"I Think I Will Like Kansas":
The Letters of Flora Moorman Heston, 1885-1886

PREFACE

DURING THE 1870s and 1880s pioneers by the thousands streamed westward across Kansas onto the Great Plains. In this semiarid area, so different from the rolling hills to the east, they built sod houses for shelter, dug wells deep in the earth for water, and used buffalo chips rather than scarce wood for fuel. Separated from their kinfolk and all they held dear, they battled blizzards, drought, tornadoes, and grasshoppers while holding fast to their dreams of prosperity and a better life in Kansas.

No one had dreams more luminous than a young wife and mother named Flora Moorman Heston, who journeyed by train with her three children from Indiana to Clark County, Kansas, in the spring of 1885. Flora’s husband Sam had gone ahead in the fall of 1884 to make a place for them, and during their separation Flora often had confided her hopes for their idyllic new life together. “I think we will be as happy as birds in a home of our own out west,” she assured him on one occasion.

After Flora and the children arrived she wrote to her relatives back home in Indiana, informing them that Kansas was as wonderful as she had imagined. Her letters were filled with descriptions of daily life in the family’s sod house, and of the garden, the crops, the neighbors, the weather, and most of all, their prospects in Kansas. “I am so glad we came west,” she told them, “for this country is bound to make its mark.”

Flora Heston’s vivid, literate letters portray life on the sod house frontier with an immediacy and a charm that have remained undimmed by the passage of time. They have been treasured through the years by her descendants, who have generously made them available for publication in Kansas History. The letters that have been selected from her correspondence are reproduced as she wrote them nearly one hundred years ago, except that some initial capitalization and ending punctuation have been supplied for clarity. Also, a few lengthy passages have been divided into shorter paragraphs for ease of reading, and occasionally some irrelevant local or family details have been omitted, as indicated by ellipsis points. Unless stated otherwise, the information on the persons mentioned in the letters (a few still remain unidentified) was supplied by Josephine Moorman Reiley, Salt Lake City, Utah (a daughter of Flora’s brother Ben Moorman), who also wrote the Introduction and the Epilogue. We are grateful also to Flora’s granddaughter Maurine Lamb Johnson, New Paris, Indiana; her great-granddaughter Judy Heston Vaughn, San Francisco, California; and to Mrs. Reiley’s daughter Martha Johnson, Idaho Falls, Idaho, for their assistance in preparing the letters for publication. —Editor.

INTRODUCTION

by Josephine Moorman Reiley

FLORA MOORMAN, a daughter of John Moorman, Jr., and Lucinda Simons Moorman, was born in Miami County, Indiana, on January 25, 1859. She grew to maidenhood on the large farm her parents had converted from the heavily forested land. Her father, as trustee of the township, employed teachers for the public schools, and he encouraged Flora to become a teacher. After his death in the spring of 1877 Flora respected his wishes and went to normal school at Mexico and Kokomo, Indiana, that summer. It was at Kokomo that her romance with Samuel Heston began to flourish. In the fall Flora went to teach school in Peoria, Indiana, where Sam’s mother and stepfather Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Weesner lived. Halfway through the school year Sam and Flora decided to wait no longer, and they

1. Flora’s letters, which had been saved by her sister Etta, were later divided between Flora’s daughter Fern and the widow of her son Fred, who had remarried after his death (see footnote 63). Years later Fred’s son Elliott discovered some of them in the back of an old desk and sent them to Mrs. Reiley. She mentioned them to Maurine Johnson, Fern’s daughter, who replied that she also had part of Flora’s letters, and thus the pieces of the puzzle fell into place. Over the years typed copies of the letters were circulated among the various family members, and the original letters were also distributed further among Flora’s descendants. The text below was prepared either from photocopies of the letters or from the originals themselves, except for the letters of May 18, 1885, December 4, 1885, February 14, 1886, February 28, 1886, and May 12, 1886, which are reproduced from the typed copies made by the family.
married on Saint Valentine’s Day, 1878. The couple first set up housekeeping in a log house on the Moorman farm and later lived near Wabash, Indiana. Their first child, George, was born on December 1, 1878, followed by Fern, born in 1881, and John, born in 1883.

In the autumn of 1884 Sam left Flora and the children to file on land in Kansas. From Amboy, Indiana, where her mother and three sisters Emma, Etta, and Elva lived, Flora faithfully wrote to her “dear husband” about the preparations for her journey and of her hopes for their new life in Kansas.

THE LETTERS
Amboy, Ind Feb. 6th, 1885

My Dear Husband:

Your letter was received this evening, and was so glad to hear from you, but sorry you are so worried in mind, but I am strong & can help battle with you for our daily bread. I think under the circumstances the best we can do is to take a claim, of course if you could have rented it would have been easier for us for awhile, but you know what it is to rent, & a home is a home. I wrote to Uncle Call this evening, & told him to get those notes cashed right away, as you wanted the money now. He told Ma Ben Smith would cash them at 12 percent & I told him to let Ben cash them at that rate if he could do no better. Now, Sam, Mother & I both think it would be best for me & the children to go to Oxford, then go through with you in the wagon to the claim. It will be an enjoyable trip for us, & I could not bear the suspense of knowing you were going through alone. I was so uneasy about you when you went before & I do want to go with you, we can go in a covered wagon, & just have a picnic, find us a claim, and then go work in earnest. I would rather do that than live up our little means, & then not know what to do next.

