

## Kansas historical quarterly

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KANSAS  
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"Taken when the R- R- was built through Philip's claim. Our cabin was among the trees. The Ninnescah river is back of the tents."



As Abbie departed from Kansas late in November, 1871, she visited Mrs. A. C. McLean in the Southern Hotel on East Main street, Wichita. Photo courtesy Wichita Historical Museum Association.



had a two story head, and could not keep track of the upper story. That amused the boys. With all our ague—some funny things happen—and on our free days—we have some hearty laughs. I do not write all that happens—only a sketch.

The sun is setting, the sky is a glorious vision of colors.

[SEPT.] 5TH—Another day gone, and little done, Philip is so concerned lest I do too much, and get sick. . . . *This p. m. I sewed, mended, made a bag out of a gingham apron, for the dried meat. The meat hung around until I was tired seeing it. I want to take some East when I go home. When the hearers out here need meat, they kill a steer, slice the meat thin, hang it on roaps in the air, and it soon dries. Then it is called "jerked meat." The air out here on the prairie is so dry and pure, it soon dries. Mrs. Lane gave me some jerked meat they had bought from a hearer. It was sweet and nice.*

*Philip is much better. His appetite is much better than mine. J[ohn] went away this morning. I watered Reddie [the ox] this evening. Had to dip so much water. Another lovely evening.*

[SEPT.] 6TH—Philip continues to improve, his appetite is coming back.

I tend the ox—must dip up so much water for him. This a. m. washed, p. m. baked two loaves of bread and a pie. Had the ox to feed and water this evening again.

Will answer letters now.

[SEPT.] 7TH—The sun is just setting, a great red ball in the West. To the south we see a great volum of smoak. A prairie fire, but out of sight.

[SEPT.] 10TH—Have not written for two days. Had time, but there was nothing of special interest to write. Finished P[hilip's] shirt, all but button holes. No mail for some days. Two weeks ago brother H[iram] was here. Time passes— My six months will soon be up. Philip wanted to take me on a trip to Indian Territory, but we have both been too ailing. I think I will go home, and he will likely spend the winter in Indiana. Have been thinking of going to the cabin, since I feel stronger. Went this p. m. Took my time and walked slowly. Sometimes it seemed as if I was taking good bye looks. Perhaps I was. It is a long walk. I find I am not nearly as strong as when I came to Kansas.

We have corn, mellons and potatoes—back of the cabin. I tried to eat a mellon—but have taken so much quinine, that mellons sicken me. Such a lot going to waste.



The cabin, so lonely— I could not even rest there— The walks to well and river grown over. It did not seem like the old cheerful place, and I left— Went up the river to the plum patch, found three qts.

Was acrost the river from the Rose [Ross] house. Would have gone over, but had on such an old torn dress— I still have a little self respect left.

Coming home I stopped at my garden and got sweet corn for supper. Had dried apples soaking. Stewed some plums—drained them, and boiled the apples in the plum juice, and they are much better.

Do not think I will have a chill tomorrow. I am getting thin, I will soon look like the man who had ague so long, that he looked like two knitting needles, stuck in a mellon seed, as Bess Bee [Belle Butler] said of some one.

[SEPT.] 14TH—George came with mail. Jake had been to the P. O. Two letters and two papers. Mr. Smith is sick again. George said they expected the doctor from Wichita. I gave him letters, and asked him to give them to the Dr. to mail in W[ichita]. George had scarcely gone when I had a chill and went to bed. Philip got supper, and made me a cup of tea.

*Last week W[ichita] Tribune had "Here and there from Brains journal" on front page. Quite flattering, but it was too poor an article for such a conspicuous place.<sup>31</sup> John went down the river this morning— wish he would stay a week— makes me so much less work.*

[SEPT.] 15TH—Philip had a chill to day, but it did not last long.

The baking was a trouble to day, I must make new yeast before I bake again. Mother sent me hops again—and I will make yeast soon.

When Mrs. North [West] moved to town—she gave me her cat Jimmie. Now the mice and rats are so bad up at Bachelor Hall, that they borrowed Jimmie.

I will miss him. He often slept at my feet.

When on our hunting trip, the handle of the teakettle was broken, and it made it very unhandy to use. Now Philip has fixed it. He is so handy about the house, when he is well. He made a darning needle for me, out of a piece of wire. Browned coffee, and pounded a can full, in p. m. copied my expenses for the year, and did other writing.

31. Abbie's second article was a condensed version of her diary written in a facetious manner. It appeared in the *Tribune*, September 7, 1871.

[SEPT.] 16TH—There were two angry people here to day—and we are not our good natured selves yet. J. R. uses P[hilip's] blankets. Fortunately he sleeps out, or up at his clame most of the time when not working down at the ranch or elsewhere. This morning P[hilip] saw that they were lousy. His indignation was justafiable.

We put one at a time in the big camp kettle and boiled them, and I finished them in the tub. Such heavy work. Now I hope he will get blankets of his own, and sleep else where. I hope we wont be sick tomorrow, it will be Sunday, and I must go and do some baking.

[SEPT.] 17TH—Neither of us feeling well to day. Letters for both & papers. The other day I heard some one call— Went to the door, there was a hearder on a horse, when he saw me, he jerked off his hat. He was surprised to see a woman. He inquired about some lost horses—then rode on. His horse had four brands W. 4- O -A. one below the other. A few horses have been in P[hilip's] corn patch, and a white one has spoiled my garden—and comes here and eats the corn P[hilip] wants for the ox. He was tame, so P[hilip] caught him and tied a tin can to his tail, which I hope will keep him away. Jake sent up some sweet potatoes. We could not get any sweet potato plants last Spring when we wanted to plant the garden.

[SEPT.] 22ND—A long time since I wrote. I hate to begin, for I know I will get tired writing and miss some things. Monday while I baked, Philip went to see the neighbors—and get the mail. Came back at noon—and reported Mrs. L[ane] very sick. He thought I had better go down. It was 3 p. m. when I started. Took a loaf of fresh bread along for Mr. Smith, who is getting better but has no appetite. Thought it would be better than soda biscuits. Had quite a visit with him. He told me of parts of New Mexico and Arizona he had been in, and wished I could see them, particularly Jacobs Well and Inspiration Rock. When I left he said, "Be very careful, dont try and do too much, and get sick."

There had been a log acrost the branch where I used to cross, it was gone and I had to take off shoes and stockings and wade. It was a miry place, and I went in over my feat, such ugly mud, had trouble to wash it off.

Found Mrs. L[ane] in bed— Mr. L[ane] just able to crawl, and her brother getting supper. Mush and milk, coffee and pie.

The L[anes] are one of the very few, who keep a cow. After supper fixed to bake bread next day, then commenced at the dishes,



which sat around in confusion, seemed not to have been cleaned for some days.

A little room, two beds, a table and stove. The brother sleeps out in another building, where they keep barrels of.

She moved to the other bed while I made hers, then back, while I made that one also. Then I bathed her. She has what she calls "the flu." East we call it dysentery. What with waiting on her, and the mosquitos so many, there was little sleep for me.

Next morning waited on her (wonder who did it when I was not there), washed dishes, pots and pans, I had not found the evening before, dressed a chicken, browned coffee, and what not. Had chicken and sweet potatoes for dinner. It was long after noon when the bread was baked, and house tidied up. Then they wanted me to go to the P. O. I was too blind to see, what I do now, that any one who could eat as heartily as they did, were better able to go to the office than I was. I got on Cricket their Mexican pony and rode over. It was the first time I had been to the trail since I came in April. Struck the trail as the last of a herd were crossing the river. I asked a herder if it was safe for me to go on. He said, "no danger, the beeves are a mile or more ahead, these are young cattle and laggards." Forded the river—rode to the post office, only to be told that one of the boys had been there, and taken it along. Coming back, a large flock of prairie chickens flew up, and frightened the pony. I managed to stick on. Mrs. L[ane] required waiting on during the night, but I got some sleep.

