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Governor Fletcher whose disinterestedness was less easily impugned. The new governor showing little respect for the things sacred to lawyers, promptly set aside the receiver appointed by the court, and took over all three railroads or the entire Platte Country from Weston north in the interest of the public welfare.<sup>46</sup> The *St. Joseph Herald and Tribune* commented that this made "a rich thing for lawyers."<sup>47</sup> The legislature added what legality it could to the proceedings by ordering the governor to seize the Platte Country railroad a month after he had already done so.<sup>48</sup>

The real reason for the seizure, General Stringfellow hastened to assure his Atchison audience, was that Governor Fletcher had been misled by ex-Governor Hall, who had pledged the people of St. Joseph that he would sell Atchison's railroad so that it could be torn up, thus preventing the construction of the Atchison and Pike's Peak railroad and clearing the way for St. Joseph to receive a Pacific railroad grant from congress. As proof the general pointed out that the excuse of the Missouri legislature for the sale was nonpayment of the interest on \$700,000, whereas other roads had paid no interest on nearly \$20,000,000 but no sale had been threatened.<sup>49</sup> While General Stringfellow was throwing dust in the eyes of his fellow citizens at Atchison by portraying some prominent men of St. Joseph as utter villains, the council of that city in solemn session passed a set of resolutions in which General Stringfellow and his companions were referred to as "those cormorants who are revelling in their ill-gotten gains."<sup>50</sup>

In spite of the unfair tactics of the governor of Missouri, General Stringfellow carried on as Atchison's champion. He offered to compromise. At first he had hoped to pay less than a hundred thousand dollars, which, he claimed, was all that had been spent on the two little railroads. This offer was rejected and the general was hurt to think that Atchison's railroad, which had had nothing to do with the use or misuse of Missouri's bonds, should, nevertheless, be held responsible for them. He next offered to buy the roads south of St. Joseph for the \$350,000 plus interest that was due to Missouri, if he could pay off any time before 1880 in depreciated Missouri bonds

46. *Ibid.*, p. 187, message of January 12, 1865.

47. *The Morning Herald and Tribune*, St. Joseph, January 11, 1865.

48. Act of February 10, 1865, *Laws of the State of Missouri, 1864*, 23d General Assembly, pp. 97, 98.

49. *Atchison Daily Champion*, October 12, 1865. Cf. Governor Fletcher's inaugural address, January 2, 1865, Avery and Shoemaker, *op. cit.*, p. 62. An act for the sale of other defaulting railroads was passed February 19, 1866, *Laws of the State of Missouri, 1865*, Adjourned Session, 23d General Assembly, p. 108.

50. *The Morning Herald and Tribune*, January 28, 1865.

worth about 56 cents on the dollar at that time.<sup>51</sup> This would leave Missouri with the other half of the debt and practically no railroad. The *Herald & Tribune* claimed that this bill almost passed the legislature except for carelessness on the part of Stringfellow's managers, who consented to a brief postponement. In the meantime a substitute bill was prepared, which would permit John Corby and the St. Joseph group to buy the Platte Country railroad. This bill, however, did not offer Missouri any better prospect of recovering its loans.<sup>52</sup>

These maneuvers are practically unrecognizable in General Stringfellow's account of them to his fellow citizens of Atchison. The general's story was that he was on the verge of getting a compromise on terms easy to pay from revenue, when he was stabbed in the back by a report that Atchison was not 100 percent behind him. A telegram from Atchison reassured the legislature, "but folly and treachery had had its [*sic*] effect."<sup>53</sup> The general had to accept the entire road, the whole debt of \$868,000 to Missouri, and an obligation to build to Kansas City and to the Iowa line within a specified time.<sup>54</sup> And this was to be done by a railroad that needed new rolling stock, was in urgent need of repairs, and at the same time had to produce a large sum of money quickly for its first payment to Missouri.

Talk of the onerous conditions of the compromise act of February 18, 1865, caused Atchison's city council to appoint George Fairchild to get the facts and to explain to the city what had happened to its railroad. Fairchild's report of October 2 was critical of General Stringfellow's procedure and particularly of his peculiar stock deal with Carpenter.<sup>55</sup> The general resented this and used up most of the available space in the *Champion* for four days in presenting his colorful and frequently imaginative tale of how he had bled in the defense of Atchison's interests, while ungrateful Atchisonians accused him of selling out to Osborne and Carpenter.<sup>56</sup> It was quite a dust storm and more legal comedy was to follow.

January 1, 1866, came and no payment was made to Missouri. The governor seized the road on January 3, and advertised that the railroad would be sold again.<sup>57</sup> In a message to the legislature the

51. *Ibid.*, January 24, 1865.

52. *Ibid.*, February 3, 1865.

53. *Atchison Daily Champion*, October 13, 14, 1865.

54. Act of February 18, 1865, *Laws of the State of Missouri, 1864*, 23d General Assembly, pp. 98-103.

55. *Atchison Daily Champion*, October 5, 1865.

56. *Ibid.*, October 11-14, 1865.

57. *Ibid.*, January 21, 1866.



governor claimed that General Stringfellow and his group did not represent bona fide stockholders and consequently had no equity which need be respected. By a new sale the governor hoped finally to settle the question of title to the roads.<sup>58</sup> On April 21, the day of the sale, Atchison's defenders with sly smiles were on hand in St. Joseph. The hour of the sale approached, our heroes performed various feats of legal magic, the governor called off the sale and went home.<sup>59</sup>

The governor had thought that the state had a mortgage on the railroads, but in this he was mistaken. The state could buy the entangled roads as a unit, but only by paying the full sum Missouri claimed, thus benefiting only the stockholders. The several roads could be sold separately, but the titles were hopelessly confused. The compromise act had failed to provide a mode of foreclosure so that resort to the courts was necessary to enforce collection. And when Stringfellow had offered \$100,000 in greenbacks, plus interest and costs (which the governor had rejected because it was only a fraction of the sum due), he had legally prevented sale of the roads. All this the attorney general of Missouri, who had been ill at the time of the sale, gave as his belated opinion to the discomfited governor.<sup>60</sup> After the event, in his first biennial message, the governor claimed that the railroads had made a part payment and had begun to extend the roads so that the state's loans seemed sufficiently secure to make the sale unnecessary, though he also admitted that legal entanglements had prevented the sale.<sup>61</sup>

Missouri's real complaint was that the conglomerate confusion of the Atchison and St. Joseph, Weston and Atchison, and Platte Country railroads was preventing the building of a railroad from Kansas City up the Missouri river. Headway was finally made in 1867. The roads were mortgaged for two and a half million dollars of New York money,<sup>62</sup> and another compromise act in the Missouri legislature consolidated them into the Missouri Valley railroad on March 8, 1867.<sup>63</sup> A year later another act permitted the road to retire its debt to Missouri through a generous credit given for each five miles of new construction.<sup>64</sup> In 1870 the road was consolidated with the

58. Message of January 15, 1866, Avery and Shoemaker, *op. cit.*, pp. 199, 200.

59. *The Morning Herald*, April 22, 1866.

60. *Atchison Daily Champion*, June 1, 1866.

61. January 4, 1867, Avery and Shoemaker, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

62. *Atchison Daily Champion*, February 6, 1867.

63. *Laws of the State of Missouri, 1867*, 24th General Assembly, pp. 135-139.