I was out to Nathan Pearson’s this week, & they said John Bundy has been in western Kansas this winter & he said they just build real nice houses out of sod. Just cut it like brick, & they could have them real cozy inside, & the cost is only the work you put on them. So when you get your money buy you a good team for without a good one, we can do nothing, then we will get what other things we will have to have, then we will start with our little ones, for a home of our own, be it ever so humble. We can live in a wagon until we get a house built. I suppose you know just where you can get a claim at, and I reckon it will not take so very long to drive through. As you are having such nice weather there, I tell you, we ain’t. It has snowed nearly all day, & we haven’t had any spring yet, only a few warm days.

Now I want to ask you some questions. Is it subject to droughts in Ford Co where you think of taking a claim? About how far is it to drive through to where you want to locate? Are the snakes, & other varmints very numerous? & are the wolves troublesome? Me and the children are all well except colds, & we just have an abundance of clothes to last a long time, & I think we will be as happy as birds in a home of our own out west. I have got an abundance of vegetable seeds & Jont is sending you some of that early corn that Nathan used to raise. Oh Sam, do let us make a desperate effort to get a home. We can stand hard times if we know there are better days coming.

One of Lee Rich’s sisters & her husband went to northwestern Nebraska last fall, & took a claim & this winter the thermometer stood at 42 degrees below zero & they have just burnt hay, & the children have not had any shoes this winter, just wear stockings, & old rags around their feet, but they write they are as happy as birds, & are looking for better days. Of course we have our troubles & blue times, but when we look into the lives of our neighbors, we found they have shadows also. This evening, about an hour ago, Dr. Frier-

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2. Calvin King, a hardware merchant in Wabash, Indiana, and the husband of Sam’s aunt Mary Heston.
3. Not identified, possibly related to Milt Smith (see footnote 25).
4. Oxford, Kansas, south of Wichita in Sumner County. Apparently Sam Heston went first to Sumner County; see Flora’s letter of May 31, 1885.
5. A brother of Jonathan Pearson (see footnote 7).
6. A neighbor from Peoria, Indiana.
8. Levi Rich, the husband of Sam’s sister Josephine.
moods lost a little girl, six years old, & they are nearly prostrated with grief. Now while we have our health & precious little ones, don’t let us be too much discouraged. For we know we have a Kind Father above who will ever care for us and I’m sure if we trust Him fully, we will not come to naught.

Benna’s came in after me this evening, & as I had letters to write, I did not go but George went. I want you to answer this right away. Tell me if my plan suits you, & where must we ship our goods too, Oxford or Dodge Cy. I want to see you so bad, I can’t bear to think about it, so will close hoping to see you soon.

Truly your wife, Flora M. Heston

P.S. I told Uncle Cal to write you as soon as he got the notes cashed and send you the money. By by Flo. Saturday Morning. We had a big snow of several inches last night and it is snowing hard now, doesn’t look much like spring here. Mother wants to know if the ground is miry or if there are any places where we would have to go through quick sands. Write us all you know about that as that will interest us more than anything.

Amboy, Ind.
Feb. 15, [1885]

Dear Husband Samuel:

As dinner is over and the dishes washed I will proceed to answer your kind letter. I was so glad to hear so favorable a report from you, but sorry to hear of that ragged overcoat, for I do love to hear of you being at church, for I know therein is your delight. I went to church at Amboy last Sunday & today both. We all went but mother, she has been real sick with head trouble. Dr. Frierwood was here this morning to see her, & she is better now. I don’t think Ettie is any better, she looks the worst I ever saw her. The children are all well. George stays at Benna’s all the time, they were here last evening, & George just cried to go back with him so I let him. Ben lets him ride the horses. Mary’s Pa has been visiting for a week, he looks very youthful. I have not been there yet, but aim to go in a few days, then Benna will take me to Kokomo the last of the week. I have not heard from Wabash since I left there, but I write every week. I am so glad I left, & came here. I am enjoying myself so much better.

Nearly every body I see are going to Kansas or wanting to go, lots of them to take claims, so I think just as the weather will admit you had better go on and take your claim if the money has not come for I am sure those notes will be cashed, & I feel confident we will succeed in our western home.

Every one is envying that warm weather you are having, while we are half freezing here, but I notice whenever we have it colder here, it is cooler there.

Well, well, and we have been married seven years, and it seems like it has been nearly that long since I saw you (my precious valentine). The girls all got some yesterday, & I tell you Elva was mad, Emma & Ettie’s were nice ones, but Elva’s was fearful. Well, I will stop & get Johny to sleep.

