

Kansas historical quarterly

Section 60, Pages 1771 - 1800

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

which was so much needed to carry on operations in Kansas, was even harder to obtain. The trustees, who then constituted the acting company, had signed articles of agreement preventing them from making any expenditures beyond the amount of funds actually in their hands.⁴² They were consequently in a grave quandary by late summer, 1854, with no available stock subscriptions, "since we cannot make any assessment until the sum of \$50,000 is subscribed, and now we have barely \$20,000, and from the efforts which have been made we must infer that the stock, like all stock in land companies, is looked on with distrust . . . ,"⁴³ or that other reasons prevented subscriptions. In this predicament Lawrence advised that each of the trustees take an additional \$10,000 subscription, and thereby attain the working capital of \$50,000.⁴⁴ Yet in November, 1854, only \$12,731 had been received into the treasury, and about twice that amount subscribed, on which a half had been assessed.⁴⁵ Early in 1855 important meetings were held in New England in the interest of the company and Kansas, but the financial returns were disappointing. At these meetings Thayer stressed the hope of profit from the investments in Kansas, as was his custom.⁴⁶ The financial embarrassment of the company continued, and early in March Lawrence wrote: "A crisis has arrived in the affairs of the Emigrant Aid Company, and the whole fabric must come down with a crash . . . unless we have energy enough to avert it." Pomeroy would be forced to suspend all operations, unless money could be ob-

42. Memorandum of Lawrence, to Williams and Thayer, August 26, 1854 (cited above).

43. Quoting the same document further, Lawrence appears to have distrusted the Emigrant Aid Company at this time even more than other land companies. He had considerable interests in western lands, and was himself later a trustee of the Kansas Land Trust, which acquired large holdings around Quindaro.

44. Lawrence, *Life of Amos A. Lawrence*, p. 85; Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, September 2, 1854. It appears that Lawrence acted accordingly, but not all the other trustees. There had been no money to honor the Kansas drafts sent in by Pomeroy, and Lawrence paid them himself. The company was already six or seven thousand dollars in debt to him. "Meanwhile we are making large promises as to what we shall do for settlers, which are certain to be broken, and which will entail much dissatisfaction," Lawrence wrote.

At this same time reports were circulating in Missouri of the tremendous projects of the company, which was reputed to be immensely rich.

45. *Documentary History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company*. In the fall of 1854 the company sent a circular letter to the ministers of New England, appealing for support and funds. Receipts had been, it stated, "altogether inadequate to sustain the activity and vigor of the enterprise."

At a later time a much wider appeal was made to the same profession, with much more success (1855).

46. Clipping in "Webb," from the *Kennebec Journal*, Augusta, Maine, February 2, 1855: The meeting there was held in the hall of the house of representatives. Thayer made a long address, and stressed the importance, from a commercial point of view, of making Kansas a child of New England. Those who went out six months ago were now worth, in some cases, \$3,000 each, in their locations in Lawrence. The 600,000 European immigrants directed by the society into the Southwest, would prove a mighty force against slavery. Each state should in addition furnish its quota. The company also wanted a fund of \$200,000. They hoped to establish ten cities, etc. The company takes a fourth of the lots in a city. A fourth of the profits will be divided among all who take stock. Kansas for freedom!

tained.⁴⁷ The executive committee considered the subject at an April meeting, relieved Pomeroy, but did little to solve the riddle.⁴⁸ Pomeroy addressed the first annual meeting of the company at Boston on June 1, and praised its technique in planting towns in the territory. Soon thereafter he began a series of speeches through New England, in which he appealed for money to send sawmills to the settlers, and for subscription to the company's stock.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Lawrence continued to advance money, and became increasingly irritated at the method in which business was carried on in the territory. In September he wrote to C. H. Branscomb:

It appears to me that the plan of conducting operations in Kansas with borrowed capital, and incurring debts which cannot be paid without further loans is not a good one. If, as in some kinds of business, the property acquired were convertible into cash, it would not be so liable to objections; but we have very little which can be thus converted.⁵⁰

Apparently in order to sever his connection with the financial morass into which the company was sinking, Lawrence, on September 26, 1855, handed in his resignation from the position of treasurer.⁵¹ No action appears to have been taken by the executive committee, whose members probably hoped that he would reconsider his move. Early in October Lawrence wrote more urgently: "As I have resigned my place as treasurer some way must be devised or the company must go to the wall."⁵² While still in this state of suspense, he continued to pay in an individual way, drafts on the company.⁵³ Some sort of an agreement must have been effected, as Lawrence

47. Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, Boston, March 2, 1855 ("Lawrence Letters," p. 57): In the face of this dark situation, Pomeroy was permitted to overdraw his account, the company expecting to make it up later. Lawrence appears to have "weakened" somewhat in his opposition to speculation, at this time. He wrote Pomeroy in April (*ibid.*, p. 75): "Do not fear to buy the Kaw lands freely for the company. The company needs something to make money with, more than the trustees or outsiders. . . . As to stock subscriptions, they have almost ceased."

48. Adjourned meeting of the executive committee, April 18, 1855 ("Trustees' Records," v. 1): Only \$26,840 had then been paid for shares, with nearly eleven thousand still outstanding. Lawrence reported around \$39,000 subscribed, at the first annual meeting. Despite the crisis, the executive committee authorized the purchase of a steamer, the *Grace Darling*, if Messrs. Lawrence and Webb consented. Lawrence objected, believing that such investments would leave little margin for profit.

49. *Hampshire Gazette*, Northampton, July 10, 1855, in "Webb," v. IV, p. 209: Pomeroy promised a mill for the Hampden colony, "on condition that the citizens of Hampden county will subscribe three thousand dollars to the stock of the Emigrant Aid Co." The sawmills would be the nuclei for free settlements. Money thus given for the cause of freedom "is not asked as a donation, but simply as an investment, which will pay a good dividend in a few years."

50. Lawrence to Branscomb, September 22, 1855, "Emigrant Aid Collection." He continues: "Some of the executive committee have already taxed themselves to pay the drafts of Mr. Pomeroy, and may be willing to go on increasing the amount, but this makes them creditors in relation to the very property which they are appointed to hold in trust." Such was "expressly forbidden by our by-laws."

51. Letter of resignation of Lawrence included in minutes of the executive committee meeting of September 29. Lawrence added that the duties of the office were so pressing that they required the entire time of a competent person.

52. Lawrence to Dr. Cabot, October 9, 1855.—"Emigrant Aid Collection."

53. Lawrence to Branscomb, October 19, 1855.—*Ibid.* "I have not heard of the appointment of my successor as treasurer of the Emigrant Aid Company and think there must be some mistake. . . ."



retained his position. Later in the fall Thayer came to his aid with a new plan, to meet the crisis.⁵⁴

At the meeting of the executive committee late in the fall of 1855 it was made clear that the funds of the company were exhausted, and that Lawrence had advanced heavily of his own resources. Some of the committee were much discouraged, and repented having adopted the "charity" plan, Thayer states. Thayer proposed an immediate campaign for funds among the "friends of freedom" in New York, and left immediately on this mission. In that city he conferred with Simeon Draper and George W. Blunt, who called a meeting of prominent and wealthy men, to whom Thayer made a special appeal.⁵⁵ A series of meetings in New York and Brooklyn rewarded Thayer and his assistant, C. H. Branscomb, with a number of large subscriptions, among which those of Horace B. Claffin and Rollin Sanford were notable.⁵⁶ Henry Ward Beecher's congregation also contributed liberally, as did William Cullen Bryant, editor of the *New York Evening Post*. Thayer continued his campaign into the early spring of 1856, when he returned to his customary work of raising colonies.⁵⁷ The immediate crisis to the company had then passed, and the troubles in Kansas, coupled with the interest in the election of Fremont, brought indirectly a new interest in the company.⁵⁸

54. Lawrence retained his position until 1857 when he permanently resigned. At about that time he made the following summary statement (letter of Lawrence to Giles Richards, March 22): "I find that within 2 years I have sent \$20,000 and more to Kansas from my own means, and of which not a dollar can ever come back to me or my heirs, for I have never owned \$200 there which I have not given to the settlers."

Lawrence stated, in a letter in 1855, that his wealth was around \$120,000. One sixth of his private fortune was then spent for the cause of freedom in Kansas.

55. Thayer, *The Kansas Crusade*, pp. 188, 202-205. The same author, "The New England Emigrant Aid Company," in *Proceedings of Worcester Society of Antiquity*, v. VII, pp. 55-56. His appeal included the following passage: "That New York merchants were more interested pecuniarily in this result (freedom in Kansas) than were any other people in the Union; that if they would compare their sales of goods to Kentucky with those to Ohio, they would need no further argument. . . ." This was the time to act decisively, by means of a conservative company, which would in all cases support the government.

56. Claffin and Sanford each gave six thousand, Thayer states (preceding citations). Other large subscribers were Henry H. Elliott, George W. Blunt, David Dudley Field, Thaddeus Hyatt, Bowen and MacNamee, Cyrus Curtis, Moses H. Grinnell, and Marshall O. Roberts. Speaking later at Syracuse, N. Y., Thayer said that \$50,000 was subscribed in New York City. Lawrence, testifying before the special Kansas committee at Washington (May, 1856), stated that about \$95,000 had then been paid in for subscriptions to stock, plus \$4,000 of donations (34th cong., 2nd sess., *H. R. Report No. 200*, p. 874).

Claffin remarked long after this that the six thousand he paid the company in 1856 had been several times repaid by the excess of profit on goods sold in Kansas and Kansas City over what it would have been if slavery had prevailed (Thayer, p. 209).

57. Thayer was nominated for congress from the Worcester, Mass., district in 1856, and was elected. He argued that Kansas would be free, regardless of whether Fremont were elected. At the end of 1856 he left the Kansas work, and began his Ceredo, Va., project (see footnotes numbered 76 and 136).

58. Contributions were collected in many places in 1856, to relieve those injured by the troubles in Kansas (and perhaps in part to help elect Fremont). In this the machinery of the Emigrant Aid Company was taken advantage of. Its agents might accept gifts for relief, and at the same meeting take subscriptions to the stock of the company. When Lawrence resigned the treasurership in May, 1857, he said: "You will find the company free from debt, and its prosperity entire," with the shares never more valuable.—*Documentary History of the Company*, p. 22.

The early literature of the company stressed the plan to transport emigrants, but the records of the company do not indicate any income from this source. Investment in sawmills and gristmills, to be rented or sold to the settlers, offered a better hope for income or profit. The original plan of action provided that the company forward the steam sawmills and gristmills needed in its pioneer communities, to be run or leased by its agents. The pioneers themselves could not be expected to furnish such products of capital, it was argued. Thayer and the representatives of the company greatly emphasized the importance of such machinery, whereby free labor could multiply itself, and make sure a victory over slavery.⁵⁹ By the fall of 1855 the company could report a mill in each of its five settlements, although no doubt they were not all in operation.⁶⁰ So anxious were the settlers to obtain these mills for their communities that they were frequently willing to pledge the company a share of the townsite in return.⁶¹ This service would have been of signal benefit to the settlers if the company had been able to furnish the mills quickly, and keep them in good order, but the lack of ready finances, coupled at times with poor management in the territory, more than once defeated the plan. Thus 1854 passed with no mill in operation in Lawrence, and none in the entire territory.⁶² When mills finally were obtained the agents had difficulty in keeping them running properly, and further trouble in collecting the rents when due.