64. Act of March 17, 1868, *ibid.*, 1868, Adjourned Session, 24th General Assembly, pp. 107-111.

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St. Joseph and Council Bluffs, becoming the Kansas City, St. Joseph and Council Bluffs railroad.<sup>65</sup>

By that time the stock owned by Atchison, what with reorganizations, Carpenter, Stringfellow, and what not, was down to \$23,333.33 book value. After advertising for bids, the city had rejected an offer of 60 cents on the dollar in city bonds—an offer that represented about 30 cents on the dollar in cash. There were suggestions that the stock be given to anyone willing to extend the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe to Atchison.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, Acting Mayor B. P. Waggener was sharply criticized when, after a hurried meeting of the council, the stock was sold for 40 cents to John Price, agent for Pickering Clark, an official of the Kansas City, St. Joseph and Council Bluffs railroad. Everyone concluded that the stock must be due for a rise.<sup>67</sup>

Atchison really had no ground for complaint. She was extraordinarily fortunate to have had a railroad before the Civil War, and the wonder was that the road had been built at all. She had spent future taxes for an important bit of transportation; it had given her a real advantage over neighboring towns for a few years, and besides it had been built mostly with Missouri's money.

65. *The History of Buchanan County, Missouri*, p. 580.

66. *Atchison Daily Champion and Press*, September 28, 1870.

67. *Ibid.*, September 23, 28, 1870.



## Letters of a Free-State Man in Kansas, 1856

Edited by NATHAN SMITH

### INTRODUCTION

MUCH attention has been given to the political and ideological aspects of the struggle in Kansas between the Proslavery and Free-State forces in 1855-1856. Several letters written by a Free-State settler<sup>1</sup> interned in an army camp in Kansas, together with what is known of his activities there prior to his imprisonment, indicate that there was another aspect to the relationship between Proslavery and Free-State men.

On May 27, 1856, at a bipartisan meeting of landholders on Pottawatomie creek, called as a result of the slaughter three days earlier of five people by John Brown and his friends, Henry H. Williams, a Free-State settler, was elected secretary of a committee to take action against recurrence of such an event. The committee expressed its disapprobation of the John Brown atrocities and resolved that the settlers would "from this time lay aside all sectional and political feelings and act together as men of reason and common sense, determined to oppose all men who are so ultra in their views as to denounce men of opposite opinions."<sup>2</sup>

On that same day, Williams was indicted in Lykins county, together with John Brown, Jr., charged with "conspiracy to resist the collection of taxes."<sup>3</sup> A few days later he was arrested<sup>4</sup> and after detention in various prisons was transferred, on June 23, 1856, to the army camp near Leecompton.<sup>5</sup> There the men who had been indicted for treason by Judge Leecompte's grand jury in the first week of May, 1856, were also imprisoned.

The arrest of Williams was a direct result of the conflict between the Proslavery legislature elected on March 30, 1855, and the Topeka legislature, which was organized on December 15, 1855, by the Free-State forces.<sup>6</sup> Governor Robinson of Lawrence, who was among the treason prisoners, testified that on Williams' arrival at the camp near Leecompton he exonerated the men killed by John Brown and

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1. The original letters are in the possession of Prof. Richard Hooker, Roosevelt College, Chicago, Ill.

2. Charles Robinson, *The Kansas Conflict* (New York, 1892), p. 275.

3. G. W. Brown, *Reminiscences of Old John Brown* (Rockford, 1880), p. 30.

4. D. W. Wilder, *The Annals of Kansas* (Topeka, 1886), p. 119.

5. Sara T. L. Robinson, *Kansas* . . . (Boston, 1856), p. 304. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 30, gives an earlier date for his arrival but inasmuch as he wrote 20 years later and Robinson wrote the same year the later date is possibly the more accurate.

6. William Phillips, *The Conquest of Kansas by Missouri and Her Allies* (Boston, 1856), p. 350.

company of any provocation for the attack.<sup>7</sup> Evidently, for Williams, some considerations were beyond partisan definition.

That feeling was not limited to Free-State men. On July 31, 1856, Williams wrote that in the face of a common danger (ruffian raids), "the proslavery men in Lecompton . . . are trying to compromise [and] get up vigilance committees &c with the free state men."

Williams' letters and activities are an indication that there was a common ground between Proslavery and Free-State men. It was not more extensive partly because the settlers had come to the territory already labeled. Incidents which normally would have been considered a product of frontier conditions were therefore magnified out of all proportion to their importance. The killing of Dow by Coleman, referred to by Williams, for example, had its roots in a complicated boundary dispute.<sup>8</sup> The attack on Perkins seems to have been due as much to a desire to rob him as to an antagonism over slavery.<sup>9</sup> In many of the other incidents—stealing cattle and horses from Free-State men; confiscating property of Free-State settlers on Stranger creek; stealing teams sent from Lawrence to Leavenworth for provisions—gain seems to have been a strong motive.

#### THE LETTERS

CAMP SACKETT near Lecompton July 31 1856

I sent a letter yesterday to Gerry by a man on his way to Boston & also a letter to Sarah Wilks but directed it in my haste to Sarah Aldrich it makes but little difference however I would write to all my friends if I did not dislike to write so much. A proslavery man and daughter from North Carolina called to see us last week came up from Lawrence in a wagon belonging to a Mr Chapman a member of the bogus legislature upon their return an altercation took place between Wilson (Carolinian) and Chapman about price of carriage hire & Chapman struck Wilson over the head with a club & Wilson died same day Wilson [*sic*] is under arrest at Lecompton but will probably get clear as he is "all right on the goose" A Dagurreian in Lawrence named Perkins taking a walk one evening last week was acosted by three Ruffians half mile from town & asked "where he lived" he replied in Lawrence the Ruff presented a pistol & fired Perkins knocked the pistol in the air &

7. Charles Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

8. O. N. Merrill, "A True History of the Kansas Wars," *The Magazine of History*, Cincinnati, v. 45 (1856, No. 178, reprinted 1932), pp. 15-23; Frank W. Blackmar, *The Life of Charles Robinson* (Topeka, 1902), pp. 137, 138.

9. See, also, Sara Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 320.



returned the fire but was immediately knocked down with a pistol & robbed of \$40, in cash watch &c & stamped & kicked untill nearly dead & lies in a very precarious situation yet The bogus laws are not feared by the proslavery men or regarded by the free state men

The proslavery men in Lecompton are frightened to death keep guard around their town every night for fear of an attack & are trying to compromise get up vigilance committees &c with the free state men Marshall Fain<sup>10</sup> from Lecompton arested a man near Lawrence for horse stealing before he got to Lecompton with his prisenor he was rescued by two of his friends but the man wanted the matter investigated and went on with the marshall Fain went to Lawrence for witnesses they were busy & could not come up so the marshall came to our camp for soldiers to help him a doz went down with him but could *not find* any of the witnesses although Fain at one time when at a distance from the soldiers saw one of the men that he wanted & conversed with him but when he bro't the soldiers he wasn't *thar* One of the men that the marshall suppoeneied came into camp after the Marshall left with his posse & staid two or three hours

The last I heard from Potowatomie there was a company of United States troops camped about six miles from my claim near Partridges Some of the most obnoxious proslavery settlers had left & dare not come back others had moved together in companies and were in a continual state of alarm (the wicked flee when no man pursueth) The imprisonment of Gov Robinson<sup>11</sup> and others here is making political capital for Fremont so mote it be, you can send or deliver a copy of the account of my arrest and imprisonment which I sent to you; to the Fredonia Censor and please state that I am from or rather bro't up in Chantagne (for political effect)

5 buggies one two horse wagon and one saddle horse hitched in front of our tents just now they bro't us green corn grapes apples beets cucumbers squashes &c We have glorious news from the house of representatives to day but we have nothing to expect from the senate or administration untill the 4th of March next when we do expect everything How does Hank Dunbar & father vote or all the old fogies of my acquaintance & uncle John Mott I have a great notion to write to Jon Mott jr Had a heavy rain night be-

10. W. P. Fain was a United States deputy marshal assigned to Kansas. On May 21, 1856, he led a posse into Lawrence and arrested some of the Free-State men indicted for treason.

11. Charles Robinson, a Free-State leader, held the title of governor in the Topeka government. Early in May, 1855, indictments for treason were issued against all its members. As a result Robinson was imprisoned at the camp near Lecompton until September 10, 1856, when he was freed on bail.