9. E. K. Frierwood, M.D., a graduate of the Rush Medical College in Chicago and a physician in Amboy since 1877. History of Miami County, p. 544.
10. Flora’s brother Ben Moorman.
11. Mary Moorman was the wife of Ben Moorman. Her father is the “Mr. Hays” mentioned later in the letter.
Monday morning. And it's fearful cold again. I just know I will like Kansas, for I am so tired of cold weather. I have got lots of garden seeds, & am going to get a lot more. Uncle William Thomas12 said he didn't think we would see very hard times if we get good land, he asked me so many questions, about you and the country. Mother is better this morning. . . . I knit her a hood & am now making Ette a dress. I have had 4 dresses given to me this winter & have about 14 dresses, & the children have lots of good clothes, so we will not have to get any clothes for quite a while. I have not been discouraged about our prospects at all. Mr. Hays13 said some of his acquaintances went to Ford Co Kan. & were well pleased with that county. I suppose the drouth is not in that part. Leah Powell14 & Ida McCoy (Frank's wife) 15 are going to Kansas this spring & want to go when I do. I feel certain I will have company, but would not dread to start alone. Ben aims to go to Peru today to sell his grey team. Johnny talks a very little, but he is ever so cute & pretty. Mother thinks he is the prettiest of all the children. Ette said to tell you she used the chair you gave her all the time, & takes it with her whenever she goes off on a visit.

About how long will it take you to take your claim & build if you want to? Just make me a dugout, for a few years. We had better have a poorer house, & have a cow, & farming implements and especially a good stout team, get a good team if we don't have anything else! Aunt Beck16 said oxens were all they used when they first came to this country, and they were just the thing, but then use your own judgment. You know what you need.

. . . I tell you there are lots of people envying us our prospects, & I think it looks very bright myself. We are all well, & feel so glad you are the same. It is so cold that I am sitting in the back part of the room & there is a big fire up, & my fingers are so cold I can hardly write. Well Elva is nearly starting to school & I must close. . . . With much love I remain as ever your wife.

FLORA MAY HESTON

Amboy, Ind.
Feb. 18, 1885

MY DEAR HUSBAND:

Your letter was received yesterday, & I suppose you are now in the region of the claim, & Probably commencing a little sod house. We are all well. Fern was sick yesterday but is well today. Elva is feeling bad today. George is at Benna's this week, and having a good time. I hope you will keep well and keep up a good heart, & as soon as you are ready for us, we will be more than ready. I was at Will Yates' yesterday, & they think they will go to Hodgeman Co. Kan. in a few weeks, to take an abandoned claim of some of their relatives, and if they do they will charter a railroad car, & said, I could put my things in their car. Now don't you think it would be a good Idea for me to get a milch cow & ship her, or can you get cows their cheap? Benna will look around & try and get a cow on time untill after harvest, then our note will be due, & Mother Moorman says we need not pay for the buggy until we get able, so we will have some wheat money, then. Don't you think it would be a good Idea to ship some potatoes too if I can in a car? I want you to write & let me know what to ship through in the eatable line. Did you think you could do better to buy your team in Dodge Cy? I thought you were intending to go through with a team. I do hope you are getting along all right. I believe we will make it if we get a cow, & I will get some chickens here & send. If we can do it that way, I will have to have some more money if you can spare it. I still have $25 & am aiming to keep it all too until I start. Mother is footing all my small bills now. If you need all your money probably I can borrow some of Debbie,18 until after harvest.

I have just been reading a paper on South-

12. The uncle of Flora's best girl friend Lucy Younce, and thus no relation to Flora.
13. See footnote 11.
14. A close friend of Ida McCoy (see footnote 15) who lived in Converse, Indiana.
15. Ida and Frank McCoy lived on a farm adjoining the Moorman farm near Amboy.
16. Rebecca Elliott, the wife of Sam's uncle Jake Elliott.
17. An Amboy neighbor.
18. Sam's step-sister Deborah, born in 1855 to Nathan Weesner and his first wife Elizabeth, who died in January 1862. Weesner and Sam's mother Mary Heston were married in August 1862 (Sam's father had died in 1858). History of Wabash County, Indiana (Chicago: John Morris, Printer, 1886; reprint, Evansville, Ind.: Unigraphic, Inc., 1970), p. 272.
ern Kansas and it says Dodge Cy is the hardest hole they were ever at, & there were no land cultivated within 20 miles of it. When I take this letter to mail this evening, I will inquire of Jno. Zimmerman19 about the time of the day to start & the best route. I do not want to go to Wabash to take the train it is too muddy to go through, & such a bad way to go around. If the Marion Colony go I will go with them & can get greatly reduced rates.20 I do so want to succeed out west, if we do have hard times dont lets give it up, for if we get good land we can surely make it. Every body have the Kansas Fever. Becca Neusbaum21 was here all day today, they aim to go west next spring and take a claim, think they would like to settle by us. Will we have very close neighbors & what, oh what, will we burn for fuel, but I reckon there is always a way provided, at least there always has been. Well I must close. Fern talks almost constantly of Papa, she will wake up in the night & talk about you. The children all want to see you so bad as well as their Mother.

