Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856

Section 5, Pages 121 - 150

Correspondence relating to Kansas territorial troubles. Topics include interference with law enforcement and the movement of prisoners, reports of raids, and letters from militia leaders. Many of the documents are petitions from communities, including Leavenworth, Sugar Mound (now Mound City), Fort Scott, Westport, Council Grove, Pottawattamie, and Lawrence, seeking relief from robberies and harassment, and the protection of militia escorts. Petitions came from pro-slavery individuals as well, as evidenced by the September 23, 1856 letter written on behalf of citizens of Anderson and Coffey Counties being driven out by abolitionists. The antagonists in these letters include Colonel Whipple (also known as Aaron Dwight Stevens), Captain Frederick Emory, and Sterling Price. A proclamation by Governor Woodson, dated July 4, 1856, forbids the assembly of the "bogus legislature" in Topeka. Another proclamation, dated August 24, 1856, declares the territory to be in a state of open insurrection and rebellion. Other important events, such as the Pottawatomie Massacre and the Battle of Hickory Point, are also mentioned.

Date: 1855-1856

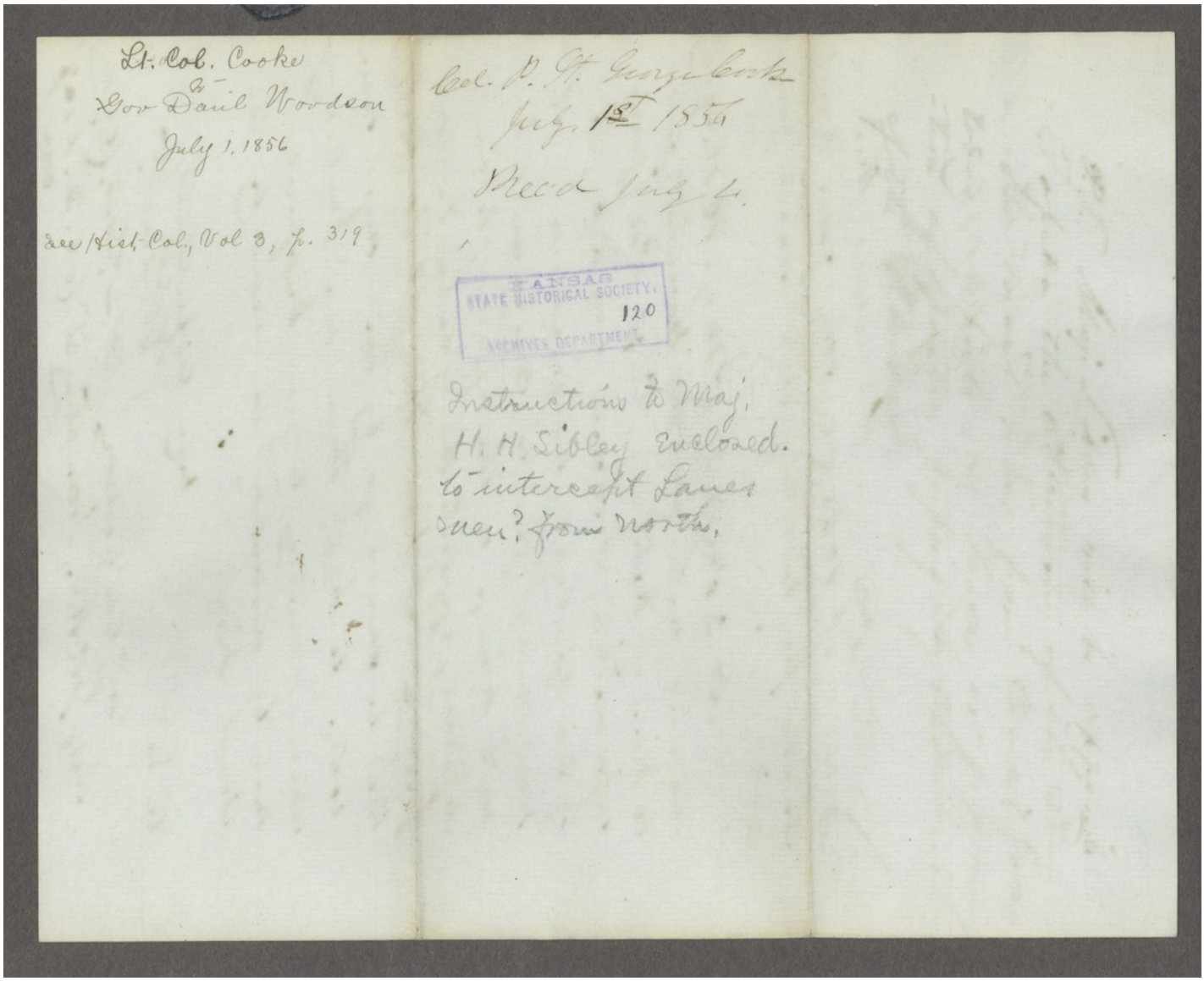
Callnumber: Territorial Executive Department, Correspondence and Miscellaneous Documents, 1854-1856, Box 1

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 225774

Item Identifier: 225774

www.kansasmemory.org/item/225774

Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856



Lt. Col. Cooke
Gov Daniel Woodson
July 1, 1856

See Hist. Col., Vol 3, p. 319

Col. P. St. Geo. Cooke
July 1st 1856
Recd July 4.

KANSAS
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
120
ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT

Instructions to Maj.
H. H. Sibley Enclosed.
to intercept Lanes
men? from north.

COOKE, LT. COL. P. ST. GEO.

JULY 1, 1856

Cav Dv. Fort Riley K. T.

July 1st 1856

Sir

On the requisition of the Governor, - a copy of which is furnished you for your guidance, as to points of information, -

You will march at 5 o'clock P. M. in command of a mounted Squadron, one piece of artillery and a dismounted platoon, in the direction of Topeka, by south side of Kansas River.

As your guides in this delicate duty of suppressing armed invasion, or insurrection against the Constituted Territorial & National Authorities, I furnish you with the Presidents proclamation, and the letter of instructions of the Secretary of War of Feby 15th 1856.

Unless unforseen emergencies, or circumstances meanwhile arise, requiring the responsible exercise of your judgment, I wish you agreably to the information and tenor of the Governor's letter, to leave the dismounted detachment at Manhatten, covering that Kansas crossing as well as the two ferries - close by - of the Blue.

The Officer in Command, will communicate with you by express as any important information - which he will seek to obtain - as to either side of the Kansas.

You will proceed to Smith's Ferry on the Kansas (Fort Leavenworth & Santa Fe Road) and there detach a Company or platoon to take post South of the river, on the most important Communication from above, down to Topeka, the Officer, in the absence of important information, or discoveries made, to detach patrols, on all the lateral roads.

You meanwhile will proceed rapidly as before and cover all the communications from the north of the river which cross by ferry or ford in the vicinity of Topeka

You and your detachments will act on the Governor's suggestions as to disarming &c armed bodies of men.

Be pleased to communicate to me by express, any very important event.

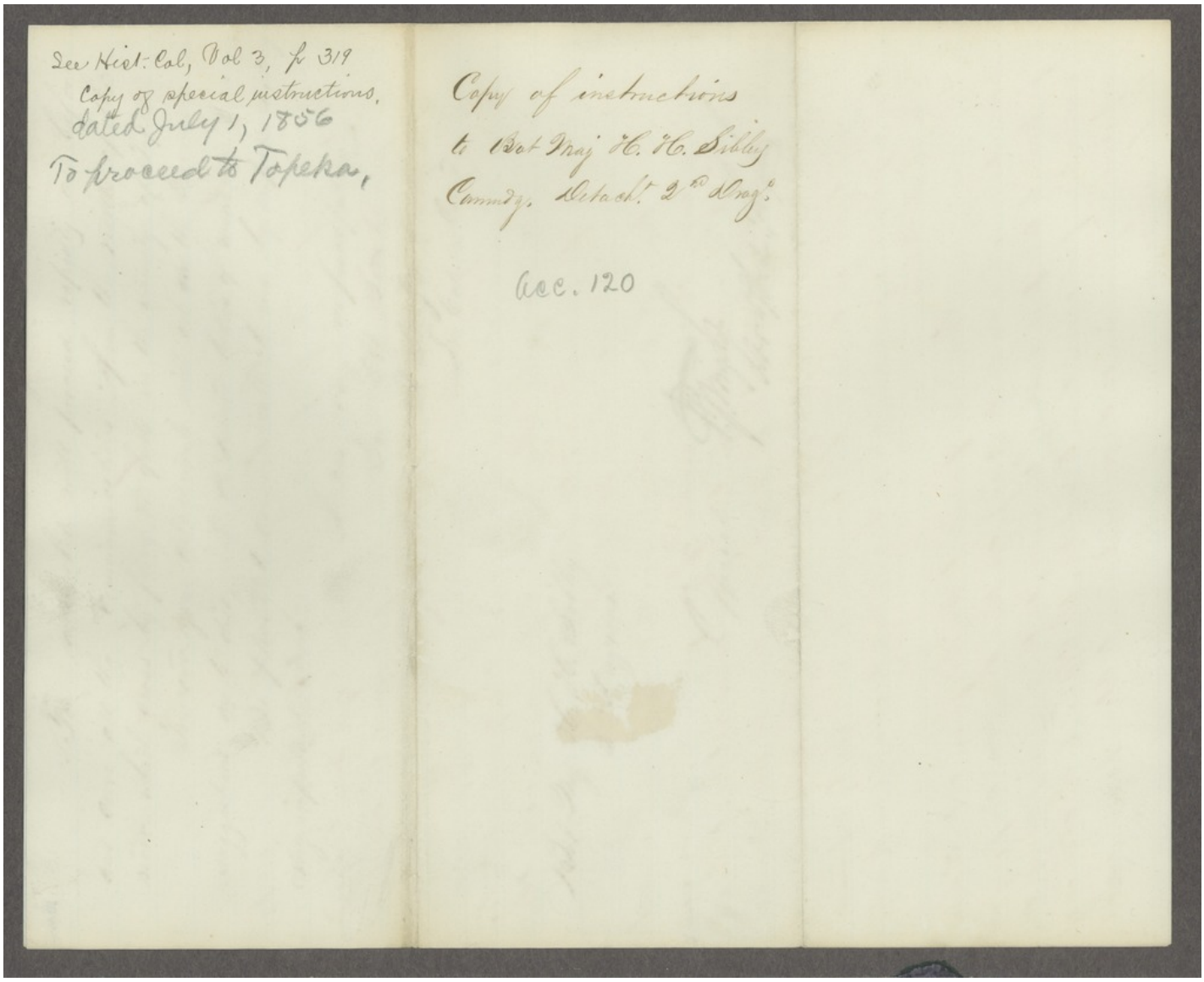
I am very respectfully
Your Obt Servt
P St. Geo Cooke
Lt Col. Comdg.

(Signed)

1st Lieut H. H. Sibley
2nd Dragoons.

Official

Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856



See Hist. Col, Vol 3, p 319
Copy of special instructions,
dated July 1, 1856
To proceed to Topeka,

Copy of instructions
to Brt Maj H. H. Sibley
Commdg. Detach. 2d Dragns.