As a part of the plan to transport emigrants to Kansas, the company planned a series of hotels and receiving houses, to provide

59. See the speeches of Thayer.

60. Statement of the executive committee, to the quarterly meeting of the directors, November 27, 1855, "Emigrant Aid Collection." The settlements then included Lawrence, Manhattan, Hampden, Topeka, and Osawatimie. The book value of these mills then totaled \$23,400, out of a total of \$82,550 of property.

61. Manhattan, Osawatimie, Wabaunsee, Claffin (Mapleton), and Batcheller (later Milford) were examples. The company also at times authorized the sale of its mills, and the purchase of town shares with the proceeds (for example, Burlington).—"Emigrant Aid Collection." It was a general rule of the company to avoid payments in cash, as far as possible, and pay instead in company property, shares, etc. During its entire history, a considerable number of mills were owned or passed through the hands of the company. A large proportion of the real estate acquired from time to time was obtained from the town companies in return for the mills furnished, thus avoiding a direct cash outlay.—See the documentary *History of* 1862, p. 23.

62. *New York Daily Times*, January 10, 1855: "The Aid Companies have done something toward introducing Northern emigrants, but not nearly so much as their feeble efforts have stimulated the slave interests to do. With lavish promises, the Massachusetts Company induced some hundreds to go to Kansas, a large proportion of whom, disgusted before they have ever seen Kansas, or finding that their circumstances were inadequate to meet the realities of the case, have returned, some to stay, and some to take a new start in the spring. . . . There is no doubt that, at this very moment a large proportion of needless suffering is being endured by those who went out under its auspices. With a whole summer in which to provide sawmills, lumber, and boardinghouses, according to promise, the first of November found them without a mill in successful operation, and a mere tent, the sole shelter for newcomers at Lawrence. . . ."

This was a harsh but rather truthful judgment, as the company's record for 1854 was not very good, due to slowness in getting started. Later more success was achieved. At the second annual meeting of the company in May, 1856, it was reported that all five of the company's mills were in operation.

temporary shelter. In 1854 the chief hotel at Kansas City was purchased, at a reported cost of \$10,000.⁶³ In 1855 the Free State hotel at Lawrence was erected as a receiving depot for emigrants, at an estimated cost of over \$15,000.⁶⁴ By May, 1856, the company claimed to have spent \$96,956.01 in Kansas, of which by far the largest part had gone for the two hotels, and for engines and mills.⁶⁵

The plans of the company centered upon speculations in real estate, particularly in the towns which their emigrants had had a leading part in founding. The project for a future income or profit of this nature was emphasized, particularly by Thayer and Pomeroy, in the meetings in New England and the East. It was kept much more quiet in the territory, but was well known by the leading men, and many others as well. This was more than once brought forward, particularly by the Proslavery party and their colleagues in Missouri, as a general condemnation of the company.⁶⁶ Clause four of the plan of operation provided that: "It is recommended that the company's agents locate and take up for the company's benefit the sections of land in which the boarding houses and mills are located, and no others,"⁶⁷ such properties to be disposed of whenever the territory became a free state, and a dividend declared to the stockholders. This plan was put in effect at the first settlement of the company, at Lawrence, and was consistently followed thereafter.⁶⁸ In 1855 the towns of Topeka, Osawatimie, Manhattan, Hampden,

63. *Kansas Weekly Herald*, Leavenworth, October 6, 1854. Any such exact figures are always open to question, due to the method of payment.

64. This hotel was destroyed by the raiders from Missouri in the troubles of 1856, and thereby led to a claim by the company against the United States government, which was in 1897 transferred to the University of Kansas.

65. Pamphlet *History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company* (1862). The company also took stock in the hotel at Manhattan, and considered other hotel projects. The sale of these properties later brought plenty of trouble to the company. The greatest difficulty lay in carrying out the terms of a sale which was largely not a "cash down" one. However, in such transactions the agents of the company probably were merely following current business practice.

66. For example, by John Calhoun, in an address before the "Law and Order" convention at Leavenworth on November 14, 1855 (reported in *Kansas City Enterprise*, December 1). Calhoun charged that, while political objects were kept in view, the almighty dollar was never lost sight of, as they hoped, by abolitionizing the territory, to become large land owners.

The strong criticism of the company during the winter of 1854-1855 led to a meeting of its friends at Lawrence (described by William H. Carruth in his article, "The New England Emigrant Aid Company as an Investment Society,"—*Kansas Historical Collections*, v. VI). The activities of the company were praised, as well as the "basis" on which it was operating, i. e., a share of the town lots.

67. Thayer, *The Kansas Crusade*, pp. 27-28.

68. In addressing the first annual meeting in May, 1855, Pomeroy reported there were eight towns of prominence among which were included Lawrence, Topeka, Pawnee, Boston, Osawatimie, and Grasshopper Falls. Northern workmen thus controlled the right points. "They have their mills, and their machinery—their churches, and newspapers. With the exception of Council City, there is not another center of influence or trade in Kansas." This control of public opinion had been arrived at "quietly but thoroughly."—*Kansas Territorial Clippings*.

Boston was renamed Manhattan. The company never invested in either Grasshopper Falls or Pawnee. The latter proposed site of the state capital was a speculative project in which Gov. Andrew H. Reeder and officers at Fort Riley were interested. Council City (later Burlingame) was the projected site of the American Settlement Company.



and Wabaunsee were established.⁶⁹ By the close of that year the company estimated its real estate in the towns of Lawrence, Manhattan, Topeka, and Osawatomie (exclusive of mill properties, hotels, buildings, lumber, horses, etc.), at the book value of \$31,100.⁷⁰

No consistent rule was followed in determining the proportion of a town site to be held by the company. At times the original amount was reduced by the town companies at later meetings. It has been pointed out that in Lawrence the share of the Emigrant Aid Company was reduced from a half of the original town site to a fourth, and in the spring of 1855 to ten of the 220 shares of the town stock (two of these in trust for a university).⁷¹ At Topeka the original agreement gave the company a sixth of the lots "as a consideration for the erection of a mill, a schoolhouse, receiving house, etc.,"⁷² but this was later reduced to one thirty-sixth. At Osawatomie, on the other hand, the original proportion of a third of the town site was retained by the company.⁷³ Much discretion seems to have been left in this regard to the bargaining ability of the Kansas agents, Pomeroy, Robinson, Branscomb, and Conway,⁷⁴ who were expected to follow the accepted business practice, and do the best possible for the company, in their execution of its instructions.

The year 1856 was one of transition in the history of the company. The increased sale of stock subscriptions, coupled with the greatly increased popular interest in the work of the organization, appear to have given new hope of attaining the main objectives—freedom in the territory, and a dividend to the stockholders.⁷⁵ The troubles resulting from the incursions of the Missourians, with the blockade of the Missouri, put a temporary check upon business, but the ar-

69. Documentary *History of the Company*. Wabaunsee really did not get well under way until 1856, when the famous New Haven colony, sponsored by Henry Ward Beecher, left for that place, armed with "rifles and Bibles." Hampden was located on the Neosho, about fifty miles south of Lawrence, in the spring of 1855.

70. Report of the executive committee to the quarterly meeting of the directors, November 27, 1855, in "Emigrant Aid Collection." Total property in Kansas and Missouri was then estimated at \$82,550, distributed as follows: Lawrence, \$36,900; Manhattan, \$9,700; Hampden, \$3,000; Topeka, \$8,100; Osawatomie, \$17,300, and Kansas City, \$7,550. The Kansas City hotel had been recently sold, but the transaction had not been completed.

71. Carruth, *op. cit.*, p. 93. Also documents included in *A Memorial of the University of Kansas in Support of Senate Bill No. 2677*. Concerning the bitter quarrel over the Lawrence town site, see A. T. Andreas, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago, 1883), p. 315. In 1857 the company owned 117 lots in Lawrence.

72. Original agreement of the Topeka Town Association, December 5, 1854.—F. W. Giles, *Thirty Years in Topeka* (Topeka, 1886), p. 21. This work gives a very good account of the various steps in the founding of a town in Kansas.

73. The other two thirds was owned by O. C. Brown and William Ward—"Emigrant Aid Collection."

74. S. C. Pomeroy, 1854-1862; Charles Robinson, 1854-1856; C. H. Branscomb, 1854-1858; and M. F. Conway, 1858-1862. Pomeroy acted as treasurer of the agents, kept books, and was chief in importance in transaction of business, from 1854 to February, 1858. Thereafter Conway became general agent.

75. However, a circular of the company dated August 10, 1856, requested subscriptions to rebuild the Free-State hotel, and put up the saw and grist mills already purchased, and concluded: "But the funds of the company are nearly exhausted. . . ."

rival of Gov. John W. Geary brought a restoration of order in the fall. The company had suffered a large loss in the destruction of the Free-State hotel, but nevertheless it continued its program of investment, even though collections were not easy to make in the territory, and few sales had been completed.⁷⁶ The events of the year showed the value a well-located town on the Missouri river would be to the Free-State party and its friends at a distance. Charles Robinson was a leading promoter of the newly projected town of Quindaro, on the Missouri, three miles below Parkville, Mo. Early in January, 1857, Robinson was in Boston in the interest of Quindaro. The company purchased ten shares of Quindaro stock and made plans to aid in its development.⁷⁷ It was announced that \$500,000 had already been subscribed for investment, and that a hotel, sawmill, gristmill, machine shop, and paper mill would be constructed.⁷⁸ With such evident "puffing," Quindaro enjoyed a transitory boom, later to pass into oblivion.

In 1857 the company invested in several Wyandot floats, to safeguard the title to its properties. Pomeroy had in 1855 urged the company to invest more extensively in these claims, as sure to bring returns, but the proposal was then declined, further than laying a

76. Even the sale of the hotel at Kansas City remained "in the air," the terms having not been satisfactorily met. A little later the hotel site at Lawrence was sold to T. W. Eldridge for \$5,000.

Lawrence wrote to J. Carter Brown on July 9, 1856 ("Lawrence Letters," p. 151): "As to the Emigrant Aid Company, I have very much the same view as yourself: that it has done its work. But you always find it odious to propose the destruction of an organization of which you are a manager." Such might discourage the settlers. "As to the stock, its value will probably become steadily less, as no sales of land can be made to keep down the expenses."

Thayer was at this time becoming increasingly interested in other things. Besides being a candidate for congress, he had begun the manufacture of a new type of rifle which, it was announced, would far exceed the Sharpe in effectiveness. He was also planning his Ceredo, Va., project, with which the company declined to cooperate.

77. Pomeroy's statement of expense for September 1, 1855, to December 15, 1856—"Emigrant Aid Collection." The ten shares, valued at \$3,614.80 were obtained by trading to the town company one of the three mills which had been dumped into the Missouri river by the "border ruffians," and later recovered.—Minutes of executive committee for 1857.