Wednesday. One of the boys [Jake Sohn] passed, and gave me a letter from sister Mary. Set yeast to bake again. She takes medicine day and night. When morning came baked pies and bread. From some hunters Mr. L[ane] bought a piece of buffalo meat as big as my body. He put in on the table, and I was expected to cut it up, and salt it down, which I did. When dinner was ready I was too sick to eat. They talked of going to town soon. "I can go to day," she said. I was surprised, as she had only set up while I made her bed.

The dishes were not finished when I had a chill. I said I must go home, I was feeling so badly. By the time they got Cricket—the chill was over, and fever had come on.

When I passed the Hall Jake came out with a paper for us. Mr. Smith was getting supper, Mr. Philips was there.

They invited me to stay for tea, but I rode on. Their fresh buffalo and sweet potatoes did not tempt me.



DIARY OF ABBIE BRIGHT

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I was anxious to get home, and anxious about Philip.

I took the foot path across the branch between the Hall and our place because it is nearer. Cricket did not want to cross, and at a steep place whirled around and started back. I talked and coaxed and got to the bottom again, thinking he would waid acrost, but he made a big jump, and started up the bank full tilt. I grabbed his main and kept my seat. It is a mystery to me how I ever kep on, for I had a mans saddle—and was riding side ways. They say "angels take care of children, and old people," wonder to which class I belong.

I remember nothing more of the ride home, when brother lifted me from the pony, and I could not stand.

I sat on the grass until he staked Cricket, then he helped me in. I have been wondering to day how I lived to write about it. I promised brother I would never ride Cricket again. He said he was not safe for me to ride, and was angry at them for letting me come home a lone—when I had fever.

[SEPT.] 23d—I feel much better than I expected to, after my long ride home last evening. Philip took Cricket home this morning. He is going with them to W[ichita]. I sent along for some things. Have been very busy to day, so many things to do. Started hop yeast which I will thicken with corn meal in the morning, then dry. Baked two loaves of bread. The boys were out and had been using sour dough and soda. Brownd coffee and ct.

SEPT. 24—I did not have the house rid up yesterday morning, when Mr. Newcomer came. He is the father of Mrs. Elsworth & Mrs. L[o]ucky. He is here on a visit. They expect to go on a buf-falo hunt, and want me to stay with Mrs. E[lsworth] who is not well, until they come back. I scarcely knew what to say. P[hilip] does not like Elsworth— he owes brother—and he has the name of running off cattle ct. I was puzzled what to say, but told him P[hilip] was not home and it would all depend on him. He said he would be back this morning. He gassed about an hour— then left. Now an hour is a long time to loose, when one has baking on hand ct. I put the bread in pans, made dry yeast, put it on paper to dry. Then I scraped three mellons, got about 3 qts. of juice, this I boiled down, then thickened with plums, long after dinner when it was boiled enough. Besides the bread I baked a plum pie. Did not feel well, but there was so much to do—after being away so long, but at 5 p. m. I had a chill— and John had to get his own supper. I slept pretty well last night. This morning I got up early

and got breakfast. I felt so hungry, as I had not had any supper. I put the house in order, then washed and combed, and sat down to write. This is Sunday, and I intend to rest. Expect Philip towards evening.

[SEPT.] 25—Philip went to W[ichita] was gone one night. . . . [He] came home about 3 p.m. yesterday, and had walked nearly all the way from W[ichita]—20 miles. He brought me a cake of chocolate, nutmegs, medacine, and nice cakes. I wanted a couple pounds of brown sugar for baking. We have plenty white. He got 7 lbs. because he could get that much for a dollar. Lanes will bring the sugar and some other things when they come home.

Have not been well to day, a bad attack of diarheoea. Last night I wanted to go out, and there was a skunk in the door way. The prairie is on fire somewhere acrost the river, and behind a divide. In the evening the reflection is georgeous. There have been fires several days—and the air is quite smoky. It is early for prairie fires.

This p.m. I finished "I Dreamed a Dream the other night." I'll send the paper home, if it is published.

SEPT. 30TH—Since Monday have been in bed nearly all the time. Had an attack like Mrs. L[ane]. Thankful to be better. I came the nearest to being homesick I ever was. Philip has been doing the cooking. I have no appetite, and that worried him. It is laughable to see him bake flap jacks for himself. To be ill and not see a woman for a week—is hard luck. I am better so let us rejoice. We have not seen Jimmie cat to day. I am afraid a coyote or gray wolf caught him last night. Philip has gone to see if he can shoot a prairie chicken. The sun is seting— I must take a look at this last of Sept. sun set. and may a picture of it be on memories wall for a long time. This p.m. I took a little walk looking for Jim cat, did not find him.

OCT. 1ST—A beautiful morning. Two letters from home. They have kept us in papers—so we have kept track of the Franco Prussian War, ct. The Springers [Summers] were here to day, Mr. S[ummers] is a tease. It seems to him I ought to marry one of these young men. I'd rather keep them as friends.

When they left, they went to our mellon patch. Since I am taking quinine, I cannot eat mellon—it makes me sick and there are so many going to waist.

I ought to write two or three letters to day but do not feel able.

OCT. 3D—Wanted to wash yesterday, but the tub leaked, so I



put it to soak. Baked with the new yeast, and the bread is a "perfect success." Also baked ginger snaps.

Mrs. Springer [Summers] here to see if I would stay with the children [Elisha and Ida] while she went with the men on a hunt. *I promised I would, and they will come for me tomorrow.*

Wrote letters until my hand got tired.

[OCT.] 4TH—Washed in a. m. and ironed. *Summers did not come for me.* Saw prairie fire, such a sight.

[OCT.] 6TH—Yesterday we had a real wind storm. Had a blanket up at the door with sticks across it to keep it from blowing up all the time. When it was open great rolls of tumble weed would come in. What a house we had.

Mended a pair of pants, and vest for Philip and tried to read. Towards evening, a thunder storm came. Then it was as unpleasant as it could be. Cold wind and almost dark. This is the way some people live all winter. *How true it is that one half the people do not know how the other half live.* I have not wished myself elsewhere, for I want to see how it would be to live on the frontier in all seasons.

I was chilly, although dressed warm, and went to bed early to get warm.

OCT. 14—Over a week since I wrote in my journal. I should have taken it along. Now I have much to write, and most likely will miss some things of interest.

Saturday I was fixing a duck for dinner, and a goose for Sunday, when Jannette Rose [Ross] came with a letter for me. Father sent me a draft of \$300.00 to prove upon my claim.

Then Mr. Springer [Summers] came for me, they were ready to start on a hunt. He wanted brother to go along, but he said he was not well enough. *Then he asked John—and he went.* He was in a flurry about "shooting irons." Wanted all he could get.

I would rather have stayed home, but had promised Mrs. S[ummers] I would stay with the children. He had a good saddle, and the best riding horses I have seen in this state. I enjoyed the ride, my horse paced along. Mr. S[ummers] who is from Va., talked all the time, with his southern accent. He declared that if he was a young man I "should never leave the Ninnescah single." I laughed at him, and said there are very nice young men in the East. When we crossed the branch, we saw a very large snake. The largest I ever saw, "Well" he said "if I were not in such a hurry I'd get off and kill it."



They had the waggon packed, and left soon after we got there. When leaving Mrs. S[ummers] said, "There is nothing in the house but flour and bacon." I thought she was joking.

When dinner time came, one of the children said "I guess you will have to bake bread for dinner." I looked, but there was not a crum of bread in the house. And no soda. She had started "salt risin" in a tin cup, but that would not be ready before night, and I had never baked any. I had left duck dinner, with good yeast bread ct. Here were three of us, and almost an empty larder. I found a few potatoes and dried fruit, also yeast—and started bread at once—which I baked Sunday.

When we were out on a hunt we were gone one night, and I never thought they would be away more than two nights at the longest. Well they left Saturday morning and never got back until Wednesday evening.

