

#### Kansas historical quarterly

Section 120, Pages 3571 - 3600

The quarterly journal of the Kansas Historical Society from 1931-1977, the Kansas Historical Quarterly succeeded the Kansas Historical Collections, 1875-1928, (also available as unit 221606) and preceded Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains, 1978 - present.

Creator: Kansas State Historical Society

Date: 1931-1977

Callnumber: SP 906 K13q

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 221562

Item Identifier: 221562

www.kansasmemory.org/item/221562

# KANSAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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gnawing the bark under the snow. I am sending the Herald of Freedom to you once in a while. There is a good deal of gas in this paper along with a good deal of substantial truth. I suppose you

have seen our Gov. Geary's message.39 It is a strange mixture of excellent recommendations with miserable political philosophy. His practical suggestions are good, but his political theories are detestable, untrue, and inhuman. I doubt if Gov. Geary does not soon find himself, in spite of himself, with the freedom loving people of Kansas, and at loggerheads with the border ruffian legislators thereof -like Reeder, with this difference, then the people were a handfull, now comparatively a multitude, and every month becoming stronger. The few grains of common sense hidden under the bushel of error in the doctrine of squatter sovereignty will compel this. The violent proslavery papers here already berate Geary. They say the show of moderation to the free state people before the presidential election was a political necessity, to carry Pennsylvania and Indiana; but now he should throw off the mask and openly show the proslavery colors. But I feel thankful, that it is getting more and more impossible for mere politicians to mould the institutions of Kansas at their will. The people here are getting too strong. It is a curious commentary on the doctrine of squatter sovereignty that where it is first applied, in the territory to govern which the doctrine and sounding phrase were invented, here the people have actually less political power than in any civilized government on earth. Our Legislature is elected by the wild and half civilized Missouri borderers. All our Executive officers from Governor to constable are appointed either by the President or by the Legislature; so with all the judiciary from Supreme Judge to the most ignorant Squire

"Who would be free themselves must strike the blow." And sooner or later the people will triumph. They tried to subdue us last summer with the whole power of the U. S. Government and army on their side. They failed. Now I think they may try governmental forms and formulas. But they will equally fail. The people at last will triumph. If any thing were wanting to insure this, the munificent donations for Kansas in the free states have done it. The South have done nothing comparatively to encourage and keep their sons here.

hardly able to write his name; all county officers. But the people

are awake.

 Governor Geary's message to the legislative assembly of Kansas territory, January 12, 1857.—See The Kansas Historical Collections, v. IV, pp. 676-687.



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LETTERS OF JOHN AND SARAH EVERETT

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The weather has softened. We have had three mild days, thawing the snow a little. I think the hardest of our winter is over

With much love Your affectionate Son John.

Osawatomie Feb 3, '57.

Dear Father

We received yours of Jan 19 this morning. I hasten to write a few words in reply. The snow is thawing and going off very fast. Today is the warmest day since November—the thermometer now (about 2 P.M.) indicates 60°. The past has been a very mild pleasant week. My health seems to be better as spring approaches than it has been for many years. I am fleshier than I remember myself since I was a boy. My clothes that I wore two years ago are all too small. . . . Sarah and Franky are both well. We are hoping the back of this winter is broken. The Indians think there will be no more very cold weather this winter. Friend Mendenhall has been on a tour through Lawrence and North of the Kansas river. He found people hopeful. There is a good deal of a speculating spirit among a great many where he has been. Lots in Lawrence on Massachusetts street (the main Street) are rated some of them as high as \$150 per foot front. Tomorrow the Pottawatomie may [be] too high to be fordable so I hasten this brief letter to the office. We thank you for the stamps in your last.

