Kansas...for the month of July, 1869, Post Returns, March 1866-May 1882, Fort Wallace Kansas, RG 94, National Archives (microfilm, Kansas State Historical Society).

will retain Dr. Turner's servant in charge of his horse,
until I hear from you.

I am Sir

Very Respectfully

Your Obt. Servt.

Chas. R. Woods

Bvt. Major General USA

Commanding

Dr. M. M. Shearer to George Turner

Fort Wallace Kansas.

August 3rd 1869

George Turner Esq.

Dear Sir:

You have learned ere this, by telegraph of the sad and sudden death of your son Dr. T. H. Turner Asst Surgeon U.S.A. on the 27th ult at 8 o'clock P.M. after an illness of eight days duration during which period he was not considered seriously ill until the afternoon of the day on which he died! Everything was done by kind friends to alleviate his sufferings, mitigate the severity of his disease and restore him, if possible, to health and life.

But a Mysterious Providence ordained otherwise, and your son who but a few days ago rejoiced in the full vigor of health and prime of life is taken from our midst!

We all sympathize with you and your afflicted family, Sir—in this your sudden and terrible loss and profound grief. For we too had learned to love the deceased for his many good qualities of heart as well as of mind. Still we are overwhelmed with sorrow at the sundering of the warm social ties that bound us to him. We remember also that the Government has lost, and will deplore in his death a most skillful and efficient officer—a leading member in his Corps and a shining ornament to his profession.

In compliance with a request made by Genr'l Woods Comd'g Post I enclose you a list of your son's personal effects, that you may make what disposition of them you deem best.

His liabilities amount in all to about \$165 =

His Retained Gov't Papers have also been taken care of should you desire them.

The body was placed in an airtight metallic coffin and buried the second day after death—By reason of the extreme heat of the weather, decomposition proceeded rapidly, rendering embalming of the body impracticable.

Very Respectfully

Your Ob't Serv't

M. M. Shearer

Acting Assistant Surgeon U.S.A.

Inventory of Effects of late Asst Surgeon

**T. H. Turner U.S.A., deceased at Fort Wallace Kansas
July 27th, 69**

Two (2) Trunks Containing Cloth[e]s
Two (2) Carbine (Sharp [Pattern])
Two (2) Pistols (Colts Navy)
One (1) Pocket Pistol
One (1) Horse
Two (2) Bridles
Two (2) Saddles
Two (2) [Do] Blankets
One (1) Field Glass
One (1) Bucket Wooden
One (1) Wash Basin Clinico
Two (2) Camp Chairs
One (1) German Student Lamp
One (1) Rifle Henry's Patent
One (1) Watch (Silver)
Four (4) Pair Spurs
One (1) Spittoon
One (1) Sword (Med. Officer)
Two (2) Sashes
Four (4) Spoons (German Silver)
Four (4) Forks
Four (4) Knives
Fourteen (14) Plates delf [delftware]
Seven (7) Saucers
Nine (9) Cups
One (1) Butlers Tray
One due bill for (\$20) Twenty Dollars drawn by Capt. James J. Gordon 6 US Volunteers
One due bill for (\$62) Sixty Two Dollars drawn by Actg Asst Surg M. M. Shearer
Cash Three Hundred and Ninety Seven Dollars \$397
One (1) Pocket Book
One (1) Chair Cushion
One (1) Box Containing Books
Two (2) Broken Glasses
One (1) Desk

Dr. M. M. Shearer to George Turner

Fort Wallace Kan.

Nov. 25th, 1869

George Turner Esq.

Dear Sir:

This morning Genr'l Woods showed me a letter rec'd from you and I hasten to send you a few lines before the mail closes this morning. I rec'd but one letter from you about two weeks ago containing photo of the Dr. for which I have to thank you.

The Genr'l says the proper way to act in this matter is for you to make application to the Sect'y of War

direct stating the circumstances and asking that the body be shipped by Q.M. Dep't to Hope, N.J.⁶² There is but little doubt that it will be granted. I will raise the body, see that it is carefully and properly packed, and placed aboard the train. I have had the Dr. photo placed in a frame and put in his old office. It looks very natural.

Make your application to the Sect'y of War immediately asking that the transportation be furnished the body and if granted forward same to myself or Gen'l Woods and we will attend to it just as soon as the weather will admit. I will notify you beforehand when the remains are shipped that you may look for it by a certain date.

We are all well. I have been on Leave and brought my family out to the Post.