Uncle Jess22 left here today. He got a letter from Uncle Thomas Moorman23 of Cal. & he had heard we were going to Kansas, & he just begged & plead for us to go to California, & gave Kan. the worst name I ever heard. I think he must have an ax to grind. I have not heard from Wabash since I came from Kokomo. We are having gloomy days now, & rather cool. The snow is still on the ground. I believe I will like it where it is warmer. Ettie says tell you to hurry up & get the dirt-dobber nest done for she wants to come out, & if there is any bachelers around she would like to form their acquaintance.

I must close as it is getting dusky, write soon & often as I think of you continually & pray for you often.

Lovingly Your Wife

Flora M. Heston

Amboy, Ind Mar 29th, 85

Dear Husband Samuel:

Your most welcome letter was received last evening and was so glad to hear from you, as I was afraid your exposure would make you sick. I am about well again only real weak, but think I will be able to start on the 6th. I came from Bennas on a real cold day & took such a cold it threw me into a hard chill.

I got a letter from Ma this week stating our goods were started last week, but will send her letter to you. Well Sam, I think our prospects look very encouraging for future success. I feel better about it since I got your last letter than I have at all. I am sure we will be happy in our little sod house. I do not feel like it will be going away from all we hold deary, but I know I shall enjoy it, then we will be so glad to all be together again, we will not think of the privations. As for the hard work, it is the very thing we would do be we any place. I think you did well to get your house done so quick, was glad you have employment while waiting for us, as the time will not pass so slowly. The children cant hardly wait until we start to see Papa. How about the water, can we get water handy & how close is our claim to a stream?

Will Yates and Dr. Friemood talk of going next week to look for homes. Yates will go to Hodgeman [County] first, then on to Meade [County], if he gets suited, he will come back, charter a car & move. They said I could send a cow & other things with them. I feel the worst about getting our note cashed. I wonder if you could borrow some of Irvin Stanley24 if they fail to get it cashed. Do you hear from them any more? I got a letter from Beck last week, they were very anxious about you. If the well wishes of our friends would make us succeed we surely will. Lute Younce25 was here last evening & I was telling her about our claim & she said, “now aint we fools for staying. I tell you, we wouldn’t” she said if they was able to go. Ollie Jones26 & children were here yesterday, & it just made her sick to think they werent able to go, so you see here are lots of people envying us.

19. The Amboy postmaster.
20. The Clark County Clipper, Ashland, reported on February 26, 1885, that “E. C. Murray, of Marion, Indiana . . . is in town. He is looking over Clark county with a view to selecting a location for a colony of about twenty-five families who expect to come to Kansas.” Later Flora wrote that the group was going to Meade County, see her letter of March 29, 1885.
22. Jesse Moorman, a brother of Flora’s father John Moorman. There were seven Moorman brothers in all.
23. Another brother of John Moorman. Thomas Moorman had gone to California during the Gold Rush.
25. Lucy Younce, Flora’s best friend.
Ettie has just been cutting a curl off Johny's head. His hair lays in ringlets & he is so sweet. He can say papa, & when he wants out he goes to the door & hollers "Yout, Yout". . . . There are no more cases of Scarlet fever since Friermoods child died with it. We were so uneasy about our children for awhile. It looks more like spring this week than it has at all, but there is snow on the ground yet in places.

Mother went downtown the other day & got 5 yds. of shirting for the children's everyday clothes & 10 yds of muslin for me underwear. I am going to take enough provision to eat on the road & to last until we get to our claim. If you get the money & get the team before I come try & come after me with the oxens as it will save expenses. . . .

I can get potatoes for about 85 cts a bu. & Mother don't know about Bens oats yet. I don't know what my ticket will cost yet. I guess the Marion Colony are going to Meade. They are now trying to get reduced rates. It may be
possible if they get very low rates I will go with them. I will let you know if I do, in time to meet me at Dodge City. I must close now as Elva wants to take it to the office.

As ever your wife, Flora Heston

Amboy, Ind. April, 3rd [1885]

Dear Samuel,

Your welcome letter was received last eve. and found all pretty well. I am about well, but am not very strong yet. Well I still aim to start on the 6th unless it is a very stormy day or some of us are sick. Bennas sister in law is there visiting & he will take us both to Peru to take the train. They will come here and stay all night on Sunday night, then go to Peru the next day.

I have shipped all my cooking utensils so we will not need to buy anything but the stove, and no other furniture unless some chairs. I do not know whether Yates is going or not. I went to see him yesterday but they had gone to Peru.

Oh I will be so glad to be with you again but it won’t be long any more. I think you must be strong to walk so far in one day. Sam, I don’t believe we can do without a team; if that note can’t be cashed, dont you think it will be a good idea to borrow the money to buy a team? Would $75 be enough with what we have to get a yoke of oxen? Mother said if we could get that much of Uncle Jake Elliott, she will go our security and would want us both to sign the note, so if we were unfortunate in paying it of course it would come out of my estate, which of course would be right. I guess I will write to Uncle Jake this morning as we need the team right away . . . . I never saw so many people dissatisfied with Ind. before. I believe it is because the winter was so cold & long. It is cold this morning & snowed some last night. George has been at Bens all this week. The rest of the children are all well.