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fore last which was needed and will do a great deal of good Shannon<sup>12</sup> begins to curry favor of the free state men 10 days since he tried to cut us off from all communication from our friends

Judge Scuylers popularity is hurt in Kansas on account of his timidity in times of danger or rather his conservatism or prudence, men that in the earlier days of Kansas were considered rash and imprudent are now the most popular. The stirring times that we have had the past few weeks has shown who are the men to be relied upon in every emergency and they will be remembered I think

When the General assembly convened at Topeka on the 4th of July there was a quorum present but only 17 in the lower house answered to their names & the senate did not call the roll I laid my plans to escape the night of the 3d so as to be there on the 4th but Mr Brown the editor<sup>13</sup> remonstrated against my going he said that it would only be harder for those that remained as they would be closer confined none of the rest of the prisensors objected to my going but I believe that Brown is a coward notwithstanding all his boasting what he would do if his press was mobbed for it was only the week before that he talked of escaping himself and going to Alton and starting his paper & none of the prisensors objected to his going but rather wished that he would We could escape any night now, if we chose but we have such a kind captain now that we do not want to get him into trouble

CAMP SACKETT, Co. B. US Cavalry near Lecompton Aug 2d 1856

Hurrah! a letter from Highland Eagle Peekskill April 1st fathers journals with a line from Emily May 31st fathers letter to Shermanville July 3d & to Lecompton July 4th all rec'd this morn the first I have recd since I have been a prisoner I took them into my tent & lay down on my blanket & read them rolled over on my face & shed tears copiously better to relieve nature in this way than to have the blues for a week Hiram is dead Delia recovering from her burns what does this mean I have heard nothing poor Hipe he might better have come to Kansas Geo in Cleveland Ri in Delanti well well I hope that I shall hear from you oftener

12. Wilson Shannon was appointed governor of Kansas territory in September, 1855. He recognized the Shawnee Mission legislature and supported Judge Le Compte's efforts to disband the Topeka government.

13. George W. Brown was the editor of the *Herald of Freedom*, a Free-Soil paper published in Lawrence and circulated in the North. He was arrested for treason and interned in the camp near Lecompton along with the other treason prisoners.



now dont sent to Lecompton we have to get an order from Jones <sup>14</sup> or Darn-old son <sup>15</sup> to get them & that is humiliating

I have not paid much for counsel & do not intend to pay any more for a very good reason that I have not got it to pay I understand that there is a large amount of money being raised in the States for the relief of Kansas sufferers this is well & is much needed but I am afraid that those that most deserve the relief will be less likely to recive assistance than those that are less deserving there are those here that have always been ready to sacrifice anything & everything for the good of Kansas & have had to bear the brunt of the battle often sacrificeing property always time & often life they are generally unassuming & diffident about putting themselves forward as objects of charity even in so just a cause I am owing about \$15 or \$16 which I borrowed & expended in the war or for counsel fees but I look forward for a brighter day a comeing & If John Mott or Langworthy or Dunbar are friends of mine they will come to my assistance by voting for Fremont and Freedom I tell them that the administration is as corrupt as the Bottomless pit & all our appressors are working scheeming & fighting for its continuance in power with Buchanan for a leader & slavery for a motto they are trying to ride rough shod over the freemen of Kansas

It is now raining furiously & I cannot find a dry place to write in the tent Dietzler <sup>16</sup> was writing too but has stopped on account of the rain Judge Smith <sup>17</sup> who occupies the tent with D & I is dodging the drops as they come through the tent he has had the ague since he has been a prisoner but he is nearly well at present "Deizler says d—n the scoundrels, Pierce at the head of them for attempting to enforce those *infernal laws*" By the by Commissioner Hangland [Hoagland?] who committed me to prison has fled the country between the light of two days the storm has ceased & D has resumed his writing he is a good fellow has had the blues once, did not speak for nearly a week but is cheerful now We are to have preaching here tomorrow the Rev Mr Nute from Lawrence is to speak and a choir will come up it will be a relief to the monotony of our prison life Some of the prisoners have recd cheering letters from Reeder Holloday Klotz & others of our friends that are in the east some of them stumping for Fremont

Chapman who killed Wilson (Carolinian) spoke of in a former

14. Samuel J. Jones was the sheriff of Douglas county who, on May 21, 1856, with a posse destroyed books, local newspaper offices, and important buildings in Lawrence.

15. Israel B. Donaldson was the first United States marshal of Kansas territory.

16. G. W. Deitzler was a general in the Free-State militia who was arrested on May 21, 1856, for treason.

17. G. W. Smith was a member of the Topeka government also arrested on May 21 for treason.



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letter is out of prison on \$3000, straw bail while a free state man arrested for horse stealing will not be admitted to bail by the bogus authorities so it goes One of the tents in camp occupied by Editor Brown has rents in it made with a bowy knife in the hands of Coleman the murder of Dow<sup>18</sup> I have just examined the tent it has 8 cuts in it from the top nearly to the bottom since sewed up the tents belongs to the father in law of Brown who lives near Hickory Point near where Coleman lived Coleman is hanging about Westport and comes up into the territory with a gang of maurauders occasionally & drives off cattle and horses only week before last he drove off two horses for Browns father in law and 11 others were missing from that vicinity at the same time Coleman sent up word to Gleason (Brown relative) that he could have his horses by comeing to Westport & *taking* them No doubt that there has exaggerated accounts of affairs in Kansas been published but have not seen anything that would exceed the reality I have not met with any personal violence since I have been in the territory but I have seen the time when my life would not have been considered worth much by many in my situation

I understand that quite a large number of Alabamians have settled on the Potowatomie since I have been a prisoner but a number have died & the others discouraged If there can anything be gleaned from the above worthy of insertion in the Censor put it in by all means let there be light I would direct this to Geo but I do not know what office he is in Do write to Aunt Eliza nearly all the facts of the case in the murder of Brown Dow Barber Stewart Jones Cantrell & H— are true & if she wants a faithfull account of our troubles let her read the report of the Investigating committee

CAMP SACKETT. Sunday Aug. 24th

250 dragoons arrived at Lecompton this morning from Fort Riley there is one company of artillery there and all of the first regiment of Cavalry Colonel Jonson is in command and has orders to keep his force together what they intend to do is more than I can surmise I hear it rumored that 4000 missourians are prepared to come up and sweep every abolitionist out of the territory 25th 200 Topeka boys went down last night, the free state men will march for the Stranger creek today headed by Gen Lane<sup>19</sup> 400 Missouri-ans camped on the Stranger All the regular force in the territory

18. Franklin N. Coleman was a Proslavery man who killed Charles W. Dow, a Free-Stater, on November 21, 1855, after difficulties which arose over a land claim. The killing began a series of disputes which led to the Wakarusa War.

19. James H. Lane, who was in command of the Free-State militia, was indicted for treason but never arrested.



is here now 500 or 600 under the command of Col Cook<sup>20</sup> what they are all concentrating here for I can't conceive The mob on the Stranger has drove all the free state settlers off and confiscated their property

26th Mirable Dictu I've got a letter at last fathers and sisters of Aug 16th arrived last eve it seems that the Border Ruffians are not to blame for my not receiving any before why the dickens dont you write more I want you to keep the Censors that you say have published my letters and when I get out please foreward them or you can send them right along now to Lawrence because if I am not here when they arrive I can get them Letters papers and visits of a few friends is all we have to relieve the tedium of our confinement now the usual restrictions of Military prisoners is put upon us now we can't stir without a guard at our heels & the free state men are so busily engaged with the affairs of the territory that we have but few visitors Havn't heard from the telegraph operator yet

I see that Pierce has called an extra session of Congress but I don't believe that Pierce or the Senate will do anything for Kansas the most that I can hope for is that the House will "stand up to the rack fodder or no fodder" Amos Lawrence<sup>21</sup> had donated \$50 to each of the prisoners and Simpson of Lawrence<sup>22</sup> advanced me \$20 this morning for him 27th I understand that the Missourians will not be disturbed for the present on the Stranger though it is impossible for me to tell what will or may take place any hour the free state forces continue under arms for the present 28th 6 teams that went from Lawrence to Leavenworth for provisions were taken by the borderers yesterday in Leavenworth and one of the teamsters shot