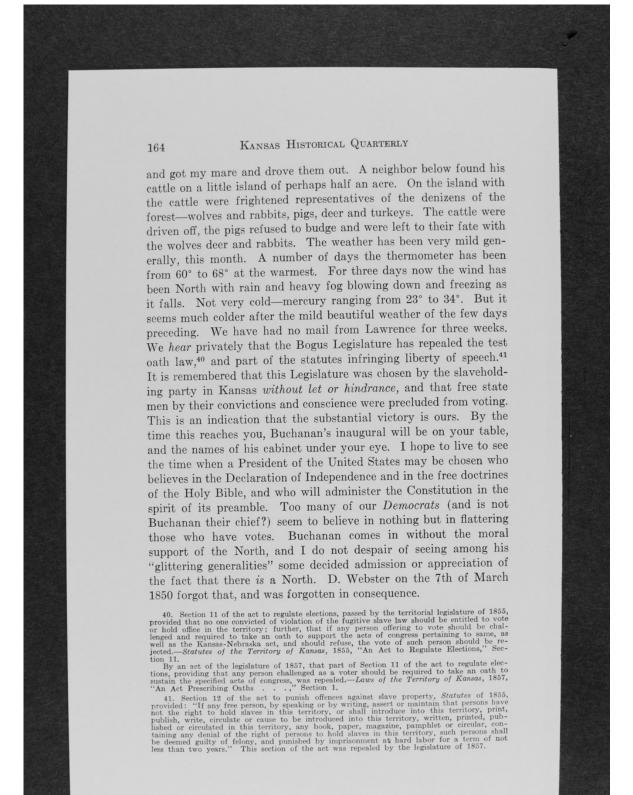
> Your affectionate son and daughter John & Sarah

> > Osawatomie Feb 19, 1857

Dear Father and Mother

We received yours and Lewises of Jan 28th this week. This is the first mail to come in for two weeks. We had a heavy rain and a flood. The Pottawatomie was away over its banks and every other stream I suppose. Of course the mail could neither go out or come in. The prairie was all frozen so that all the water ran down into the natural channels as from the roof of the house into an eaves trough. Some lost cattle and hogs. I found our cows up to their bellies in water, with the water still rising, a bitter cold day. It was one of their usual haunts, when they happen to wander, about 1½ miles from home. The water surrounded them, and they had not the courage to break for the land, partly I suppose because it had turned so cold, and they would have stayed there till they were floated off or had been frozen if I had not found them. I went home







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You see I have nothing to write about, and I close. Sarah intends to write a few lines to Jenny if she has time before we can send this. Do not expect our letters regularly now for a few weeks. To take this to mail, I will either have to wade the Pottawotamie or go down three miles below and cross in a canoe. The banks are so miry that it is not safe for me to try to cross with my blind mare. - We have 3 or 4 hens laying. Do you get any eggs? How many quires do you wet now for Cenhadwr? Do you or Lewis or Jenny know of a cheap edition of Macaulay's last volumes of the History of England. Harper published the two first vols in paper covers for 25 cts per vol. If the last two volumes are so published you would do me a very great kindness by getting and sending them to me by mail. I have not seen a new book since I came here, above an Almanac. If you want to get a very interesting and useful little farmers book, you will find one in the "Illustrated Annual Register of Rural Affairs and Cultivator Almanac" for 1857. It is beautifully printed and illustrated, and cannot be read by any one with a square rod of ground without profit.

With much love

John

Your son

Osawatomie Mar. 5, '57.

Dear Father

We are well. Have only had one mail for nearly three weeks, and no letter or paper in that. The rivers have been high, and now the waters have subsided. The banks are so miry no wagon can pass. These are some of the inconveniences of a new country. In a few years we hope to have good roads and bridges. Emigration has commenced in good earnest. Every boat we hear of comes up loaded with emigrants. Several claims have been taken near us this week. Mr. R Hughes of Lawrence, whose name is on your Cenhadwr book, spent Sabbath with us. He is out here looking at the country, with a probability of moving here. I do not see but that we are likely to have a Welsh settlement at Osawatomie. At least there seems to be a number of Cymry who talk of coming here. They all like the country around here well.

A proslavery man named Sherman, generally known over the territory, as "Dutch Henry," was shot Monday evening four miles above on the Pottawatomie. He was a violent proslavery man, active in the troubles last summer, and this is one of the bad fruits of that miserable slavery extending crusade. He had been a resi-



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dent of the territory for 10 years before the Kansas bill was passed, first as hired man to a half breed Indian head man, and then as stock raiser having for his pasture the illimitable prairies. Before the troubles he had large herds of 200 or 300 cattle, but "when there was no king in Israel" guerrilla parties found means to find wings for his cattle, and now he is probably dead. This act is greatly regretted here, but perhaps not to be wondered at. Today is cold. The weather has been spring like. Our pie plants have started. We get some eggs.