Well, I must close hoping to see you in less than a week.

By, by. As ever Your Wife, Flora Heston

At Home, April 12th, 1885

Dear Mother and Sisters:

As this is sabbath morning I will proceed to write you some news of our new home: We got here about two hours before sundown on Thursday, and I think I never enjoyed a ride so well in my life. It was a beautiful day, almost too warm for comfort, and we came through the most beautiful country I ever saw. I could not see the country very well on the train. The country here is just beautiful here, and by the way, we have the best claim around here. It is the only one but what has sand hills or lagoons on them. Milt Smith came here yesterday, and took claim here. He will board with us until he gets his house done and his family comes. There are 14 houses in sight, & only one frame, the rest sod. I tell you ours ain’t to be grinned at when we get it plastered & floored. They plaster with gyspum, a kind of sement they get when digging wells. There is a well being dug on the quarter joining us. They went 56 feet & have struck quicksand so of course they are close to water, and are waiting for the man to get lumber to wall it. We will dig a well before long. Sam carries water ½ mile from a lagoon, it tastes pretty well after it sits a while. Well, I must tell you about our garden. Sam spaded up three large beds yesterday, & I set out onions, planted peas & beans & we were aiming to plant a lot more, but the wind raised so we couldn’t plant any small seeds. Yesterday was right cool and very windy, but this morning the sun shines warm & it is still. I think we surely have a good farm. Sam spaded where the sod had been taken off for the house & the ground worked up almost like an ash heap. I think I will like Kansas. We are on the Clark Co flats it was a part of the Indian Reservation but they had more land than they wanted so put it in trust to the government to sell for them. So there are no

28. A friend from Amboy.
29. The northern part of Clark County was known as "the flats," while the southern part, where water at shallow depths could be obtained, was termed "the breaks." "It's Worth Repeating" column, High Plains Journal, August 13, 1899.

27. Sam’s uncle, married to Rebecca Elliott ("Aunt Beek").
homesteads to be got here." Irvin took a claim here, & has hired Sam to break 10 acres of ground for him & build him a sod house. Him & Ruth will live here about 4 mo. this summer, then go back to Hesper & teach this winter.31 We got a draft from Uncle Jake Elliott last evening. It will not get a team but we can get all the money of Irvin we need, and he wants Sam to work it out, if not the first year, he wants it being improved all the time. The price for breaking sod now is 9.00 per acre, & they think it will go higher, as there are so few good teams here. Sam has gone to look at a yoke of oxen. (Just come in at the door as I was writing it.) He found the oxen to his notion but the price was $165—an awful price but the way things sell here. Sam will write to Irvin for $100 today & I expect will take the oxens as a yoke sold the other day for $175, as they are scarce. Well, I expect you will be surprised when I tell you the children are barefooted and a happier set of children I think I never saw. Johnny goes your to his hearts content. We haven’t any of us been sick a particle since we left at Amboy. When we went down to breakfast at Dodge Cy. some one went up to our room & took mine & Johnys mittens & my little bible out of my valise. I had plenty of provisions to last me on the road. At Quincy while we were waiting at the Depot, Fern wanted a doll & I rolled up a wrap for one, & she got up on the seat & sung to it for half an hour, her best, & I couldn’t make her hush. In a while after there was a gentleman came up to her & said I believe this is the little girl that sang, & she said yes, she could sing some- more, so he took her on his knee, & she sung again, then they made a penny collection for her, & everybody laughed. The children were noticed so much on the road. I saw seven women with their little children, all coming west to meet their husbands. I got off at Kansas Cy & the conductor helped me on another train not 12 ft away bound for Dodge.32 Oh I did hate to wait so bad at Quincy. I just hate Quincy.33 If I had got my ticket via St. Louis, I would have got to Kansas Cy long before I did. I had to cross the Miss. river after night, it rained whilst at Quincy & I could not get out to get a good look there. Just merely saw it, that was all. I was so disappointed, but I saw many other rivers on the road, traveled on the bank of the Arkansas for miles.

[Mid-April 1885]

. . . . I have thought so much about Ettie since I left, & I do hope she is improving. I do wish she was here. I expect if we had a good spay glass, we could see the mountains. We have very cool nights will have to sleep under heavy covers all summer, on account of being so close to them. But the air is so pure, it does not make us sick like it would in Indiana. The people are just pouring in here all the time. There were five Missourians came yesterday with their families, looking for a home. Yates can find plenty of preemption land if they come right away but they don’t want to be too long about it. I do wish they would come, for if we had a cow & some chickens, it would be such a help. . . . if you could get a cow on time & some one is coming to Dodge, find out how much they will charge & we will send you the money, as we have over $90 left. Meat is 14 cts a lb. & lard about the same so a cow would save us all those bills. Tell Mary that plate of butter is the most precious thing we have. The box that is missing has all my dishes in & we have been eating on pie pans & with spoons have just two knives. We don’t feel uneasy that we will lose it; if we do we will get

30. More precisely, the Osage Indians, bowing to the pressure of encroaching settlement, had agreed to cede their large reserves along the southern border of Kansas to the United States in an 1865 treaty and a subsequent congressional enactment in 1870. The proceeds from the sale of the land benefited the Osage endowment funds. As Flora notes, under these agreements the provisions of the Homestead Act did not apply within the former Osage territory; all of Clark County except the extreme western part had been Osage land. See Paul Wallace Gates, Fifty Million Acres: Conflicts over Kansas Land Policy, 1854-1890 (Braun, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954), pp. 194-229, and H. Craig Moore and William E. Urrutia, The End of Indian Kansas: A Study of Cultural Revolution, 1854-1871 (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), pp. 121-132.