Will write you again soon when more at leisure as I desire this to go this morning.

Yours Respectfully

M. M. Shearer

Post Surgeon

Edw. D. Cope to Turner

Philada, 12/23 1869

My dear Dr. Turner

I sent by mail a copy of Pl. 11 [plate 11] of the work on Extinct Reptiles etc, I am issuing, and which I promised some year or more ago. It was out in August.⁶³

I send also two other pamphlets of some scientific interest.

I would be glad to hear at any time what success thee may have in observing and collecting fossils, and would be glad to aid in introducing them to the Scientific world, thro the publications of our City, at such time and way as may be agreeable to you.

With much regard I am etc.

Edw. D. Cope

Corr. Se. A.N.S.⁶⁴

Daniel Turner to Edw. D. Cope

Belvidere Warren Co.

N.J. January 11th 1870

Mr. Edward D. Cope

My Dear Sir.

A letter came to my father from Ft. Wallace, to which place it had been directed. On opening that

letter it proved to be from you. It is with sorrow I am compelled to inform you of my brothers death. Dr. T. H. Turner died at Ft Wallace Ks. July 27th 1869 of acute gastritis (inflammation on the bowels).

I was aware of the interest he took in your branch of the sciences, and was once with him in Phila when he called to see the fossils he had sent you: he inquired for you: but you were absent—somewhere in the southern part of New Jersey—in the Marl region.⁶⁵ He showed me the fossils you were then dressing, and informed me when and how he obtained it. I saw him take the Cars the evening after. That was the last time I ever saw him.

You speak in yours of having sent him a copy of some work and a pamphlet but these we have not received. Perhaps they would be of interest to us.

There were a few specimens at his quarters when we got there but none of any value. We feel very glad in being able to get a large part of his effects, but many things we would like to keep as relics we are unable to find.

Yours with the Kindest

regards

Daniel Turner

P.S. My father desired me to answer yours. His address is—Geo. D. Turner

Hope Warren Co. N.J.

Edw. D. Cope to Daniel Turner

Academy of Nat. Sciences

of Philadelphia 1-25-1870

Daniel Turner

Respected Friend

Thine of the 11th in regard to a letter which I wrote to Dr. Turner is now before me.

Before receiving thy letter I had heard with deep regrets of Dr. Turner's death.

He will always be known and remembered among scientific men as the discoverer of the Elasmosaurus Platyrus.

Canst thou furnish me with the name of his successor? And is it probable that he would take an interest in Science and be willing to collect for us?

62. Captain Turner's remains were buried in the family plot in the old Moravian Cemetery at Hope, New Jersey.

63. It was on this plate, sent to Captain Turner, that Dr. Cope inscribed the epithet "Dr. Turner's Dragon" for the newly discovered *Elasmosaurus platyrus*.

64. This letter has been donated by Turner's descendants to the manuscript collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

65. Marl is defined as a loose crumbling earthy deposit that contains a substantial amount of calcium and is used especially as a fertilizer. The region south of Camden, New Jersey, has been referred to as a "marl region." As Cope had gone there it is assumed that the region was good for fossil hunting.

If there are any bones or teeth among the specimens you have received I should be very glad to examine them provided you do not wish to make other disposition of them. Shells and minerals however do not fall within my department. I am very respectfully
Edw. D. Cope
Cor. Sec. A.N.S.

Bvt. Maj. Gen. Chas. R. Woods to George Turner

Fort Wallace Kns
Feb. 20th 1870
Geo. [D] Turner Esq
Hope, N.J.
Dear Sir

Your dispatch reached me a few days ago. I had not heard from the express agt at Sheridan [Kansas]. I sent a messenger down and found that he had received orders to forward the remains of Dr. Turner.

The body will be exhumed tomorrow morning and forwarded immediately.

I left this post on the 27th of Jan on an expedition and was gone fifteen days, and have been laid up with Rheumatism since my return.

I am Sir

Yours Truly

Chs. R. Woods

Bvt. Maj. Gen.

[KH]

Science in Kansas: The Early Years, 1804-1875

by John M. Peterson

Introduction

THE BEGINNINGS OF SCIENCE IN KANSAS have received little attention in the many volumes devoted to the history of the state. More specifically, science seldom is mentioned in accounts of the territorial and early statehood periods, and it is not until much later that science is allotted some attention. In this study I propose to search out and briefly describe at least some of the scientific endeavors pursued in Kansas from the earliest times until 1875. It is my hope that a survey of the scattered but not negligible activities in several scientific disciplines will shed some light on later and better known developments. The closing date, 1875, is arbitrary, but serves to keep the subject within bounds and is, I believe, late enough to reveal many of the persons, trends, and activities that became important to Kansas science in later years.