Abelard Guthrie was vice-president of the town company, and Robinson treasurer and agent to sell shares. Robinson was also the Kansas agent of the closely allied Kansas Land Trust, a company formed in 1856, with its main office in Boston, to invest in Kansas land. Its depositors included J. M. S. Williams of the Emigrant Aid Company, and Oakes Ames, later involved in the Credit Mobilier scandal. Joseph Lyman was treasurer, and Amos A. Lawrence one of the trustees. The trust bought land extensively in and around Quindaro, promising Robinson a good share of the profits. In 1857 it sold a large amount of its land to Robinson, who gave his notes, signed by Guthrie. By 1860 Robinson had paid nothing on these purchases, although contrary to his agreement. This placed Guthrie in a very tight situation (see quotations from the diary of A. Guthrie, edited by W. E. Connelley, and published in the Nebraska State Historical Society's *Proceedings and Collections*, Second Series, v. III). The trust was placed in a difficult position, because of the trouble to complete the sale to Robinson, and the impossibility, after the panic of 1857, of selling any additional land. The holdings appear to have been divided in 1860. (The Kansas State Historical Society has an incomplete collection of the trust papers. These, with the diary of Guthrie, are the authority for these statements.) An arbitration in 1860 found the Quindaro town company deeply in debt to Robinson.

78. Wilder, *Annals of Kansas*, p. 148. Late in 1856 the company sent a saw mill to Wabunsee, but a loan was necessary to the operators to set it up ("Minutes of the Meetings of the Connecticut Kansas Colony," p. 143). Evidently it was not satisfactory, as the town company the following June offered a bonus for a mill. Pomeroy favored such going towns, rather than ones newly projected. He proposed to also finance a hotel and a Wyandot float, for Wabunsee. The latter was granted. The property stake of the company in the town was limited to the mill and site.



float at Lawrence.⁷⁹ However, the need of surety of title came to be more clearly appreciated, as the stake of the company in the Free-State towns of the territory grew. Hence the Emigrant Aid Company, on its own initiative, or in coöperation with other town promoters, arranged from time to time to locate Wyandot floats on such towns as Lawrence, West Lawrence, Manhattan, Topeka, and Burlington.⁸⁰

Simultaneous with the investment in Quindaro, the company embarked on several additional town projects. Early in January, 1857, Pomeroy was instructed to sell one of the small mills at Kansas City for not less than \$3,000, and take as large a share as possible in Wyandotte.⁸¹ Late in December, 1856, the boot, shoe and leather dealers of Boston and vicinity, at an adjourned meeting, agreed to subscribe for \$20,000 of the stock of the Emigrant Aid Company. As a reward they were given the privilege of naming two new towns in Kansas, after their principal contributors, William Claflin and T. J. E. Batcheller.⁸² Mr. Pomeroy was directed to obtain suitable locations for these projected towns, in Kansas, and appears to have had some difficulty.⁸³ His general advice to give the preference to

79. Weekly meeting of the executive committee, April 28, 1855—"Trustee's Records," v. I. By article 14 of the "Treaty of 1842" with the Wyandot Indians, as modified by further arrangement in 1854, the United States agreed to grant in fee simple to each of thirty-five named Wyandots, or their heirs, a section of land from any of that set apart for Indian use, and still unoccupied, west of the Missouri river. Such a reserve could be planted before the lands were surveyed, and would take "precedence over that of the white settler in cases where his location either precedes or is of equal date with that of the white settler" (Government regulations for such reserves). One need only recall that there were no government surveys during the first years of settlement, and that the only "title" then existing was such as squatter claim associations could enforce upon their own members, to see why that such reserves were so much in demand.

80. Other Free-State towns upon which such floats were located included Wyandotte and Kansas City (site), Big Springs, Emporia, and Doniphan. No doubt others could be added to this list. (See *Senate Documents*, 1857-1858, v. II, "Report of the Secretary of the Interior," pp. 274-275, for a complete list of such reserves.) Because of their lack of fluid capital, the Proslavery settlers did not locate as many as their rivals. A large number of these reserves were located, evidently by capitalists, along the Big Blue river above Manhattan. Each float of 640 acres covered four legal claims. Wyandot floats were so valuable that a cynic might point to them as a further good reason for the movement among the Wyandots (many of whom were now of white blood), to open Nebraska to settlement. Unfortunately even these reserves did not entirely prevent disputes by rival town companies, or previous claimants. Thus the Robitaille float at Lawrence was long in dispute, and less serious disputes occurred at Manhattan and Topeka.

81. Minutes of the executive committee meeting of January 9, "Trustees' Records," v. III. Nothing came of this proposal.

82. Minutes of the executive committee meeting of December 26, 1856. At the annual meeting in 1857 this was reported as over half the total sales of stock for the year of \$37,000. However, the "Journal" notes on April 7, 1857, p. 4, that only \$8,660 worth was actually sold. Batcheller took \$1,000 worth, and Claflin \$300. Figures given for publication at the start of a campaign are naturally much higher than the amounts that actually materialized later.

83. Pomeroy to Thomas H. Webb, January 6, 1857, executive committee minutes of January 23, in "Trustees' Records," v. III. "The Fishes, at the mouth of the Wakarusa, now want a movement. We have organized a Town Company (unknown to even our friends) the matter is kept perfectly quiet. They vote the Em. Aid Co., one sixth of the original interest. . . . But I think my influence will be sufficient to secure a Name to the Town, to suit the Shoe and Leather Dealers." He had then bought a mill of the Wyandotte company, for Wakarusa.

Another letter of Pomeroy of February 2, 1857, in the minutes of February 20: "The Fishes are in a heap of trouble. The commissioners, in allotting the land to the Shawnees, instead of leaving the land open are locating the lands of the orphan children and the absentees thereabout, so that little will be left for preëmption. It is a trick of the Proslavery officers to prevent the Yankees settling on the upper part of the Reserve." Pomeroy had been trying to "manage the Indians," and get them to go ahead with a town on lands not set off.



going towns rather than newly planted ones was finally followed, and the directors of the town of Madison, on Madison creek, were persuaded to rename their town Batcheller. The company agreed to erect a mill,⁸⁴ and obtained in return a mill site of five acres, and an eighth of the townsite.⁸⁵ Claflin, the second of these two towns, was located by arrangement with the proprietors of Mapleton, Bourbon county. A New England company had laid off the site in May, 1857, but it was later preempted by a company of westerners, and called Eldora. This was later changed to Mapleton,⁸⁶ and now, in the fall of 1857, it came under the financial tutelage of the Emigrant Aid Company, and was renamed Claflin. A mill was promised at an early date, but was not actually erected until 1859.⁸⁷

The most important investment of the Emigrant Aid Company in 1857 was made in Atchison. The Quindaro site did not appear sufficient, as the executive committee early in March authorized Mr. Pomeroy to establish a town in Kansas on the Missouri river, as nearly opposite St. Joseph as possible, at an expense of not over \$8,000.⁸⁸ About a month later Pomeroy wrote he was convinced that Atchison was the best townsite on the Missouri river above Quindaro. Mr. McBratney, agent of an emigrating company from Cincinnati, had made preliminary arrangements for the purchase of one half the townsite of 480 acres, including the chief paper, the *Squatter Sovereign*. Pomeroy coöperated with McBratney, and demanded further property adjacent to the town, both in Kansas and Missouri. P. T. Abell, of the town company, bound himself to obtain at least fifty-one of the original hundred shares, at \$400 to \$500

84. Minutes of executive committee meeting of October 9, 1857, in "Trustees' Records," v. III. M. F. Conway was one of the original incorporators of this town, in 1858. In 1870 the name was changed to Milford. Mrs. Frank C. Montgomery, archivist clerk of the Kansas State Historical Society, has an extensive bibliography of Batcheller.

85. Valued on January 1, 1859, at \$3,792.35—"Emigrant Aid Collection." The mill was evidently not satisfactory, as the town company, in the spring of 1859, offered the Emigrant Aid Company a quarter interest in the town site of 320 acres, to get the mill into operation quickly. This was accepted (executive committee minutes of April 29).

86. Andreas, *History of Kansas*, p. 1097. The Rev. B. B. Newton, of the original town company, executed a contract with Pomeroy, agreeing to change the name to Claflin.

87. Development of these last two towns came during a period of depression, when the company was compelled to curtail operations drastically. However, it eventually carried out its contracts.

88. Minutes of executive committee meeting of March 9, "Trustees' Records," v. III. A Quindaro correspondent, of strong antislavery views, of the *Daily Missouri Democrat*, St. Louis, of May 2, 1857, argued it as proved that the Proslavery men could not make a town. With all its advantages Lecompton had become merely "the abode of innumerable doggeries." Delaware City was another example, until recently a company from Lawrence bought the town, when things immediately boomed. Doniphan was another case, until General Lane and some friends purchased it. Atchison was now about to capitulate, in a similar way. However, nine-tenths of the Kansas towns "are perfect catch-penny operations, and must burst as flat as flounders."

Lack of needed capital was, without doubt, a basic reason for the failure of many Proslavery towns. Fluid capital from Missouri and the South was far less than Yankee capital from New York, Cincinnati, New England and the East. No doubt some of the above transactions were motivated by a desire to "cash in" at a favorable opportunity. The Emigrant Aid Company might also have profited by selling when the tide of emigration was at its height.



each, which would give control to the Free-State party.⁸⁹ A little later Pomeroy wrote that the bargain had been consummated by McBratney and himself. "It has been a very difficult matter to get a *controlling* share in the *Town lots*. But we have got them. I should have bought much more if I knew of any way to *pay*. The company have not *authorized me to buy*. I have taken the responsibility."⁹⁰ The Emigrant Aid Company accepted the Atchison purchase, as made by Pomeroy, and authorized a draft sufficient to complete the initial terms of the transaction.⁹¹ Late in May the executive committee considered the question of changing the name "Atchison" to something of less "evil" memory. "Wilmot" was the first choice, and "Pomeroy" second, but no definite action was ever taken.⁹²

By the summer of 1857 the Emigrant Aid Company reached the apex of its hopes, and was filled with gratification at its accomplishments. The Free-State cause had clearly triumphed in the territory.⁹³ The annual report of the directors for 1857 ably summarized

89. Pomeroy to Thos. H. Webb, April 10, in minutes of the executive committee meeting of April 24, "Trustees' Records," v. III. It was further agreed to give Atchison any "abolition name" desired. Pomeroy wrote the next day that, as soon as a rumor got abroad concerning the sale, shares and lots went up about 300 per cent. A move was made to locate a Wyandot float below Atchison, and start a rival town.

90. Pomeroy to Webb, April 18—*ibid.* He added they could now either accept, or allow him to sell to other parties. There was no town site opposite St. Joseph in which he was willing to risk any money.

91. Minutes of the executive committee meeting of April 24—*ibid.* Money from the sale of the Lawrence hotel site was used, in part. However, the commitments of the company were very large in this transaction. C. J. Higginson noted (letter of April 29, in the minutes of May 15) that an outlay of about \$11,000 cash was involved, with a like amount six months hence, and the expenditure of \$50,000 in the place by himself and new settlers, in which a flouring mill was to be included. Both Higginson and Martin Brimmer quailed at such a large outlay.

Yet contrast the following "balance" presented at an executive committee meeting of May 25: \$2,000 paid; \$1,500 promised in six or twelve months. In January, 1859, the company's property in Atchison was listed at over \$17,000.

92. "Wilmot" after the author of the famous Proviso to exclude slavery from the Mexican cessions.