31. Irvin and Ruth Stanley were the first teachers at the Hesper Academy, which had been established in the fall of 1884 by the Society of Friends in the Quaker community of Hesper, four miles southeast of Eudora in Douglas County. Irvin Stanley also served as the first principal. S. Lindley Stanley, "A History of the Quaker Settlement at Hesper, Kansas," Master's thesis, Pittsburg State Teachers College, (1937), p. 31; Eudora Community Heritage of Our USA Bicentennial, 1776-1976 [Eudora: Eudora Bicentennial Committee, 1971, pp. 120-121.

32. For the details of Flora's trip, see her letter of May 21, 1885, especially footnote 43.

paid for it. My [sewing] machine came all right. Sam brought in a nice pin cushion cactus & a flat cactus yesterday. This is the native home of the cactus. I do wish Ettie had them, probably we will have a few specimens after a while. The prairie is beginning to get a little green. We have what is called mirages here. They look in the distance like a large lake of water & are beautiful. Oh yes, Elva, I have a fellow for you, out here, his farm joins ours & I tell you he is good looking & smart.

. . . You had better come out and make a mash. . . . You must write & keep me posted, for you know I am interested. You need not send any oats or potatoes, as Sam got a bushel of Potatoes at $1.65 & it is too late to sow oats. There has been four young gentlemen just visited us. All have taken claims, all rather nice young men, they were here about an hour. I don't think we will get lonesome. They call themselves bachelors. You said I must not be lost at home, but I am. It seems like the sun raises in the north. George has found his calling (picking up buffalo chips or B.S. coal). They make a quicker & hotter fire than any dry beach or sugar, only they soon burn up. There is not a particle of stench about them, and they save coal. Well, I have not been living here long enough to know whether I like Kansas or not but I am more than pleased with our prospects. I think the prospect is good for good crops, & when Sam gets his team he can make $6.00 a day breaking for the others when ours is in the ground. I will send you a few spears of grass that grew in our sod house on the wall on the inside, also a little virgin soil that I got in our front yard. Tell Uncle Jess that I want him to inspect it & let me know his opinion of it. I didn't work it with my fingers either to get it fine, it was just as I picked it up.

Please write soon, Your daughter, Flora

Sunday Morning, Apr. 27th, 85
Dear Folks at Home
Your letter was rec'd last night, the first I had heard from home, but it was missent & was ten days on the road. I was getting very anxious to hear from you. We are all pretty well, except colds. We have had a cold rainy week and as our roof is not very good, it made a damp floor on the sod, so some of us took cold. We are having beautiful weather now. Our garden is growing nicely. We have onions, peas, beans, radishes & cabbage up, but alas, they are on another man's farm. The survey that we were all located by here has proven to be wrong, and the settlers held a meeting, appointed Sam as chairman, and concluded to have the County surveyor come & survey again, so they appointed Sam to go & see him, he did so, was gone two nights but got the surveyor. He commenced this morning & by the old government stones laid 19 yrs. ago, the survey moves us west & south so that we only own about 40 acres of our original claim. We were awful blue awhile but feel better now. We really get better land (120 acres of bottom land) but it doesn't lay near so pretty, but we have a nicer building place. We lose our house, but get a well 75 ft deep, & a frame house, but of course they will move the house, & Sam will help the man, Mr. Thomas, dig another well, oh but it has caused a racket here, but can't be helped. Nearly everybody lose their houses. Milt Smiths was nearly done & he loses it, but gets a better farm. Irvin's farm is helped wonderfully. They will be here in six weeks and I expect will stay at our house most of the time, we want them to. They teach again this winter. Well Sam got his team last week, but not the ones I wrote to you about. He got oxens 2 years old, but nice good ones well broke, a plow & a good wagon for $165 and he does five acres of breaking, at $2.50 an acre as part pay. Sam thinks he got a bargain. The oxen are fat. He bought them of that young fellow that joins us that I wrote to Elva about. His two sisters & husbands came last week & all have claims joining ours. Sam & I called on them last evening, all young married people without families. One of the women is so pretty, but not as pretty as the boy, but he is awful hard, swears like a trooper, but nearly everybody swears in Kansas. Profanity is the prevailing sin, but all are real neighborly. Smith still boards with us & the surveyor has been here over Sunday, & some one calling real often my bread customers for instance. I sell bread to the fellows that batch around here, have sold $4.50 worth in less than two weeks. One party from Pennsylvania get bread

34. The Hestons' neighbor C. C. Thomas; see footnote 58.
of me. I sell three small loaves for a quarter. Sam has made us some furniture, double bunks one above another, a plank table & a long bench. I like my stove so well. We get roller flour at three dollars a hundred & I get such nice bread. I can more than keep us in flour by selling bread. One party furnishes the flour & gave me 25 cts a baking. I am glad to have something to keep me busy. Sam will get to plowing this week. No one did any improving last week except one man & he said he'd not be moved, & just kept on, highered a big seller dug, and a well, & he lost it all.