"Science" and "scientific activities" in this article will be taken to mean subjecting natural phenomena to systematic observation, classification and experimentation, and will include the knowledge so derived and the teaching of those techniques and that knowledge to others. In mid-nineteenth century Kansas, scientific activities mostly were concerned with what we now call earth and life sciences—geology, mineralogy, zoology, botany, entomology, ornithology, and meteorology. Physics, chemistry, and astronomy played a lesser role until laboratory facilities and instruments became available. Mathematics, whether as a science or a tool of science, received much attention in the schools. Certain subjects which now occupy the attention of many scientists—biochemistry, bacteriology, and genetics, for example—did not yet exist.

Before recounting the scientific activities carried on by the early European visitors, we should reflect that long before the first Europeans ventured into Kansas there were people here who had a great deal of knowledge about its natural resources. Though we seldom think of them as possessing scientific knowledge, what they knew about plants and animals closely paralleled that sought by the early scientists of European descent.

I am referring to the hunter-gatherer peoples who came into Kansas as early as twelve thousand years ago. They lived by hunting and gathering, and they moved from place to place in consonance with the yearly cycle of plant food production and the annual movements of game animals. As botanists they recognized many plants, knew their habitats and properties, when they could be used for food, and what parts were useful in making shelter, clothing, utensils, tools, weapons, and ornaments. As zoologists they were close students of the habits and life cycles of many animals, not just the large game species but also smaller mammals, as well as birds, fish, molluscs, turtles, and snakes. All of these were used as food at one time or another and provided the raw material for clothing, shelter, tools, and ornaments. The hunter-gatherers even can be credited with some knowledge of mineralogy. Remarkable stone points attest to a knowledge of the properties of certain kinds of rock. They also sought out other lithic materials for ornaments, used hematite as body paint, and discovered that heating chert would improve its knapping qualities.

Much later, in the Ceramic Period, additional kinds of knowledge were acquired. The Indians found the sources of potting clay to make pottery; discovered local materials for tempering the clay; and learned how to fire the pottery with locally available fuel. The basic techniques may have been brought in from elsewhere, but experimentation was needed for adaptation to local materials. When plant cultivation began, possibly about the same time that pottery making was introduced, another whole range of information about plants, soils, and cultivation techniques was slowly accumulated.¹

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1. Many sources could be cited for these paragraphs, but a convenient presentation may be found in Patricia J. O'Brien, *Archeology in Kansas*, University of Kansas, Museum of Natural History, Public Education Series no. 9 (Lawrence: 1984), 28-53.



The Plains Indians' knowledge of their natural environment was not recorded in printed form, but much of what they knew was passed on to the early explorers and settlers.

Though the Indians' natural science, for the most part, was not recorded, much was passed on to the early settlers and explorers, and even nineteenth-century scientists sometimes learned of new species or a new plant usage from the Indians.²

The Early Explorer-Scientists, 1804-1854

Once the Louisiana Territory was added to the United States in 1803, the next order of business was to determine what President Jefferson had acquired for \$15 million. Not much was known about this vast

area west of the Mississippi although a few traders and explorers had ventured into its eastern fringe. Boundaries were rather vague, and features—geology, natives, flora and fauna, and mineral resources—were little known but were of much interest to government officials and the public. During the next three or four decades the U.S. government sponsored a number of expeditions, beginning with that of 1804-1806 headed by Lewis and Clark, to explore the new territory. Private parties also entered the new lands for a variety of purposes—fur trading, prospecting, opening commerce with Mexico, learning about and trading with the natives, finding new plants and animals, or just adventuring.

Science in the United States in the first few years of the nineteenth century was primarily concerned with inventorying natural objects using the Linnean system

2. See John Charles Fremont, *Memoirs of My Life* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke and Co., 1887), 28, or Thomas Nuttall, "A Catalogue of a Collection of Plants...by Mr. Nathaniel B. Wyeth," *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia* [hereafter cited as *Journal, Natural Sciences*] 7, pt. 1 (1834):27-28, 38-39, 55-56.

of classification. Much progress had been made during the eighteenth century in collecting, classifying, and describing the animals, plants, fossils, and other natural forms of the eastern part of the country, although the task was far from complete. Of greatest interest was the identification of new species and genera, but species habitat, behavior, and distribution also began to be recognized as of scientific interest.³ The sudden accession of an enormous western territory, presumably filled with innumerable new genera and species, stimulated American collectors and scientists to greater efforts and attracted the attention of many of their European colleagues.