Three companies of dragoon just gone towards Lawrence I expect that it is to arest Lane a committee just waited on Col Cook to see if he would send a force to Leavenworth to recover the teams says that he has no authority to act unless called upon by the civil authorities I got letters from Westchester and papers but nothing from home or Clev

20. Brev. Col. Phillip St. George Cooke commanded the federal troops at Fort Riley.

21. Amos A. Lawrence of Boston was a strong supporter and treasurer of the New England Emigrant Aid Company.

22. S. N. Simpson was one of the delegates to the Free-State territorial convention held in Lawrence on June 25, 1855.



## Susanna Madora Salter—First Woman Mayor

MONROE BILLINGTON

THE town of Argonia in Sumner county, Kansas, became nationally and internationally known in 1887 when the voters of that little Quaker village, with a population of less than five hundred, elected the first woman mayor in America. Mrs. Susanna Salter, who received this honor, was one of a number of women mayors elected during the years after the Civil War when women were renewing their demands for more political rights.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Salter was born Susanna Madora "Dora" Kinsey, near Lamira in Belmont county, Ohio, March 2, 1860. Her parents, Oliver Kinsey and Terissa Ann White, were both of Quaker parentage, their ancestors having come to America from England with William Penn's colonists on the ship *Welcome*. The Kinsey family in successive generations moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio to Kansas, settling in 1872 on an 80-acre farm in the Kaw valley near Silver Lake. There Dora attended district schools until 1878, when she entered Kansas State Agricultural College as a sophomore.<sup>2</sup> She left college because of illness only six weeks before time to graduate. While at Manhattan she had met Lewis Allison Salter, son of former Lt. Gov. Melville J. Salter. Salter was graduated in 1879, and Dora was married to him on September 1, 1880, at Silver Lake.<sup>3</sup>

The young couple moved to Argonia in 1882, where Salter managed a hardware store. The following spring Mrs. Salter gave birth to her second child, the first born in Argonia. A year later Mrs. Salter's parents moved to Argonia and bought the store, which was operated under the firm name of Kinsey & Salter. In the meantime Salter read law with a local attorney and prepared himself for the bar.

The town of Argonia was incorporated in 1885. Mrs. Salter's father, Oliver Kinsey, was its first mayor and her husband was city clerk. In this capacity Salter wrote the ordinances of the town. Two years later the Kansas legislature enacted a law giving the

MONROE BILLINGTON, a native of Oklahoma, is a graduate assistant at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, where he is writing his doctor's dissertation in history. His wife is a granddaughter of Susanna Madora Salter.

1. The author has spent several hours with Mrs. Salter gathering information for this article. He has had free access to her newspaper clippings, letters, and mementos. From these interviews and papers, the political life of this interesting person has been reconstructed.

2. Mrs. Salter entered college as a sophomore because she had taken several high school subjects which in those days could be counted as college credits. After taking an examination on these subjects, she was permitted to skip the freshman year.

3. Alfred H. Mitchell, "America's First Woman Mayor," *The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, Columbus, v. 53 (January-March, 1944), pp. 52-54.

franchise to women in first, second, and third class cities. Since Argonia was a third class city, the women there became eligible to vote.

A Woman's Christian Temperance Union had been organized in Argonia in 1883, and with the right to vote, its members made enforcement of the state prohibition law a prime issue of the city election.<sup>4</sup> They called a caucus and selected a ticket of men whom they considered to be worthy of the town's offices, regardless of political labels. In the absence of their president Mrs. Salter presided at this caucus.

A certain group of men in Argonia felt that the field of politics was their exclusive domain and resented the intrusion of women into their affairs. Two of these men had attended the W. C. T. U. caucus and heckled the proceedings. They were "wets," trying to intimidate the W. C. T. U., but when they attempted to nominate a candidate they were voted down.

A secret caucus was called by this faction. Twenty of them met in the back room of a local restaurant and decided to teach these females a lesson. They drew up a slate of candidates identical with that of the W. C. T. U., except that for the office of mayor they substituted Mrs. Salter's name. They assumed that the women would vote for the W. C. T. U. slate and that the men would not vote for a woman. They thought if Mrs. Salter got only their 20 votes it would embarrass the W. C. T. U. as a political organization. They also felt that such a move would curb some of the W. C. T. U.'s political activities. Mrs. Salter was chosen to be the butt of the prank because she was the only officer of the W. C. T. U. who was eligible for office, the others living outside the town limits.

This could be done as a surprise because candidates did not have to file before election day. The faction simply had the ballots printed with Mrs. Salter's name on them; of course without her knowledge or consent. Early voters on the morning of the election were shocked, therefore, to find that she was a candidate. The chairman of the Republican party in Argonia immediately sent a delegation to see her. They found her doing the family washing. They explained the trick and then asked if she would accept the office if elected.<sup>5</sup> When Mrs. Salter agreed, they said, "All right, we will elect you and just show those fellows who framed up this deal a thing or two."

All day long they explained the situation and campaigned to get

4. Alva (Okla.) *Review Courier*, January 4, 1944.

5. Wellington *Daily News*, November 9, 1933.





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out the vote. Mr. Salter, an early voter, was angered when he discovered his wife's name on the ballot. He was even more perturbed when he returned home and found that his wife had consented to serve if elected. Mrs. Salter was undeterred. At 4 P. M. she went to the polls with her parents and voted. It was not considered proper to vote for oneself in those days, so Mrs. Salter left the ballot for mayor unmarked.

By forsaking their own caucus nominee, the members of the W. C. T. U. voted for Mrs. Salter in such numbers that she received a two-thirds majority. Instead of the 20 votes intended for her, the faction had given her the election. Instead of humiliating the women, they had elected the first woman mayor in the country. When the results were known, Mrs. Salter's husband adjusted himself to the situation, and, with a certain amount of pride, made jokes about being the "husband of the mayor."

Two days after the election was held, the following message was sent to Mrs. Salter:

ARGONIA 4/6/87

DORA SALTER,  
Argonia  
Madam

You are hereby notified that at an election held in the city of Argonia on Monday April 4/87, for the purpose of electing city officers, you were duly elected to the office of Mayor of said city. You will take due notice thereof and govern yourself accordingly.

WM H WATSON Mayor  
F. A. RUSE Clerk Pro. tem.

Five members of the town council were also elected. It was learned years later that three of them had been in the group of 20 pranksters. Nevertheless, the new mayor had no trouble with these men during her year in office. When she called the first council meeting to order, she said, "Gentlemen, what is your pleasure? You are the duly elected officials of this town, I am merely your presiding officer." This indicated to the surprised and skeptical councilmen that, contrary to predictions, they were not under "petticoat rule." She let the men take the lead in the council; the council and mayor worked harmoniously throughout the year. Actually the council did little. Two draymen were arrested for refusing to buy licenses, some boys were warned about throwing rocks at a vacant house, but otherwise the term was politically uneventful. No new ordinances were passed, although some of the ordinances which Mrs. Salter's husband had drawn up were tested for their effectiveness.



Notwithstanding this uneventful term of office, Mrs. Salter immediately became one of the most talked about and written about political figures in America. Newspapers sent correspondents to Argonia to visit her council meetings and to see how she conducted the town's business. Argonians were interviewed as to their reactions to a woman mayor. Newspapers debated over the advisability of other towns electing women mayors. Many objected to a possible "petticoat rule," while others took a "wait and see" attitude. Those who deferred judgment felt that if her term of office were a success women in politics might not be such a world-shaking change in American political life after all. Other newspapers made the mayor the object of many editorial jokes and sly remarks.<sup>6</sup>

One of the first council meetings over which Mrs. Salter presided was attended by a correspondent of the *New York Sun*. She knew that her every act would be publicized over the nation. She was determined to handle the council meeting with a firm hand, showing the world that a woman could hold her own in the realm of politics. The correspondent was impressed. When he wrote his story, he described the mayor's dress and hat, and pointed out that she presided with great decorum. He noted that several times she checked discussion which she deemed irrelevant, showing that she was a good parliamentarian. The councilmen, though respectful, bore the air of protesting pupils of a not over-popular school mistress. No official action was taken on any subject at this particular meeting, though an order of business was carried out and several matters discussed.