It was windy all the time they were gone. Pieces of the chinking would fall out from between the logs, on the south side of the house. The house which was 18 by 14 had no windows. Along one side were two beds—at one end a stove, along the other side were a table and chairs—and at the other end chests or trunks.

The neighbors were too far away to go calling, and none came to see us. The children were good, but we all seemed stupid.

Tuesday I had a shake. I had many chills—but never a shake, before Then came the fever. So time draged on, and not one word from Philip, and I was worried.

I was as glad as the children, when they came Wed. evening!

They had to go so far, before they found any buffalo, is what had kept them so long. I wanted to go home at once— but they said it was too late, and they were tired, would take me home in the morning. Thursday early—we saw smoke and thought the fire was coming over the divide towards us. so they rushed out to plow a fire guard beyond their hay stacks. The wind favored them, and the fire did not get on their side of the branch, but all between the branches—and beyond—way up this way, and on to the river.

Brother was alone, and had his hands full. He quick "back fired" when he saw the fire coming, then moved the ox there, after which he had to watch the dugout. Half our wood burned and a load of chips. The ground thrown out when they built the dug out, helped to save it. From Springers [Summers'] we could see the flames beyond the branch—when it burned the sunflowers on Mr. Smiths clame, It burned Elsworths hay stacks and some others, also Mr. Smiths stable and corn crib. He is away freighting.

I was so anxious about my brother—but could not go to him. J. R. was at Elsworths, and could not get to his claim or my dugout until the fire had burned down.

When he came up here, Philip had gone to the river to see his cabin, which fortunately escaped. . . .

*When John got here, there was a skunk in the room or dug out, and what did he do but shoot it behind my trunk!* In the meantime the Springer [Summers] men did not get back to the house, until 2 o'clock. Then we had dinner and the boy [Lish] brought me home. Mrs. S[ummers] gave me some buffalo meat and two preserving citrons. She offered to pay me for staying with the children, but I considered it an act of neighborliness, and told her so. The S[ummers] are not poor, but in loading up when they left, they in their hurry had taken the eatables along, and left us short. She is a vary capable woman.

*Mrs. S[ummers] has very good beds, and nice bedding. Nice linen table cloths & towels ct. Sheets—the nicest lot I have seen since I left home. She [h]as a sewing machine too. She told me she had spun most of it during the war when they lived in Virginia. I suppose she was married just before the war. She is the second Mrs. Summers and much younger than he is. Truly a nice woman.*

When the boy and I finally got started in the big waggon toward home, and when we rounded the branch we were on burned over ground. Down toward the Hall we could see where the fire had run through three acres of corn. The wind was so high, the fire burned the dry leaves and some of the husk, that many ears were half exposed, others that had fallen down, were still smouldering. The stalks were mostly standing.

Rounding the head of the other branch between the Hall and home, we saw three deer, running toward the sand hills. What a dreary sight it was—not a green thing in sight, except the trees at the river. I had expected to find things looking bad, but my imagination was short, far short of the fact. The prairie had burned black and even; but over the bottom where the grass grew rank, it left the blackened stalks standing. The ground was still hot, and a high wind blowing.

We were both glad to be together again, and I was so relieved to find him as well as he was.

Everything in the house was covered with burned grass—that blew in—and O the skunk smell, how it sickened us. Philip was angry at J. R. for shooting the skunk in the house—but that did not help matters any, after he had gone to the Hall,



Philip tried to clean up a little. Fresh wood ashes back of my trunk absorbed the scent to some extent.

He was baking sweet potatoes for supper. I soon laid down—after he told me of his fight with the fire, leaving the cleaning of the house for next day.

It was cloudy and windy coming from Springers [Summers'], and I got chilled through. After going to bed fever came on.

Some time later Brother called me. He said if I felt able, I should wrap up well, and come out and see the fire, that it was not likely I would ever see the like again.

The scene was grand beyond description. To the North *and within ½ mile* there was a sheet of flames extending east and west. To the west there was fire beyond fire. Across the river, a hay stack was burning. Jake had the logs for his house ready to put up, the fire got among them, and did much damage. I can't give a description of the wild fearful—yet fascinating sight.

I went back to bed, thankful that we were safe. The first fire, the one that came over the divide early in the a. m. while it swept on, at a terrible speed, did not extend far in width. I cannot understand how so many fires in different directions, should be burning that night.

The people and hearers across the river did not expect the fire to cross, but it jumped the river, and caused much trouble. One heard of cattle and ponies stampeded—and some were burned. Another hearer lost \$700. Before morning a thunder storm put out all the fires.

OCT. 18TH—Have been too busy to write. Cleaned the house and wrote letters. Monday washed, baked and made brine for the meat. Yesterday finished the white clothes, dressed a prairie chicken, and wrote a letter.

It still smells of skunk. Had to turn the head of my bed, it prevented my sleeping. There have been three deer around, but too far away to shoot.

Philip took his ox to town and sold him for a cent a pound. He paid \$100 for the two, did a little breaking, then one died.

There was a man here this a. m. hunting a girl. His wife was sick and they needed help. They were from N. Y.

My first thought was, I must go and care for her, she is ill and so far from home. Then I knew I could not leave here— It was ten miles down the river, and I would not put that distance between brother and me, under present conditions.

He had two fine horses. One had a ladies side saddle on—seated in blue velvet.



[OCT.] 20TH—Baked four loaves of bread, Philip shot a coyote from the door way. We will dry the pelt for me to take home. He just came from the sand hills with a big wild turkey, I am drying some pieces of buffalo meat, that I will take home—

[OCT.] 21ST—This a. m. P[hilip] shot a rat at the foot of my bed. That is the third he has shot here. They call them wood rats. One day when crossing the upper branch among the scrub trees, I saw one fussing in the crotch of a tree with little sticks. Our cat is still down at the Hall. *We don't want him now, as Philip is going to put out poison for gray wolfs and coyotes.*

Baked pies this a. m. out of pie mellon. Mr. Rose [Ross] gave me the seed last spring. I dont care for them, and there are enough to supply the whole settlement. Our squashes are fine and good to bake. The fire scorched the garden badly.

[OCT.] 23D—Two letters from home. Yesterday I was not well, and P[hilip] got dinner, and a nice one it was. This a. m. my head was all right—so I washed. Flocks of wild geese along the river. The air is so still at times, one hears a long distance. Heard some one sing, but did not see the singer. It was pleasant to listen.

[OCT.] 25—Mr. Stafford came to plow, *I was so glad, we have to have a certain amount broke before we can prove up*, but his plow would not work, so he went home. His sister Mrs. L[ane] had come along to spend the day, and was cheated out of her visit. I got a pie baked before they left, and we enjoyed eating it together. Mr. Rose [Ross] came in time for pie. He was full of fun, and told many rediculous things that had happened since he came to the river. One new comer complained of his bad luck hunting. "You must wiggle your gun man. Wiggle your gun when you shoot." The poor innocent believed.

We drove down to the garden with them, and got four pie mellons & a watermellon for them.

[OCT.] 28TH—Quite forgot my journal yesterday. Baked and sewed. Philip shot a young turkey. Had a fry for breakfast, pot pie for dinner, and enough for dinner tomorrow.

[OCT.] 29TH—*We go to bed early and get up late.* Lizzie Rose [Ross] came over on their pony. She had three letters for us and a bundle of papers. In p. m. Mr. S[tafford] came with two more letters—and another bundle of papers. What a terrible fire they have had in Chicago.<sup>32</sup>

The boys were to the river, and came back with two wild geese. Mr. Stafford stayed for supper. We had turkey, squash, stewed

32. The great Chicago fire that broke out on October 8, 1871.



peaches, pie, bread and coffee. He promised to do the plowing next week. It is very smoky. The wind from the North.