Osawatomie, Mar. 11, '57.

Dear Father,

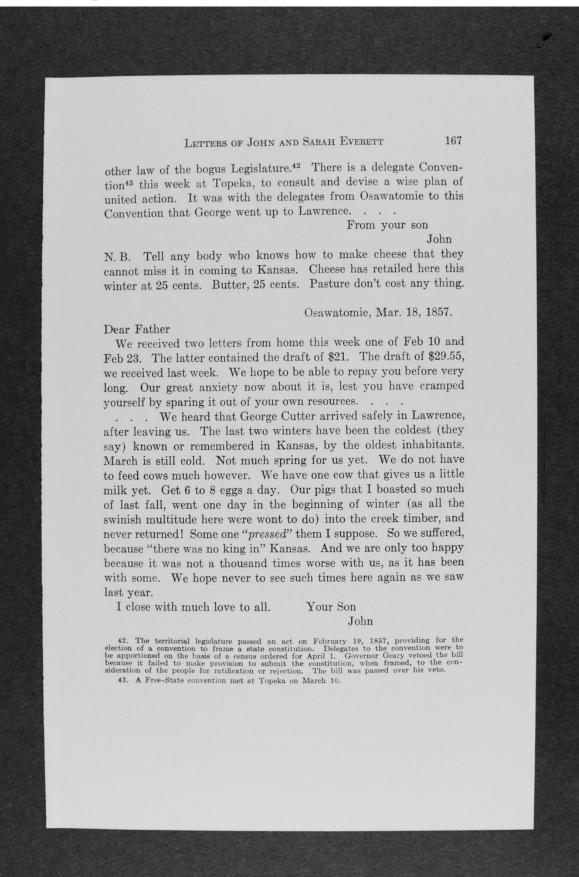
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We received yours of Feb 18 this week. It contained a draft of \$29.55. This will be of great service to us. I am disappointed in the way of making my field and plowing as I wrote. The man who took the claim West of me proved quite changeable in his plans, gave up the claim and bought a timber claim elsewhere. Still I expect to make a field of 10 to 15 acres in addition to what I have now under cultivation, and think I can do it and get it plowed with this assistance. I fear it will cramp you to take this from your own means. I wish you could have borrowed it.

George Cutter has left us. He had a chance to go and went the beginning of the week. He had got so as to sit up nearly all day, and to walk around some. We miss him much. His disposition was kind, very peacable, and unrevengeful. One of the last persons who would seek a quarrel. The Committee owe us yet \$30 for taking care of him, which I think we will get in time to be of service for our spring expenses. I have besides between \$20 & \$30 in my pocket. We get 7 or 8 eggs a day. Now we are alone we expect to sell most of what we get. They are worth 20 cts. a dozen now. We have some 1st September chickens laying now, and some May and July ones not laying. The winters here are much more favorable to poultry as indeed to all stock than with you. The difference in latitude between us and you makes a more marked difference in temperature in Spring than in fall. We shall not need to fodder much more this spring. We have had a very cold turn of weather these last few days, but the sun has got so high it cannot last long. There has been a good deal of discussion about the Convention called by the bogus Legislature. The general feeling is in favor of voting if we could expect fairness but this bill was so unfair Gov. Geary vetoed it, and I think Free State men will not recognize this more than any

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Longwood, Mar. 26, 1857.

Dear Father

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We received yours from Utica, (March 5) this week. . . . The last few days have been beautiful spring days. Last Sunday the mercury rose to 84°. To day it is between 70° and 80°. This week we heard that Gov. Geary is dead. If so, it will be a great loss to Kansas. He will be sincerely and truly mourned in many a humble log cabin. With all his errors of logic in his messages, in his administration he was the true friend of the actual settler. He stood between free state men and those who would devour them. He restored peace, and maintained it by refusing to employ the military in enforcing the barbarous territorial laws. We shall hardly get a better Governor, and may easily get a worse. A son of John Pierce of Big Rock and one of Thomas Pierce of Aurora, fine young men, have taken claims near us. They stopt with us one night.