A councilman thought the license on billiard tables should be reduced from \$25 to \$12.50 a year, since the existing license—in his opinion—was almost prohibitive. Mrs. Salter thought that the town did not need billiard parlors badly enough to offer any premiums and expressed this opinion. When one of the other councilmen agreed with her, the matter was dropped. When the councilmen were asked if they knew of any violations of ordinances which demanded attention, they did not respond. The mayor pointed out that she knew of two small boys who had been throwing stones at a vacant house, and she thought they should be arrested and punished. The reporter added, "This was about all the business transacted, and it is little else that the Council is ever asked to do."

The mayor was regarded as a curiosity by even the townspeople,

6. From unidentified newspaper clippings. Many of Mrs. Salter's newspaper clippings are impossible to identify or to date since often only the brief articles have been clipped. When the dates and names of the newspapers are known, they are included.





Argonia 4/6 - 1887

Mrs. Salter.

Argonia

Madam

You are hereby notified that at an election held in the City of Argonia on Monday April 4/87, for the purpose of electing city officers, you were duly elected to the office of Mayor of said city. You will take due notice thereof and govern yourself accordingly.

Wm. H. Hutton Mayor.

J. A. Rees Clerk Pro Tem.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION OF THE OFFICIAL NOTICE OF ELECTION  
SENT TO MRS. LEWIS ALLISON SALTER IN APRIL, 1887



Mrs. LEWIS ALLISON SALTER, born Susanna Madora Kinsey, was elected mayor of Argonia on April 4, 1887. She was the first woman to be so honored in the United States. At left, Mrs. Salter in 1887, at the age of 27. At right, Mrs. Salter in 1954, on her 94th birthday. She now lives in Norman, Okla. Photos courtesy of Mrs. Salter and Mr. Billington.



always being pointed out to strangers visiting the town. The *Sun* reporter noted that "the mischievous small boys appear to regard her much as a New York gamin does a 'cop,' and 'There's the Mayor' is often the signal for a general scattering of urchins as she approaches." This Eastern observer concluded his column in this way:

I asked Mrs. Salter if her ambition to act as a female politician or leader in woman suffrage circles had been aroused by her election. She quickly replied, "No, indeed, I shall be very glad when my term of office expires, and shall be only too happy to thereafter devote myself entirely, as I always have done heretofore, to the care of my family." And in conversation with a number of business men in Argonia I found a very general disposition to rest on the laurels now won as the only American town which ever tried the experiment of a woman Mayor.

The Leavenworth *Times*, quoting the *Sun* article, pointed out that the correspondent expressed the opinion that she made "an intelligent, capable and conscientious officer, fully equal to all the requirements of her position." The *Times* went on to defend Mrs. Salter when it stated that "this evidence is corroborated by every individual who has had an opportunity to base his judgment on a personal observation of the conduct of her administration." The Rushville (Ind.) *Republican*, August 18, 1887, carried a brief article on Mrs. Salter stating that she "is said to discharge the duties of her office in the most acceptable manner." Another paper wrote that she "is having a very successful administration. When she was elected to her present office, her enemies predicted that she would make a failure of her effort to run the municipal affairs of Argonia. Up to the present time she has made no great blunders."

New England's reaction to the events in Kansas were expressed in a Massachusetts newspaper:

The Kansas women have done it. Susanna Madora Salter, mayor of Argonia, a little town of 500 inhabitants, is the first woman ever elected to that office. And she is not an "unsexed female" either, but the wife of a lawyer and the mother of four children. There is no more likelihood of her neglecting her babies—she is only 27 and the children cannot be much beyond babyhood—than that her husband would neglect his practice if he had been elected to the same office. There is also a poetic fitness in Mrs. Salter's election. Her father was the first mayor of the town, and she can continue the work he began.<sup>7</sup>

The Manhattan *Nationalist* remarked that it was fortunate for those who favored woman suffrage to be first represented in official life by one like Mrs. Salter. "There are many others in Kansas just as capable as she, but as among men, there are some incapable. It

7. Springfield (Mass.) *Republican*, May 1, 1887.

cannot be said now that the very beginning [of women in office] was a failure," concluded the *Nationalist*.

Not all of the editorial comments were as favorable as the ones quoted above. One paper, when it heard that Mrs. Salter was not going to run for re-election, stated, "She is tired of the burdens of office. [She plans to] return to private life and leave the government of Argonia to the care of the sterner sex. Mayor Salter's experience proves that woman suffrage is its own cure." Another newspaper took issue with the statement that Mrs. Salter was tired of the responsibilities of office. On the contrary, it declared that she "finds . . . [official duties] less troublesome than household duties, which she also attends to and does not complain of either."

Laura M. Johns, president of the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association, capitalized on Mrs. Salter's election. For a Salina newspaper she wrote on April 28, 1887:

Argonia is a pretty little city . . . with a population of 500 . . . incorporated two years ago. . . . It has attracted the attention of suffragists by electing, this spring, a lady to the mayoralty. This is the first time a woman has held that office in Kansas, and we are glad that the "innovation" is made in the person of one who will fill that office with credit to herself and sex, and satisfaction to her townspeople. [The mayor] . . . does not fear [her opposition] in the least, and is determined, by the help of God, so to conduct her office as to make it serve the best interests of the city. She is an officer in the Argonia W. C. T. U., much interested in the enforcement of the prohibitory law, and in the study of the best means of suppressing and eradicating the vices that beset our cities.

Newspapers pointed out that a short time after the election the billiard hall was closed and the sale of hard cider was stopped in Argonia. The morals of the little Quaker town became stricter than ever. Men thought that it was necessary to put on a clean shirt and to black their boots before they consulted the mayor about the enforcement of the hog law. This was gall and wormwood to their souls, so some of those who originated the scheme which backfired left town, if one newspaper report is to be trusted.

Argonia received additional publicity when newspapers discovered that the mayor had given birth to a child while holding office.<sup>8</sup> As one newspaper put it:

When Mayor Salter of Argonia had a baby, that village received such a boom and such gratuitous advertizing that all the other villages in the State

8. Edward Easter, who died 11 days after birth. Mrs. Salter was the mother of four children at the time of her election. Two more, in addition to this one who died in infancy, were born in Argonia, and two more were born after the family moved to Oklahoma. The Salter children in order of their births are: Clarence, Francis Argonia, Winfred, Melva, Edward, Bertha, Lewis, Leslie, and William.



almost went wild with envy. From an unknown country crossroads hamlet, Argonia has jumped into a prominence that is wonderful, and is today probably the best known, or at least the widest known town in the State.

Other Kansas towns elected woman officials the following year, much to the chagrin of many newspaper editors. Here are some headlines reflecting their attitudes: "Women as Mayors and City Councillors Not a Success in Kansas," "Pretty Campaigners—Indulging in Kissing to Change the View of Stony-Hearted Partisans," "How Women Lose Self-Respect—Argonia, Syracuse and Oskaloosa Under Female Government." An article under a Kansas City, Mo., dateline, and telegraphed to the New York *Herald*, may have been serious, but it probably was making fun of the towns under feminist rule:

There is reason to believe that billiards will soon become a lost art in all the smaller towns in Kansas, for the women have entered politics for the purposes of reforming the men, and it is a well-known fact that their principal objection to the modes of male recreation is to billiards. As the Mayor and Council of Oskaloosa all wear petticoats there will soon be such a revolution in that burg that the male sex will be compelled to go back to the days of their youth when they played "hookey" for devices to escape the lynx eyed rulers of the town. Quiet games of "draw" or "old sledge" will be played in the corners or behind the hedge fences, while such a pleasure as "sitting up with a sick friend" will become obsolete.<sup>9</sup>

Mrs. Salter's publicity was not confined to America. Many foreign papers carried notices, articles, and pictures about her. The official organ of the Grand Lodge of Western South Africa, *Temperance News*, carried an article about the mayor on June 16, 1888, and *Idun*, a women's magazine published in Stockholm, Sweden, carried her picture and an article about her on June 27, 1890. Other foreign newspapers and magazines carried similar stories.