[OCT.] 31ST—The last of the month *and my time is up*. As soon as the plowing is done we will go to [the land office at] Augusta and prove up. It is cold and stormy. Yesterday it rained all day. The rain froze on the grass. I baked and had a slow time. The geese are fat, stewed one, it is very nice— *Had enough left for breakfast. . . . I will roast the other one for supper. The boys went down the river this morning* [so] I am alone to day, just had dinner— baked a little corn bread in the skillet. Am seated by the fire, writing on my lap.

Nov. 2—Busy all day, and accomplished little. P[hilip] shot a goose, it took so long to dress it. They are plowing to day.

[Nov.] 4TH—Plowing with two yoke of oxen. P[hilip] is helping. It will take them five days next week, to finish. Lanes had their best horse stolen, what a pity they cant get the thief.

We are having pleasant weather. Mrs. Springer [Summers] spent the day here. She rode up— and brought the band she stiched for me on her machine. A letter from Reading to day. Game is plenty we have had three geese and a turkey within a week.

Sometimes a thousand geese and brance [brants] fly up and down the river, and fill the air with their gabbling. The coyotes often make the nights hideous with their howling. Have not had any ague for over two weeks—but take medacine every other day

[Nov.] 5TH—Here come the men with three turkeys, now I cant write— must help dress them. I am getting tired of game.

[Nov.] 7TH—Rainy and cold all day. Hope it will clear up and not hinder the plowing. Yesterday I baked and cut up the turkeys. Put some in a jar, and covered it with brine. George [McQuillan]<sup>33</sup> is helping plow. Came in yesterday with a chill. I told him of the salt cure. *He tried it and said his shake was not nearly as hard.*

[Nov.] 8TH—Just finished baking [ginger] snaps—we like them. It is nothing but cook turkey all the time, feel as if I did not care to see another for a year. It is fried for breakfast, potpie for dinner, roasted for supper—cold for breakfast ct. ct. Today is clear and the plowing going on. *Perhaps they will finish tomorrow. Then I wonder when we will get to the land office at Augusta.* Baked two squash pies. They are real good. Mrs. S[ummers] told me how to

33. George McQuillan was another young man who came West to grow up with the country. He was a son of Irish-born parents who had settled in Michigan. When George was turning 21 he located a claim one-half mile above Old Clearwater. His granddaughter, Ruth McQuillan Chambers, owns a portion of this claim which is astride the old Chisholm trail. Other families named on the map on p. 260 of the first installment of this article still having descendants living in the area include the Rosses, Macredies, and Murrays.



bake them when we have no milk or eggs. Had an early dinner. They came in before I was ready. I slept so well last night. Sometime I lay awaik for hours. We had pancakes for breakfast. I cant toss them over like P[hilip] can. Sometimes he sends them over the second time, to see them flap.

Heavy shower last night over east. We thought it might reach here. Sometimes the rain comes in at the sides— so I took my clothes down, put them on a stool, then under the table. We dont have any chairs, just stools, two are cushioned with robe. Some time a go P[hilip] raised his bed from the floor. When J. R. is here he sleeps on the floor. *I keep the bread in the tub, and washboard on top, and all under my bed.*

We have no broom. When I sweep, I take a turkey wing in each hand, sweep out a corner, then step there, and sweep a head of me, until the floor is all swept. Sweep every thing into the fire place. *Two small store boxes—resting on wooden pegs—serve for cupboards. I have them curtained, on one side are two boxes, one upon the other. In one I keep the groceries— in the other dried fruit. We have a shelf for papers and books. Two more shelves near the fire place, with cans, bottles ct. Another large box—on top of which is the flour sack, and inside the coaloil [kerosene] can ct. And a block on which we keep the water bucket. And two trunks—that I believe is all the furnature. I forgot the table—“cheap and handy. Varnished, and never gets soiled.”*

[Nov.] 11TH—This is a rainy Sunday. The stars were shining when I went to bed, but it is raining now. We expect to get to the land office this week. Friday eve the boys brought home two turkeys and a prairie chicken. Five turkeys in one week. P[hilip] is a good marksman. Sent Lanes some turkey. Prairie chicken we had barbecued for dinner. It was better than turkey. Will have turkey and sweet potatoes for dinner.

It still smells skunky. *I think some of calling this place Skunk Retreat.* The other day when the boys came from Jakes, they saw seven skunks along the branch—

I am drying the skin of a large gray wolf. If it gets dry, I will take it home with me.

[Nov.] 15TH—The days go by and we have not been to Augusta yet. Were to have gone to day, now it is tomorrow. Yesterday I washed, baked bread and pies, was busy all day. The boys did not get home until an hour after sunset. They had a goose and prairie chicken. It took me all a.m. to dress them, do my work and get

dinner; then no one came to eat it. I am beginning to gather my possessions together, and pack.

Jammie the cat had been with Jake at the Hall for a long time. The other day they found him dead. They think a coyote or gray wolf killed him. The boys have come—and it is decided we go tomorrow.

[Nov.] 16TH—Up at 3 a. m. After breakfast we packed eatables, and started for Lanes. The team and waggon was brought up last night. It was cold, but we took a lot of blankets and my comfort to wrap around us, so we did not mind the cold. The three miles ride to Lanes was truly grand. The sun was not up, but the gaily colored clouds were georgeous. No one said "Morning red will bring down rain upon his head." Although some of us may have thought of it. We reached Lanes at sunrise. Mr. Stafford got in. It was his team, and he drove. The Ninnescah was low, and we had no trouble to fording it. So different from last April.

After we reached the trail it clouded over, and became very windy. The trail was good traveling, yet the 20 miles to Wichita, in a big waggon was a long ride. The wind was so strong, it blew the dried cow chips on edge, and they rolled along on the trail like wheels. Philip told me that hearers and travalers, when out of wood, gathered them and burned them. In Whichita we sat in the waggon and ate our dinner of roast goose, chicken and pie, that we had brought along. We had our drafts cashed, and about 3 p. m. we started toward Augusta.

Night came on. Not being in sight of timber, we camped by a hay stack. It was too windy to make fire, *as it might have set the grass on fire*, so we had a cold supper, after which they put the waggon cover on which was a shelter from the wind. I slept in the waggon, and the boys by the stack.

[Nov.] 20TH—We started early next morning, expecting to come to timber soon, and have a warm breakfast, but we were farther from Walnut Creek than they thought, and it was nearly noon when we stoped, and had a good warm meal of bacon, coffee, and the rest of what we brought along.

After leaving W[ichita] a few miles, there were almost no signs of settlers. The first settlers always choose clames near some stream where they can get wood for fuel. Most of the way there was no road—just went acrost the prairie in the direction of where they expected to find Augusta.

After eating we drove on into Augusta. While Mr. Stafford cared for the team, we went direct to the Land Office. I waited in an ad-



joining room, while brother went in. They were very busy. Brother knew one of the clerks, and we were waited on, sooner than we otherwise would have been; which was fortunate for us. Philip had attended to all the preliminary parts, before I was called in. I had little to do, beside sign my name and pay \$1.25 an acre or \$200—, and some office fees, after which we received a certificate. The patent will be made out in Washington, D. C., and sent to us. Now I am the owner of 160 acres of land. Were my nice smooth land in Pa. it would be worth a little fortune.

We left Augusta before 4 p. m. and had reached Four Mile Creek when it began to rain very hard. There was a frame house near the timber, Philip went there and asked if I could stay all night. They said I could, and the boys went and camped among the trees.

I had a good nights rest— a good supper and breakfast.

I wanted to pay Mrs. Long but she would not let me.

I should write her a letter when I go home, that would be all the pay she wanted. I certainly shall write to her.<sup>34</sup>

One of their daughters was home. I spent a very pleasant evening. She asked me about my Summer—and my home in the East, and told me of their many moves— They were comfortably settled now, but her husband was getting restless, talked of moving to Medicine Lodge.

In the morning it was colder, and the rain had turned to snow. The most desolate and disagreeable day I ever knew. The snow soon covered the tracks we were trying to follow, and at times they did not know which way to go. The waggon cover protected us some, but the snow blew, and we could only see a little way ahead, and it was so cold.