. . . I must close in haste.

Your son John.

Friday morning.—I was interrupted in writing this by a prairie fire driving down straight into our timber. We both worked hard to keep it back for about 8 hours. Did not get to bed till midnight. We finally succeeded. It reminded me of the effort of the slave power to spread its devastating flame over our beautiful prairies. We had to work hard, watch constantly, when one plan failed to try another, and it finally only blackened one little corner of the timber. I have a chance to send this, and must close.

Longwood, Apl 2 1857.

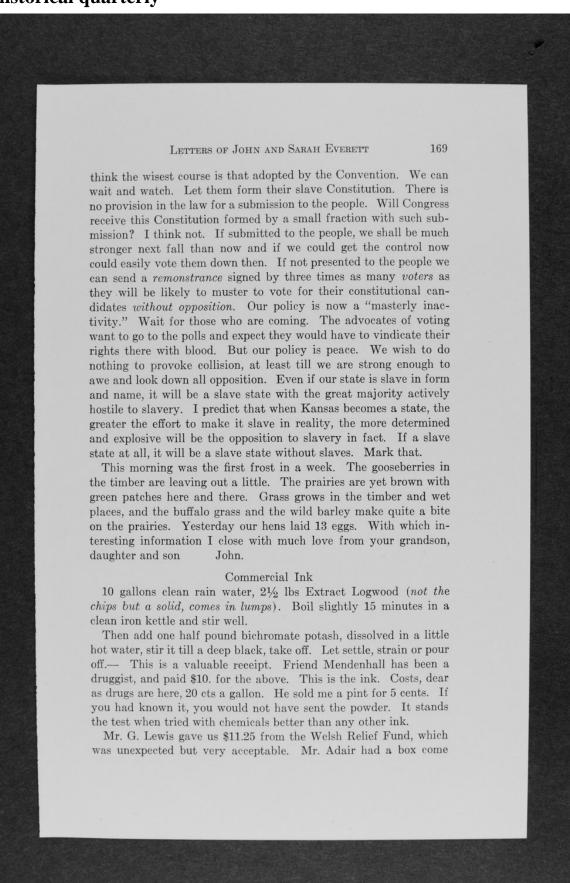
Dear Father

Yours of Mar. 10 (from Utica) recd last mail. I thank you for sending the heads of your sermon on secret prayer. Hope it may do us good.

Rev. Geo. Lewis and Mr. Thomas of Racine stopped with us last Sunday. Had a pleasant interview with them. You will have seen 'ere this the account of our Topeka Convention. They resolved not to vote at the coming constitutional Convention. This vote I think was unanimous. There has been a good deal of difference of opinion as to the wisdom of such a resolve, and is yet. Many were in favor of going to the polls, and if necessary with rifles in their hands. I

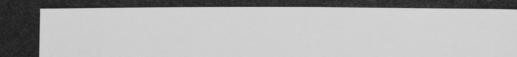
44. Governor Geary left the territory secretly on March 10. He had addressed his resignation to President Buchanan on March 4, to take effect on March 20. His death did not occur until 1873.







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lately. He sent word over and Sarah went and got a pair of shirts for me, two pair of woolen stockings for herself, a pair of pants, apron & mittens for Frank, 12 yards of calico, 1 pair of pillow cases. . . .

Longwood, Apr. 8, 1857.

Dear Father

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We received two letters from home this week Mar. 16 and 24 with . . . that little ball of yarn. Please excuse me writing a letter this time, as I am very busy with my spring work. I am splitting rails now. My health is better this spring than I remember it since I left school. Sarah and Franky are both well. The Spring is quite backward. Sunday was a very cold day—a regular return of winter. Monday morning the mercury fell to 10°. How was it with you about then? It has stopped freezing nights now except once in a while. We were sorry to hear Gov. Geary has resigned. We have not heard who is the new appointee. It was a great joy to us to read of the triumphant result of the New Hampshire elections. A few short years back and N. H. was where Penn. & Ind. are now. The world moves and will continue to move. We feel cheerful, and confident of the final triumph of the right. . . .