When the transaction was being made, Pomeroy wrote (April 18) concerning the Atchison town company members: "B. F. Stringfellow and [P. T.] Abell are here. They have both done their utmost to *facilitate* our bargain. They both declare they have done all they could to make Kansas a slave state; *now they want to make some money*, which, to quote from B. F. Stringfellow, 'can only be done by falling in with manifest destiny, and letting it become a free state.'"—Minutes of the executive committee meeting of May 1.

The name of the *Squatter Sovereign* (formerly rabidly Proslavery) was changed to that of *Freedom's Champion*, and the politics radically altered, with Pomeroy and McBratney as editors.

93. This was undoubtedly due chiefly to the great wave of settlers from the Northern middle-west. Even the company, in its report for 1857, did not claim that even a considerable part of the population had come through its direct agency.—See its *History*, published in 1862. The census of 1860 showed conclusively that by far the greatest number of *permanent* settlers came from such states as Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.—See the article by William O. Lynch, cited elsewhere. Settlers were on the move to Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and Texas, as well as to Kansas. Although the settlers actually transported to Kansas by the company were few in numbers, they did include a number of important leaders and influential men. Historically the greatest importance appears to attach to the powerful and widespread influence of the company propaganda and advertising. Probably many settlers were indirectly influenced thereby, while the political effects were widespread. Unfortunately, this same propaganda was the stormy petrel which, when wildly exaggerated, stirred the Missouri slaveholders to action to prevent the abolitionizing of Kansas, as a safeguard to their own firesides. The reader should bear in mind that the land activities pale into insignificance when compared historically with the effects of the company as an agent of propaganda.



HICKMAN: THE EMIGRANT AID COMPANY

255

their accomplishments: "In view of the present condition of Kansas . . . your committee may be pardoned for dwelling with pride and satisfaction upon the reflection that this result has been chiefly owing to the operations of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," which had taken the initiative. "The truth of the great principle of the immense benefits to colonization from the aid of associated capital planted in advance of emigration, to prepare the way for a civilized community, has never been so fairly tried and so fully proved as by this company." Without its work, the territory would still have been "wild and uncultivated," with slavery established. "The policy which has built up towns in Kansas, has also, as a natural result, enhanced the value of all the permanent property of the company in the territory. . . . The value of its actual property, at a low estimate, nearly equals the total amount of the subscriptions to the capital stock."⁹⁴ Land was now worth double to quadruple the amount of a year ago, in the more thickly settled areas. This was especially encouraging, in view of the fact "that considerable sums have been expended without a direct view to pecuniary profit," and additional amounts lost by the destruction of property. If peace continues the stock will probably recover its original value, and make possible good dividends on the investment.⁹⁵ Amos A. Lawrence presented his annual report, and resigned his position as treasurer. In his official farewell to the company he remarked:

You will find the company free from debt, and its prosperity entire. Whatever may have been the result to the stockholders, the shares have never had more value than at the present time. The main object for which the association was formed—viz., the incitement of free emigration into Kansas—has

94. The statement of expense to date of all their properties totaled \$126,616.27 (June 20, 1857—"Journal," p. 21). However, the cost of the Atchison property so far (\$1,293.78) was only a small part of its real value, while no figures could yet be placed on the projected towns of Clafin and Batcheller. The above included the following:

Kansas City (hotel and site, etc.)	\$13,869.48
Lawrence (claim on U. S. for hotel destroyed, real estate, mills and sites, and West Lawrence)	55,181.00
Topeka (mill and mill sites, 10 shares, etc.)	7,146.80
Manhattan (95 shares)	12,092.08
Oswatimie (mill and site, one third town site, timber, etc.)	17,042.60
Quindaro (10 shares)	6,912.80
Wabaunsee (mill and site)	3,555.42
Burlington (real estate)	2,401.21
Atchison (103 lots and hotel, listed in 1859 as \$17,107.10)	1,293.78
Mills property (mills on way)	7,121.04

Expenses were prorated annually between Boston and Kansas, and charged to the various properties. For 1856-1857 the total had been over \$32,000. Over \$27,000 had been received from stock sales that year, and \$5,000 from donations. See the article by Carruth.

95. Quotations from the "Annual Report of the Directors" for 1857, in Lawrence *Republican* of August 6. The report noted that the great improvement from a year before was not due to any help from the government, but to the "brave and determined resistance to oppression" of the Kansas patriots. (The anti-slavery party in Kansas and elsewhere was highly prejudiced against the Democratic administration at Washington.) The tide of emigration now promised to make the aid of the company no longer needed, the report continued. The company at this time began to consider activities elsewhere, particularly in Texas.



been successfully accomplished. The corporation must hereafter be considered a land company, and be managed as such. A speedy closing-up of its business seems to me to be the surest method of yielding a return of the money expended; and, in disposing of the property, much consideration appears to be due our faithful agents. . . .⁹⁶

The approach in the fall of the panic of 1857 blasted all reasonable hope for a satisfactory liquidation of the company's holdings. The crisis, precipitated by the failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company late in August, spread rapidly over a wide area.⁹⁷ The west suffered most severely, as the close of the Crimean War had opened a large area to wheat production, causing that commodity to fall from \$2 to 75 cents a bushel. Kansas and Nebraska were particularly hard hit, as the settlers in these regions had scarcely gotten established (many had indeed only arrived that year). As early as September the *Kansas Weekly Herald* of Leavenworth advertised a sheriff's sale of land for taxes.⁹⁸ The *Herald of Freedom* remarked in the following June:⁹⁹ "We pity the man who is compelled to raise money now in Kansas. We were told by a moneylender, the other day, that he was receiving from 10 to 20 per cent per month, and had been paid at the rate of 20, 25 and 30 per month to discount notes." Business was nearly suspended in all Kansas towns, and men with twenty or twenty-five thousand dollars could not sell property at any price, to realize even a few hundred dollars. A movement was begun to obtain united support in an appeal to the President to postpone the coming land sales, and they were put off several times, but were held in 1859 and 1860. A similar movement was instituted to reduce the taxes, but by 1859 the advertising of delinquent taxes reached an astounding scale, including both rural lands and town lots. Vast numbers of the latter were listed as of unknown owners, presumably nonresident speculators who had abandoned their holdings on the approach of the depression.¹⁰⁰ The severe drouth of 1860 caused an almost complete crop failure, necessitated a widespread program of relief, and

96. Annual report of Amos A. Lawrence, as treasurer, May 26, 1857, incorporated in the documentary *History of the Company*, p. 22.

97. Frederic L. Paxson, *History of the American Frontier, 1769-1893* (New York, etc., 1924), p. 441.

98. Issue of September 26.

99. Issue of June 5, 1858.

100. Information derived chiefly from announcements in various territorial newspapers. The *Neosho Valley Register* of July 21, 1860, remarked that, down to the fall of 1857, Kansas had been largely dependent on Missouri for the chief articles of food, being more concerned with speculation than with the growing of crops. (It might be added that several years were usually required for a settler to establish himself.)



still further postponed recovery. Thousands sold their claims, or abandoned them, and left Kansas.¹⁰¹

What were the chances of success for the Emigrant Aid Company under such circumstances? In the past the company had depended on sales of stock to finance it, and had never accumulated a reserve of any importance. Income from rents had always been disappointing, and from sales negligible. The general policy followed in the years 1854-1857 had been one of expansion, with no apparent intention of sales on a large scale. Had no depression intervened, such a program might have slowly reached fulfillment, but in stringent times, with its credit nothing to boast of, a large reserve would be imperative to tide it over. The Emigrant Aid Company was thus totally unprepared to pass through any extended period of hard times, and was in the class of "frozen" corporations which are ordinarily expected to fail in such circumstances. By a policy of sales instead of purchases in the summer of 1857 the company might have been more fortunate. Lawrence, early in the summer, in a letter to Williams, advocated the sale of at least half their Kansas property before September first, to avoid a coming depression.¹⁰² His warning went unheeded.

The panic of 1857 brought an abrupt end to the policy of expansion, and inaugurated one of strict retrenchment. So pressing was the situation at the close of the year that the company was obliged to procure a loan to meet its obligations, and to allow Pomeroy to fulfill his engagements in Kansas.¹⁰³ Early in 1858 the resignations of Messrs. Pomeroy and Branscomb were accepted, and a new policy

101. Thaddeus Hyatt had a leading part in the program of relief. He wrote to Hon. B. F. Camp, January 12, 1861, soliciting aid from the New York legislature, and stated that his statistics, covering twenty-five counties and representing the general average, were as follows: 12,673 persons had only \$10,671, or less than a dollar each; 18,967 bushels of corn, or about 1½ bushels each; less than nine pounds of flour each; and their corn and wheat crops had been almost complete failures.—"Hyatt Papers," Kansas State Historical Society.

102. Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, May or June, 1857 (exact date not clear), "Lawrence Letters," p. 258. Lawrence said: "1. That the land speculation now rife in the Western states must have an end before another summer. 2. That Kansas lands are higher than they will be next year. So are town lots, taking all the towns together. 4. That it is for our interest to sell freely, say one half of all we own in Kansas before September 1st. . . . By this course we may in time pay over to our stockholders 50 or 75 per cent of their investments. By the opposite course, in my opinion, we shall lose the capital. . . ."

103. Letters of Pomeroy of December, 1857, in minutes of the executive committee meeting of January 1, 1858, "Trustees' Records," v. IV. Why the situation should have changed so very rapidly, is not entirely clear to the writer. The "Journal" states that, at the time of the annual meeting, there was a balance of \$10,000 in cash on hand. 1857 had been, it is true, a year of large outlays. Whether Pomeroy was in any way responsible, cannot be said without further study. (Strange to say, the more important books of the company for the first two years seem to have disappeared.)

There was at that time trouble as to the Kansas City hotel property, and claims held there against the company. To raise money, Pomeroy tried to sell the Atchison mill, but "the proposition to sell for cash was deemed a joke."



inaugurated, with M. F. Conway as general agent.¹⁰⁴ The company's property "will not be enlarged except in the towns of Claflin and Batcheller. . . . We do not intend to enter upon any new enterprises in the territory."¹⁰⁵ There was to be "a prudent husbandry of our resources, which can only be secured by *economy, method in the accounts, & a careful attention to details.*"¹⁰⁶ A plan for the gradual sale of their properties, in order to obtain the best possible returns for the times, also came to be increasingly urged.

In the program of townsite promotion the Emigrant Aid Company had been obliged to coöperate with the local town companies. As a result it became seriously involved, even in its earlier years. Thus at Osawatomie the company had obtained a third interest in the townsite, along with William Ward and O. C. Brown. Early in 1857 Pomeroy was made head of the town company, and could then better protect the Emigrant Aid interests.¹⁰⁷ A serious difference arose between Ward and Pomeroy, on the one hand, and Brown, who had formerly headed the town company, on the other. The townsite proved to be not properly preëmpted.¹⁰⁸ Even worse, however, was the course pursued by Brown, who, to avoid payment of what he owed the town, placed his property in other hands, where it could not be touched.¹⁰⁹ Thus by 1860 the town company was mortgaged to the extent of almost \$1,000, with the courts threatening a foreclosure. The Emigrant Aid Company was obliged to authorize its agent to advance \$1,000 to free its property of encumbrance.¹¹⁰

104. See footnote No. 131 concerning the serious dispute between the company and Mr. Branscomb. Whether Pomeroy supported him or not, is not clear to the writer, but at any rate both resignations took effect on March 1, 1858. No doubt Mr. Pomeroy was, from a business standpoint, too optimistic to serve the company well in times of depression, when retrenchment and not expansion was necessary. He continued to serve as local agent for Atchison and Kansas City, and apparently was still in good standing with his employers.