We expected to strike the Arkansas river at a place they called El Paso.<sup>35</sup> We missed the road, and came to the river ten miles below El Paso. Two men who had charge of the ferry there, said the ferry was out of order, that they would fix it in the morning, and take us over.<sup>36</sup> We had expected to reach Lanes that evening— but had to camp there by the river. They made fire and stretched a blanket between trees, to shelter me, while I tried to warm myself.

34. This might have been the home of George W. Long and his wife, Martha. Long was born in Indiana in 1844 and came to Kansas in 1857. Ten years later he settled on the banks of Four Mile creek south of Augusta.—Andreas-Cutler, *History of Kansas*, p. 1451.

35. El Paso was the original name of Derby, now just a few miles south and east of Wichita. The name was changed July, 1881.—“Dead Town List,” manuscript division, KSHS.

36. On February 25, 1871, David Richards opened the first ferry in Sumner county across the Arkansas opposite Belle Plaine. This may have been the ferry Abbie refers to.—Andreas-Cutler, *History of Kansas*, p. 1495.

I asked Philip if I could not go to the dugout and get warm. He said "no it is too dirty a place for you."

We were out of bread. So the boys had the men bake us some biscuits for supper, after which Philip fixed the waggon— and I went and laid down. He charged me "If you take off your shoes, keep them near you, or they will freeze, and you cant get them on in the morning." It was cold, however I had plenty of blankets and my comfort, and I slept a little.

Philip slept under the waggon with Mr. S[tafford] and J. R. by the fire. Every where it was so wet and snowy. I think they got little sleep. They called the storm a "Northener." I would never have believed it could get so cold in sunny Kansas. The men baked more biscuit for our breakfast, and we had bacon, coffee and gravy to go with the biscuits. The ferry was out of order, and the boys worked hard to get it fixed. Then when they tried to use it, it stuck fast on a sand bar, and was no good.

Too provoking, we had lost the whole morning.

When they found they could not use the ferry, and get paid for taking us acrost, they told of a place a mile down the river where we could ford. We drove down and crossed without much trouble, except the ice bothered the horses.

We reached Bell Plain<sup>37</sup> about 2 p.m. I went into a house to warm while they fed the horses. They bought a sack of crackers—but could get no bread. I had been dull and stupid, and a chill followed by fever came on. Philip was worried, and tried to make it as comfortable in the waggon as he could. I do not remember about the rest of the trip, until some one said "Now we are acrost the Ninnescah." Then I roused up for I knew we would soon be to Lanes. We stayed here all night. I was so tired, I thought I might as well stay and visit her now as I would soon be starting East.

[Nov.] 20th—Philip went to the dugout and moved some things down to his cabin by the river, thinking it would be warmer. J. R. has his trunk at Jakes and is patiently or impatiently, waiting for a chance to go to Wichita. Too far, and too bad walking to go to Springers [Summers']. So I finish this then write a letter.

[Nov.] 21st—Another chill and fever. Philip was down, he will bring my medacine tomorrow. Four hunters out from W[ichita] to day. They shot 31 prairie chickens, saw four deer and some turkeys.

37. Belle Plaine, on the Ninnescah's right bank in Sumner county, was a new town barely half a year old when Abbie visited there. From Belle Plaine the party must have traveled up the river's north side for they apparently crossed at Clearwater or Summers ford.



DIARY OF ABBIE BRIGHT

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[Nov.] 22<sup>ND</sup>—Philip brought my medacine. I helped Mrs. Lane make butter out of pie mellon from my garden. Expect to go to Wichita Sunday, so I must go up tomorrow and pack my trunk.

[Nov.] 23<sup>D</sup>—It was nearly noon when I left Lanes on old Bill— It was cold, When I passed the Hall there was no one there but J. R. He went along to the dugout. I packed some things, gathered others together, then rode to the cabin. No one there, then I thought I would go and see Roses [Rosses], but I could not get old Bill to ford the river. Then I stayed at the cabin, and J. R. took the horse back to Lanes.

I had covered the coals, so I soon had a good fire. Being hungry, I made coffee and boiled mush—which I ate with much molasses, and considerable relish, having had no dinner. Hunger is a good cook. Philip did not come for some time. He had been hunting. Had shot a turkey which he took to Lanes, was surprised not to find me there. Then he went to the dugout and brought more things down. He wished he had not moved as it made it so in convenient for me.

[Nov.] 24<sup>TH</sup>—Last night in the cabin. Up early. Breakfast of mush, molasses, sweet potato and coffee. I bid the cabin good bye, and went to the dug out to pack. Met Mr. Rose [Ross] in a big waggon. He wanted me to go home with him, but I could not— I had to pack. I made a big fire, and went to work. So many things to pack I scarcely knew where to begin; what to take and what to leave—Dried buffalo meat, turkey fans, wolf and coyota pelts ct. I put on enough petticoats to make me look like a barrel, but it was so cold, I needed them.

Philip had said if I left any clothing I should "give it to the I[n]gmires they have children." There were many things I did not pack, and later he can give them away.

When done packing, I made a can of chocolate, and ate some ginger snaps. There I sat by the fire, and went over the days I had spent in the dugout. I never got to Roses [Ross'] after we left the cabin, The slow way of baking took so much time, then reading and writing—trying to make Philip comfortable, and having the ague so often filled up my days. Trying days when Philip was sick. Exciting days when brother H[iram], and cousin Tom came, and we went on a buffalo hunt. Dreary days when it stormed. Light hearted days when I could go to the garden and plant, or bring up good fresh things to cook, and now a sad day of leaving. I dont want to leave brother here— he is not well, and has only half promised to go East for the winter.

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Finally I looked at the little home, the well, the garden and the surroundings, then started on my long walk to Lanes. *I felt real sorry to leave. As I stood alone by the dugout—no one in sight, no visible sign of civilization—except the roof of Igmyer's [Ingmire's] dugout across the river, (the trees along the River shut out Ross' buildings) I felt depressed. I was so glad to be with Philip for over seven months. Now I was leaving. When would I see him again?*

The snow was melting, and my feet got wet. We were both invited for dinner, to help eat the turkey Philip had shot, and we were both late getting there.

[Nov.] 25<sup>TH</sup>—Have been helping Mrs. Lane all day. It is decided we go to Wichita tomorrow. Someone shot a deer—so we have deer stake.

[Nov.] 26<sup>TH</sup>—Cloudy, windy, exceedingly unpleasant all day. I did not see the Roses [Rosses] or Springers [Summers] to give them good bye— Will have to write to them. The boys got my trunk last night, but it was after nine when they came this morning, so we got a late start. I have a poor place to write, so it is impossible to give the particulars of our leaving.

The Ninnescah was easily forded. The Cowskin was bad. The driver Mr. Stafford feared we could not cross the Arkansas, but two teams ahead of us crossed, and the ice was broken, so we had no trouble. We stopped at the Harris House. It has changed in every respect, since I was here last Spring.<sup>38</sup>

It is now a three dollar a day house. We had a good supper which did me much good, after our cold ride of twenty miles.

[Nov.] 27<sup>TH</sup>—Slept well, and felt rested. Philip got roap and roaped my trunk. Then I went down town and bought shoes.

Called at the Southern Hotel<sup>39</sup> to see Mrs. McLain [McLean]. When I left the Hotel, I met Philip, who had been over town hunting Indian curiosities for me to take home. All he found was a pair of moccasins. We went to Woodenings store,<sup>40</sup> where he bought lunch for me to take along. The Lanes and Mr. Smith came in, and we talked until it was time for them to start home. Then I gave them all good bye. Philip too. *He went back with Lanes. He said he would likely go East before long, which made me feel better. I wonder if it was lonely at the Cabin and if he missed me.*

38. See Footnote 10. The Harris House was now operated by E. J. Blood.

39. The Southern Hotel had been opened since Abbie came West. L. D. Gun, the proprietor, advertised that "this house is furnished with the best beds, and sets the best table of any house in the city."—*Wichita Tribune*, October 26, 1871.