Your affectionate son

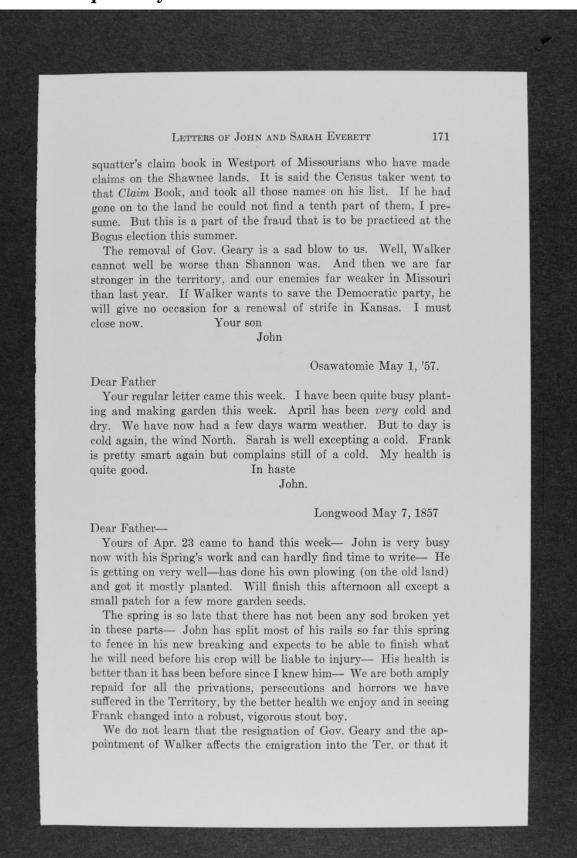
John

Osawatomie, Apr. 16, 1857.

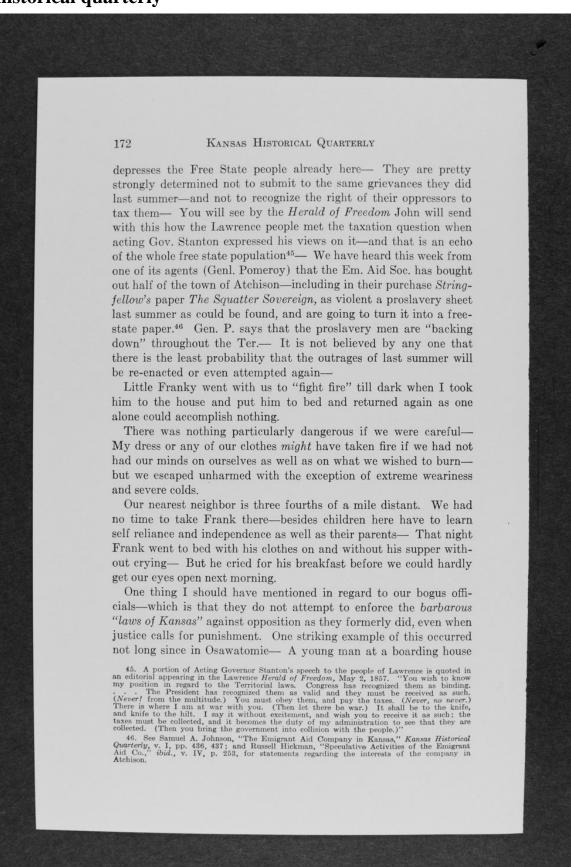
Dear Father

The mail seems to have become rather irregular on the advent of a new administration. We got no letter this week. (But now I remember we got two last week.) The Feb. Cenhadwr only came to hand last week. We have had no N. Y. Tribune for two weeks now. We are having a cold April—colder than anything we have seen in April before— North winds now two days out of three. Some have made garden and planted potatoes, but they are doing no good. Last years crops were poor, except wheat, and the emigration is large; so provisions are quite high. It is a good omen for us that we hear of very little Southern emigration. Ask any one just come in, if the boat he came on was full? "Crowded," will be the answer. "Were there most free state or slave state?" "O, Free State, a great deal," or "Nearly all Free State," will be the reply. Still, the most of those going on to the Indian lands, or claiming there are Proslavery Missourians. It is said there are 2800 names registered on the