Rec. 120

GOV. WOODSON JUNE 30, 1856

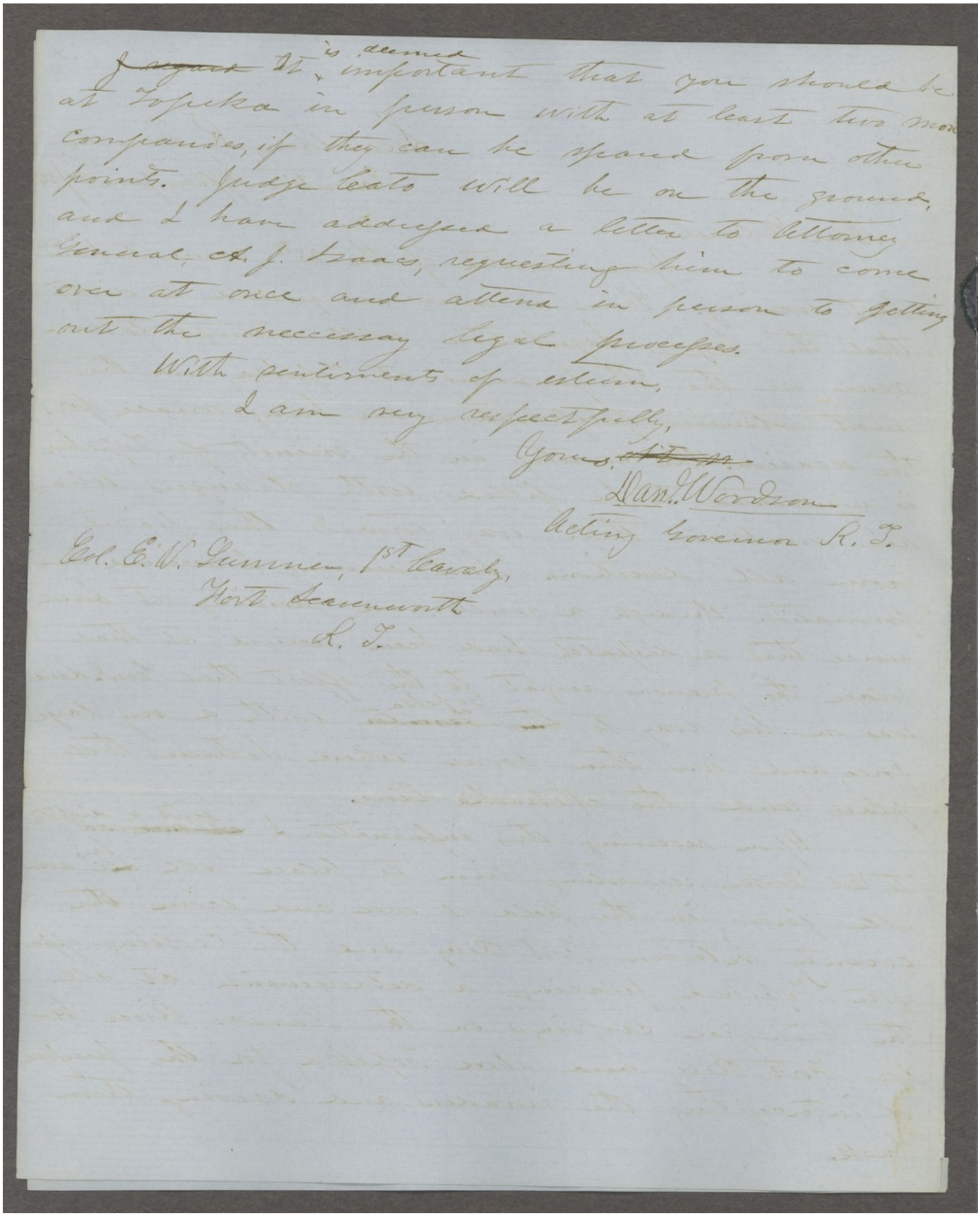
5k

Lecompton, K. Territory,
Executive Office, June 30/56

Dear Colonel:

Your dispatch of the 28th came to hand last evening. There is now no ground to doubt that the bogus legislature will attempt to convene on the 4th proximo at Topeka, and the most extensive preparations are being made for the occasion. The country in the vicinity of Topeka is represented to be filled with strangers who are making their way towards that point from all directions. Last evening I received information through a gentleman residing at Lawrence that a dispatch had been received at that place the previous night to the effect that Gen. Lane was on his way to ~~the~~ Topeka with a very large force, and was then some where between that place and the Nebraska line.

Upon receiving this information I ~~at once~~ sent a dispatch to Col. Cooke, requesting him to place all ~~all~~ his available force in the field at once, and scour the country between Fort Riley and the crossing opposite Topeka, placing a detachment at all the principal crossings on the Kansas River between Fort Riley and above Topeka, for the purpose of intercepting the invaders and driving them back.



It is deemed important that you should be at Topeka in person with at least two more companies, if they can be spared from other points. Judge Cato will be on the ground, and I have addressed a letter to Attorney General, A. J. Isaacs, requesting him to come over at once and attend in person to getting out the neccessay legal processes.

With sentiments of esteem,

I am very respectfully,

Yours,

Dan'l Woodson

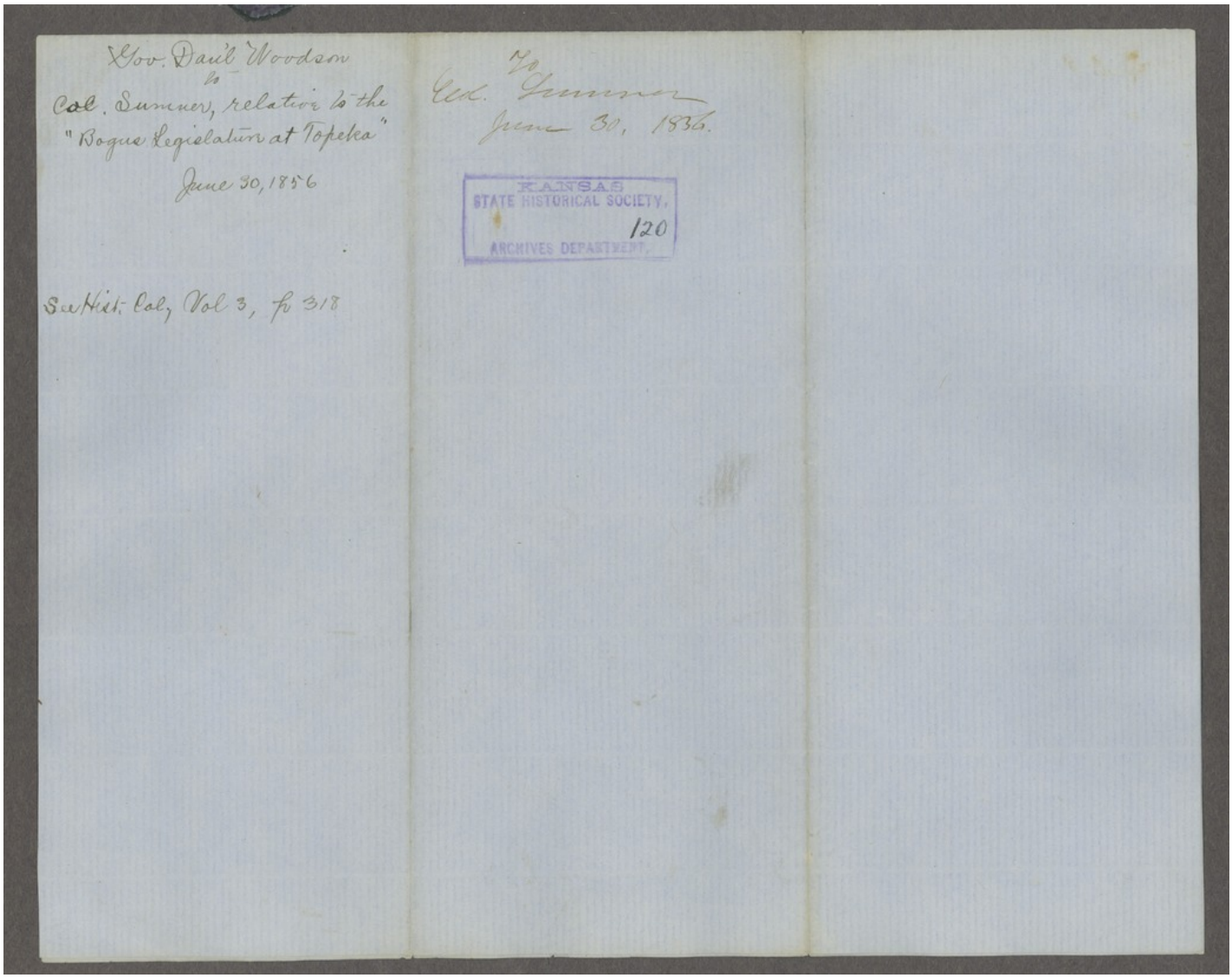
Acting Governor K. T.

Col. E. V. Sumner, 1st Cavalry,

Fort Leavenworth

K. T.

Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856



GEARY, GOV. JOHN W.

SEPT. 16, 1856

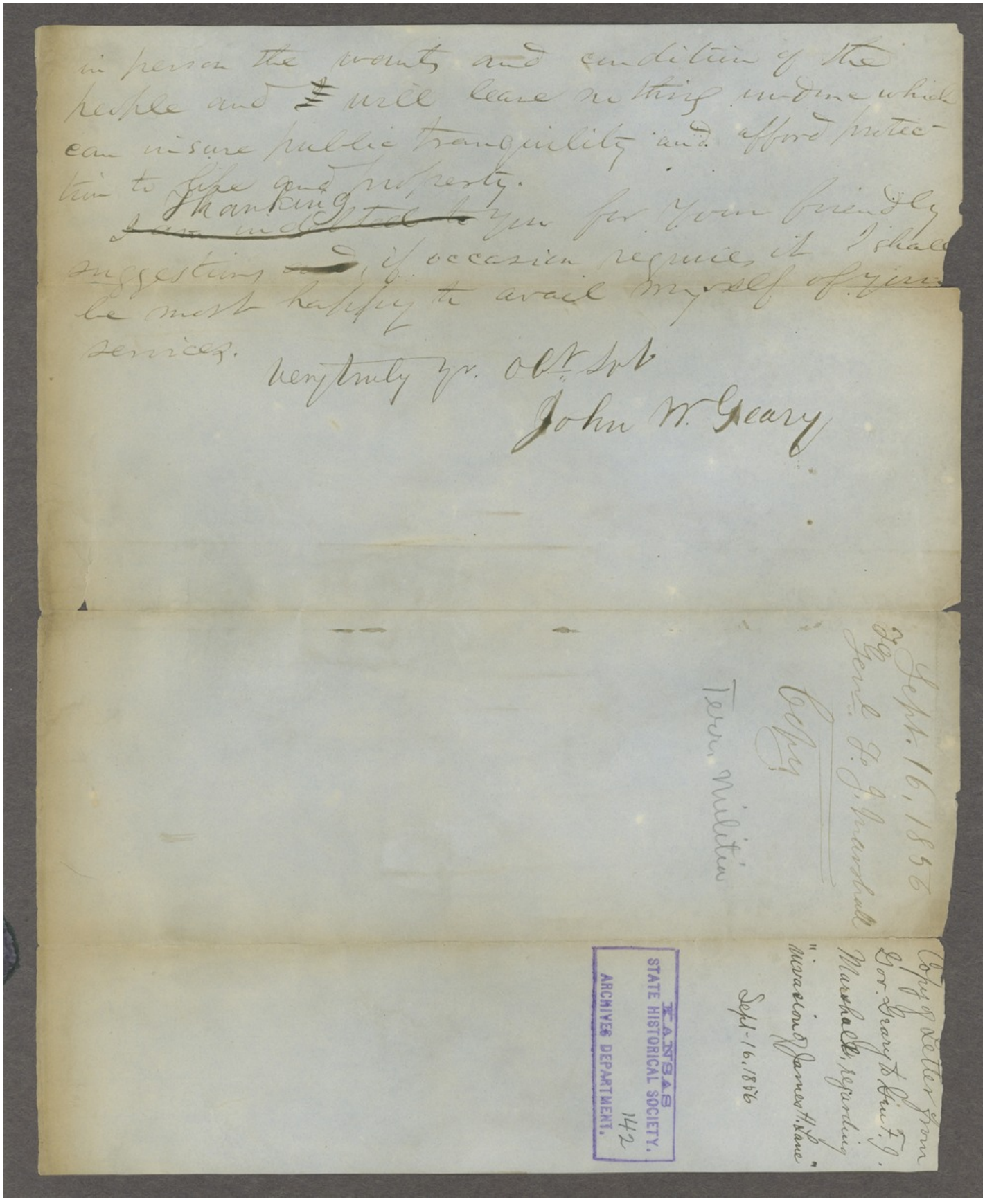
Lecompton, K. T. September 16. 1856

General F. J. Marshall
1st Div: N. Militia
Dear Sir,

I have this moment received your communication of this date informing me of the contemplated invasion of this Territory by force under the command of a certain James H. Lane and recommending the formation of two regiments of Territorial Militia, to be stationed on the Northern frontier for the protection of the inhabitants in that vicinity. In reply I have ~~the honor~~ to state, that ~~I am deeply solicitous~~ the policy I have adopted for the restoration of order in this Territory will be found in my recent Inaugural address and my several proclamations.