105. Letter of instructions of C. J. Higginson to M. F. Conway, newly appointed general agent, "Emigrant Aid Collection." The letter stated that the political objective of freedom in the territory had been attained "so far as the influence of the company through investment can attain it." The second objective of profit was now to be the goal to aim at.

106. Letter of notification of Mr. Brimmer to Conway as general agent, February 6, 1858—*ibid.* This advice seems to have been quite to the point. In the earlier years of the company Lawrence appears to have been the only one in authority who stood for the application of strict business principles.

107. By 1859 Conway was elected to this position. He was also a member of the Manhattan town company. Pomeroy, Robinson, and Branscomb were also at times on various town companies, such as Atchison, Quindaro, Lawrence, etc. The agents were greatly helped by being in such positions.

108. R. S. Stevens to O. C. Brown, Washington, February 18, 1860. The land office pronounced the entry of town sites by the probate judges as void.

109. M. F. Conway to Thomas H. Webb, May 27, 1859, and June 18, 1860. Ward had abandoned the whole affair in despair, and refused to make further payment. The company was thus left to shoulder the whole burden, or follow the example of Ward, and complete the fiasco.

The trouble at Osawatomie was merely an extreme example of a class of troubles that was constant.

110. C. J. Higginson to M. F. Conway, July 10, 1860.—Instructions of the executive committee, "Emigrant Aid Collection."



The problem of collecting rents had always been a difficult one. The attitude of many settlers, that the Emigrant Aid Company was a great charitable organization, increased these troubles. For example, the Topeka association early in 1858 advised Mr. Branscomb it would be useless to attempt the collection of more than a nominal rent for the Topeka schoolhouse.¹¹¹ The problem of rents had become so serious by early 1858 that the company issued special instructions to Conway, the newly appointed general agent, advising him that: "These rents you will henceforward insist by all means upon collecting punctually. . . ." Otherwise the "impression is thereby produced that the company is neglectful or indifferent to its own interests. . . ." ¹¹²

Conway as general agent found it virtually impossible to personally supervise the disordered business of the company all over the territory. He advised that the sales of lots, erection of mills, and the like, be left to the local agents in the towns.¹¹³ The company now authorized the sale of its property, but to obtain any reasonable payment in cash, as desired, was almost out of the question.¹¹⁴ The treasurer could no longer borrow on a simple promise of the company to pay. Before the ill-starred year of 1858 drew to a close he recommended the borrowing of \$10,000.¹¹⁵ In the face of this dark outlook, meetings of the executive committee, which had regularly occurred weekly, now became more and more infrequent during 1859. The company fulfilled its contract and voted a mill for Batcheller, but doubt was expressed as to the outcome.¹¹⁶

111. Official letter of Branscomb to the company, January 14, 1858, in the minutes of January 29. The Kansas State Historical Society possesses the contract for this building, drawn up in 1857. The company advanced money to Abner Doane, to aid in its construction. (The term "Topeka association" refers to the town company.)

112. Letter of instruction, C. J. Higginson to M. F. Conway, February, 1858—"Emigrant Aid Collection." Properties then rented included the Lawrence mill, the Pinckney street and Kentucky street houses in Lawrence, the Manhattan mill, Topeka schoolhouse, Osawatimie mill, Atchison hotel (and the Atchison mill soon to be rented). Rent of the Lawrence and Manhattan mills was then overdue, and affairs of the Osawatimie mill were in disorder.

113. Official letter of Conway to the company, May 5, 1858, in the minutes of May 14, "Trustees' Records," v. IV. "I have the Manhattan embroglio, the Topeka embroglio, besides the Williams & Critchett embroglio, the Branscomb embroglio, and a half dozen other embroglios here in Lawrence, all to straighten out. . . . I do not wish to become myself an embroglio, so be prudent, gentlemen."

The local agents could not have been very enthusiastic, as they were now paid a mere commission on business transacted.

114. When Pomeroy did sell a few lots in Atchison, he could make no collection. His rosy letters as to the outlook there began to cool down by the fall of 1858. He complained in addition on January 3, 1859 (minutes of January 28): "Those of us who live here are every day called upon to give a lot to a church or school or to secure the Salt Lake mail, or other purposes."

115. Letter of the treasurer, minutes of the executive committee meeting of October 22, 1858. Kansas receipts for 1858-1859 were only \$3,474, and expenses \$14,724.95.

116. Webb wrote to Conway, April 30, 1859: "I am in hopes now, they will go ahead and make a bona fide town. I trust the town executive committee are discreet and judicious men, who will be careful not to accumulate a debt, to ruin and sink the whole concern."

It may be stated here that Webb had a very large property interest in Kansas. This included a share in each of the following towns: Topeka, Brownsville, Lawrence, Quindaro, and Osawatimie; also lots at Manhattan, an undivided interest at Atchison with Pomeroy, another at Winthrop (opposite Atchison), and a quarter interest in the Wyandot float at

A question arose as to the exact extent of the company's property at Manhattan.¹¹⁷ It was found that in general no sales of importance were possible in such a period, but the company continued to oppose forced sales,¹¹⁸ even though current expenses made impossible a reduction in the notes outstanding. Sales were limited chiefly to the Topeka schoolhouse and the Kansas City hotel.¹¹⁹ In its extremity territorial scrip was accepted in payment of several "bad" debts.¹²⁰ The executive committee noted, in the fall of 1860, that it was "entirely unsafe to rely for any part of this needed money, upon remittances from the territory" . . . and recommended a further note issue.¹²¹ At the annual meeting in May, 1861, it was shown that rents from Kansas for the past year had been only \$915.09, and sales a paltry \$520.75. Though current expenses had been greatly reduced they were still not far from \$4,000. Non-resident landholders could make no sales, while the mills of the company were deteriorating.¹²² With the admission of Kansas as a free state the special purpose of the company had been fulfilled; "still, the Ex-Committee have always borne in mind, that our enterprise to be perfect in result, must be a success financially, as well as in every other way. It must be shown that the Free State system of settling new country, pays well, in money. This we do not absolutely despair of doing even in the case of Kansas," despite the series of unfortunate events.¹²³ It was decided to sell their entire property for \$20,000, which would leave \$5,000 above indebtedness, and with the \$25,000 due from the United States for destruction of the Lawrence hotel, might eventually admit of a small dividend to the stockholders. A few weeks later, however, it was voted inex-

Burlington. He had also a promise of a share in each of the following: Moneka, Emporia, and Tecumseh.—Letters of Thomas H. Webb to "Friend Conway," July 6, 1858, and August 20, 1859, "Emigrant Aid Collection." Webb would request a share in a city as a reward for his account in the handbooks he published for emigrants. (A share was uniformly ten lots.)

117. Official letter of Conway, April 23, 1859, in the minutes of May 13. A hotel project there also caused trouble.

118. Minutes of the directors' meeting of May 29, 1860, "Trustees' Records," v. V. "The secretary observed that the business affairs of the company continued much as they were at the last annual meeting, the year closing having proved quite unfavorable for the effecting of sales to any great extent or amount.

"The opinion was very decidedly expressed that forced sales ought not to be made, but the property carefully husbanded, and disposed of in larger or smaller parcels, from time to time.

119. The Kansas City hotel was sold to one Hopkins for \$10,000. The company objected to the unfavorable terms Pomeroy obtained, however. Eldridge intervened, claiming Hopkins his customer. The sale does not seem to have been finally completed.

120. \$2,500 from G. W. Brown of the *Herald of Freedom*, to pay his debt in full. Brown had often claimed that he owed nothing, because of his services to the cause of freedom. Also \$1,500 from S. W. Eldridge, for furniture of hotel at Lawrence.

121. Minutes of the executive committee meeting of November 9, "Trustees' Records," v. V.

122. Annual meeting of May 28, 1861, described in the documentary *History of the New England Emigrant Aid Company*, p. 26.

123. Minutes of the directors' meeting of May 28, 1861, "Trustees' Records," v. V.

pedient to sell at that time. In July Messrs. Brimmer and Lawrence, of the finance committee, reported that the income of the company was nothing, and "neither its value, nor the necessities of its management justify an annual expense of \$3,000."¹²⁴ The salary of the secretary and expenses of the Boston office were discontinued, and the salary of the general agent in Kansas reduced. Evidently the problem of paying its debts was bringing the Kansas venture to a close.

At an auction in Boston by Leonard & Company, February 27, 1862, the entire property of the Emigrant Aid Company in Kansas and Missouri was sold to Isaac Adams, of Sandwich, N. H., and Henry A. Ayling, of Boston, for a consideration of \$16,150 (excepting its claim on the United State for the Free State hotel).¹²⁵ This amount little more than covered outstanding debts, to say nothing of a dividend to the stockholders.¹²⁶ The property thus disposed of had a book value of \$143,322.98, having remained at approximately that amount for some time, with no reduction to conform to depression values.¹²⁷

In reviewing the reasons for the failure of the Kansas real-estate project, several major factors appear. There was no income to the company in the transportation of emigrants, while the indirect results, upon which it had so much doted, were hard to obtain. It was often very hard to get the emigrants to "stay put," upon which the success of a projected town so much depended.¹²⁸ The Emigrant Aid Company became so seriously involved with the affairs of the various town companies where it had interests, that its fate was virtually the sum total of theirs.¹²⁹ It has been held that the agents

124. Minutes of the executive committee meeting of July 22, 1861.—*Ibid.*

125. "Journal," p. 179. Also minutes of the executive committee meeting of March 20, 1862, in "Trustees' Records," v. V. Included in the sale were Kansas bonds and territorial scrip to the amount of \$3,500.

Isaac Adams was the inventor of the "Adams power press," which worked a revolution in the art of printing. He was a member of the Massachusetts senate in 1840. He died in 1853. Henry A. Ayling was in earlier years a member of the firm, Priest and Ayling, commission iron merchants. He later became an officer of the Union Elastic Goods Company of Boston. Both men were members of the Emigrant Aid Company.

The original agreement of sale is in the "Emigrant Aid Collection" of the Kansas State Historical Society.

126. Three notes outstanding then amounted to \$12,000.

127. For most of this property, at least, the company now had valid deeds. The "Journal" lists the following (p. 179):

Kansas City	\$12,864.08	Burlington	3,096.05
Lawrence	50,075.28	Atchison	15,127.65
Topeka	10,646.87	Batcheller	4,392.32
Manhattan	11,910.77	Claffin	2,739.20
Osawatomie	19,965.54		
Quindaro	7,456.15		
Wabaunsee	5,049.07		
		Total	\$143,322.98

128. At least four of the company towns eventually became "dead towns," or were radically altered.

129. If the company could have had a 100 per cent interest, this would not have been the case, but usually its share was proportionally small.



of the company, in Kansas, were in part responsible for its failures.¹³⁰ It appears that in general they did their work well, for which the company more than once heartily thanked them. There were, indeed, several serious disputes, involving at least one forced resignation,¹³¹ but in general the agents coöperated well in carrying out their official instructions.¹³² No doubt the company itself was lax in its general policy, which was reflected at times by its agents in the field, justifying well the poor opinion of it as a land company held by Amos A. Lawrence. Yet the Emigrant Aid officials did considerably alter their plan as to the agents early in 1858. Under this system the local agents were paid solely by their commissions on sales and rents, and were to do much of the actual business, while a general agent (M. F. Conway), supervised the entire interests of the company. A general policy of strict economy was enjoined on all.¹³³

There is little doubt that the one chief cause of the failure of the real-estate projects of the Emigrant Aid Company in Kansas was the panic of 1857, which intervened at a decisive time in the company's history. Probably few land companies could have survived such an immense deflation in property values. The severe drought in Kansas in 1860 prolonged the depression, and made it even more

130. See Carruth's article, cited in footnote No. 66. A minute recheck of the company's finances might lead to interesting conclusions. Unfortunately the records, as found at Topeka, are not complete in this regard. It is furthermore doubtful whether the books kept by Pomeroy are in existence.