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in the place ran away one night with a span of horses and wagon belonging to another individual \$80 in cash belonging to another, and a coat, pistols gun &c belonging to others— He was pursued, taken, and lodged in jail in Lecompton. Not long after, the sheriff and a posse of ten I believe brought him down to Osawatomie for trial before our bogus justice but no one would testify against him, the blacksmith who boarded at the same place with this fellow was subpoenaed but he told them if Williams (the Bogus justice) wanted him he would have to come where he was— Williams talked pretty loud about making him testify and others also, but it all ended in talk, and we have heard nothing since— So it is in other parts as well as here— The free state party are conscious of superior strength and are not moved or daunted as heretofore.

We are having a very dry spring and have had also a very cold one. During April the wind was strong and steady and cold—the weather here was well described by the Tribune in speaking of the weather in N. Y. that it was "unseasonably, unreasonably, uncomfortably and unnecessarily cold." It was that here once more also—I close with love to all from—Your children

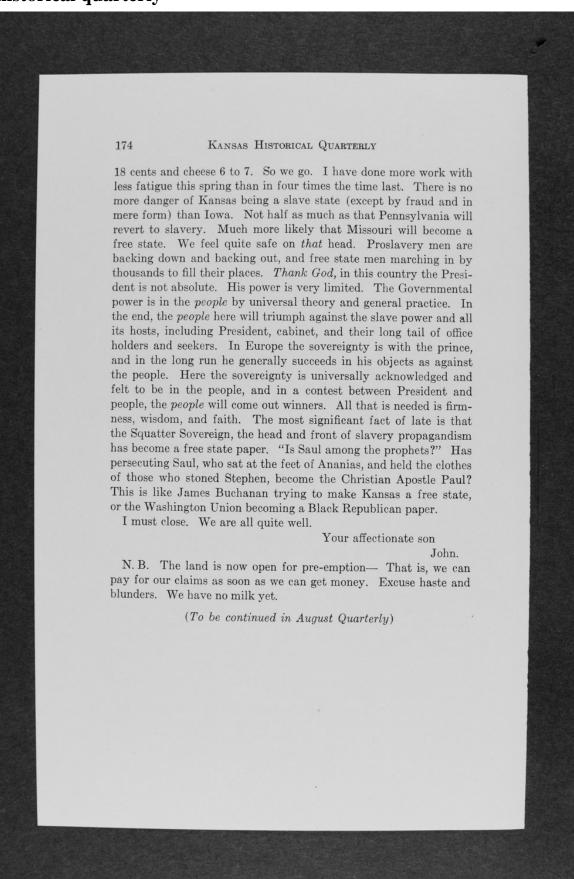
Sarah & John & Franky

Osawatomie May 14, 1857.