I will in the first place employ the U.S. troops, as being entirely free from all partizan feeling, and failing in this from want of sufficient number I will be pleased to accept the service of the Militia of this Territory organized in accordance with my recent proclamation.

At any threatened point I will immediately concentrate a sufficient number of troops to protect the citizens, and I also contemplate an immediate tour through the settled parts of the Territory to ascertain



in person the wants and condition of the people and will leave nothing undone which can insure public tranquility and afford protection to life and property.

Thanking you for your kindly suggestions, if occasion requires it I shall be most happy to avail myself of your services.

Very truly yr. obt. Svt

John W. Geary

Sept. 16, 1856

Gen. F. J. Marshall

Copy

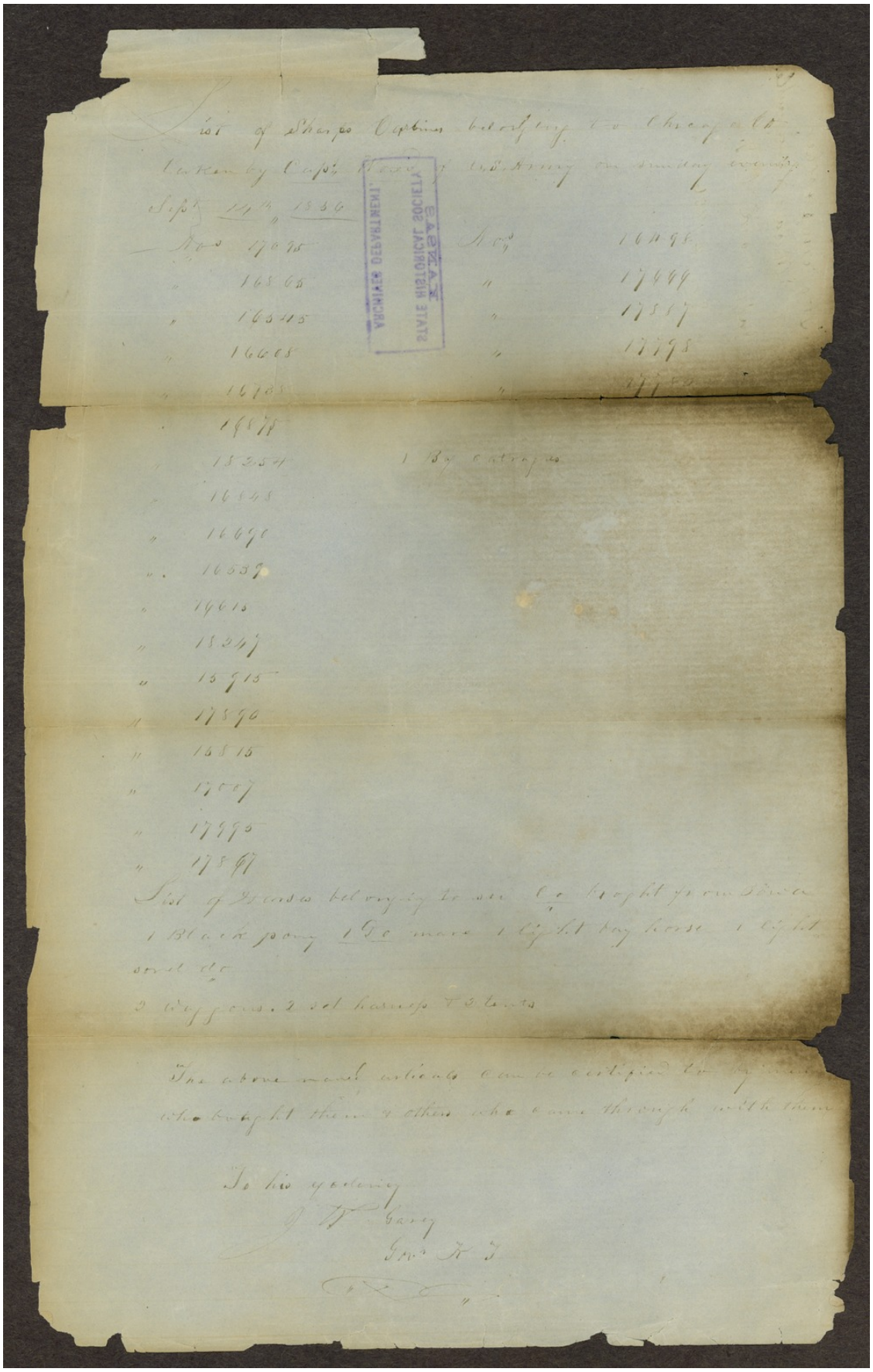
Terr. Militia

Copy of letter from Gov. Geary to Gen. F. J. Marshall, regarding "movements of Gen. H. Lane"

