



NEWS

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Kansas Troubles: This Week in Territorial History June 20-26, 1854

By the 20th of June, settlers had given the name Leavenworth to a town platted on Delaware land just south of Fort Leavenworth. Officers from the fort were among the signers of the Leavenworth Association agreement, implying the Army would ignore tribal rights to the land. Another infant town along the Missouri River was begun when, according to *The St. Joseph Gazette*, “a large and respectable concourse of the citizens of Kansas Territory” met at Million’s Ferry about fifteen miles north of Weston. They eventually organized a prospective city named for Missouri Senator David Atchison. Towns sprouting along the eastern border often adopted the Salt Creek Resolutions, aligning themselves with Missouri’s slave economy and declaring abolitionists unwelcome.

In Fitchburg, Massachusetts, the Northern Division of the Worcester County Anti-Slavery Society held a meeting addressed by Lucy Stone on the afternoon of the 24th. Stone, among the most effective of the lecturers employed by the anti-slavery societies, lectured for abolition during the week, for women’s rights on her own time on weekends. A female lecturer was controversial no matter what the topic. A few months earlier the *Fitchburg Sentinel* had printed an item: “Miss Lucy Stone realize[s] \$100 per night above expenses....Who says that strong-mindedness doesn’t pay.”

Fitchburg was home to a relative of sorts, her brother’s brother-in-law, thrice over. Lucy’s brother, minister Bowman Stone married three Robinson sisters in succession, wedding a younger woman in the family after each wife’s death. Dr. Charles Robinson and Lucy Stone were thus related by marriage as well as by political principle. Robinson, who’d been elected to the California Legislature in his days as a forty-niner, was meeting in the spring with Eli Thayer about Kansas emigration. Thayer’s enthusiasm convinced Robinson to emigrate as an agent of the company. Robinson had knowledge of the territory, having spent a few weeks in Westport and ridden across the corner of Kansas on the overland route to the California gold fields. Long interested in reform and abolition, he’d earned a reputation as a man known to act on his principles. His tenure as a California Assemblyman had been short due to the fact that he was elected from a jail cell, awaiting trial for inciting a Sacramento squatters’ revolt. Several men died in the

violence, including the Mayor. Although California eventually dropped his case, he had not lingered long in the state.

In Weston, Missouri, Richard C. S. Brown arrived from Van Buren, Arkansas, to cross into the Kansas Territory and assume his new duties as Indian Agent to the Potawatomi. Brown's charge was to facilitate the tribe's transition to a smaller reserve as the Kansas Territory filled with white settlers. But Brown never made it to Kansas. On the 21st, he died of cholera in his Weston hotel room. Cholera continued to rage along the Missouri River in June with fatalities on the steamers *Sam Cloon* and *Clara*, in the Missouri towns of Independence, St. Joseph, Westport, and into the territory at settlements at Bull Creek and Wakarusa. (500)

Louise Barry, "Kansas Before 1854: A Revised Annals," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* VXXX, 1964, Pp. 209-210.

Fitchburg Sentinel, Feb 10, 1854.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Cheerful Yesterdays*, (Boston: Houghton & Mifflin & Co., 1898) Pg. 326.

National Intelligencer, June 22, 1854, Pg. 3.

Charles Robinson, *The Kansas Conflict* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1892)