In the early 1800s American scientists, almost all of whom were amateurs, began to form associations and to establish journals in which the results of their work could be published. Major study collections also were formed and rapidly enlarged for use in identifying and describing new species. In the field, scientists spent most of their time observing and collecting, and reserved the tasks of identification, classification, and description until they returned home. Some scientists became specialists and devoted much of their time to identifying and describing specimens collected by others. Consequently, explorers and travelers who were not scientists but had some training in collecting could gather specimens in the West and forward them to eastern specialists for examination and further scientific processing.⁴ Philadelphia, the home of two major societies with large collections and established journals, was the primary center of this activity, but New York, Washington, New Haven, Cambridge, and St. Louis also became important by mid-century.

Only a few of the many expeditions to the West will be mentioned here; mainly those with serious scientific intentions which spent some time in what now is Kansas. A few others which skirted the borders or spent considerable time in a nearby area will be noted because they contributed knowledge about plants, animals, or geological formations also found in Kansas. Three main routes led to the West; the river route up the Missouri and its tributaries and the two land routes which became

known as the Oregon and Santa Fe trails. The route up the Missouri did not enter Kansas but followed its northeastern border; the Oregon Trail ran through the northeastern quarter; and the Santa Fe Trail traversed Kansas from its eastern border to near its southwestern corner.

All of Kansas except for a small part of the southwestern section was included in the Louisiana Purchase. Its natural history was almost completely unknown although many of the birds, animals, and plants native to Kansas had been identified, named, and described from specimens collected in the eastern parts of the country. The first expedition to actually spend much time in Kansas, that of Maj. Zebulon M. Pike in 1806-1807, is not of major concern even though his instructions were to observe geographical structure, natural history, the native population, and to "collect and preserve specimens of every thing curious in the mineral or botanical worlds, which can be preserved and are portable."⁵ Pike's main purpose was to make contact with the Indians and to impress them with the strength and good intentions of the United States, but he was not given the needed resources and his party suffered great hardships. Consequently, there was little or no collecting. He did report extensively, however, on the natives and submitted some geographical data; this despite the confiscation of the greater part of his papers by Spanish authorities. Unfortunately for his reputation, Pike is chiefly remembered for concluding that the prairies were "incapable of cultivation" and might "become in time equally celebrated as the sandy deserts [*sic*] of Africa...."⁶

Significant scientific collecting in Kansas began with the Stephen H. Long Expedition in 1819-1820. This expedition, largely a military effort, advanced up the Missouri River to Council Bluffs, Iowa, and spent the winter there. Before resuming travel in 1820 the military party was eliminated, but the scientific group, though funds were reduced, proceeded under Long's leadership to the Rocky Mountains, then south to what now is southern Colorado where, in July, the party was split. One group under Capt. John R. Bell made its way to Fort Smith down the Arkansas River while the other party under Major Long reached the same point by a more

3. This data was valuable as raw material for the development of theories which then could be tested and modified as additional data was reported. In the Linnean system of classification, the grouping of natural objects into larger categories proceeds from species to genera, families, orders, classes, and phyla.

4. In geology, probably the most advanced of the sciences in the early 1800s, European geologists already recognized the differing origins of various minerals and rocks, the existence of strata extending across large areas, and the usefulness of fossils in identifying strata. In the United States, geologists applied these concepts in their study of American formations.

5. Z. M. Pike, *An Account of Expeditions to the Source of the Mississippi*... (Philadelphia: C. and A. Conrad and Co., 1810, reprint ed., 1966), pt. 2, 108. Pike left the St. Louis area on July 15, 1806, and arrived at Santa Fe on March 3, 1807, after passing through parts of Missouri into north-central Kansas, then south to the Arkansas River which he followed to the mountains where he turned south into Spanish territory. See Pike, *An Account of Expeditions*, pt. 2, 111, 212.

6. *Ibid.*, appendix to pt. 2, 8.

southern route down the Canadian River. Thomas Say, expedition zoologist, went with Bell while Edwin James, botanist and geologist, traveled with Long.