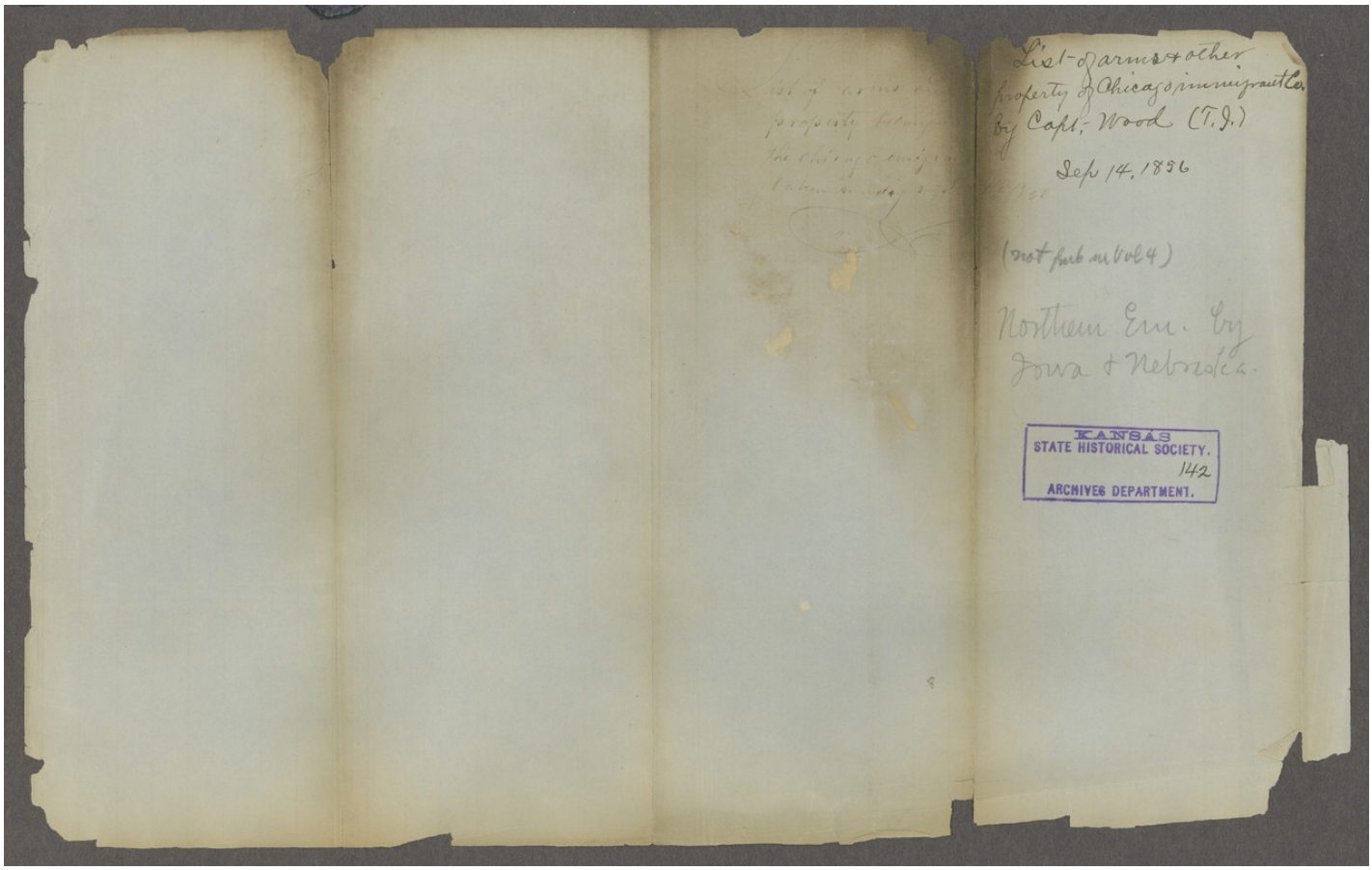
Sept-16, 1856

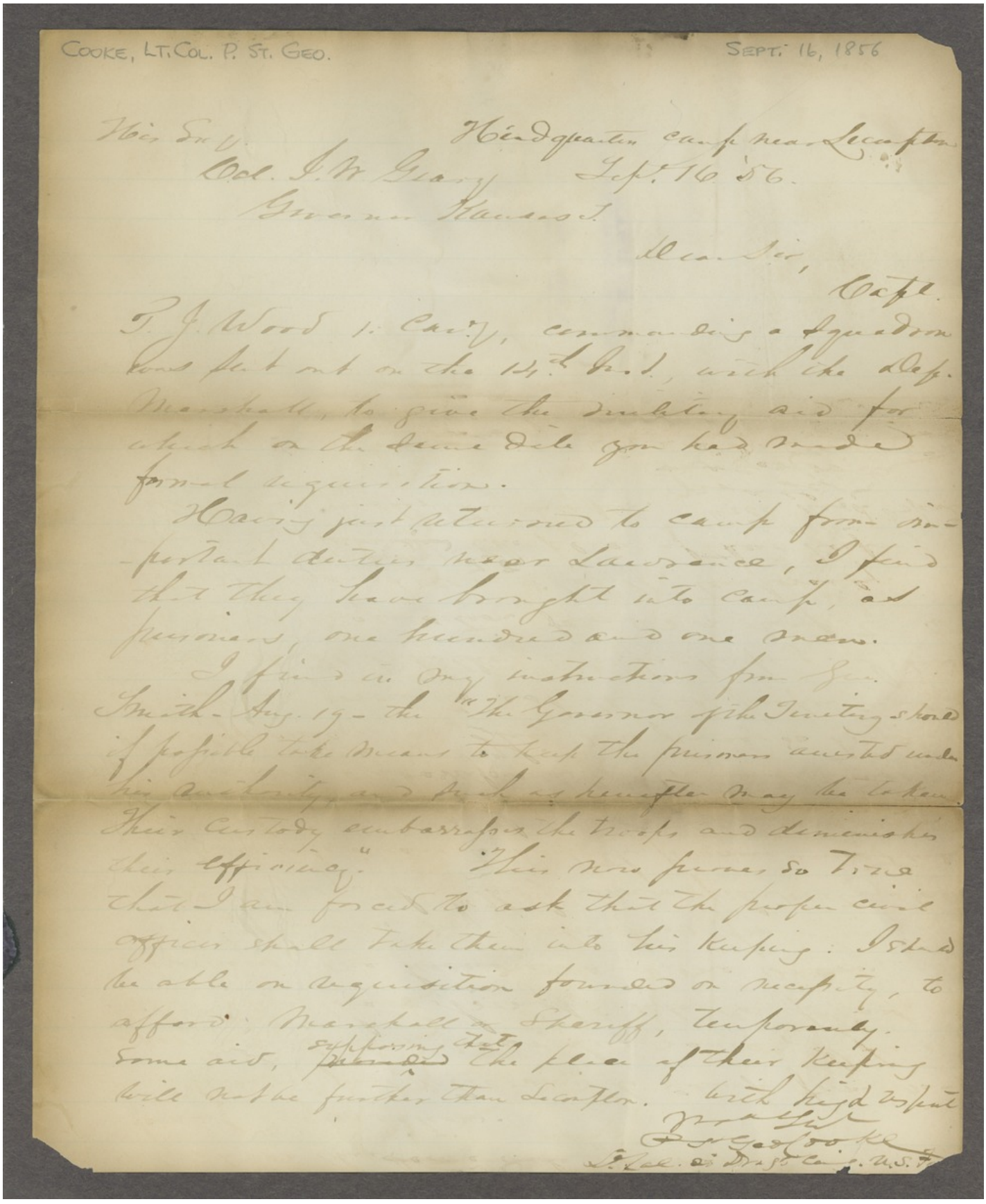
KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY. 142 ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT.

Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856



Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856





COOKE, LT. COL. P. ST. GEO. SEPT. 16, 1856

Hdqrs Dept
Col. J. W. Geary
Governor Kansas T.

Hdqrs camp near Lecompton
Sept. 16 '56.

Dear Sir,

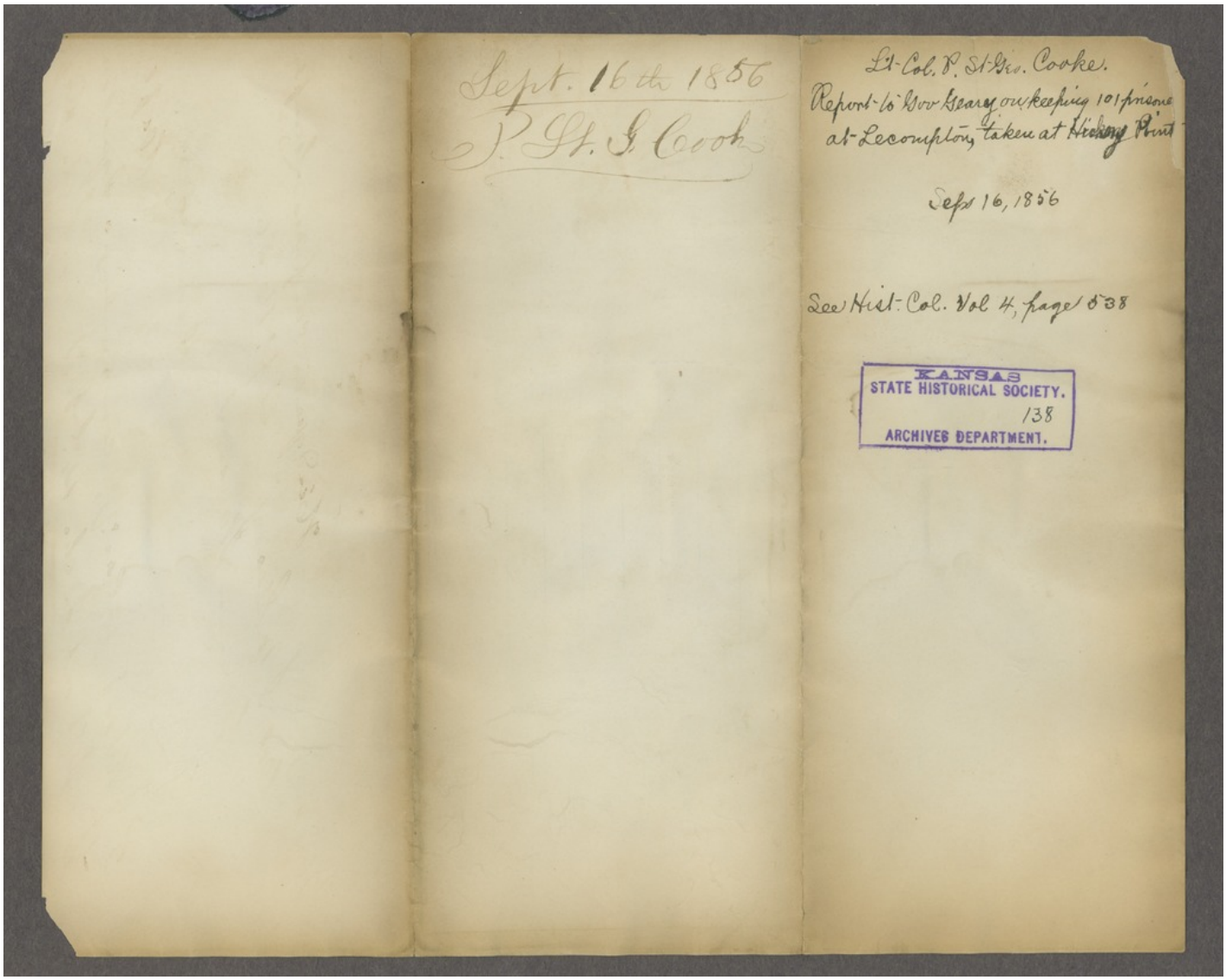
Capt.
T. J. Wood 1. Cav., commanding a Squadron
has just met on the 14th inst., with the Dep.
Marshall, to give the assisting aid for
which in the case did you had made
formal requisition.

Having just returned to camp from im-
portant duties near Lawrence, I find
that they have brought into camp, as
prisoners, one hundred and one men.

I find in my instructions from Gen.
Smith - Aug. 19 - that "the Governor of the Territory should
if possible take means to keep the prisoners arrested under
his authority and such as hereafter may be taken,
their custody embarrass the troops and diminish
their efficiency." This now proves so true
that I am forced to ask that the proper civil
officer shall take them into his keeping. Should
he be able on requisition formed on necessity, to
afford a Marshall or Sheriff, temporarily,
some aid, supposing that the place of their keeping
will not be further than Lecompton. With high respect

Your ob. Servt
P. St. Cooke
Lt. Col. 2d Dragoons U.S.A.

Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856



GILMAN, CHAS. T. SEPT. 16, 1856

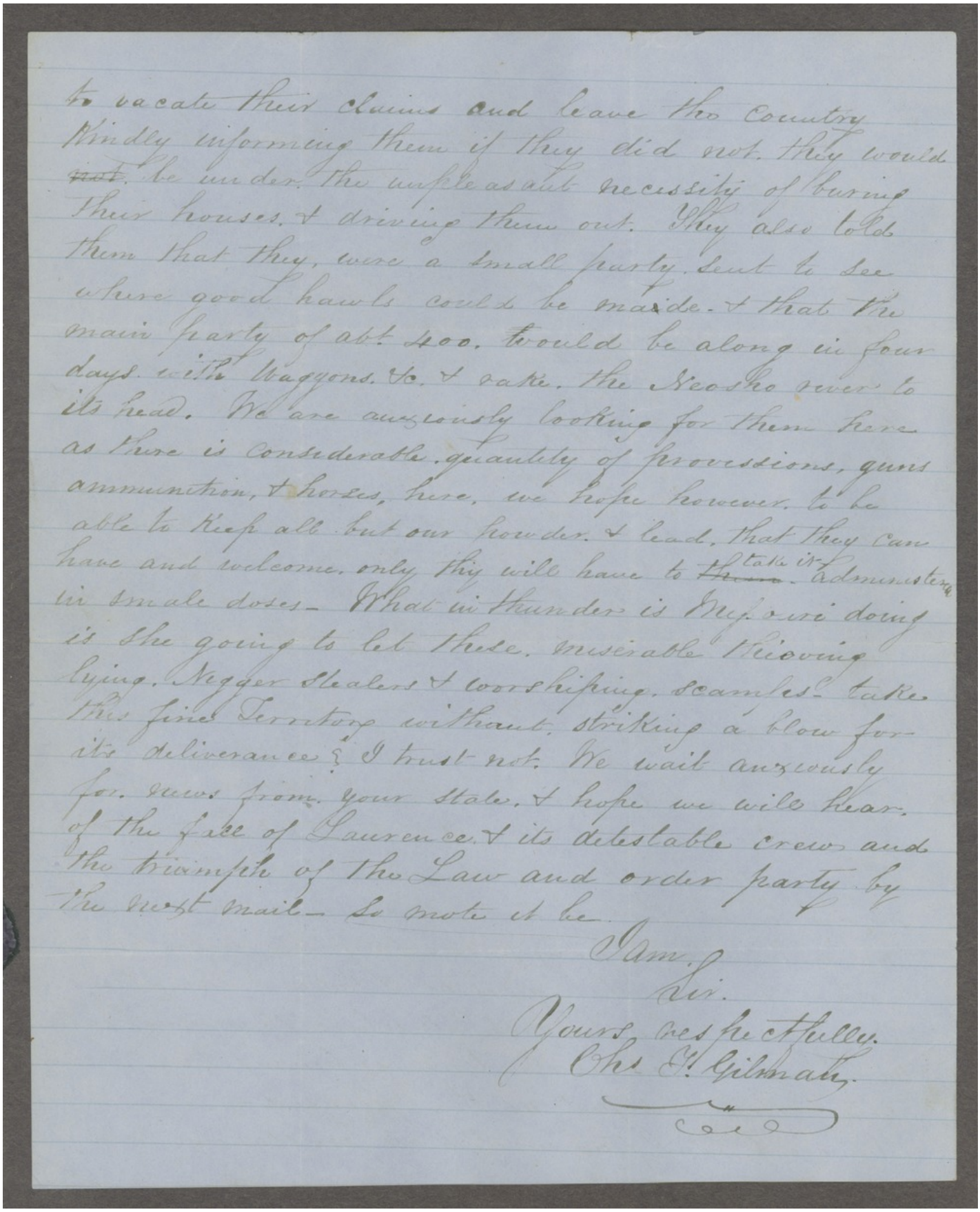
Council Grove Ks.
Sept. 16th 1856

Col. A. G Boone,

Sir.

I wish to inform you and others in Westport that our neighborhood which has hitherto been free from political broils is now coming in for its share. Last Sunday Evg. a party of twenty Abolitionists, made an attack on the Pro Slavery Citizens living near at the junction of the Neosho & Cottonwood Creeks distant from here abt 30 Mls. They commenced operations at the Store of Mr Greg robbing him of abt $400 in goods & money & taking his Clerk prisoner to prevent an alarm being given, this however was given by this mans wife & fired round, but as is generally the case on an emergency something is wanting the men had no ammunition, and the robbers had their own way. They Stole Horses & mules & other things in the neighbourhood committing various excesses at one house. Shooting several times at a man accidentally (as they say) wounding his wife at another pointing their guns at 2 ladies & threatening their lives if they did not tell where their husbands were, they were out at the time informing their friends that they did just as they pleased.