I don't think Johnny knew Sam, but Fern saw him the first one & said Oh Sam did you build a sod house for us in Kansas. George made it a special point to tell the people on the road, We were going to a sod house. We had prairie chicken for supper one evening. They are thick here & antelope are seen every day. One came in 300 yds of our house one morning & stayed there 1/2 hour, but we had no gun. Irvin will bring his gun when he comes, & will later take some stereoscopic views of this beautiful county. I am so glad we came west, for this country is bound to make its mark. A few evenings ago two fellows came to our house that had been travelling one month looking for claims & had found nothing they wanted until they struck our country. Then they were perfectly elated and took the claims that Sam had been holding for Jont and David Votaw.35 Sam killed a rattlesnake last week with six rattles and buttons. I haven't seen any yet. The wild flowers are beginning to bloom nicely. George said to tell Grandma she never paid him for stacking that wood & he would like for her to send him a vegetable letter. (I guess he meant a registered.) He gives us away too bad, last night at the table we were talking about what we liked to eat & George said the first meal he ever eat, he didn't know what it was, he was a little baby then. It just tickled us all nearly to death, the surveyor and all just laughed. Our box of goods haven't come yet. Sam wants to go to Dodge Cy this week to see after them & Irvin sent us $100 by express & Sam has to go & get that at Dodge. . . . . .

Yes, my didies held out all right, while I was waiting a[t] Quincy, I spread them out to dry in the privy. After I got here, I didn't have water to wash them for two weeks, then it took me two days, & the dirtiest washing I ever saw. Sam hadn't had any done since he left Davids. The first day I washed, it was terribly windy, & I had no lines stretched. I had to spread them on the grass. Just as soon as I would let go of them they would blow up into a wad, so I got mad after awhile & took the pan of clothes & gave them a big through in the air, & they came down in as good shape as if I had spread them, but they soon dried then they commenced blowing away. A couple of didies started, & George after them, he run about a quarter of a mile, & started back a crying, but the didies went on. I just stood & laughed and laughed. I know I have laughed more since I came to Kansas than I ever did in Indiana. I guess because I feel so well. I haven't had the neuralgia or been sick since I came. Well, I must close as I have a chance to mail it now. Write soon, & come and see us as soon as you can.

As ever,

FLORA MAY HESTON.

Sunday morning, May 10th, 1885

DEAR MOTHER AND SISTERS:

As I wrote to Bennas last Sunday, I will write to you today. We are all in the best of health, although having cool and windy weather. I expect you have had it cold as the wind came from the North East. Well, I have got good news to tell you, we struck water in our well day before yesterday at ninety-three feet deep, but got good water and plenty of it, and we were so well tickled. We were getting uneasy as at another place, they had dug at 195 feet and gave up.36 Ours is the only well dug to

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35. A member of the Votaw family of Amboy.
36. The newspaper published at nearby Appleton (see footnote 51) boasted some six months later that “water is accessible at easy depths varying from 35 to 60 feet,” which seems an overly optimistic assertion based on the Heston’s experience. Appleton Era, January 14, 1886.
water in seven miles of us but there will be several more dug soon now. When we get able to get a wind pump, won’t we be flying? Well, I have been in Kansas one month and I guess it has been as happy a one as I have ever passed, in spite of the inconveniences. Oh, I tell you, it does seem nice to have a home and it is such a pretty one too. Sunday evening Milt Smith has come from Fowler and brought our mail, a letter from Ruth and two of Ma’s papers from Wabash. She sends us papers real often and they are like an oasis in the desert; also a seed catalogue from Ferry.

Well now, I will try to answer your questions. We are eight miles from Fowler and five miles from Sand Creek, the nearest stream, but we get our wood from there, green cottonwood is what I cook with. Fowler is not between here and Dodge, but is west. Dodge is due north 20 miles and 4 east. We are one mile east of the Meade County line. Our county is all settled up and with good homes and enterprising people, I believe. When we build again, we will have neighbors in 60 rods.