The Long Expedition was the first to provide extensive collections from the West. Specimens included sixty prepared skins, several thousand insects of which seven hundred or more were thought to be new to science, between four hundred and five hundred species of plants, and numerous minerals, shells, and other objects. Also brought back were many descriptions of birds; extensive accounts of Indian life, customs, physical characteristics, and languages; many sketches; numerous observations of geological formations and rocks;

and many calculations of latitude and longitude.⁷ Even though most of the journals and scientific notes were lost when three men deserted Bell's party, the arrival in the East of the expedition's specimens and reports stirred the interest of the public, as well as that of the scientific establishment.

Thomas Say (1787-1834) was the first distinguished naturalist to set foot in Kansas. A native of Philadelphia, he was a charter member of that city's Academy of

7. Edwin James, comp., *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains... Under the Command of Major Stephen H. Long* 2 vols. (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1823, reprint ed., Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), 2:330.



This map from the Long Expedition of 1819-1820 indicates the Long and Bell routes taken when the party split (the routes have been enhanced to indicate Long's southerly and Bell's northerly routes eastward). The map's lower section, the country profile, notes the area designated as the "Great Desert."

Natural Sciences and an important contributor to the work which made Philadelphia the center of scientific activity during the first half of the nineteenth century. Primarily an entomologist, he also worked in other fields. Representative of the science of his time, his primary concern was to collect, classify, and describe the many new forms being found in the West. When he saw a new insect he could not refrain from collecting it, regardless of the circumstances; he once captured a new beetle while in a solemn conference with the leaders of the Kansa Indians in a lodge on the Kansas River.⁸

Most of the Long Expedition collections were sent to Philadelphia. James wrote a general report based on the remaining journals of the expedition's participants, and Say published many descriptive articles on insects, shells and fossils, largely those collected by the Long party. Thus, the expedition made a significant contribution to the scientific knowledge of the time, as well as stimulating much interest in the natural history of the territory beyond the Mississippi.

Only three years after the Long party's sojourn, a German, Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg, stopped briefly in Kansas. Representative of the European traveler and collector who on his own initiative visited the West in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Duke had considerable training and experience in the natural sciences, and made four trips to North America and several exploratory ventures elsewhere. His only visit to Kansas was in 1823 on his way to the upper reaches of the Missouri River. On a short trip up the Kansas River, he visited a camp of the Kansa Indians. He intended to go farther but was turned back, not by the many bears he saw but by the hordes of mosquitoes.⁹ While on the Missouri he collected plants, butterflies, insects, and birds which undoubtedly included many species native to Kansas. His collections were taken to Germany and housed in his museum at Mergentheim, along with the products of his many other travels, and presumably were studied by European scientists. The narrative of his 1822-1824 trip, published in Germany in 1835, contained many observations and astute comments, particularly on American natives, relations between the races in America, distribution of plants, and weather phenomena.

About a decade after the Duke's visit, two leading members of the eastern scientific establishment visited Kansas. They were John Kirk Townsend, M. D. (1809-

1851), a skilled ornithologist from Philadelphia, and Thomas Nuttall (1786-1859), an Englishman who was among this country's foremost botanists. The two were on an extensive collecting trip; Townsend was sponsored by the American Philosophical Society and the Academy of Natural Sciences, both of Philadelphia, while Nuttall was collecting for Harvard College where he lectured on natural science and was curator of the botanical collection. In St. Louis they arranged to travel to Oregon with Nathaniel J. Wyeth's second expedition, a mixed group of missionaries, immigrants, and fur traders. The party of seventy men and two hundred fifty horses left Independence, Missouri, on April 28, 1834.¹⁰

Wyeth's expedition went up the Kansas River to the Blue River, then north to the Platte River valley. There they turned westward. This route, long used by fur traders, later became the first part of the Oregon Trail. The party moved rapidly and spent less than two weeks in Kansas, but Townsend reported seeing and collecting many birds in that period. Nuttall, who had collected on the upper Missouri in 1810 and in Arkansas and Oklahoma in 1819, found "no end of plants" as the party moved west. Along the Platte, Townsend became particularly enthusiastic, saying that many of the abundant birds had not been seen before by naturalists. Of one grove on the edge of the river, he commented, "I think I never before saw so great a variety of birds within the same space."¹¹ His teeming game bag delighted him, and he reported that Nuttall was finding dozens of specimens daily. Of course, they were not in Kansas at this time, but most of the birds and many of the plants were species also to be found in Kansas.