On going away they invited all pro slavery men

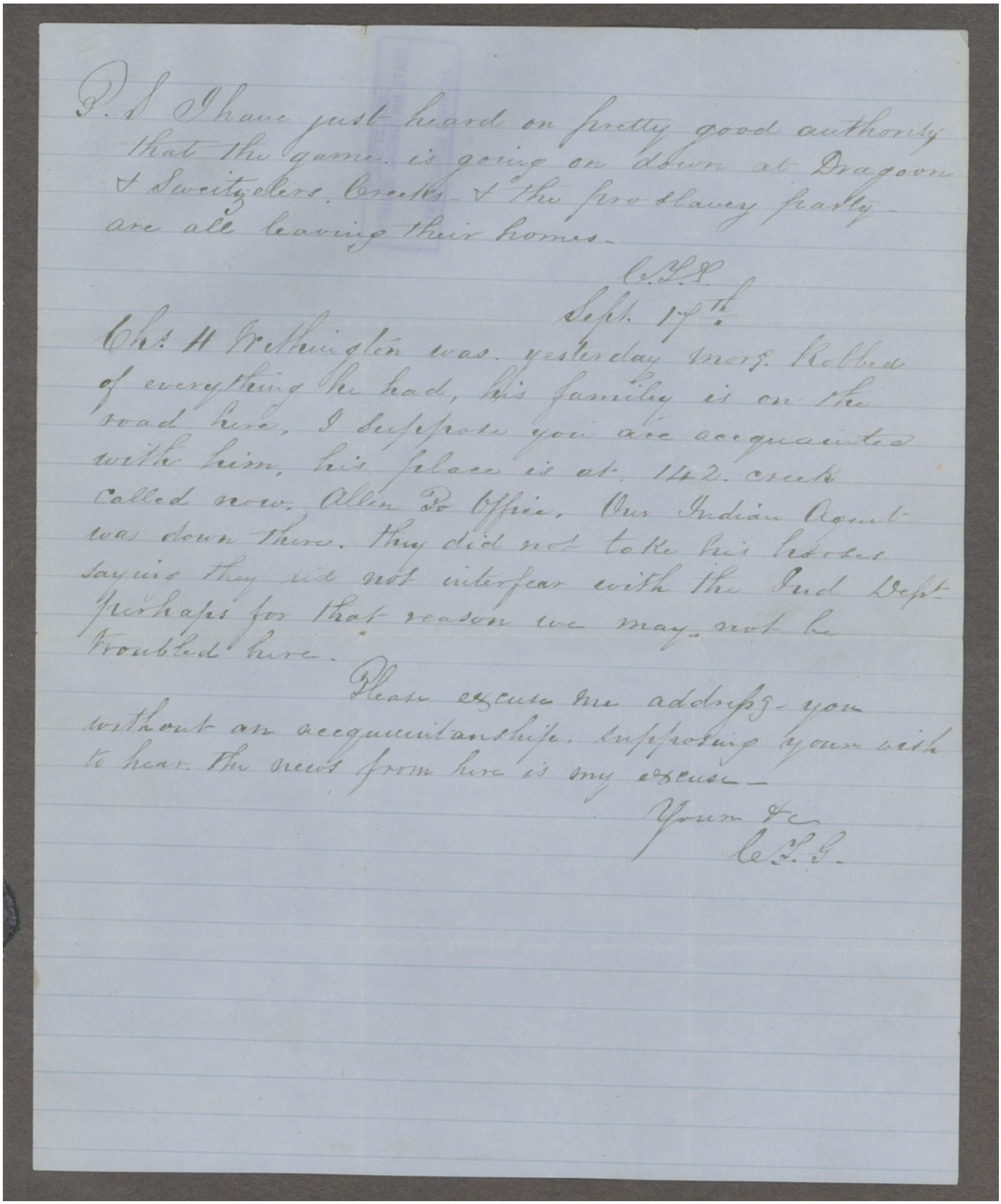


to vacate their claims and leave the country kindly informing them if they did not. they would ~~not~~ be under the unpleasant necessity of burning their houses & driving them out. They also told them that they were a small party. sent to see where good hauls could be maide. & that the main party of abt 400. would be along in four days. with Waggons &c. & take the Neosho river to its head. We are anxiously looking for them here as there is considerable quantity of provessions, guns ammunition, & horses, here, we hope however. to be able to keep all but our powder & lead, that they can have and welcome. only they will have to ~~them~~ take it administered in smale doses— What in thunder is Buchanan doing is she going to let these miserable thieving lying, Negger stealers & worshiping, scamps take this fine Territory without striking a blow for its deliverance? I trust not. We wait anxiously for news from your State. & hope we will hear of the fate of Lawrence & its detestable crew and the triumph of the Law and order party by the next mail— So mote it be.

I am Sir.

Yours respectfully.

Chs D. Gilmath.



P. S I have just heard on pretty good authority that the game is going on down at Dragoon & Switzlers Creeks & the pro slavery party are all leaving their homes.

C. L. P.

Sept. 17th

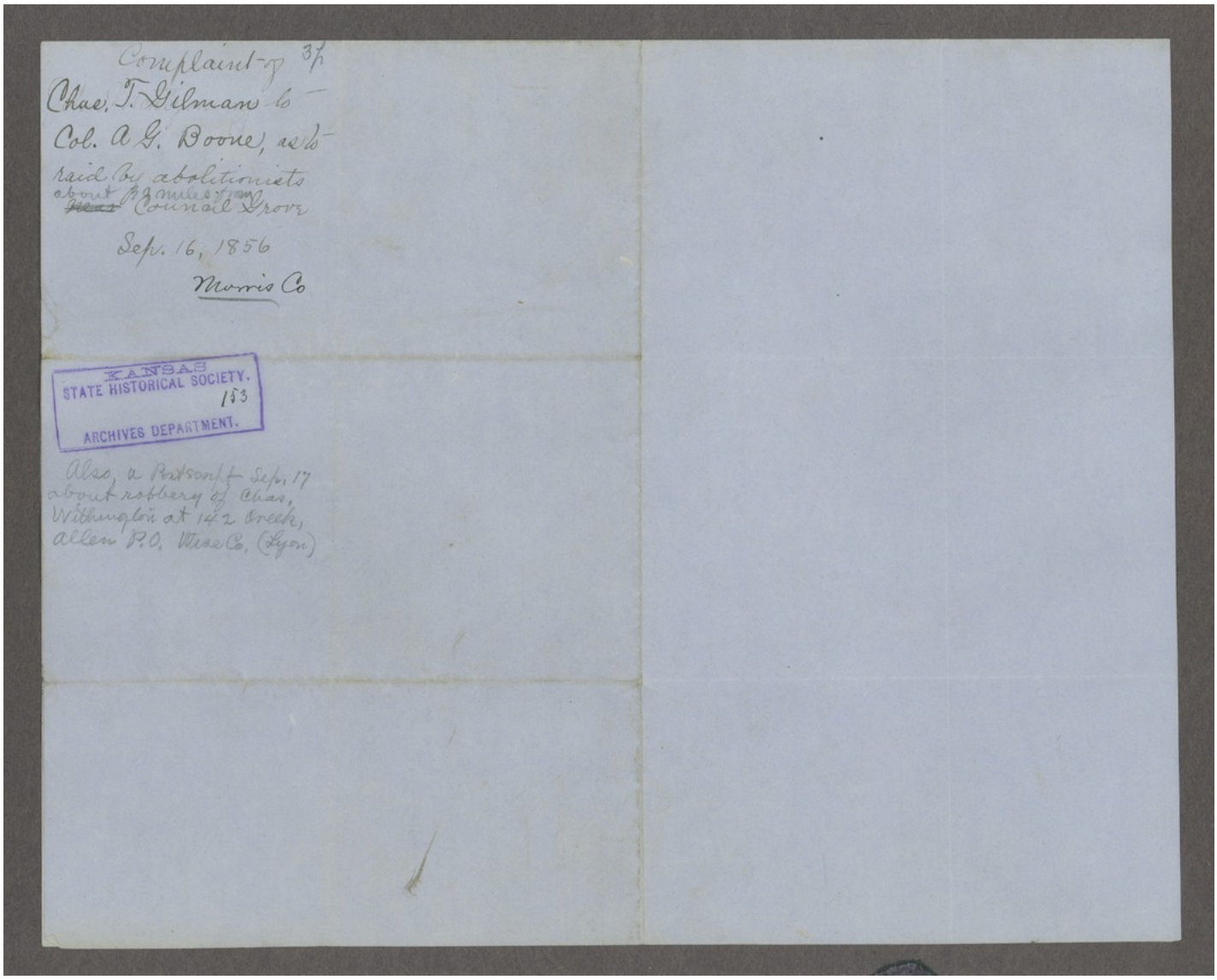
Chs H Withington was yesterday robbed of everything he had, his family is on the road here, I suppose you are acequainted with him, his place is at 142 creek called now Allen Do Office. Our Indian Agent was down there. They did not take his horses saying they did not interfear with the Ind Dept perhaps for that reason we may not be troubled here.

Please excuse me addressg you without an acequaintanship, supposing you wish to hear the news from here is my excuse—

Yours &c

C. L. P.

Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856



Montgomery, John
Withington, C.H.

SEPT. 16, 1856

1

Allen P.O. Shawnee Co. K.T.
Sept. 14th 1856.

His Excelency,
John W. Geary.
Governor of the Territory of Kansas.