131. The most serious dispute involved the account of Branscomb, in 1857. It was submitted to Judge Russell, who found in Branscomb's favor, with the exception of the payment by Branscomb of the expenses of four persons back to Massachusetts, when the Missouri river was closed to the Northern emigrants (1856). The company refused to pay this, and, coupled with an error as to salary, threatened suit. Branscomb eventually resigned (March 1, 1858). (The Topeka Tribune of January 28, 1860, notes that suit was then being brought in the court of Shawnee county, by the company vs. Branscomb and C. Robinson, on a note and deed of mortgage.)

Charles Robinson, in his resignation in 1856, claimed he could serve the company quite as well outside, and avoid the charge of being controlled by it. Secret differences seem to have arisen. Robinson was then also becoming interested in the Kansas Land Trust, and Quindaro.

The resignation of Pomeroy from his supervisory position at an hour particularly dark for the company may possibly have been due to dissatisfaction with his general policy, and more or less "free and easy" business, which would not have worked well in times of depression.

132. The company issued very definite instructions to its agents in Kansas. Those given Pomeroy in August, 1854, will serve as a good example. He was authorized to purchase property in Kansas City and Kansas territory to an amount not exceeding \$40,000. With either of the other agents he could draw on the company treasurer for an amount not over \$10,000. He was to buy not over six sawmills, and a gristmill if necessary, and to cause receiving houses to be erected. He was to be treasurer of the agents, and keep a set of books. Deeds of real estate were to be in his name, and at least one of the other agents. He was to have a schoolhouse built in each settlement, and to encourage the establishment of places of public worship. He was to use his influence in behalf of the *Herald of Freedom*, which was to be conducted on principles approved by the trustees. His salary was to be \$1,000 a year, plus traveling expenses and a ten percent commission on sales, rents, etc.—Minutes of the fifth meeting of the trustees, August 26, 1854, "Trustees' Records," v. I.

133. Instructions to M. F. Conway, February, 1858, "Emigrant Aid Collection." The company did on rare occasions send sharp reminders as to general policy. Thus on October 1, 1856, its note to Pomeroy and Branscomb included the following: "The Executive Committee feel it to be of much importance that the agents of the Co. should in future devote themselves exclusively to its affairs, so that no political or other object should be allowed to divert their attention from its interests." (Perhaps this applied well to Robinson, who resigned about this time.)

severe.¹³⁴ Yet with a sufficient fund from which to draw for running expenses, the company might have kept its investments intact until the better days of the post-war period.

None of the later projects of the New England Emigrant Aid Company approached the fruition of the Kansas venture. Early in 1857 Eli Thayer began the formation of the Homestead Emigration Society, to begin the colonization with Northern capital and labor of worn-out lands in Virginia.¹³⁵ As early as May, 1856, in the annual meeting of the Emigrant Aid Company, the subject of colonization of Virginia was broached by Mr. Thayer, as a lucrative land venture which would promote the cause of freedom. The company never acted on his proposals.¹³⁶ The future Emigrant Aid program was being studied during 1857 and 1858. In 1857 the executive committee had a subcommittee on Texas, before which Colonel Ruggles of the United States army appeared, in favor of emigration to Texas.¹³⁷ In June of that year this committee reported "that highly valuable investments can be made if prompt action be had, at comparatively moderate cost. . . ." The free-soil population could be easily added to. Operations should begin immediately to check the ingress of a slave population.¹³⁸ It was decided to make further investigation, however, before taking action. At the quarterly meeting of the directors in November, 1858, Thayer made an address in favor of continuing the activity of the company in the cause of freedom. The secretary mentioned several possible fields: Missouri—now rapidly tending to free-stateism, the Cherokee country, and western Texas, and preferred the last named.¹³⁹ The committee then appointed did not report on the subject of Texas colonization until March, 1860.¹⁴⁰ They believed that immediate action was needed to secure freedom to western Texas, and "that a well-sustained band of free settlements, like the line of fire to the

134. The documentary *History* of the company states that the panic "checked at once and fatally our hopes of rapidly converting our property into money." It also stresses the drought as a powerful factor (p. 24, *et seq.*).

135. William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*, April 17, 1857. See the speech of Thayer on organized emigration to the South, cited above.

136. Proceedings of the annual meeting for 1856, *Boston Daily Evening Traveller* of May 28, in "Webb," v. XII, p. 225. Thayer made a tour of western Virginia (now West Virginia) and eastern Kentucky in the interest of his project to develop neglected plantations and unimproved lands. Five thousand acres were finally selected in Wayne county, near the Kentucky border, in a narrow peninsula on the Ohio. Here the town of Ceredo was founded, in which Thayer planned a great manufacturing establishment along New England lines. The plan prospered well at the start, and the earlier opposition of leading Virginians to "Yankee conversion" largely disappeared. The war intervened, however, and Ceredo remained a small town.

137. Minutes of the executive committee meetings, summer of 1857.

138. Report of the committee, minutes of June 19, in "Trustees' Records," v. III.

139. Quarterly meeting of the directors, November 23, 1858.—Minutes of the meeting. He did not favor any movement, without being first assured of at least \$50,000. A committee was named to study the matter.

140. Minutes of the executive committee meeting of March 16, 1860, in "Trustees' Records," v. V.

scorpion, will turn back the advance of slavery, & turn its venom to its own destruction."¹⁴¹ The only peaceful solution of the slavery question "was the clear demonstration to the slave holders that free labor was cheaper and better in every way than slave labor," even in the cotton belt of the South. It was believed that the tide of slavery could be safely dammed up, by planting northern settlements along a 190-mile front south of the mouth of the Little Wichita river.¹⁴² To execute this plan the committee recommended the purchase of large tracts of around 2,000 acres at six or eight points, leaving about fifteen miles between the settlements. Armed settlers and machinery should then be quickly sent in, with the general plan kept a secret to all but a chosen few, "until we feel ourselves strong enough to bid defiance to the slave-power."¹⁴³ Land could be purchased very cheaply in this region. The committee recommended a \$50,000 fund, with operations to begin when \$10,000 was collected. Subscription papers were drawn up, but not enough was collected to warrant the starting of the enterprise.¹⁴⁴

Late in 1864 the Emigrant Aid Company undertook a plan to transport the surplus women of Massachusetts to Oregon.¹⁴⁵ The Rev. Sydney H. Marsh, president of the Pacific University of Oregon, called the attention of the directors of the company to the subject as early as 1860, but the war intervened, and no action was taken.¹⁴⁶ The project appears to have been largely philanthropic, and devoid of plans to invest in real estate.¹⁴⁷ The first small group of girls were sent, via the Isthmus, late in December, 1864, and a second and larger group was transported in 1865.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹. Quoting from this report.

¹⁴². South and southwest of the Rio San Antonio there was little if any danger. From a point thirty or forty miles south of San Antonio de Bexar to a point nearly due north on the Rio Llano, a distance of over a hundred miles, there was a large preponderance of German settlers, blocking the advance of slavery. This left a distance of about 190 miles to the mouth of the Little Wichita river, and through this gap slavery threatened to flow.

¹⁴³. A point like Lamar on the coast would be needed to land settlers and supplies for the South. Settlers for the North would go via the Mississippi, the Red, and Arkansas rivers, and then wagons overland.

¹⁴⁴. Quoting the minutes further (meeting of March 16, 1860). Also the documentary *History*, p. 23.

Edward E. Hale, who was prominent in the later history of the company, had been much interested in the future of Texas, as his pamphlet of 1845 had indicated.

¹⁴⁵. Emigrant Aid circular, in "Emigrant Aid Collection." This circular, dated November 2, 1864, noted that in Oregon there were, by the last census, 40,000 less women than men, while in Massachusetts there was a large surplus. The company announced it had engaged its own vessel, and employed an Oregon agent.

¹⁴⁶. Report to the directors, May 15, 1865, of John Williams, Oregon agent, in Oregon correspondence, "Emigrant Aid Collection."

¹⁴⁷. At least \$850 was given for the cause. The later announcements noted that only girls of good character would be accepted.

¹⁴⁸. The company advertised it would send its own steamer from Boston to Portland, in May, 1865. It appears to have used, instead, a government vessel to transport 300 lady passengers. (Difficulties arose on the first trip when the girls, being sent via steerage, were exposed to too many dangers.) Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, and Edward E. Hale of the company were the particular sponsors of the Oregon work. Oregon correspondence, "Emigrant Aid Collection." The *Seattle Weekly Gazette* (April 27, 1865) rejoiced at the prospect for bachelors.



Although the plan to operate in western Texas never materialized, the company still retained an interest in emigration and investment in the South. In 1862, when a bill was in congress to confiscate the lands of certain classes of former confederates, the company issued a circular suggesting that these lands be given to loyal union men, by means of an emigration southward.¹⁴⁹ The experience of the Emigrant Aid Company showed that such a movement should be organized. If the government should decide to do this, "it might use to advantage trustworthy agencies at the North," such as the Emigrant Aid Company.¹⁵⁰ A company report of the same year recommended purchases in the border states, such as Maryland and eastern Virginia, as a suitable plan for future operations.¹⁵¹ This was not done because of the lack of funds. At a meeting of the company in 1865 the proposal was advanced for the company to co-operate with the United States Mutual Protection Company, in its work of promoting emigration to the South and real-estate development in that section.¹⁵² No action was taken at that time, but the general subject made a strong appeal. In February, 1867, the Massachusetts legislature issued a new charter to the New England Emigrant Aid Company, with the object of specifically authorizing Southern colonization.

The charter of 1867 authorized the issuance of \$150,000 of additional capital stock, denominated "preferred," for the purpose of "directing emigration southward, and aiding in providing accommodations for the emigrants after arriving at their place of destination."¹⁵³ The company enjoyed a large correspondence at that time with persons in widely separated places, urging it to purchase land, particularly in Florida.¹⁵⁴ Gen. J. F. B. Jackson went on a tour of

149. Company circular, June, 1862, in the "Emigrant Aid Collection."

150. If employed, they would disclaim any idea of profit to the company or those connected with it. Signed by the executive committee, then composed of S. Cabot, Jr., M. Brimmer, C. J. Higginson, John Carter Brown, Amos A. Lawrence, and Edward E. Hale.

151. *Documentary History*, pp. 31-33.