Townsend and Nuttall journeyed to the West Coast, and Nuttall even went on to visit Hawaii. When their specimens began to appear in Philadelphia, scientists were much impressed by the great number of new species. John James Audubon, then prosecuting his great work on American birds, went to Philadelphia in September 1836 to see them. In October he obtained ninety-three of the bird skins from which he drew seventy figures on over forty plates. These made up over one-tenth of the "Elephant Folio," as his master work was called.¹² Most of Townsend's new birds were from the Rocky Mountains and points west but two, the prairie finch and the

8. John L. LeConte, ed., *A Description of the Insects of North America by Thomas Say* (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1869), 31.

9. Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg, "First Journey to North America in the Years 1822 to 1824," trans. Wm. G. Bek, *South Dakota Historical Collections* 19 (1938):303-17.

10. John K. Townsend, *Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains* (Philadelphia: Henry Perkins, 1893), reprinted, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* 32 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904-07), 21:141.

11. *Ibid.*, 180.

12. Waldemar H. Fries, *The Double Elephant Folio, the Story of Audubon's Birds of America* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1973), 98-99.



John James Audubon briefly visited Kansas in 1843, and while at Fort Leavenworth identified the Carolina parakeet.

chestnut-sided finch, may have been collected in Kansas. Nuttall described in the two scientific journals published in Philadelphia the many plants collected on the Wyeth Expedition and subsequent journeys. Several of his specimens were found in Kansas and many other species were native to this state. Audubon himself briefly visited Kansas in 1843 on a trip up the Missouri River to collect and observe birds and animals. He left St. Louis with a small party on April 25 and stopped in Kansas two or three times, including a visit to Fort Leavenworth where he identified a Carolina parakeet.¹³

The noted explorer, John C. Fremont, spent time in Kansas on four of his expeditions. Fremont, a careful,

systematic observer, had received some training from Joseph N. Nicollet, a French scientist who introduced American scientists to the use of fossils in correlating geological strata and barometric measurements to determine altitude.¹⁴ Relying on his scientific knowledge and collecting experience, Fremont seldom took technical assistants, other than a topographer, with him. In 1842 his party generally followed the Oregon Trail to Wyoming and returned down the Platte and Missouri rivers. The plants he collected were submitted to John Torrey, a botanist who prepared a twelve-page catalog mentioning numerous specimens collected in Kansas.¹⁵ In 1843-1844 Fremont varied his outbound route by going up the Republican and Prairie Dog rivers before moving over to the Platte. Returning from Colorado, he followed the Santa Fe Trail into Kansas, cut north to the Smoky Hill River which he followed most of the way to its mouth, and then went back south to the Santa Fe Trail. This was the most extensive journey through Kansas since Long's trip, but many of Fremont's specimens were lost in a wagon accident and a flash flood. Even so, enough remained for a report on plants by John Torrey and one by James Hall, one of the country's senior geologists, on rock specimens and fossils, some of which were from Kansas. Fremont also wrote at length on his observations and mentioned the good soils in the region's eastern part and the "unbroken verdure of the buffalo grass" in what now is western Kansas, thereby beginning the refutation of the "great American desert."¹⁶ In the fall of 1848 Fremont again crossed Kansas. He went up the Kansas and Smoky Hill river valleys to the Hays area, then cut down to the Arkansas River and followed the Santa Fe Trail to Bent's Fort in Colorado. Frederick Creutzfeldt, a botanist, was in the party, but the trip ended in disaster and no scientific reports concerning Kansas were produced.¹⁷

Three other expeditions in the 1840s deserve brief mention. In June 1846, Lt. Col. W. H. Emory, assisted by three other officers of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, accompanied a military column headed for Mexico. The engineers' main duty was to determine

14. William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 242.

15. J. C. Fremont, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1845), 28th Cong., 2d sess., S. Doc. 174, pp. 81-98, Ser. Doc. 461. John Torrey (1796-1873) pursued investigations in several sciences but was most prominent as a botanist.

16. *Ibid.*, 287-90, 295-319.

17. Barry, *Beginning of the West*, 783-84. As an aid in identifying locations, occasionally I have used the names of Kansas cities and counties before they were actually established.

13. Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West, Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 472-73. The bird Audubon saw may have been the Louisiana parakeet, or parakeet, which ranged to Kansas and, many years later, was determined to differ slightly from the Carolina form. Both now are extinct. See Frank M. Chapman, *Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 330-31.