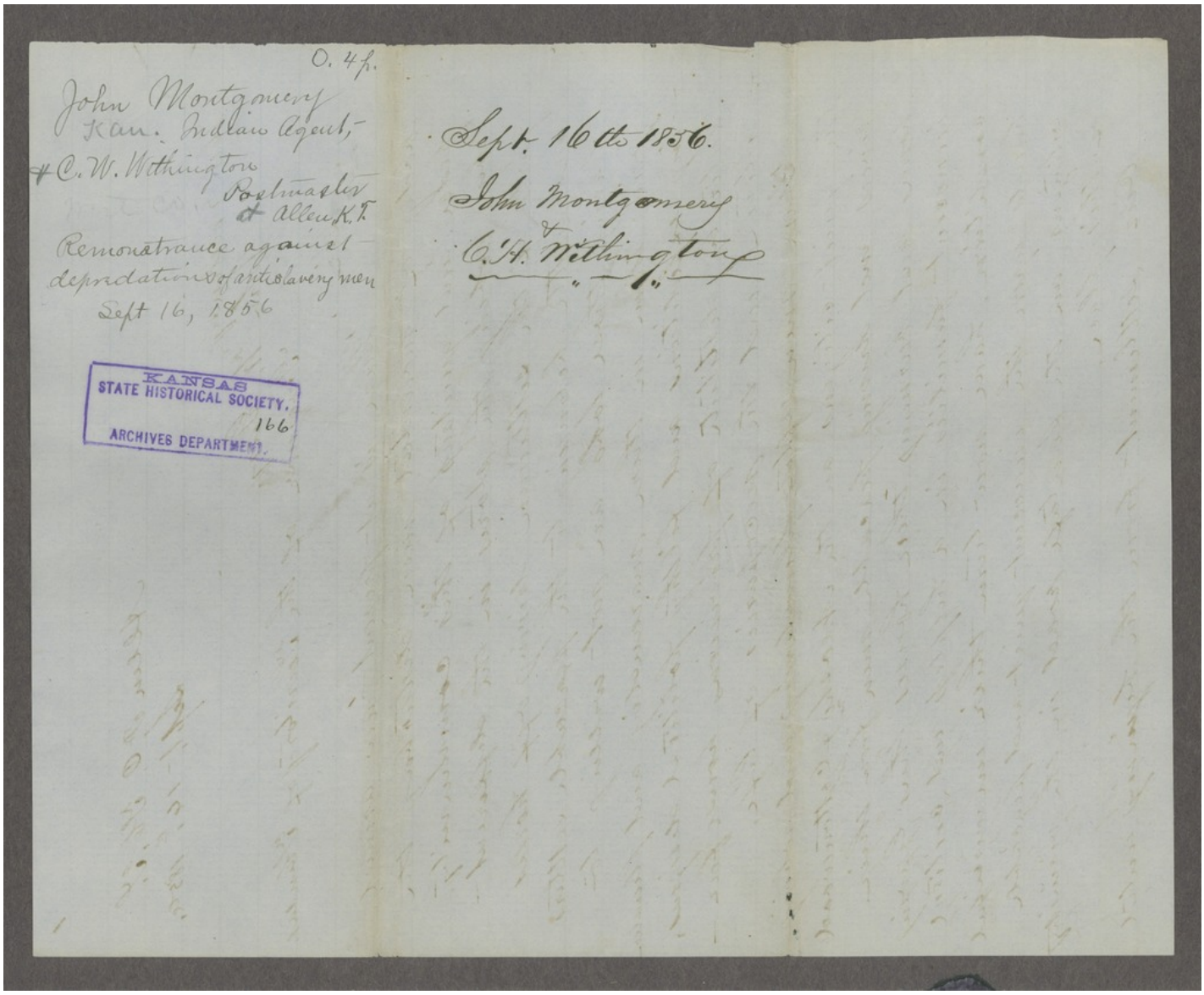
Sir.

There is at present an armed body of mounted men, disturbing the peace and quietness of this community, by robbing the stores in the different parts of the settlement, driving off horses and cattle belonging to the peacable settlers, leaving those who are not willing to join them in there marauding and plundering expeditions and filthy political designs, entirely destitute of provisions, house furniture, and the necessaries of life.

These men, after plundering and robing the quiet citizens on the Neosho & Cottonwood rivers, and driving peacable men from their homes and burning their houses thus leaving innocent families in a helpless and critical condition, have now turn their unmerciful hands upon the innocent, quiet and peacable citizens on the Santafe road in the vicinity of this place.

Our settlement from the beginning until

Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856



guilty recently, has enjoyed peace, prosperity and unbroken quietude; the citizens, no difference what may be their political sentiments, or whatever may be the natural inclination of their feelings or sympathies as regards the proslavery or anti-slavery parties, they have until now lived conformably to the laws of the land, engaged in the various pursuits of life, in a few words, they have attended to their own business.

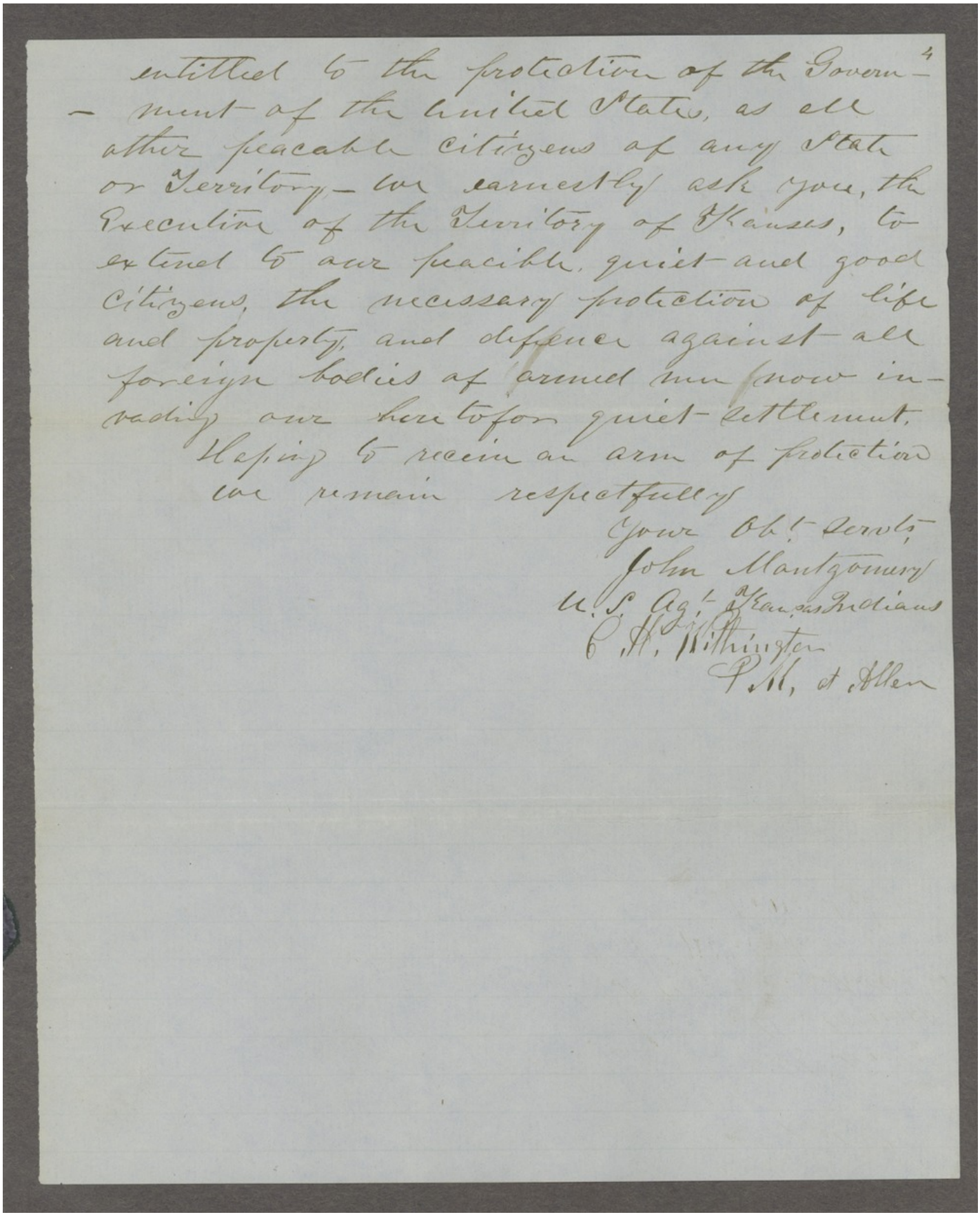
This morning at about six o'clock, this armed body of Ten or Twelve men came to this place, did not interfere with the Post office, but maliciously robed the store of provisions, guns, ammunition and other articles which they deemed useful to themselves, and retired in the direction of Topeka, declaring their intention to return in a few days with a much larger force and sweep the country of what little they have left, those who do not join them, or the free state army at once. and without hesitation may expect to meet a bitter fate, also declaring that the proprietor of this establishment is a pro-slavery man, that he commanded a company at the sacking of Lawrence, in the mean time the proprietor, Charles H Withington, who had been to some of

his neighbors house, rode up, and only witnessed the plundering of his houses and distruction of his property.

C. H. Withington is one of the Apposiate Judges of the Probate Court of this District, he has never taken any part in the political affairs of the Territory, he is one of the most peacable, quiet and worthy Citizens of our country. immediately after he arrived home this morning his horse was seized and carried off with many other horses and mules.

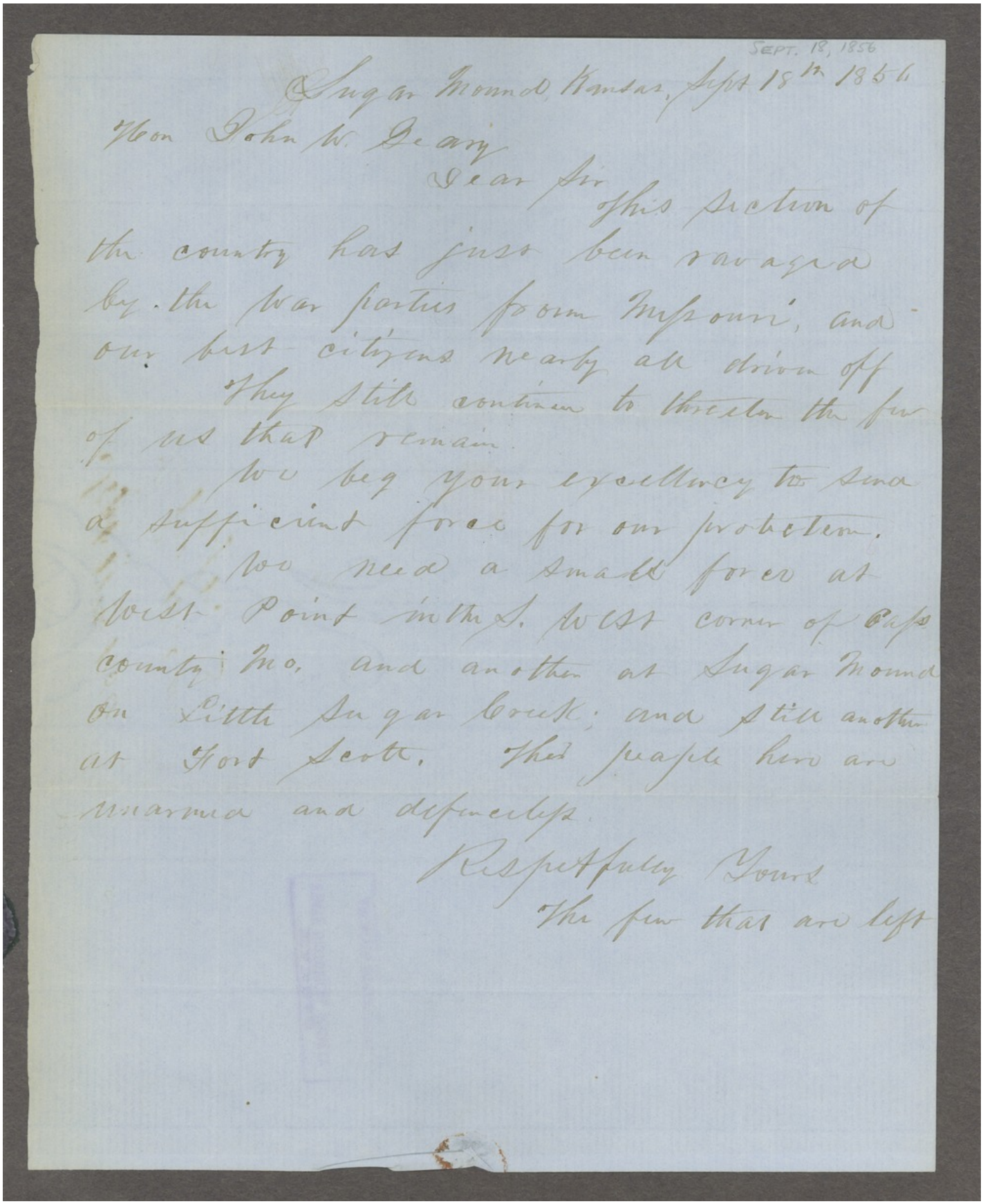
This company of armed men is a part of Lane's army, and are now preparing for winter quarters, and declare that those who do not join are pro-slavery men, and that their intention is to extinguish the proslavery party.