The publicity which the American and foreign papers gave Mrs. Salter brought a deluge of mail to her office. One skeptical yet sympathetic preacher wrote:

STEAMBOAT ROCK  
Hardin Co. Iowa

MRS. S. M. SALTER  
Dear Madam

Is it posible [*sic*] that you have been elected Mayor of Argonia or is it a newspaper falshood [*sic*]. I am glad if it is true But thought I would ask for information. I saw it in the State Register And would like to hear from you While I remain

Yours fraternally  
S. G. A. FIELDS  
Pastor of M. E. Church

9. Issue of April 18, 1888.

The opposite reaction was manifested by an anonymous person who sent the following poem to Mrs. Salter with a pair of men's pants drawn on the card:

When a woman leaves her natural sphere,  
And without her sex's modesty or fear  
Assays the part of man,  
She, in her weak attempts to rule,  
But makes herself a mark for ridicule,  
A laughing-stock and sham.  
Article of greatest use is to her then  
Something worn distinctively by men—  
A pair of pants will do.  
Thus she will plainly demonstrate  
That Nature made a great mistake  
In sexing such a shrew.

Letters of congratulations—some from nobility—were sent from France, Italy, Germany, Austria, and other European countries. Most of the foreign letters were written in the native tongue of the writer and were untranslatable by any of the citizens of Argonia. The following letter with misspellings and a misconception is typical except that it was written in English:

VIENNA, 27 July 87

My lady!

I thank an american friend your adress and he assure me that you are particularly amiable against strangers. Trusting of this, I pray you, to mark me a dealer, ingeneer or other person in your city or county, from which I could draw beautiful minerals for scientific purposes. Specially there cause before in Arizona [obviously the European is confusing Argonia with Arizona] excellent Mulfeurtes, Vanaduit, Desclorrit, Opals, ect. ect. \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_.

Thanking you before hand, I am allways to your disposition and remain as

Your obedient servant

JULIUS BOHM

Feminists and leaders of the women's rights movement from all over the world wrote letters of congratulations and encouragement to the new mayor. An enthusiastic admirer sent this effusion:

FULTON OSWEGO Co. N. Y. October 25th, 1887

MRS. SUSANNA MADORA SALTER, Argonia, Kansas,

Dear Madam, I write you this letter to you feeling interested in the equality of man and woman, and as your state Kansas, stands first to open the double door for a higher civilization to the whole world.

The dreams of my childhood have bloomed, and ripened, into a rich fruitage, in the person of Mrs. Salter. Allow me to congratulate you; as I feel proud of My Sister Woman in her manifest ability as Mayor of Argonia.

Most Respectfully,

MRS. MARY C. KNIGHT

A Lecturer on popular science





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Perhaps the most famous person writing a letter to the new mayor was Frances E. Willard, the vigorous advocate of woman's rights and outstanding national leader of the W. C. T. U. The following letter Mrs. Salter cherishes as one of her prized possessions:

EVANSTON, ILL. Aug. 18, 1887

HON. MRS. S. SALTER,  
Mayor of Argonia Kansas,  
Dear Friend,

I am sending you some of our documents and publications and I wish you would write me (on your official heading) a note that I can read to audiences, showing the good of woman's ballot as a *temperance weapon* and the advantage of *women in office*.

With best wishes to the "Best Mayor," I am

Yours sincerely,

FRANCES E. WILLARD

Mrs. Salter, of course, had no money allotted to her for official stationery. In fact, her salary for the year was only one dollar. She spent many times her salary in just answering part of her "fan mail" while she was in office.

Equal suffrage was no small or inconsequential movement, but one in which its advocates worked militantly and tirelessly. Except for financial limits, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. The following letter from the president of the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association shows the enthusiasm of the suffrage movement in America at the time Mrs. Salter was elected mayor:

SALINA KAN. 7/23 1887

DEAR MRS. SALTER

. . . How big is Argonia? If I were to bring speakers there, do you think collections could be taken sufficient to pay expenses? I would like to see an Equal Suffrage organization in Argonia. We are going into work for an amendment to our State Constitution, and *we must be organized*. To raise money to pay the expenses of organizing where the suffragists are not strong enough to do it all, we are taking part in the Boston Bazaar and it is suggested that you send as many of your Photos as you can afford to that Bazaar. We think they will sell readily and net us quite a handsome little sum. And if your lady photographer is a good suffragist (and I hope she is) she ought to "go halves" with you, as the boys say, and that would be yours and hers—a joint contribution. What do you think . . .? Why, my dear, you don't know what a prominent figure you are in history, and I just hope you are getting along as well as you can wish to.

I am coming down there to speak as soon as I can arrange my awful load of other business. . . .

Yours very cordially

LAURA M. JOHNS.

In the fall of 1887 Mrs. Johns invited Mrs. Salter to speak at the Kansas Women's Equal Suffrage Association's convention to be

held at Newton. Appearing on the platform with the mayor were Susan B. Anthony, Rachael Foster Avery, the Rev. Anna Shaw, and Henry Blackwell, husband of Lucy Stone.<sup>10</sup> When Mrs. Salter was introduced to Susan B. Anthony before the program began, Miss Anthony—instead of shaking the mayor's hand—slapped her on the shoulder and exclaimed, "Why, you look just like any other woman, don't you?"<sup>11</sup>

The newspapers made much of the fact that Mrs. Salter was only 27 years old when she was elected mayor. The Salem (Mass.) *Register* pointed out that she was only five feet, three inches tall, and that she never had domestic help until her election. The Western newspapers paid little attention to her domestic help problem. They noted that she was a strong woman, even though weighing only 128 pounds. One paper wrote, "She is a frontiersman's wife, possessed of brawn and sinew, rather than pleasing plumpness of form. She talks in an easy, confident style, in fairly good English, in which the Western mixture of tenses becomes prominent. She is always properly dignified, and in all the experience of Argonia has never been known to crack a joke in the Council chamber."

As has already been pointed out, Mrs. Salter did not choose to run for re-election. One year of political life was all that she desired.

The Salters continued to live in Argonia until the Cherokee strip was opened in present Oklahoma in 1893. In that year Salter filed on a claim one mile south of Alva, Okla., and soon he moved his family to the new territory. Ten years later he sold his farm and moved to Augusta, where he practiced law and established a newspaper, *The Headlight*, which he edited and published with the assistance of his older sons. A few years later many Augustans moved to the new townsite of Carmen. The Salters were a part of this movement, with *The Headlight* and the law office also being moved. After her husband's death on August 2, 1916, Mrs. Salter moved her family to Norman, Okla., in order that her younger children might attend the state university there. She has been living in Norman ever since.

On November 10, 1933, Mrs. Salter was honored by the citizens of Argonia. In her presence and with a great deal of ceremony, a bronze plaque mounted on a stone base was unveiled on the public square. The plaque was donated by the Woman's Kansas Day Club

10. Lewis S. Salter, "Susanna Madora Salter," *Kansas Library Bulletin*, Topeka, v. 4 (June, 1935), pp. 13, 14.

11. Mrs. Salter was also acquainted with Carry Nation. She tells the story of Mrs. Nation reprimanding her one time for attending a football game. Mrs. Salter was not one to yield to such a reprimand. She replied, "Not go to the game? Why, I have a son on the team!"