40. Probably the store of W. C. Woodman who carried a complete line of dry goods, boots, shoes, groceries, provisions, wood and stoneware, queensware, and dealt in the buying and selling of gold, silver and eastern exchange. Woodman would also lend money "in large and small amounts."—*Ibid.*





*I do not like changes.* I went to the street and watched the waggon as it moved out of sight, then back to the Hotel.

The coach left soon after noon for Newton, 25 miles away, and now the end of the R. R.<sup>41</sup> Here I stay until 4 a. m. when the train leaves.<sup>42</sup>

[Nov.] 28—*Stoped at a hotel in Newton.* Left Newton at 4 a. m. Stoped at Florance for breakfast.<sup>43</sup>

The ground was frozen and rough. Going to a restaurant for breakfast—one of my new shoes split from the lacing to the toe. When I got back to the cars, I was glad to put on my old shoes. Philip had planned a trip down to Indian Territory. Owing to our having ague so often he gave it up, and was disappointed that I did not see more of the Indians.

When I was leaving he told me about the Potawamies at St. Marys,<sup>44</sup> and wanted me to go there if only for a day. I did not promise, but as we neared Topeka, I decided I would, knowing it would please him. Left my trunk at Topeka— got a ticket for Harrisburg for \$38.50—with lay over priviledges.

Then a ticket for St. Marys 25 miles west. On the train I sat by a lady agent— She said they had been burned out in the great Chicago fire, and she had to do something to help her family. There is no hotel here—but we were directed to a private home where they sometimes took boarders— In the p. m. we visited one of the big Catholic Schools. There is some controversy now about the government withdrawing the help it gave the schools. We were only taken through halls—and to one empty class room, so were disappointed in not seeing and hearing a recitation. We walked around town, and saw many squaws and papoos.

[Nov.] 29TH—This morning I went up town before train time. Stoped at a shop and bought some curos [two arrows and a piece of petrified wood]. The shop keeper told me much about Indians there. Many of them are farming ct. He called my attention to

41. The first Santa Fe passenger train had entered Newton on July 17, 1871. While work on the extension from Topeka to Atchison went on, end of track remained at Newton until 1872.—Joseph W. Snell and Don W. Wilson, *The Birth of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad* (Topeka, 1968), pp. 38-45.

42. The published timetable of the Santa Fe, which had been in effect since July 17, advertised a passenger train leaving Newton at 5:05 A. M. and arriving in Topeka at 12:25 P. M.—*Wichita Tribune*, October 26, 1871.

43. Florence was another of the Santa Fe's towns along the right of way. It was named for Florence Crawford, daughter of Samuel J. Crawford, former governor of Kansas and president of the Florence Town Company. Miss Crawford later became the wife of Kansas publisher-politician Arthur Capper.—Andreas-Cutler, *History of Kansas*, p. 1264.

44. St. Mary's had been established as a Catholic mission to the Pottawatomie Indians on September 9, 1848. A manual labor school was conducted at the mission until 1871. St. Mary's College, chartered in 1869, developed from the school. In 1931 the college became a Jesuit seminary which was transferred to St. Louis in 1967. The future status of the campus is indefinite.—Louise Barry, "Kansas Before 1854: A Revised Annals," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 31, p. 180.

one who was passing, who he said was Chief Big Foot. He had on many coats and the out side one was a linen duster. As the ground was covered with snow, he was a sight.

I have wondered since—if the shop keeper knew I was a “tender-foot,” and was stuffing me. When I reached Topeka, I had my trunk rechecked. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving.

[DEC.] 4TH—Once more at Red Oak Shelter. How pleasant and comfortable to be here. The children have grown, and are full of fun. Little O[akley] comes to me and says “you may have a kiss.” Dear child. Katura [Rhoda] cheerful and lively, and such a good cook.

[DEC.] 20TH—The days slip past so fast. Philip came last week. He will soon grow stronger here, and to me, such a relief to know he is here. What a varied fifteen months it has been for me. Thanks be to Providence no calamity befel me.

Tomorrow brother H[iram] takes me to W[illiamsport] and I will be home in time for Christmas.

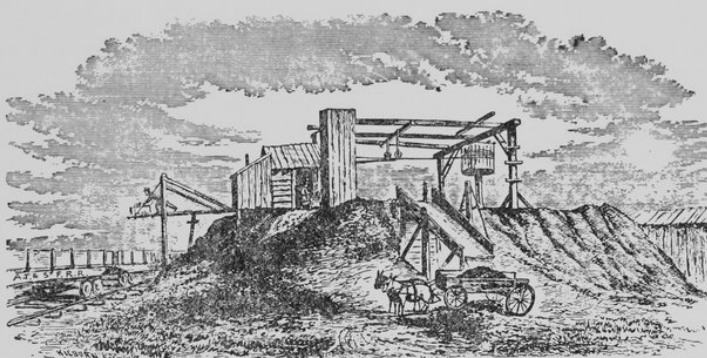
#### IV. EPILOGUE

On June 24, 1873, Abbie Bright married William M. Achenbach, who had taught mathematics at Keystone State Normal. They moved to Gladbrook, Iowa, where Abbie died on May 6, 1926.

Philip Bright moved on to Prescott, Arizona territory, and was there murdered for his money by unknown parties in June, 1873. Abbie apparently inherited Philip's Kansas land which she rented for the next 30 years or so. Her own Kansas land had been disposed of soon after her return east.

Since Abbie and Philip Bright left in late 1871, no member of their family has lived in Kansas.





"Coal Mining Scene on the Prairies of Kansas" was the title of this sketch published in *The Guide Board* of April, 1873, a promotion piece of the A. T. & S. F. railroad. It illustrated an article relating to fuel and the "Osage Coal Fields."

## The Impact of the Railroads on Coal Mining in Osage County, 1869-1910

D. LANE HARTSOCK

THE LATTER half of the 19th century witnessed the disappearance of the frontier from Kansas and the phenomenal growth and spread of settlement. The population, which in 1860 had been only 107,206, mushroomed to 364,399 in 1870, to 996,096 in 1880, and by 1900 had reached 1,470,495.<sup>1</sup> Accompanying this expansion, and in no small way the cause of it, were the railroads. Not only did they become the major means of transportation, but they were also the colonizing agents, selling the extensive land grants received from the government and ultimately directing the course of the evolving settlement pattern.

Attending the early advance of railroads and settlement in Kansas was an increasing demand for fuel. Most energy sources were initially quite scarce in the state. Except along stream courses there was a paucity of fuel wood, and while coal had been discovered in the 1850's and 1860's, because of high transpor-

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1. These figures are taken from the *U. S. Census of Population* for the years stated.

tation costs its exploitation was limited to the immediate area where it was found. As a result, many settlers had little recourse but to consume "cow chips or twisted grass for fuel."<sup>2</sup> The market for coal was certainly present and the level of technology was equal to the task of mining it, but until the advent of railroads and the consequent reduction of transportation costs, its distribution was economically infeasible.

Railroads were thus responsible, directly or indirectly, for the development of most local fuel sources, which wherever possible were coal. They required reasonably good quality fuel and coal was far more efficient than wood. Moreover, coal was found locally while wood in the quantities needed would necessarily be imported from farther east. All else being equal, it was also cheaper to develop local coal supplies than to import it. Finally, the rapidly growing populace would need coal for manufacturing and domestic heating. Thus, coal traffic would furnish the railroads with badly needed revenues.

