

## **S.T. Shore, testimony**

This testimony, a portion of the Journal of Investigations in Kansas, was collected by the National Kansas Committee under the leadership of Thaddeus Hyatt. Although Captain Shore was a free state militia captain and was active during the border warfare of 1856, this account focuses on his personal life and his perceptions of the Kansas Territory rather than upon his political or military experiences. The testimony begins with general information about his family, claim, etc., and then proceeds to his personal opinion of the land and vegetation in Kansas.

Date: December 2, 1856

Callnumber: Thaddeus Hyatt Coll. #401 Box 1 Folder 5

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 2578

Item Identifier: 2578

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Com. did not consider it their Bill. It was a private affair  
of Col. Dodge.

Copy of a letter sent to J. D. Webster Esq.  
Lawrence. 3<sup>d</sup> Decr. 1856

Capt. J. D. Webster My dear Sir You will have learned from  
my letter of this date to Horace White Esq. some remarks made by me  
J. M. Winchel a member of the Kansas Central Committee relative  
to the Presidency of the National Committee. I thought nothing  
of this at the time assuming it part of this Winchells misrepres-  
entation; nor do I ~~now~~ at this moment believe that in his  
presence you ever said anything to warrant his observation.  
But my eye has just fallen upon a Vermont paper containing  
your letter to Am Stephen Hovey Esq. of Vermont, to which your  
name is signed as the Pres. of the A. C. I believe me my  
dear Sir, with the very kindest feelings toward you, and with  
the utmost cheerfulness, & without any expectation, &  
from no motive, springing from Chapin, I cordially tender  
you the position. It matters not to me where I serve  
Kansas, so I best serve her. I am ever always

Your sincere faithful friend J. H. D. D. D.

Testimony of Capt. S. T. Shore. Disturbing Agent. Ottawa.  
I live 1 1/2 miles from Ponine City. I came from Mississippi  
and a native of N. Carolina. Selected my claim on the  
Middle Ottawa 2 years, come March next, <sup>or March 1855</sup> Have a wife  
and 6 children. Eldest <sup>12</sup> 12 yrs. Youngest 6 weeks. 3 boys & 3 girls.  
I bought in 3 yds of cattle & 4 good Mares. all on an acre  
with \$125, a piece. Bought in 3 cows & calves. A few ploughs.  
Money & notes about \$500.00. I landed on my claim 3<sup>d</sup> March <sup>1855</sup>  
All pretty well until about 1st August. Had not been exposed  
a yr of trouble, but the children had been exposed for 1 1/2 miles  
through the dew & frost. My wife had not been protected

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apond. I had been in minding and minding my cattle rather  
a horse. 2 of my mares got away & 2 I had taken into  
Missouri for breeding. This is why I had to go on foot. I had put  
up a round log house in the fall of '54. Myself & family all  
began to take chills & fever about August. My eldest daughter was first  
taken with illness fever. We all got well by Christmas, none of us to 1. Now  
there is less swamp land in Kansas than in Missouri & less local cause for  
disease than in Missouri. I have never been west of the divide of Kansas  
but I have been considerable over that part of the Kansas & I believe our  
region, the Ottawa, to be better watered & timbered than any other portion I  
have been in. I see no local cause for sickness: no bad water: no swamp  
land: our country is not level; it is high enough & rolling enough. I have  
80 acres fenced & planted with corn: no wheat. "Why have you planted no  
more wheat?" I attribute this to two causes. 1st. We were in the  
bottom field instead of the wheat field. In the fall of '55 we were  
all sick. I could then have got seed from Missouri. This fall we  
were in the midst of the troubles. (Canada lost spring wheat)  
We have no seed corn in our portion of the country. Father Moore is  
the only man I know of in the country who has old corn, first  
rate white corn: common Indian white corn. I don't think I shall  
put in any wheat this coming spring. I shall have to send to Missouri or  
some where for seed of all kind. In that whole region the corn has  
generally been frost-bitten & all the people will need seed from elsewhere.  
It is generally calculated that 3 bushels of corn is needed to a family  
for seed. At present while people have no great amount of land  
broke, we would say the average would be 5 acres. That would be broke  
1 1/2 bush. wheat for seed would be 7 1/2 bu. each family would need.  
There are about 100 families there now, & from the way they have been going  
in the last week or two should think there might be 150 in the spring  
all needing seed corn & wheat. The Indians down below are raising peaches.  
Sweet potatoes grow finely. Mr. Mucker has raised some. White down by  
Stanton 4 or 5 miles N.W. of Lawrence raised 4 or 500 bushels of sweet potatoes. They