152. This company had as its chief aim the occupation "by loyal citizens of the Northern states, of desirable plantations in the various Southern states lately in rebellion, thereby infusing into them a healthy and loyal element, and, at the same time, promoting the pecuniary interests of the patriotic men who shall be instrumental in effecting this work." It was capitalized at a large amount, and had its general offices in Washington, D. C. Hon. Alexander W. Randall, first assistant post master general, was president, and the Hon. S. C. Pomeroy, senator from Kansas, vice president. (Edward Winslow, in 1867 treasurer of the Emigrant Aid Company, was subagent for Massachusetts.) The company proposed to aid settlers on the same general plan as the Emigrant Aid Company had followed in Kansas, and was to reap a reward in real-estate profits. Official pamphlet of the United States Mutual Protection Company, in "Emigrant Aid Collection."

153. *Act to Incorporate the New England Emigrant Aid Company*, February 19, 1867. Copy in Florida correspondence, "Emigrant Aid Collection." The charter was amended to expire by limitation in thirty years. Preferred stock was to draw 8 per cent dividends, before any on the common. R. P. Waters was then president, Rev. E. E. Hale, vice president, and Edward Winslow, treasurer.

154. Knowledge of the land activities of the company seems to have been widespread at that time.



inspection of that state, and convinced the company "that capital is greatly needed there; that it may be invested with handsome profit, and at the same time so as to largely assist and encourage emigration."¹⁵⁵ It was desired to colonize settlers of small means, in units for mutual support and public influence, and thereby encourage loyal union sentiment in the state. The governor of Florida, and various internal improvement companies in that state, were ready to make very liberal offers of land.¹⁵⁶ In May, 1867, the company announced its intention of establishing a colony on or near the St. Johns river (in the vicinity of Jacksonville), on a large tract offered at favorable terms.¹⁵⁷ When twenty families agreed to unite in a colony, the company would send an agent to survey and lay out the land. It was the intention to send such a colony, at least by October. The company would remedy the chief draw-back for New England settlers—the lack of religious and educational facilities, by providing a church and schoolhouse.¹⁵⁸

The Emigrant Aid Company sold stock to finance its Florida project, but these sales never approached those made in the interest of the Kansas venture.¹⁵⁹ The cause of loyal unionism in the South did not have the appeal of "bleeding Kansas." Late in September, 1867, the company announced it had abandoned its proposed Florida colony, as announced in the May circular, because a large proportion of the emigrants wished to go unpledged as to the point of settlement, rather than in company with others.¹⁶⁰ For some months the company entertained further proposals as to Florida, nevertheless, and began to collect a new fund early in 1868, for "use in promoting emigration to Florida, and its other purposes."¹⁶¹ The next month (February, 1868) it officially denied it furnished "*pecuniary assis-*

155. Official company circular, early 1867, in the "Emigrant Aid Collection."

156. *Ibid.* Every day they received applications from small farmers of limited means, who wished to emigrate. A local newspaper was planned, to cherish union sentiments.

157. "Florida Circular," May, 1867, printed circular in the "Emigrant Aid Collection."

158. Company circular of May, 1867, in the "Emigrant Aid Collection." They would sell five shares of preferred stock at \$100 a share to each person desiring to be member of a colony. With the certificate of stock would go a written guarantee to furnish the holder a farm of from 50 to 100 acres, at from \$5 to \$10 an acre. If in a year the settler did not care to purchase, they would take back the farm, and refund the money paid, in preferred stock of the company, or its land elsewhere. All communications were to be sent to T. B. Forbush, secretary, 49 Tremont St., Boston.

159. Florida correspondence in the "Emigrant Aid Collection." One list of sales totaled \$5,300, and another \$11,400. Large subscribers included Samuel Cabot, \$1,000; John Carter Brown, 75 and 50 shares (evidently preferred and common), William Clafin, 27 and 75, Martin Brimmer, and John W. Forbes. These were largely officers or former officers of the company. Brimmer and Forbes were then both directors. Probably these subscriptions were not paid in full.

160. Company circular of September 26, 1867, "Emigrant Aid Collection." They recommended all going to Florida, however, to Capt. E. M. Cheney, their agent at Jacksonville. No doubt the company was taking a lesson from its Kansas experience, in thus abandoning the project. Settlers in the West in particular were ready to pull up stakes and "hit for the tall timber," whenever it became more inviting.

161. "Subscription Book," dated January 1, 1868, in "Emigrant Aid Collection."



tance to parties going to Florida." Neither did it have "*any colonies located, organized, or in the process of organization*, nor any interest in the purchase or sale of any lands." It gave advice instead to would-be settlers.¹⁶² The company continued to accept gifts for a "loyal paper" in Florida, evidently hoping to thus promote Northern principles in the state.¹⁶³

The Florida project virtually closed the eventful history of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. A final meeting of the stockholders, their heirs or proxies, was held in February, 1897, when its charter was about to expire by limitation, and its claim against the United States for the destruction of the Free-State hotel at Lawrence was then voted to the University of Kansas.¹⁶⁴

162. Pamphlet of information for emigrants (2d edition), February, 1868, in Florida correspondence. A description of land around Jacksonville, products, etc., is included.

163. A large number of gifts were made to the company for this purpose by benevolent persons. Some individual gifts were above \$100. The Union Printing Company, which published the *Florida Union*, a journal of Northern views, at Jacksonville, had appealed to the Emigrant Aid Company for funds, as it was in debt. The company could not give it money, they replied, but offered to start a subscription list instead.

164. In May, 1885, Amos A. Lawrence, Edward E. Hale, and Eli Thayer incorporated the Utah Emigrant Aid and Improvement Company, under the laws of Massachusetts. Its purposes were: "Directing emigration to Utah and aiding in providing accommodations for emigrants after arriving in that territory and assisting in establishing among them manufacturing and other industries."—*Acts and Resolves of the General Court of Massachusetts*, 1885. Capital stock was to be limited to a million dollars, only a small part of which could be invested in real estate in Massachusetts. A newspaper of the time remarked that the founders of the company proposed to effect for Utah and Mormondom what they had done for Kansas and slavery. The writer has no information as to the operation of this company.

The extensive collection of papers and documents of the New England Emigrant Aid Company (and allied companies) was sent to the Kansas State Historical Society many years ago by the family of Edward E. Hale. It includes the record books of the trustees, in which are found the minutes of the meetings of the executive committee and of the directors (five volumes); the "Journal" and "Ledger," which includes financial records from 1857 on; and a large amount of correspondence of the company with its agents and other persons, preliminary financial statements, company circulars, etc. The correspondence is so extensive that the writer has only slightly tapped it, and should prove a valuable source for future writers. There is a considerable aggregate of further information concerning the affairs of the company, which is widely scattered. The extensive collection of newspaper clippings in the "Thomas H. Webb Scrapbooks" is a notable compilation of such materials.

Ferries in Kansas

PART VIII—NEOSHO RIVER

GEORGE A. ROOT

THE Neosho was first known to the white man as Le Grande, this name having been bestowed by the French.¹ The year it received this title is a matter of conjecture. Pike, in the account of his journey to the Pawnee village in 1806, mentions the stream as a "grand fork of the White river,"² and so far as we have been able to discover, this is the first mention of the name as applied to this stream. M. Carey & Son, in their *General Atlas*, published in 1817, call the stream the Grand. Stephen H. Long, in the account of his expedition of 1819-1820, adds other names to the list. He says: "A short ride brought us to the Neosho or Grand river, better known to the hunters by the singular designation of the Six Bulls."³ This is believed to be the first printed mention of the stream as the "Neosho," while the name "Grand" river appears in an atlas as late as 1840.⁴ South of the confluence of the Verdigris with the Neosho, to where it joins the Arkansas, the name "Grand" attached for nearly a quarter of a century later. Maps of 1825 and later spell the name "Neozho." Joseph C. Brown's survey of the Santa Fé trail, 1825-1827, gives the same spelling. That Neosho is an Osage word various authorities agree, but there appears to be some question as to the real meaning of the word. One authority gives the meaning as "water that has been made muddy."⁵ The late James R. Mead, of Wichita, who spent a number of years on the border and trafficked with Osages and other tribes along the southern border of Kansas, says that "Neosho is an Osage word, meaning 'Ne,' water; 'osho,' clear. Neosho—clear water. In the Indian languages the adjective comes after the noun."⁶

The Neosho is the largest tributary of the Arkansas river on the north, and under federal law is considered a navigable stream.⁷

The Neosho is famed for its beauty, running through some of the choicest agricultural lands within the state, while its banks are

1. *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 17, p. 708.

2. Pike's *Expeditions*, p. 135.

3. Long's *Expedition*, v. 2, p. 253.

4. Jeremiah Greenleaf, *A New Universal Atlas*, p. 47.

5. Andreas, *History of Kansas*, p. 826.

6. Kansas Academy of Science, *Transactions*, v. 18, p. 216.

7. 65th congress, 1st session, *House Document*, No. 321, pp. 22, 30.



lined with a wealth of native timber. The stream is formed by an east and west branch, the first named having its source in the southwest corner of Wabaunsee county, while the west branch starts at a point about fourteen or fifteen miles west of Council Grove, in Morris county. These two branches unite a little northwest of Council Grove, and flow in a general southeast direction through the counties of Morris, Lyon, Coffey, Woodson, Allen, Neosho, Labette and Cherokee, entering Oklahoma at a point a little southwest of the village of Mill Rose, Cherokee county, and emptying into the Arkansas near Fort Gibson. The Neosho is 404 miles long, of which about 300 miles are within Kansas,⁸ and has a drainage area variously given as 5,090 and 5,106 square miles within the state. Before the settlement of the state the river had a sufficient flow of water to warrant an early-day assertion that the river was navigable to a point above Parsons.⁹ However, the present-day status of the river precludes the possibility of commercial traffic on the stream except in times of high water or flood. The river drains the section of the state between the Kaw and Marais des Cygnes on the north and the Verdigris on the south.

Disastrous floods have occurred in the stream, its tortuous channel being responsible in a great measure for the destruction that followed. The following years have been recorded as flood years: 1844, 1885, 1896, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1911, and 1915, and, in passing, it might be added that the year 1935 should be added to the above list. Of those floods occurring before 1935, those for 1885 and 1904 were the most disastrous.¹⁰ In order to obtain reliable data regarding the amount of water carried by the river, a gauge station was established at Iola in July, 1895, and, following the devastating flood of 1904, stations were also established at Oswego, Labette county; at Humboldt, Allen county; at Le Roy, Coffey county; and at Neosho Rapids, Lyon county. From records obtained at these stations some interesting facts regarding the river were brought out. For instance, at Oswego, the Neosho at average low water was found to be 220 feet wide. At Humboldt, "the channel is permanent—having a sandstone bottom. The current is sluggish at low water and fairly swift at high stages of flow. The gauge is at the highway bridge about one-half mile west of Humboldt. A masonry dam is about

8. U. S. Weather Bureau, *Daily River Stages*, Part XI, p. 111; Blackmar, *History of Kansas*, v. 2, p. 352.

9. 65th congress, 1st session, *House Document*, No. 321, pp. 22, 30.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 6.