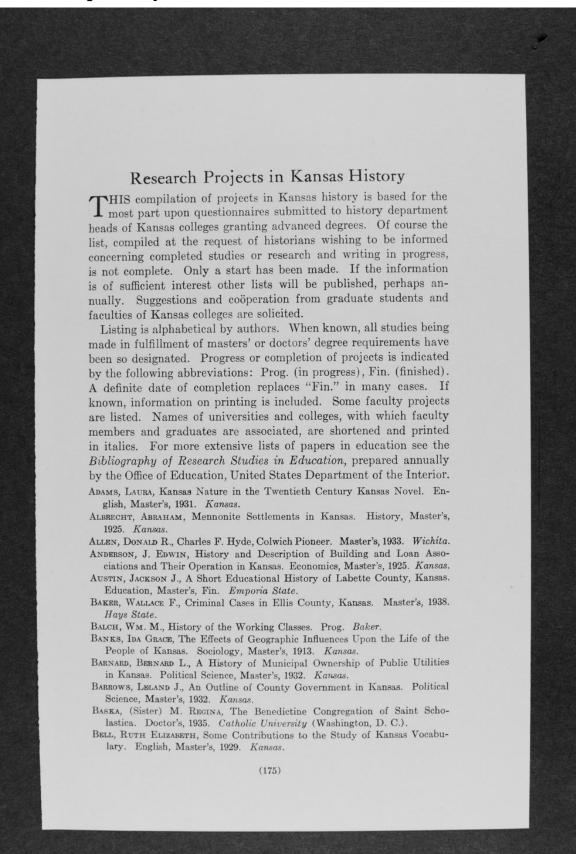
Dear Father

Your regular letter received this week. . . . I am very busy with my work now. I am fencing for my new breaking. Expect to get about 10 acres new prairie plowed or perhaps a little over. Will have to pay \$4.00 an acre at least. Around Lawrence they charge \$5.00 and \$5.50. Have saved \$40.00 of the fifty I borrowed of you for that. My rails (excepting 250) I split myself. Have got enough split to answer till my corn is planted. Yesterday and the day before was hauling rails. Have got about half done. Expect to get it planted week after next. The spring is very late and cold. Flour is \$7.00 a hundred. Bacon 15 to 20 cts. Corn for meal and seed \$2.00 a bushel. Butter is 25 cts. Cheese 25 cents a pound. I wish somebody would lend me \$100 to buy cows. I would willingly pay 10 per cent, and could afford to pay 20. It would be the same as rent with you. Are there none of your money loving Oneida men who would like to get rent for some of the Western prairies? Thousands of tons of good prairie grass will be burnt this fall within two miles of our house. When I was in Steuben men would pay \$12 rent for a cow and a place to keep her, when butter was worth no more than 15 to











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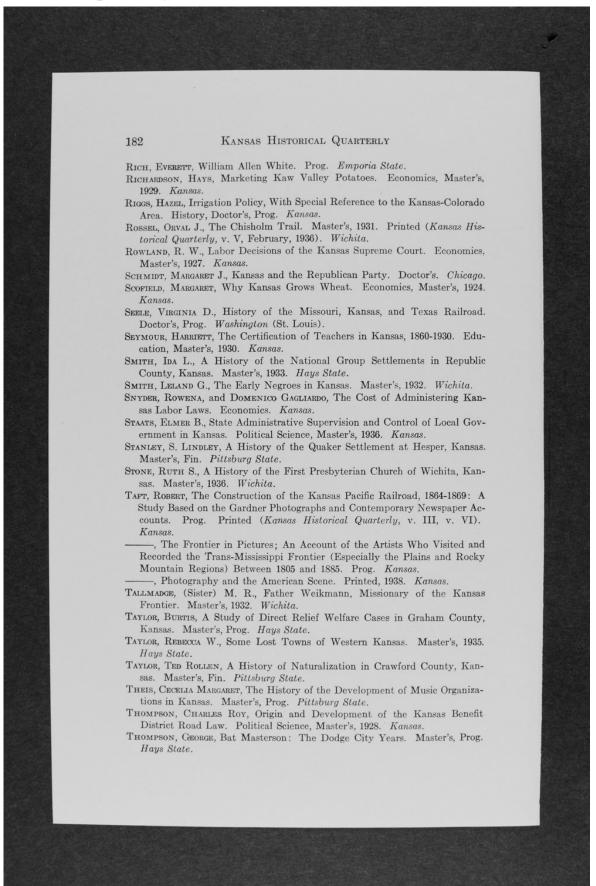
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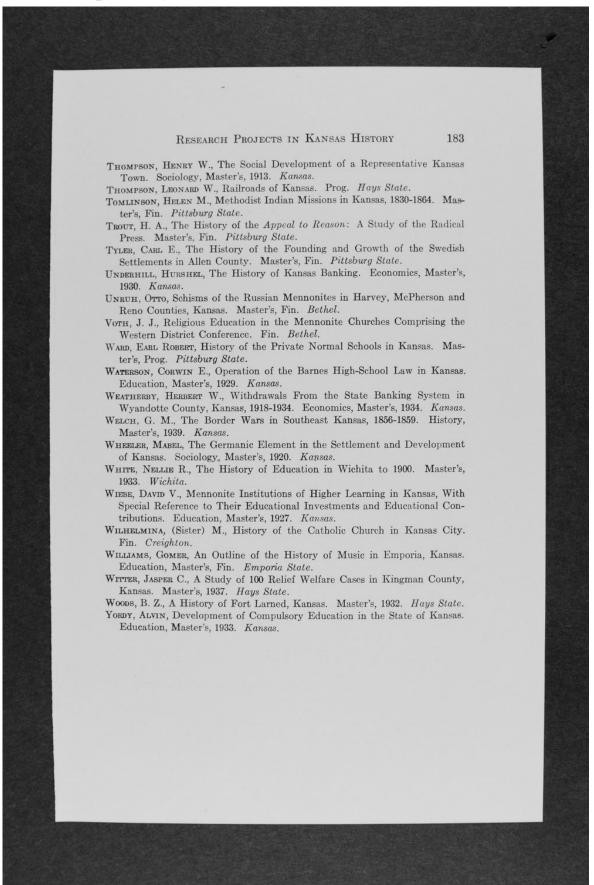