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did finely. The lower Thos. about a mile W. of me has 70-80 on.  
 The Mr. Moore has 100 coming on. Said Mr. Whiting has some + most of the  
 people have none or few. It ~~is~~ <sup>large</sup> yellow plum, some white some  
 red too some wild in great abundance. If transplanted & attended to  
 they would be vastly improved. Have seen the same kind in Illinois  
 improved & growing very large by cultivation. In some parts there  
 is great abundance of grapes; they run up on the trees; they  
 are as sweet as cultivated grapes, at the East but not so  
 large. Owing to the burning of the prairie every fall, the vines  
 get destroyed. Now our roads, running through the timber tend  
 to prevent the spread of the prairie fire into them. There  
 are great quantities of hazel nuts, hickory nuts, walnuts & acorns -  
 the hickory nut is half as large as an egg; they are excellent  
 some of them to eat for persons. The hogs get fat on them. The  
 stock of hogs at present is limited; I think this true generally  
 of the territory. There are no sheep in our neighborhood. There  
 are some on the Wakarusa. Like the Territory generally, I think  
 they are scarce. It don't pay well yet to buy geese & sheep &  
 much young stock to the Territory, yet, there are so many wolves.  
 They are not yet very cowardly, as they have not yet been  
 chased much. We are getting to have the greyhound & blood  
 hounds who can outrun them & kill them. There are not many  
 geese in the Territory. The geese rest in the pond & the wolves  
 get them; but chickens won't hit; they are getting to be plagues.  
 We have some Shagbuns; but not so many as the Branches;  
 those were first introduced. The Branches I think equal or  
 some prefer them; not so large as the Shagbun but their  
 body larger; keep fat easier than the Shagbun; & easier kept;  
 lay all winter while the common chicks do not. I suspect they  
 are the most profitable chicken a man can get. There are  
 getting to be a good many Guinea fow; great layers, stand the  
 climate well; healthy chicks & lay all winter. Faint turkeys  
 do excellently well. Not very many yet; some Cornish

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are raising them: the Indians have plenty. Wild turkeys  
are plenty. A man can take his rifle out most any day, &  
in our region it would not do to depend upon wild meat wholly.  
A man could not support a family so.

For B. C. Westfall. Lives on Middle Ottawa 1 1/2 miles from  
Capt. Shaw. Wife & 2 children. Came from Michigan when I  
married. My wife raised in Michigan. 10 yrs in Mich. prior to that  
in Iowa. Bought in no cattle: only 2 horses. 11 cows and 10  
hens. Came in 1st July last. Have no lumber. 5 acres taken  
my claim. Have 60 very good timber.

There are up present on the Ottawas, say 72 & creeks,  
some 50 claims, all up top: or good prairie as in the Territory.  
These claims Prairie claims with plenty of good stock water.  
Plenty of 300 & 400 hundred rails can be bought at 12¢ & delivered  
on the pond or 12¢ delivered on the pond. Choice timber claim  
can be bought at from \$500 to \$1,000 <sup>delivered</sup> & the quantity of  
lumber. Fire wood can be bought cheap not delivered at pond  
for cord. We have plenty of stone coal: some has been dried out  
Belgium: also 2 or 3 places in Millers Spgs. head of Main Ottawa  
creek: also stone coal on Middle Ottawa. Plenty of good lime  
stone rock: makes beautiful lime. It is said there is good soil of  
loam in lower part of the Main Ottawa about 1 1/2 miles from the  
Ottawa Reserve. Good building stone both lime & sand stone, coarse  
grained: plenty of it. On the Pottawatomie Creek or the Main creek  
I know of good <sup>fresh out of the</sup> ground stones, about 18 miles above Pottawatomie.  
Just above the line in Michigan on the base I know of sand & gravel  
stones said to be equal to the Huron Mill.

We have all varieties of oak & the Mulberry which makes the  
best posts in the world for plank fence, almost equal to cedar:  
also makes pretty furniture when long enough. Black walnut is plenty.  
We have varieties of <sup>of the</sup> spruce. Plenty of Poplar wood generally used  
for building shacks, or furniture. On all the Ottawas, plenty of Curled  
Maple: among the Indians 10 miles below plenty of Sugar Maple.