100 yards below the bridge and is used to develop power for a grist-mill nearby." This station was abandoned in about a year. The highest water recorded there was on July 10, 1904, when the river reached a stage of 30.50 feet.¹¹ At Iola, at average low water, the river is 208 feet wide. At this point flood waters once reached a height of 17.03 feet, date unknown, while the lowest stage recorded was 2.8 feet on October 19, 20, 1908, flood stage being at ten feet.¹² On May 26, 1902, at a height of twelve feet, the river discharged 15,216 cubic feet of water a second. On August 25, same year, at a height of 16.50 feet, the flow was 25,246 cubic feet a second.¹³ At Le Roy the highest stage of water recorded was 28 feet, on June 5, 1904; lowest stage 0.0 on various dates. Flood stage occurred at 24 feet.¹⁴ At Neosho Rapids, 324 miles above the mouth, the width at average low water is 142 feet. Drainage area above this station is 2,511 square miles. The highest stage of water recorded here was 29.5 feet; lowest 0.0 on November 7, 8, 1904, flood stage being at 22 feet.¹⁵ During August, 1934, the Neosho reached a new low level in Labette county. Mr. T. A. Sprague, of Oswego, who has lived in that vicinity for many years, said that the Neosho stopped running at three points in that locality during the month of August. Mr. Sprague has lived along the Neosho for the past sixty-eight years, has kept a diary for many years, and included in his notations are many facts about the river.¹⁶

The site of the first ferry north of the Oklahoma-Kansas boundary has not been definitely located. Probably it was somewhere to the southeast of Chetopa, and within Cherokee county. In the *Chetopa Advance*, January 20, 1869, appeared the following advertisement:

ROGERS NEW FERRY NEAR THE KANSAS AND CHEROKEE LINE AT THE OLD CROSSING. The proprietor has located and put in a ferry and a number one boat for the accommodation of the traveling public. It is in thorough repair and the public will find it to their advantage to cross at this point. The roads leading to it and from it are in fine condition and persons approaching Baxter from the west will find it a saving in distance to cross at this ferry. Also, the best way from the east to Chetopa.

A week later, the *Advance* of January 27, printed the following item:

NEW FERRY. Arrangements have been made to put in a new ferry across the Neosho, just this side of the residence of Mr. Hard. Unless the proprietors

11. *Water Supply and Irrigation Papers*, No. 131, pp. 157, 158.

12. *Ibid.*, No. 37, p. 267; *Daily River Stages*, Part IX, p. 68.

13. *Water Supply and Irrigation Papers*, No. 84, p. 115.

14. *Daily River Stages*, Part IX, p. 76.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

16. *St. Paul Journal*, August 16, 1934.



of the old ferry put their boat and the approaches to the ferry in better condition, they must expect to lose all their custom. When not crossing teams, the hands ought to be kept busy with the shovel.

No further mention of the Rogers ferry has been located.

By early 1871 W. H. Barker and F. C. Lowrey applied to the county board for a license to run a ferry on the Neosho near the city of Chetopa, at the crossing of the Baxter Springs and Chetopa road. Their application was granted upon their filing a satisfactory bond and payment of a \$10 fee into the county treasury. The board fixed their ferriage rates the same as those allowed other ferries within the county.¹⁷ No further mention of this enterprise has been located.

Chetopa was the next ferry location upstream. On September 14, 1868, Messrs. C. W. Isbell and J. H. Frey petitioned the county commissioners for a license to operate a ferry at Chetopa, and the board, believing that such a ferry was much needed and would be of great utility to the traveling public, granted their petition. The county clerk was instructed to issue them a license upon payment of \$20 into the county treasury of Labette county, and otherwise complying with the law. The board also fixed the following rates of ferriage. For one 4-horse, mule or ox team, 75 cents; one 2-horse, mule or ox team, 50 cents; one 2-horse buggy, 50 cents; one single horse and buggy, 40 cents; cattle, per head, 10 cents; mules, horses and asses, 10 cents each; hogs and sheep, 5 cents each; man on horseback, 25 cents; footmen, 10 cents each. This license was for the duration of one year from the date of issue.¹⁸ At a meeting of the board of county commissioners on November 26, following, the \$20 license fee charged this ferry was reduced to \$10. Mr. Frank Frey, of Parsons, is a brother of the J. H. Frey who was connected with this ferry, and worked for his brother during his spare time.¹⁹ No further record of this ferry has been found.

In the spring of 1870 F. W. Maxon appeared to be in charge of the ferry at Chetopa, located at the foot of Maple street. He probably took charge sometime during 1869, for on April 6, the following year, he made a request to the county board through the county clerk for a renewal of his license to operate at that point. The clerk was ordered to renew his license for one year upon the filing of a proper bond and the payment of \$20 to the county treasurer.²⁰

17. "Commissioners' Journal," Labette county, 1871.

18. *Ibid.*, 1868.

19. Statement of Mrs. Sallie Shaffer, Parsons, after interview with Mr. Frey.

20. "Commissioners' Journal," Labette county, 1870.



Following high water in the year 1878, when bridges were put out of commission, a ferry was constructed the latter part of May, by J. M. Bauman, under contract with the city of Chetopa, and operated during the flood period.²¹

Chetopa was an important trading point during the late 1860's, and for a time during the period of the Texas cattle trade was a shipping point for the "long horns" to northern markets. Thousands of head of Texas cattle were daily being driven through the south-east corner of the state, headed for the packing houses east of the Mississippi river. After the building of the railroads there was occasional trouble over the accidental killing of livestock by the railroad. William Higgins, an early-day politician, editor and later secretary of state, was appointed claim agent for the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad, and the greater part of his duty was adjusting claims of farmers and cattlemen for loss of livestock killed by his road. This job earned for Mr. Higgins the honorary soubriquet of "Bull Coroner."²²

In 1866 the legislature established a road from Humboldt to Chetopa, George Lisle, Henry Jackson, and William Simmons being appointed commissioners to lay it out. This road followed a trail already in use, which followed up the west side of the Neosho to Oswego and farther north.²³ In 1869 another road was established by the legislature, running from Baxter Springs to Chetopa, along the south line of the Cherokee neutral lands. J. W. Miller was the surveyor in charge of running this road, and his plat and notes are on file in the archives division of the Kansas State Historical Society.²⁴

Agitation for bridges within the county began early in the 1870's, but the sparsely settled condition of the country found the settlers rather loath to incur the necessary expense in the way of taxes for these much-needed improvements. During the early summer of 1871 another move for bridges was started, and on August 21 a special election on the proposition of voting Neosho river bridge bonds to the amount of \$105,000 was held. The settlers evidently had not changed their minds, for the vote stood, for bonds, 165; against the bonds, 1,295. However, a later effort was more successful, and a bridge was built at Chetopa in 1872. This was a wooden structure and cost the city \$10,000 in bonds. It served the com-

21. Chetopa *Advance*, December 5, 1888.

22. Parsons *Sun*, June 1, 1878.

23. Plats of land surveys in office state auditor, Topeka; *Laws*, Kansas, 1866, pp. 226, 227.

24. *Laws*, 1868, pp. 31, 83.

munity for several years, but during high water in the river on May 21, 1878, the abutment on the east bank gave way and the eastern span went down "with all on board," the crew consisting of Messrs. L. M. Bedell, O. A. Sarber, J. Ritter and a Mr. Day. The latter two were somewhat injured by the fall of the bridge, but Mr. Bedell, so the *Advance* stated at the time, "did not even get his pants wet." Following this catastrophe, a ferry boat was put into operation, and until the bridge was repaired was the only means of crossing.

The next structure built was truly a "bridge of sighs," and was constructed under great difficulties and with many discouragements. It was begun in the spring of 1879, and was a combination bridge, erected by the same company that built a later one. On July 23, when nearly completed, the props having been taken out for fear of high water, a wind storm swept up the river, tearing down the east span and breaking up the frame work and twisting the iron rods so badly that it required several weeks of labor to remedy the damage. The storm that caused all this trouble was not felt anywhere else in the vicinity. By the middle of August the bridge was again upon the trestle work and ready to be braced together, when high waters swept the bridge and trestle work down the river, leaving not a stick of timber behind. It was carried from twelve to fifteen miles downstream and had to be hauled back by team. This required much time and it was not until November following that it was ready for use. The third bridge—an iron one—was built during 1888 and completed early in December.²⁵

Labette creek is the principal tributary of the Neosho in Labette county, and consequently second in importance. The stream is close to fifty miles in length, has its source in the southwestern part of Neosho county, slightly south of the town of Thayer, and joins the Neosho at a point a mile or so north and east of Chetopa. This stream was named for Pierre Labette, an early-day Frenchman who lived on the creek a little southwest of where Oswego was built later. He is said to have once lived opposite the mouth of the creek.²⁶ There is good water power on this stream, and close to its mouth was located an ancient Indian village site. As Labette creek joins the Neosho in the immediate vicinity of Chetopa, the history of its ferry is given herewith.²⁷

25. Chetopa *Advance*, December 6, 1888; Oswego *Independent*, December 14, 1888.

26. Statement of Larkin McGhee, in Case's *History of Labette County*, p. 24.

27. *Mills' Weekly World*, Altamont, December 30, 1890; Kansas City (Mo.) *Times*, February 25, 1879.

On September 14, 1868, Hugh Moore, by his agent J. D. McCue, presented a petition to the county board for a license to keep a ferry on the Labette "river" at or near the Rocky Ford. His petition was granted and the following rates of ferriage were established: For one 4-horse, mule or ox team, 75 cents; one 2-horse, mule or ox team, 50 cents; one 2-horse buggy, 50 cents; one-horse buggy, 40 cents; man and horse, 25 cents; cattle, per head, 10 cents; hogs and sheep, per head, 5 cents; footmen, 10 cents. He was required to file a good and sufficient bond, whereupon the county clerk issued him a license good for one year from the date of issue.²⁸

Mr. J. O. Wiley, of Bartlett, Labette county, says the "Rocky Ford" on Labette creek was just a mile west and one half a mile north of where the main highway from Chetopa to Oswego crosses Labette creek. It was his recollection that there was a ferry which operated across the creek where the highway is now located. He was but a small boy at the time and cannot remember who operated it. He also recalls a ferry across the Neosho right at the line between Kansas and the Cherokee territory, but does not remember who ran it.²⁹

Apparently a ferry was contemplated for Hackberry creek, a tributary of Labette creek, for on July 2, 1867, the following item is recorded in the "Commissioners' Journal" of that date, but through some neglect or other cause, the name of the party applying for the license does not appear:

Ordered, that ferry License be granted to..... at the mouth of Hackberry creek in Labette county, Kansas, from the date of issuing said license by the county clerk the rate of ferriage as follows for wagon & two Horses 50 cents and wagon and 4 horses 75 cents. Buggy and two horses 50 cents Buggy and 1 horse 40 cents for man and single horse 25 cents every additional horse 10 cents, Loose stock cattle 8 cents per head. to am't of 100 head over 100 head 5 cents footmen crossing 10 cents not connected with wagon & team for sheep and hog 4 cents.

Hackberry creek flows into Labette creek in Richland township, S. 7, T. 34, R. 21E.

Oswego was the next ferry location upstream on the Neosho, and this early-day crossing was located at or near the residence of D. M. Clover. On July 1, 1867, Thomas Richard was granted ferry privileges at this place, paying \$10 for the privilege for the period of one year, and being required to file a bond of \$500 with the county to keep up the ferry as required by law. Ferriage rates were es-

28. "Commissioners' Journal," Labette county, 1868.

29. From letter of J. O. Wiley, July 3, 1935, to author.