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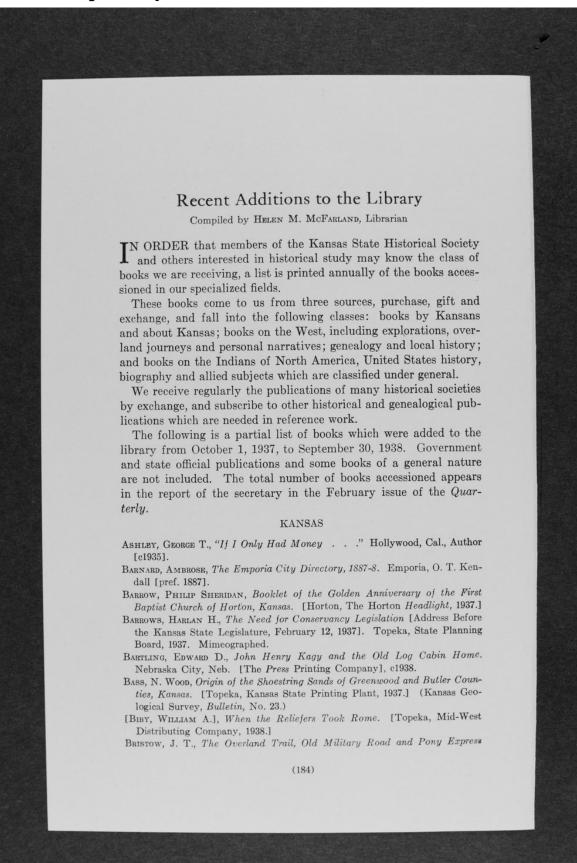








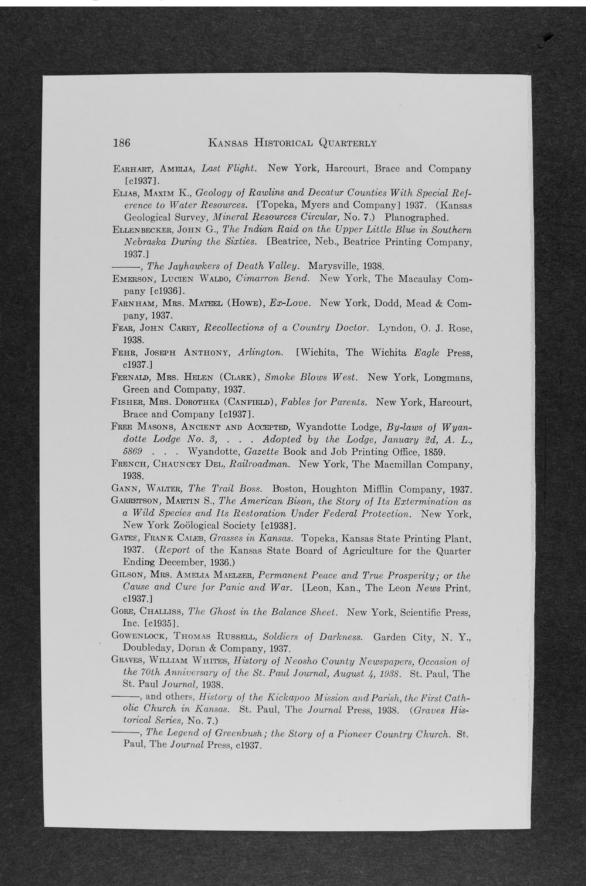






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