We believe that those people will return within a few days in larger numbers to carry out their filthy and distructive designes, as they have openly declared. and we believe we are in imminent danger of distructions and loss of life. and as we have no means of self defence, and are quiet and peacable citizens. and as we are as equally



4

entitled to the protection of the Govern-
ment of the United States, as all
other peacable citizens of any State
or Territory — we earnestly ask you, the
Executive of the Territory of Kansas, to
extend to our peacible, quiet and good
citizens, the necessary protection of life
and property, and defence against all
foreign bodies of armed men now in-
vading our heretofore quiet settlement.
Hoping to receive an arm of protection
we remain respectfully
Your Ob't Servts
John Montgomery
U.S. Ag't for Kansas Indians
C. H. Withington
P.M. at Allen



SEPT. 18, 1856

Sugar Mound, Kansas, Sept 18th 1856

Hon John W. Geary

Dear Sir

This section of the country has just been ravaged by the war parties from Missouri, and our best citizens nearby all driven off. They still continue to threaten the few of us that remain.

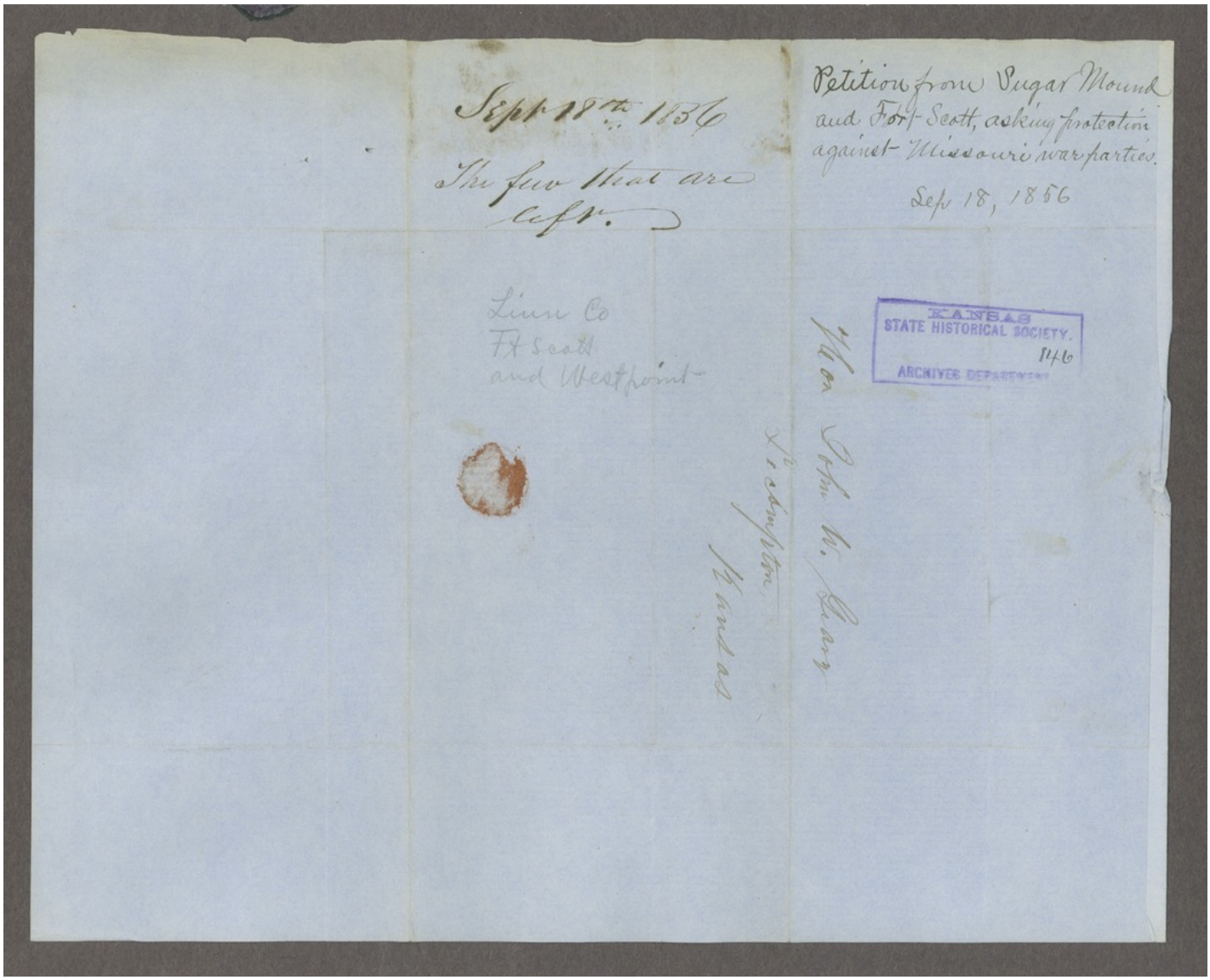
We beg your excellency to send a sufficient force for our protection.

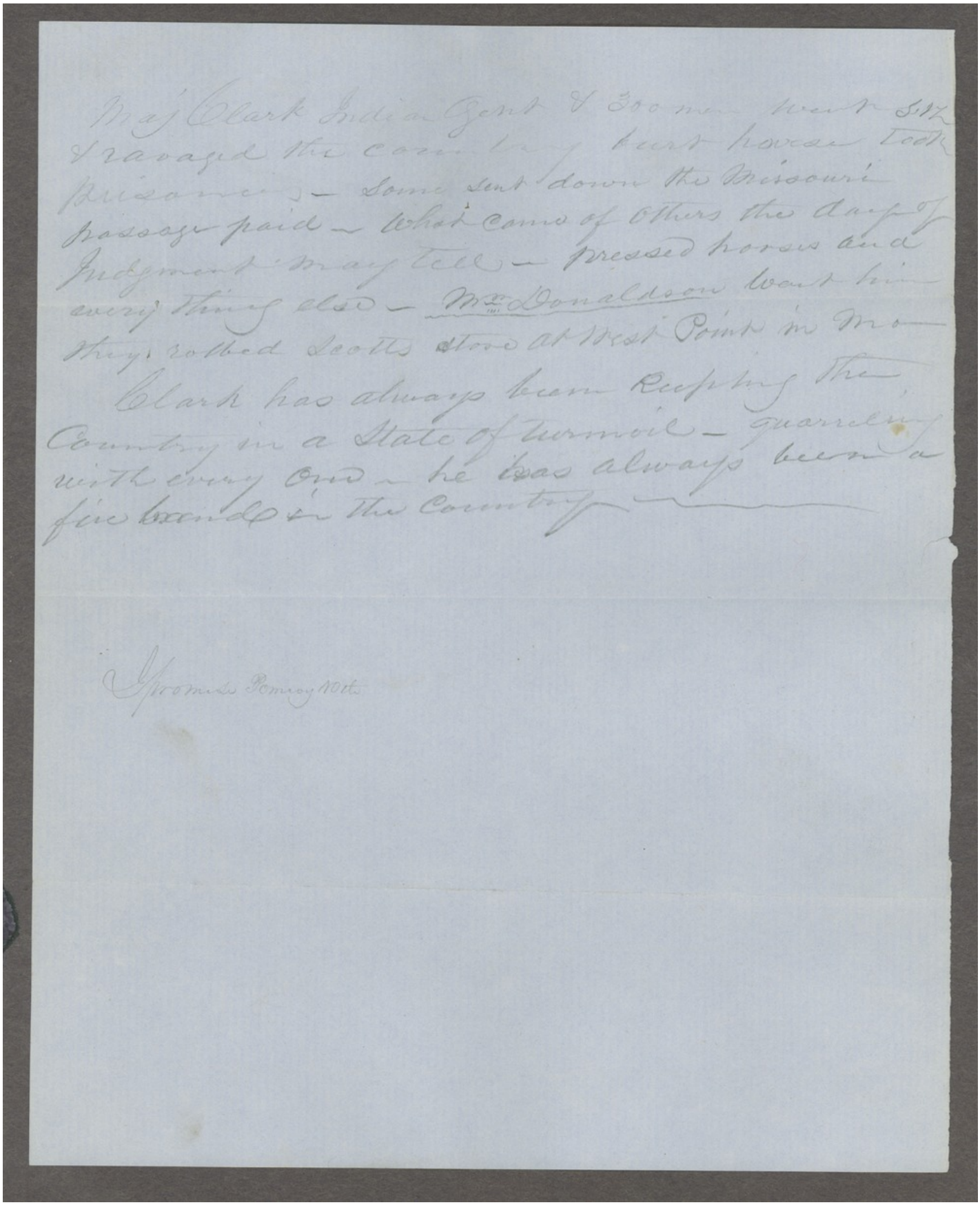
We need a small force at West Point in the S. West corner of Cass County Mo. and another at Sugar Mound on Little Sugar Creek; and still another at Fort Scott. The people here are unarmed and defenceless.

Respectfully Yours

The few that are left

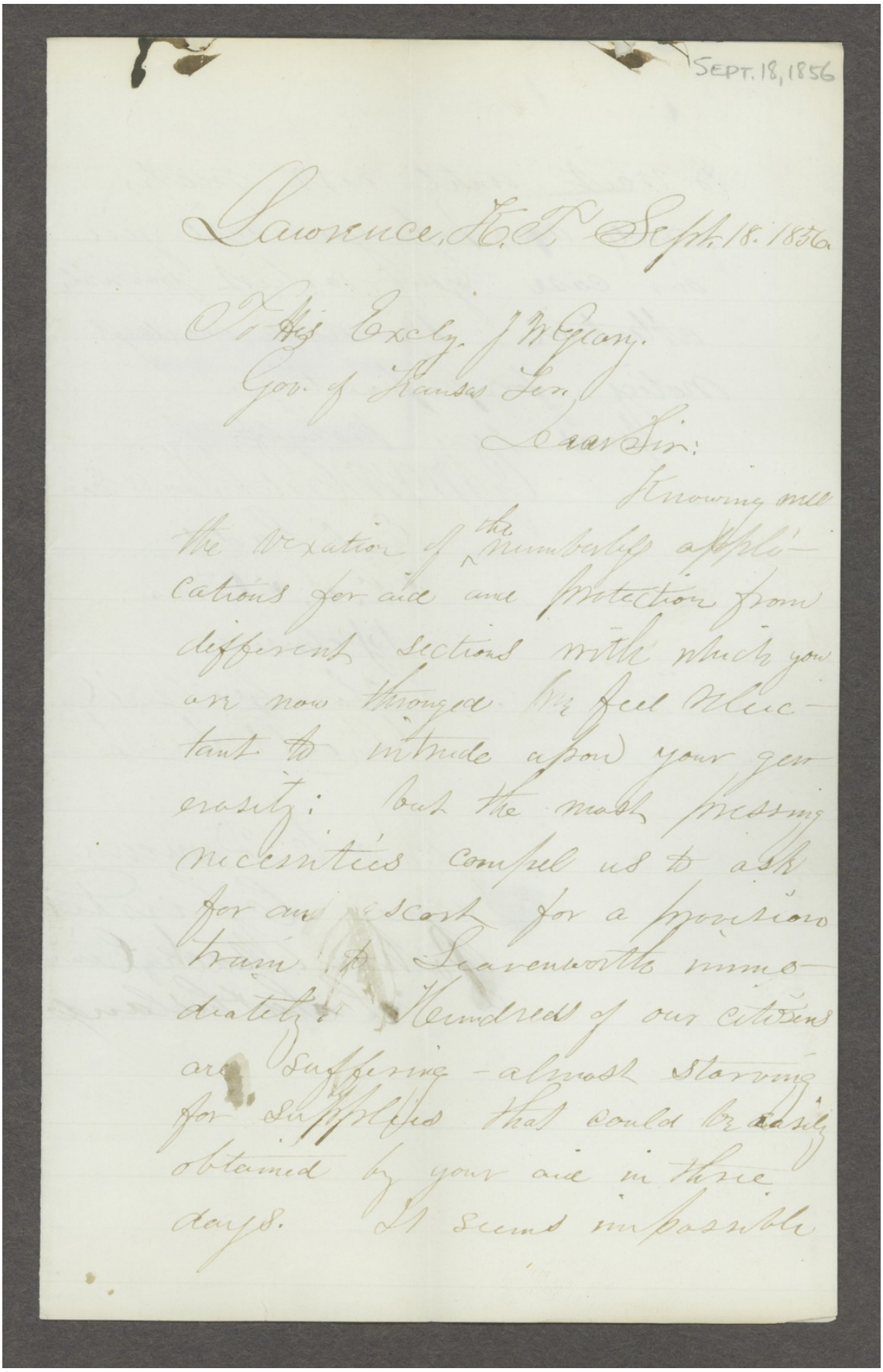
Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856