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and its unveiling and presentation was the culmination of a project conceived by the president of the club, Stella B. Haines of Augusta. The words on the plaque read:

IN HONOR  
OF  
MRS. SUSANNA MADORA SALTER,  
FIRST WOMAN MAYOR IN THE  
UNITED STATES.  
SHE SERVED AS MAYOR OF ARGONIA, KANSAS,  
1887.  
BORN, MARCH 2, 1860.

Marker Placed by  
Woman's Kansas Day Club,  
1933.

At the age of 94, Mrs. Salter still [October, 1954] takes an active interest in political and religious affairs. Since turning 90 this unusual woman has vowed that she will walk a mile every birthday for the remainder of her life. She prides herself on her independence, living in an apartment where she keeps house and cooks meals for herself. Unaccompanied, she makes regular trips to Oklahoma City and occasional ones to Wichita and Chicago. Although she is forced to wear a hearing aid, she is still keenly alert to her surroundings and her guests.



## Notes on the Writing of General Histories of Kansas

JAMES C. MALIN

### PART ONE: THE SETTING OF THE STAGE

#### INTRODUCTION: DEFINITIONS

WHEN one refers to a history of Kansas, or of any other subject, the term "a history" suggests to most people a historical work in the form of a book. But for such purposes, as well as for the present article, a definition of the two terms, "book" and "general history" is necessary, and some consideration must be given to their relations to each other. Many books were written about Kansas that do not qualify, properly, as histories, even though their titles offered them to the public as histories, and they contained historical material. In order to qualify as a general history of Kansas, the primary purpose of the work must be a history of the territory and of the state as a whole, or of some substantial period of time. In that sense the history of a particular aspect or institution would not qualify as a general history of Kansas. The question may be raised also whether a history must necessarily be in book form. The answer is no.

The last question suggests other problems of definition. What is a book? What determines whether or not a publication is a book? The number of pages, or the binding, or both? Books may be bound in boards or in paper, according to the custom of the country, or as a matter of cost or convenience. The United States post office defines a book as any publication "containing 24 pages or more, at least 22 of which are printed and consisting wholly of reading matter . . . and containing no advertising matter other than incidental announcements of books." Obviously, any definition is arbitrary, but the important thing is that it must have meaning that enables people to understand each other. For present purposes, a book is any publication "containing 24 pages or more, at least 22 of which are printed . . ." regardless of the binding.

#### BOOKS ABOUT KANSAS, 1854-1860

A large number of early books about Kansas, as distinct from histories of Kansas, were published during the territorial period, and are necessary to any study of the beginnings of the writing of the history of Kansas. Without any pretense of absolute completeness,

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a list of these for the territorial years is given here, grouped alphabetically according to the year of publication.<sup>1</sup>

### BOOKS ABOUT KANSAS, IN YEAR GROUPS, ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY BY AUTHOR, 1854-1860

#### 1854

EDWARD EVERETT HALE, *Kansas and Nebraska: The History, Geographical and Physical Characteristics* . . . With an Original Map (Boston, 1854).

MASSACHUSETTS EMIGRANT AID COMPANY, *Nebraska and Kansas. Report of a Committee of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company, With an Act of Incorporation*, . . . (Boston, 1854).

MASSACHUSETTS EMIGRANT AID COMPANY, *Organization, Objects, and Plan of Operations, of the Emigrant Aid Company: Also a Description of Kansas. For the Information of Emigrants*. 2d edition, with additions (Boston, 1854). [This publication contains only 24 pages, 22 of which are reading matter, plus a title page and its reverse, the minimum necessary to qualify as a book. The same material set in type a little differently might have fallen short of 22 pages of reading matter. This illustration demonstrates vividly how arbitrary any definition of a book must necessarily be.]

GEORGE WALTER, *History of Kansas, Also Information Regarding Routes, Laws, etc., etc.*, by George Walter, Agent and Master of Emigration of the New York Kansas League (New York, 1854).

#### 1855

C. B. BOYNTON AND T. B. MASON, *A Journey Through Kansas; With Sketches of Nebraska* (Cincinnati, 1855). [The authors were members of a committee acting for The American Reform Tract and Book Society, and The Kansas League of Cincinnati.]

J. BUTLER CHAPMAN, *History of Kansas and Emigrant's Guide. A Description . . . Compiled From Three Months Travel Through the Territory in 1854*. By . . . a resident since the settlement . . . with map (Akron, Ohio, 1855).

JOSEPH F. MOFFETTE, *The Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, Being an Account of Their Geography, Resources, and Settlements*, accompanied by

1. No attempt is made to assign chronological priorities within the year of publication. Some came so close together as to render sequences a matter of doubt, and to rob a priority, if established, of any significance except possibly to collectors.

Cora Dolbee undertook to establish the ordinal sequence of books about Kansas, but her assignment of positions is an example of the difficulties involved, and of a doubtful value of the effort expended.

Only where the influence of one book upon another, or upon the course of events is at issue, do some of these fine points of mere priority have any real importance.

Cora Dolbee, "The First Book on Kansas: The Story of Edward Everett Hale's *Kansas and Nebraska*," *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 2 (May, 1933), pp. 139-181; "The Second Book on Kansas: An Account of C. B. Boynton and T. B. Mason's *A Journey Through Kansas; With Sketches of Nebraska*," *ibid.*, v. 4 (May, 1935), pp. 115-148; "The Third Book on Kansas: An Interpretation of J. Butler Chapman's *History of Kansas and Emigrant's Guide*," *ibid.*, v. 8 (August, 1939), pp. 238-278.

According to the listing here, the rank of Boynton and Mason's book might be fifth, and Chapman's sixth or seventh. Colton's successive new editions, with some changes of text, might be listed separately as different books, or merely as different editions of a single book. The ordinal ranking of books would be substantially modified by the answer given to that question. Mrs. Robinson's successive printings, without change of text, would probably be dealt with more reasonably as a single book.

elaborate maps (New York, J. H. Colton and company, 1855). [Another edition appeared in 1856.]

Unsigned [WALTER B. SLOAN, Publisher], *History and Map of Kansas & Nebraska Describing Soil, Climate, Rivers, Prairies, . . . Politics Excepted* (Chicago, Walter B. Sloan, 1855). [Two editions, the first of 112 pages, and the second of 144 pages. A publisher's apology in the second edition explained that the additional material had been printed in *Sloan's Garden City of the West*, March and April, 1855. The Sloan family made patent medicines, "Sloan's Liniment," etc., and in its first issues, the magazine had some resemblance to a literary house organ. The authorship of the history has not been established.]

1856

G. D. BREWERTON, *The War in Kansas. A Rough Trip to the Border, Among New Homes and Strange People* (New York, 1856). [Brewerton was sent out by the *New York Herald*. The book was reissued at least twice, 1859 and 1860, but under a different title: *Wars of the Western Border; or, New Homes and Strange People*, but apparently from the same plates.]

C. W. BRIGGS, *The Reign of Terror in Kansas: as Encouraged by President Pierce and Carried Out by the Slave Power* (Boston, 1856).

MAX GREENE, *The Kansas Region: Forest, Prairie, Desert, Mountain, Vale, and River. Descriptions . . . Interspersed With Incidents of Travel* . . . (New York, 1856).

WILLIAM A. HOWARD, Chairman, JOHN SHERMAN, and MORDECAI OLIVER, House Select Committee, *Report of the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas; With the Views of the Minority of Said Committee*, House of Representatives Report No. 200, 34 Congress, 1 session (Washington, D. C., 1856). vii, 132 + 1206 pp.

[JOHN McNAMARA], *In Perils of Mine Own Countrymen. Three Years on the Kansas Border*, by a clergyman of the Episcopal Church (New York and Auburn, 1856). [This book was published anonymously, but the Kansas State Historical Society has a copy signed by the author.]