One of the first coal fields in Kansas to receive a developmental push by a railroad was that of Osage county, and the agent of that push was the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad. Construction on the line originated in Topeka in late 1868 and by September, 1869, was completed southward through Carbondale to Burlingame. The decision to build initially southwest into Osage county, rather than to Atchison, was prompted by the coal deposits located in the former.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the line as it was originally proposed would have bypassed Osage county completely. This proposal projected the Santa Fe from Topeka across southern Wabaunsee county to Council Grove and westward toward the future Great Bend. The discovery of coal in Osage county, however, caused the course of the railroad to be diverted along a more southerly route through the Osage field, thence to Emporia and Great Bend.<sup>4</sup>

The dates of the original mining endeavors in the county are questionable, but some production occurred at least as early as 1867 from a strip pit near Scranton.<sup>5</sup> The discovery of coal early in 1869 by John F. Dodds at Carbon Hill, however, apparently

2. Carl Frederick Kraenzel, *The Great Plains in Transition* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), p. 141.

3. Lawrence I. Waters, *Steel Trails to Santa Fe* (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1950), p. 39. Joseph W. Snell and Don W. Wilson, "The Birth of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 34, pp. 123, 134.

4. George W. Glick, "The Railroad Convention of 1860," *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 9 (1905-1906), pp. 476, 477.

5. Walter H. Schoewe, *Coal Resources of the Wabaunsee Group in Eastern Kansas*, State Geological Survey of Kansas Bulletin 63 (Lawrence, University of Kansas, 1946), p. 117.



was the catalyst that led to a rapid increase in mining activity. In that same year mines were opened in Osage City, as well as at Carbondale, and shortly thereafter development began at Scranton.<sup>6</sup> Mining was delayed at Burlingame until 1897 because the coal was considerably deeper and many felt that it did not exist.<sup>7</sup>

Before the arrival of the railroad the market area for Osage coal was quite restricted. Coal at that time was hauled exclusively by wagon and the market probably did not extend beyond a radius of 40 miles from the mining areas. Reference has been made to coal haulage from Carbondale to Topeka, a distance of 17 miles,<sup>8</sup> and before the completion of the railroad from Burlingame to Alma (38 miles) in 1880, quantities were transported to the latter. But in all cases the distances were relatively short and the coal amounts rather small. It remained for the railroad to expand the market.

In 1869 the Santa Fe railway penetrated the coal field of Osage county, and subsequently continued westward, reaching the Colorado state line on December 28, 1872.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the line had been extended eastward to Atchison and connections were gained to Kansas City by 1875. At this particular time Osage coal was marketed in a narrow belt virtually across the entire length of the state. No significant competition had been met in the west because the railroad had not yet tapped the Colorado fields of Trinidad and Canon City. The strongest competition was found in the eastern part of Kansas. Here Bourbon county coal from the vicinity of Fort Scott captured a large part of the Kansas City market as well as other points farther to the north.<sup>10</sup> The southeastern field was not important at this time. It supplied a local market, and the first shipments to the outside were not made until 1876.<sup>11</sup> Thus, while Osage coal had to share the eastern part of the state with competitors, that part of the west penetrated by rails was virtually the sole realm of Osage county. No other coal field in the state could boast so large a market area. Moreover, this market was expanding as the railroad extended into new areas.

In the late 1870's and early 1880's the railroads built many lines

6. *Ibid.*

7. John E. Rastall, "Reminiscences of the Discovery of Coal in Burlingame," *Osage County Chronicle*, Burlingame, August 17, 1882.

8. Stephen Jackson Spear, "Reminiscences of the Early Settlement of Dragoon Creek, Wabaunsee County," *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 13 (1913-1914), p. 360.

9. Snell and Wilson, "Birth of the . . . Santa Fe Railroad," pp. 353, 354.

10. Richard L. Douglas, "A History of Manufactures in the Kansas District," *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 11 (1909-1910), p. 104. Bourbon county became important in the Kansas City market after its penetration by rail from the latter in 1869-1870. This importance was short lived and its fate was a preview of what was to occur somewhat later in Osage county.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

in Kansas and the market area for Osage coal correspondingly increased. Competition from Colorado coal shortened the market area somewhat in the west, but this was more than compensated for by the broadening of the formerly narrow belt. The eastern terminus of successful Canon City, Colo., competition at this time was probably located at about Dodge City. Osage City was approximately 40 miles closer to this point and had a very small advantage in mine-mouth coal costs, but freight rates favored Canon City. Competition was also increasing in the east as southeastern Kansas began to enter the regional market. The expansion of this area, however, was largely at the expense of Bourbon county, which declined rapidly after 1880.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the position of Osage county in the Kansas City area was essentially unchanged. The main competitors had merely changed names. The rapid increase in population and the growth of industry greatly expanded the market, so that there may actually have been a small absolute increase of Osage coal moving into the area. This was the golden age of Osage county coal mining. As a result of this market growth and increased production a state mine inspector observed that "for years afterward Osage county was the leading center in point of quantity of coal mined and the number of men employed west of the Mississippi."<sup>13</sup>

In terms of coal consumption and transport, the Santa Fe was always the most important railroad through the Osage coal field, but it was not long the only line in the area. There were, for a time, three other railroads in the county.

The first of these additional roads was the Lawrence and Carbondale. Connecting these two towns, this railroad was built in 1872 expressly for the purpose of tapping the coal deposits of the Carbondale area. Most of the coal was moved to Lawrence, a distance of some 31 miles. However, because the line was short, the market and revenues small, coupled with the financial panic of 1873, the line was soon abandoned.<sup>14</sup> The railroad was subsequently rejuvenated as the St. Louis, Lawrence and Western, and became a branch of the Union Pacific. For a time it supplied all the coal used on the Union Pacific, Eastern division, which became the Kansas Pacific, later the Union Pacific.<sup>15</sup> The line was finally

12. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

13. Kansas, State Inspector of Coal Mines, *Eighth Annual Mine Inspectors Report*, 1895 (Topeka, Hamilton Printing Company Press, 1896), p. 17.

14. A. T. Andreas and W. G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago, 1883), p. 246.

15. "Carbondale's Infinite Wealth in Its Vast Coal Deposits," *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 14, 1888.



## RAILROADS AND MINING IN OSAGE COUNTY

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abandoned in the 1890's, by which time the Osage coal field was rapidly declining.

Another railroad of the county was the Manhattan, Alma and Burlingame which was completed in 1880. This road was built as a result of the coal discovery at Burlingame in 1879.<sup>16</sup> In return the railroad gave Burlingame an additional developmental impetus. The 57-mile line was eventually absorbed into the Santa Fe system and subsequently the Alma to Manhattan segment was abandoned.

The last railroad built across the Osage field was the Missouri Pacific. In terms of coal hauled and consumed it was second in importance only to the Santa Fe. Completed in the winter of 1886-1887, this line opened some additional consumer territory for Osage coal.<sup>17</sup> This increased market came after the Santa Fe had begun to develop new fuel sources and helped to prevent an earlier production decline. The reprieve proved to be only temporary, however, because the Missouri Pacific was also developing coal fields in southeastern Kansas and western Missouri.

Although each of these railroads contributed to the prosperity of the Osage field, its economic well-being was overwhelmingly tied to the Santa Fe. Osage county remained the principal supplier of fuel to the Santa Fe from 1869 until the line opened its mines in Crawford county in 1886.<sup>18</sup> The influence of the railroad upon the coal field for most of that period was indirect, but in 1880 some 30,000 acres of coal lands were purchased and the Santa Fe companies were soon mining well over half of the county's annual production.<sup>19</sup>

The purposes of this venture into coal mining by the Santa Fe were to secure control of its own fuel supply and to boost production, which as Table 1 shows, was falling behind company needs. It appears that Osage county production was adequate for railroad requirements until at least 1877. The figure of 72,848 tons for that year represents only the amount of Osage coal transported by the Santa Fe.<sup>20</sup> Actual production was doubtless considerably higher and total tonnage was probably sufficient. By 1880, however, there was an obvious disparity between supply and demand. The rail-

16. Rastall, in *Osage County Chronicle*, August 17, 1882.

17. From the personal files of Oscar A. Copple, president of the Osage County Historical Society and stationmaster of the Missouri Pacific depot at Osage City (April 29, 1969).