Maj Clark Indian Agent & 200 men went 5 or 7
& ravaged the country burnt houses took
Prisoners — Some sent down the Missouri
passage paid — What come of others the day of
Judgment may tell — pressed horses and
every thing else — McDonaldson went him
they robbed Scotts Store at West Point in Mo —
Clark has always been Keeping the
Country in a State of turmoil — quarreling
with every one — he has always been a
fire brand in the Country

I promise Pomroy Notts



SEPT. 18, 1856

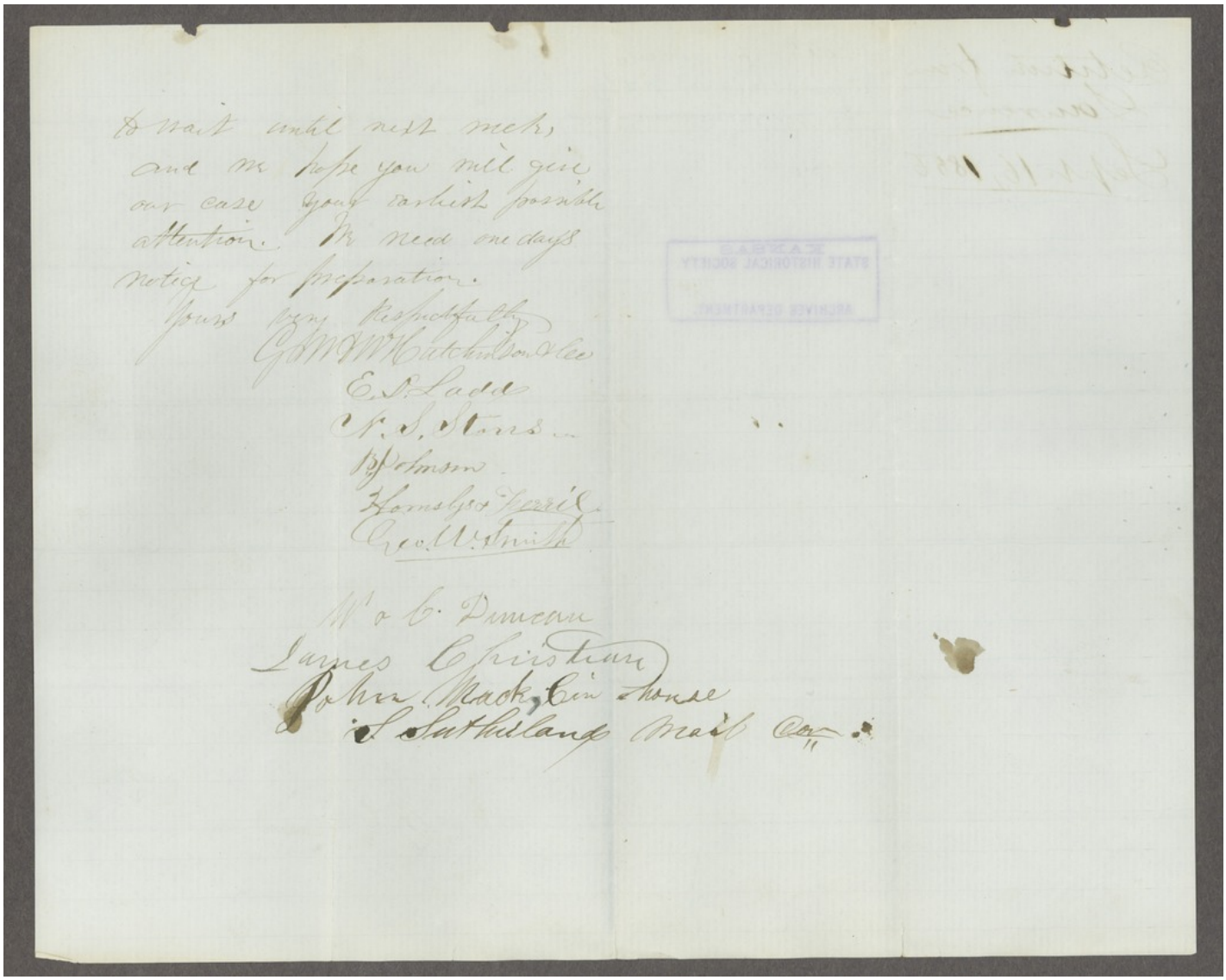
Lawrence, K. T. Sept. 18. 1856.

To His Excly. J. W. Geary.
Gov. of Kansas Ter.

Dear Sir:

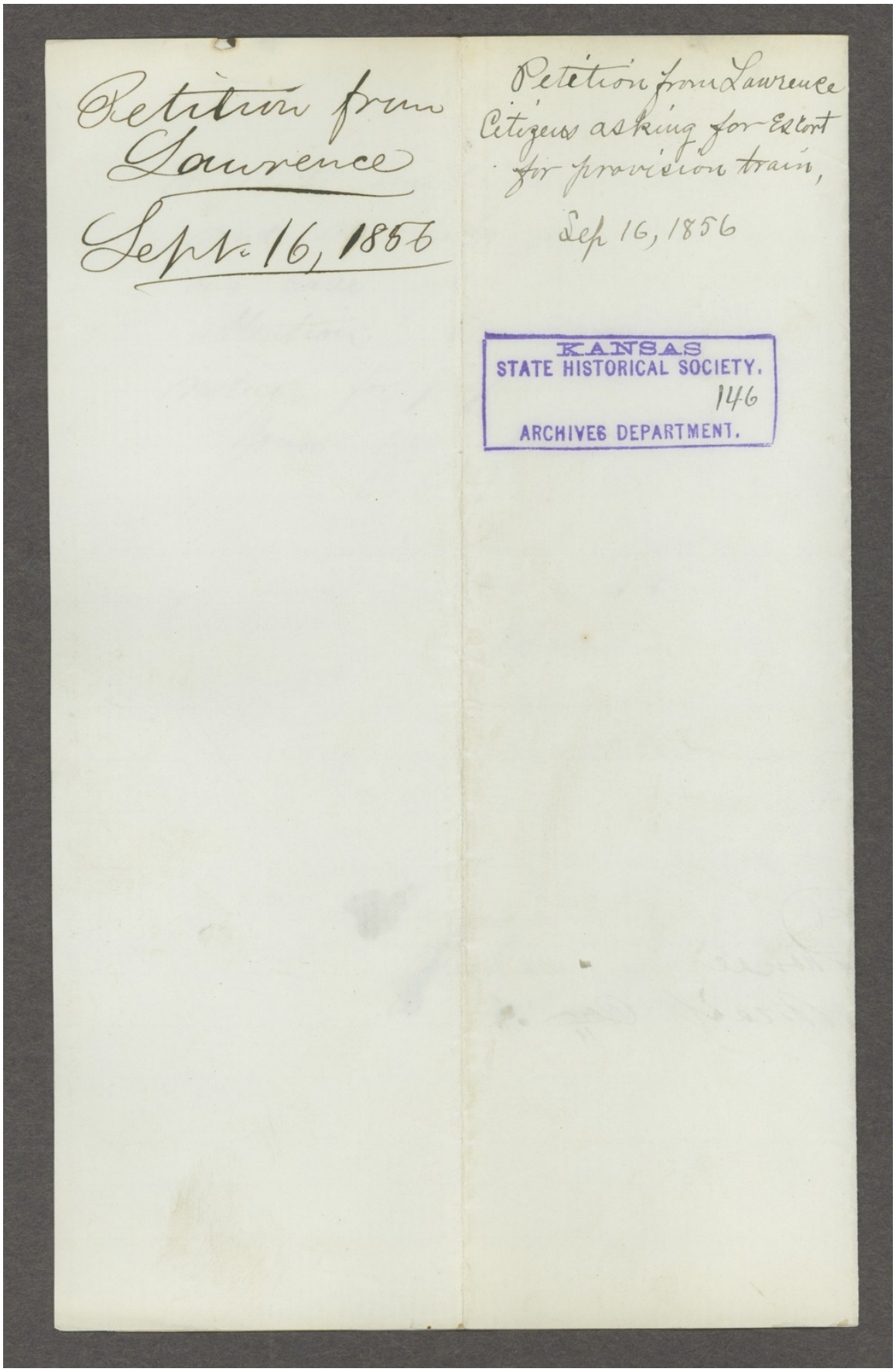
Knowing well the vexation of numberless applications for aid and protection from different sections with which you are now thronged we feel reluctant to intrude upon your generosity; but the most pressing necessities compel us to ask for an escort for a provision train to Leavenworth immediately. Hundreds of our citizens are suffering - almost starving for supplies that could be easily obtained by your aid in three days. It seems impossible

Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856



to wait until next week
and we hope you will give
our case your earliest possible
attention. We need one days
notice for preparation.
Yours very respectfully
G. W. & W. Hutchinson & Co
E. D. Ladd
C. S. Stone
B. Peterson
Hornby & Ferrill
Geo. W. Smith

W. & E. Duncan
James Christian
Parker, Mack, Cin House
& Southland Mail Co



Petition from Lawrence
Sept. 16, 1856

Petetion from Lawrence Citizens asking for Escort for provision train,

Sep 16, 1856

KANSAS
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
146
ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT.

GILLPATRICK, RUFUS

SEPT. 19, 1856

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT

To His Excellency J.W. Geary, Governor of Kansas Territory.

The undersigned, citizens of Kansas Territory, residing within the vicinity of Pottawottomie, Sugar and Middle creeks and the Osage River, wishing to represent to your Excellency the condition of affairs in this part of the Territory take this opportunity to present the following facts in relation to the deplorable state of affairs existing in our midst, & hopeing that your Excellency will take some prompt and decided action to relieve the citizens of this part of the Territory from their oppressions.

For the last four months we have been repeatedly over-run by armed bodies of men, organized in the neighboring state of Missouri and gaided by a few desperate men in our midst, claiming to act under Territorial authority in sacking, & burning houses and in robbing and plundering and menacing the lives of our citizens and conveying some as captives into the State of Missouri.

On or about the 26th of August one of these marauding parties collected principally from the States of Arkansas and Missouri, headed by P.C. Brown Sheriff of Linn County and Captain of a company of Kansas Militia and John Wartman, Commissioner for Anderson County, made a descent upon Pottawottomie Creek, burning the houses of B.L. Cookson and Samuel Kilburn and plundering those of David Watt C.P. Blunt and Wm. Shelty - the former of arms only and the latter of arms, money and land warrants

Territorial troubles correspondence, 1855-1856