O. N. MERRILL, *True History of the Kansas Wars, Their Origin, Progress and Incidents* (Cincinnati, 1856). Reprinted in *The Magazine of History, With Notes and Queries*, Extra number 178, v. 45 (1932), No. 2, pp. 67-124. (Tarrytown, N. Y., reprinted by William Abbatt, 1932.) [Two of his six chapters were little more than reprints of F. M. Coleman's and Robert F. Barber's narratives from Brewerton, *The War in Kansas*. Much of the remainder of the book was reprints of other documents. Mildly Proslavery, the author blamed both sides and appealed to common sense and mutual tolerance.]

WILLIAM A. PHILLIPS, *The Conquest of Kansas, by Missouri and Her Allies. A History of the Troubles in Kansas, From the Passage of the Organic Act Until the Close of July, 1856* (Boston, 1856).

SARA T. L. ROBINSON [MRS. CHARLES ROBINSON], *Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life* . . . (Boston, 1856). [The present author has identified five editions (in reality, printings) dated 1856, and two, the seventh and eighth, dated 1857. The sixth and the ninth have not been verified as to dating. The tenth edition came in 1899, with additional matter.]



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[HANNAH ANDERSON ROPES], *Six Months in Kansas. By a Lady* (Boston, Cleveland, New York, 1856). [Apparently there were several printings. The University of Kansas Library copy is labelled, "Fourth thousand."]

PHILO TOWER, *Slavery Unmasked: Being a Truthful Narrative of a Three Years' Residence and Journeying in the Eleven Southern States: to Which Is Added the Invasion of Kansas, Including the Last Chapter of Her Wrongs*, by Rev. Philo Tower (Rochester, New York, 1856).

Unsigned, *Western Border Life; or, What Fanny Hunter Saw and Heard in Kansas and Missouri* (New York, 1856). [The Kansas struggle according to historical fiction; possibly the first novel in which Kansas was made the setting.]

1857

JOHN H. GIBON, *Geary and Kansas, Governor Geary's Administration in Kansas. With a Complete History of the Territory Until June, 1857* . . . (Philadelphia, J. H. C. Whiting, 1857). [Another edition, with same title, except punctuation and "July, 1857" instead of "June, 1857," was published also in Philadelphia, C. C. Rhodes, 1857. A third edition, without date or place, was published by Cone.]

THOMAS H. GLADSTONE, *Kansas; or, Squatter Life and Border Warfare in the Far West* . . . *With Additions and Corrections* (London, 1857). [Gladstone was an Englishman and printed the first version in the *London Times*. The United States edition was printed under the title: *The Englishman in Kansas; or, Squatter Life and Border Warfare*. Also, there were two German translations.]

NATHAN HOWE PARKER, *The Kansas and Nebraska Hand-Book. For 1857-8. With a New and Accurate Map* (Boston and Cleveland, 1857).

1858

No important book was published on Kansas.

1859

WILLIAM P. TOMLINSON, *Kansas in Eighteen Fifty-eight. Being Chiefly of the Recent Troubles in the Territory* (New York, 1859).

S. G. FISHER, *The Law of the Territories* (Philadelphia, 1859).

The great book production stimulus of 1859 was the Pike's Peak Gold Rush. Eleven books, mostly "guide books," of more than 24 pages, were issued, and several smaller ones. For titles see the Wagner-Camp bibliography, *The Plains and the Rockies, 1800-1865* (1937).

1860

The only important Kansas books were again the Pike's Peak guides, three of them in excess of 24 pages.

JOHN DOY, *The narrative of John Doy, of Lawrence, Kansas* (New York, Printed for the author by Thomas Holman, 1860).

In the foregoing list, the year 1854 contains only four titles that qualify under the definition as books. The year 1855, with four, represents a continuity of interest, really an increase, beyond the



number of titles, because of the more substantial character of the publications, and the fact that they were the product of more independent origins. The year 1856 was the peak of activity in Kansas book making, with 11 titles, and most of them issued by commercial presses. Nothing could make clearer than this record of the number of publications the significance of the year 1856 in Kansas history; the presidential campaign, the Republican party organized, and Kansas—Bleeding Kansas—as the indispensable issue for holding together in a semblance of unity the diverse elements of the new party. Only the Merrill book and the Oliver *Minority Report* of the Howard committee were not antislavery in outlook. Without a presidential campaign in the states that year, it is a moot question whether serious trouble would have occurred in Kansas. Unfortunately for the historian, the experiment cannot be rerun in a laboratory, like a chemistry or physics problem, and a determination made of what would happen if any of several factors were removed from the operation.

Only three important titles appeared in 1857, the critical year during which the Free-State party gained control of the territorial legislature. In 1858 no important book appeared, although that was the year of mid-term elections in the states, and of the Lecompton constitutional controversy in congress, while Kansas and Missouri suffered under the excitement of the southeastern Kansas border war. Only one important book, Tomlinson, *Kansas in Eighteen Fifty-eight*, published in 1859, came out of that disgraceful episode. The Fisher book, *The Law of the Territories*, was a general theoretical study, and a warning against the extremists, in which Kansas really appeared only as the horrible example. A question might be raised legitimately whether it should be classified as a Kansas book. In any case, the inclusion here is imperative, if for no other reason, to document the difficulties met in deciding what should be considered a Kansas book. For reasons that will appear later, the present writer would place it in two categories of books; those applicable to Kansas and to the United States.

The year 1859, notable for the Pike's Peak Gold Rush to western Kansas territory, was a complete change of scene as well as form of excitement. Books about Kansas again became best sellers, and in a bigger way than ever, but the focus of interest was gold not Kansas. However potent the gold fever, it must not be permitted to detour attention from the main problem. Book-wise, Kansas was not really a best-seller subject after 1857, and even the Gihon and the Glad-



stone books of that year were only delayed fifty-sixers. This collapse in the production of new slavery-inspired books on Kansas is a fact that was remarkable in itself, and has not been the subject of explicit comment by historians. This trend ran counter to rising tension in the states which culminated in 1861. It suggests that some re-examination is in order of the assumptions that have become traditional about the relation of Kansas to the crisis of 1861.

In addition to the types of books already listed, two other classes must be mentioned, briefly. The general subject of the American West was already a topic of recognized reader interest in the book trade. "The Great West" had come into its own when the upper Ohio valley was the Great West. As the population filled into other areas within the Mississippi valley the names of new places were included in the books. Emigrant and traveler guide books multiplied and some of the more important houses, such as J. H. Colton and Company, issued their several series of guides. Colton's *The Western Tourist and Emigrant Guide*, first published in 1839, underwent successive expansions until the 1850 edition listed Nebraska territory, the 1852 edition was similar, and the 1855 edition included Kansas, but only incidentally on the map.

Histories of the Great West expanded their coverage likewise. Thus Henry Howe's *Historical Collections of the Great West* . . . , copyrighted originally in 1851, included the far Western country, Texas, New Mexico, Oregon, California, Utah, and Minnesota. The edition of 1854 added Washington, Nebraska, and Kansas. By 1856, if not before, the book included the Pacific railroad (pp. 440-448), and a page of Kansas views with an 1856 copyright notice and a caption stating they were taken in May, 1856. Of particular interest are views of Lawrence and Leavenworth, facing p. 370, in the California section. Two editions of the book were issued during 1857. Early in that year an edition was prepared, that of 1856 unchanged except for the addition of an "Appendix Containing History of Kansas," pp. 449-527, and the page of views as of May, 1856, facing p. 449. In this Kansas appendix, Howe leaned heavily upon the Howard committee *Report on the Troubles in Kansas*, and upon Oliver's *Minority Report*, as well as upon Phillips' *Conquest of Kansas*. As did most of the other books on Kansas, the Kansas-Nebraska act was represented as a sudden decision, forced through congress by the slavocracy in indecent haste. But that aspect was offset somewhat by the most candid presentation of the facts and allegations brought out in the Oliver *Minority Report*, revealing the