18. "Coal Deposits Brought Santa Fe to Crawford," *Pittsburg Daily Headlight*, May 19, 1926.

19. *Sixth Annual Report of the State Inspector of Coal Mines*, 1893, p. 129.

20. Since this figure represents 91 percent of the coal transported on the entire Santa Fe system in 1877, Osage supplies must have been adequate because very little coal was imported from elsewhere.—Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company, *Annual Report*, 1877, pp. 55-68.

TABLE 1—Osage County Coal Production and Santa Fe Railroad  
Coal Consumption, 1874-1890

Year	Production (Tons)*	Consumption (Tons)†
1874.....	73,400	21,367
1875.....	123,400	38,996
1877.....	72,848‡	43,894
1880.....	130,172	159,884
1883.....	371,885	277,520
1885.....	425,834	354,781
1887.....	417,607	519,676
1890.....	468,622	1,303,265

\* Kansas, State Inspector of Coal Mines, *Annual Reports* (Topeka, State Printer, 1883-1890).

Walter H. Schoewe, *Coal Resources of the Wabaunsee Group in Eastern Kansas*, State Geological Survey of Kansas Bulletin 63 (Lawrence, University of Kansas, 1946), p. 120.

U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States: 1880. Report on the Mining Industries of the United States*, v. 15, pp. 650-653.

† Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company, *Annual Reports of the Board of Directors* (Boston, George H. Ellis Press).

‡ This figure represents Osage county coal hauled by the Santa Fe railroad in 1877. Total production for that year is unknown.

road was forced to acquire increasing amounts of fuel elsewhere. Part of the fuel deficit was made up from the developing Colorado fields at Canon City and Trinidad and still more was imported from Missouri and elsewhere, but this was expensive fuel. Thus, railroad capital began to pour into the Osage county field in an effort to increase the supply.

These efforts were to a degree rewarded, for production by 1885 had more than trebled that of five years earlier. Consumption, however, had also greatly expanded and supplies remained insufficient. Since the Santa Fe controlled only a fraction of the total production a considerable amount of the coal was sold elsewhere. The railroads were generally unwilling to pay the rates charged domestic consumers, so that many producers preferred the latter market. In consequence, the railroad had no recourse but to seek alternative sources of fuel. The Santa Fe soon extended its lines into Crawford county where vastly greater coal reserves were to be found, and in 1886 purchased some 6,000 acres of coal land.<sup>21</sup> This event was to signal the beginning of the end for Osage mining. Although production was to increase for a few more years, relative prosperity declined and the competing coal fields made rapid absolute and relative gains.

This period 1890-1910 was a time when coal mining in Kansas was generally prosperous, yet for Osage county it represented two

21. *Pittsburg Daily Headlight*, May 19, 1926.



decades of disaster. Conditions for mining in the county in earlier years had been relatively favorable, but only because other producers in the state were comparatively undeveloped. The disadvantages of the Osage field were at that time more potential than real. Mine-mouth costs were even then higher, but it was still more centrally located, accessible, and developed. In short, the economic situation may not have been the most favorable in some respects, but as long as the supply satisfied the market needs it was, at least in the short run, less expensive than developing another source. But well before 1890 Osage was unable to entirely supply its rapidly expanding market, so that other sources were necessarily developed. Its production became inadequate for even the Santa Fe railroad, not to mention other railroads, domestic heating, and so on. The major competitors which arose had vastly greater potential for production, mining costs were generally lower, and coal quality was superior. Thus, they not only supplemented Osage coal on the market, but gradually replaced it.

The growth of Crawford county was particularly damaging to the Osage field because it was in the former that the Santa Fe initially invested most heavily. Of course, once Santa Fe branch lines had been extended into Crawford county, and particularly after opening its mines there, it was to the company's advantage to use this superior and cheaper coal. When Crawford county development had proceeded to the point where supplies were sufficient for railroad needs, consumption of Osage coal was drastically reduced, and the sale of the Santa Fe properties there began. By 1898 the Santa Fe had disposed of more than half of its Osage coal properties.<sup>22</sup>

The Santa Fe was not the only railroad which made pronounced reductions in Osage coal consumption. The St. Louis, Lawrence and Western (by this time known as the Lawrence and Emporia) terminated regular operations even before coal production declined.<sup>23</sup> Contrary to the others, the Manhattan, Alma and Burlingame reached peak consumption of Osage coal after the decline began, in 1894.<sup>24</sup> The amount of coal involved, however, was quite small and was not significant economically except to the

22. W. R. Crane, "Geography and Detailed Stratigraphy of the Kansas Coal Measures; Description of Mines, Mining Methods, and Mining Machinery; Chemical and Physical Properties of Kansas Coals; Output and Commerce; Mining Directory; and Mining Laws," Pt. II in *Special Report on Coal*, *The University Geological Survey of Kansas*, v. 3 (Topeka, State Printer, 1898), p. 190.

23. Lawrence and Emporia coal consumption in 1888 was reported at 34 tons. Thereafter no statistics of that nature are given for this line. The tracks, however, were not taken up until 1899-1900.—Kansas, Board of Railroad Commissioners, *Sixth Annual Report, for the Year Ending December 1, 1888* (Topeka, Kansas Publishing House, 1888), p. 404.

24. Board of Railroad Commissioners, *Twelfth Annual Report, 1894*, p. 155.

Burlingame area. The Missouri Pacific, because of extensive coal holdings in Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and southeastern Kansas, was not an important consumer of Osage coal. It was more important as a carrier.

Osage county might still have remained a major producer had it been able to retain its manufacturing and domestic consumer market. But much of this market was lost, and again, the cause was the higher cost of Osage coal. Nevertheless, Osage county would have retained a larger share of the market had the railroad freight rate structure been equitable. The Osage field paid substantially higher freight charges for coal shipments than most major competitors. Table 2 shows the charges levied by the Santa Fe in 1893 on coal shipped from three of the fields to various Kansas markets. It can readily be seen that ton-mile rates on coal

TABLE 2—Coal Rates Via the Santa Fe Railroad From Three Competing Coal Fields to Various Kansas Market Points\*

Market	Osage City			Frontenac†			Canon City, Colo.		
	Miles	Rate/Ton	Ton-Mile Rate in ¢	Miles	Rate/Ton	Ton-Mile Rate in ¢	Miles	Rate/Ton	Ton-Mile Rate in ¢
Lyndon.....	9	.50	5.55	145	1.30	.90	583	4.00	.69
Topeka.....	34	.60	1.76	177	1.40	.79	608	4.00	.66
Atchison.....	85	.65	.76	234	1.00	.45	659	4.50	.68
Kansas City	92	.65	.71	181	.80	.44	675	4.50	.67
Ottawa.....	35	.65	1.86	119	.80	.67	615	4.00	.65
Emporia.....	26	.60	2.31	126	1.50	1.19	549	4.00	.73
Newton.....	100	1.20	1.20	200	1.90	.95	475	3.60	.76
Hutchison...	133	1.40	1.05	233	2.00	.86	442	3.60	.82
Abilene.....	109	1.30	1.19	208	2.00	.96	591	3.60	.61
Salina.....	131	1.30	1.00	230	2.00	.87	613	3.60	.59
Concordia...	164	1.60	.98	263	2.20	.84	646	4.00	.62
Superior, Neb.....	204	2.00	.98	303	2.40	.79	686	4.00	.58

\* Kansas, State Inspector of Coal Mines, *Sixth Annual Report, 1893* (Topeka, Hamilton Printing Company Press, 1894), p. 132.

† Crawford county, Kansas (about two miles north of Pittsburg).

shipped from Osage City were notably higher than from Frontenac. In 1893 the average mine-mouth cost of Osage coal was \$1.89, while in Crawford county the average was \$1.25.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the total cost at each of the market points can be determined and the

25. *Sixth Annual Report of the State Inspector of Coal Mines, 1893*, pp. 23, 69.