The lady, Mrs. Thomas and her sister called a little while this evening, they are nice intelligent ladies, both younger than I am. Sam is well pleased with his oxen. He has several acres broke at home and has three broken at Irvin’s and Smith has broke some for himself. Sam has been hindered a good deal with finishing the well; we had to curb about 48 feet with lumber, and that took money, but it had to be done. Our garden does well, we have onions to use and peas six inches high. I suppose you have had an abundance of rain. We have had just a plenty. I haven’t seen any mud since I left Indiana. The prairies are perfectly green and covered with the prettiest flowers. The children take my Inneh basket and all three go flower gathering and come in laden. I see antelope nearly every day. The children are all hearty and Johnny talks a good deal he says “No” but can’t say “Yes” but nods his head with a vengeance. We are planting an abundance of vegetables and will raise some buckwheat for winter bread so if we just had a cow we would get along fine. Everything is getting so high in the eatable line since the war in Europe. We kept the County Surveyor while surveying but did not have to help pay him and got 75 cents besides I have sold about $7 worth of bread. I only bake six loaves at a time every other day now for the party that furnishes their own flour. I am planting lots of onion seeds as everything we can sell will bring a good price. There has been a town started in our township called Appleton. There are so many Indians here that they call this valley Indiana; about five out of six are from Indiana. I must close as it is getting late. Write soon and often.

**Flora, Sam and Children**

I will send those rattles—there was one more but it broke. Elva, Why, oh Why don’t you write those letters that you said you would? I am getting awfully hungry to hear about those young swains of the masculine gender. You girls might all write occasionally to your sister.

**Flora**

May 21, 1885

**Dear Mother & Sisters:**

This leaves us all in good health and hope it will find you all improving. We are having real warm weather with frequent heavy rains, don’t hurt as much as it soon soaks down to the sand. Our corn is doing so well, and there is very little of it missing. Sam thinks of letting Smith plow on the shares, and give it a good hoeing. We have over a peck of beans planted, and melons, and squash and pumpkin seeds planted without number, and all up & doing well. We have a few early potatoes about six in. high but our late ones are not up much. We have 12 or 14 acres broke at home and about five for Irvin and Smith. The little oxens are slow but sure, & we have not fed them a thing since we got them. Sam has to dig our neighbor a well as deep as ours was when we got it, & he has Smith plowing while he works in the well, so he has not paid any money yet, but said he would. They can’t collect some money that is coming to them, & Ret can’t come until

37. The Hestons settled in the Lakeview neighborhood about six miles southwest of the new town of Appleton. Appleton Era, June 24, 1886; see also, footnote 38.

38. In late March 1885 a group of men primarily from Illinois and Kansas surveyed and staked off the site of Appleton and organized a town company. Returning for their families, they began building houses and settling the town in mid-April. Appleton Era, January 7, 1886.

39. Ret Smith, Milt’s wife.
they can get money, Milt works all the time. I
tell you our valley is all settled and being
improved wonderful fast. They are beginning
to jump claims, here, and we got uneasy about
Irvin's claim and had Ruth to come down be-
fore school closed, as she came and she was
here last Wednesday a week, just in time as
there was a man jumped a claim in sight of
them the same week she came, where the
family had not moved. Sam is building them a
frame house to live in this summer as they will
teach this winter. Irvin will be here this week.
I do wish you could all have been here this
morning. There was a drove of about 500
ponies camped in about 1/2 mile of our house
last night; & this morning we all went & saw
them, it was a grand sight; there were several
little colts amongst them. They had come 1100
miles, from the southern border of Texas, and
were taking them to Dodge for sale. All the
cattlemen in Texas and the Indian Ty. get
their supplies at Dodge, & there is going to be
a Railroad run from there to the Territory, this
summer, it will come within a few miles of us,
and Oh won't it be a help to our country.40
Claims will be sold for several thousand dol-
ars this fall and at proving up time, but ours is
not for sale. We aim to take a homestead when
we find a good one,41 while we are out here
going through the privations, we had just as
well get all there is in it.

Milt got a letter from Ret last night,—
Rachel42 is coming in the fall, with a chartered
car, so you will please send us some chairs, as
we are getting awfully stoop shouldercd sitting
on boxes. Sam made me a cupboard out of a
goods box, & I am the proudest woman in
Kansas. By the way we got our box of goods a
week ago, there were several dishes broken,
amongst the rest, my big round scalloped top
glass dish that I got before I was married. A
neighbor brought them out from Dodge for us.
We just have the best neighbors, we ever had.
The man that got our house will help Sam
build the walls for our new house. Sam thinks
he can build next week, and use all the lumber
that is in this house. The way we get water out
of our well, we have 105 feet of roof, and a
bucket on each end of it with a pulley on a
scantling 8 ft. above the well, & when you pull
down on one rope, it draws the other one up,
so we get water without much labor, & no
danger of the children falling in whatever.
Ruth & I thought we would draw water one
day & instead of pulling down we pulled up a
bucket full by main strength only, & the men
nearly bursted laughing when we told them
how we drew it.

Sunday evening. While we were eating din-
ner Mr. Thomas & wife came & stayed awhile,
& after they left, Sam & I took a walk over our
farm also saw a herd of cattle that are herded
about a mile from our house. We take a walk of
about two or three miles nearly every Sunday.
I should feel decidedly cooped up if I was
back in Indiana. I want to see the folks real
bad, but don't care to see the state any more.
I hope some of you will come to see us ere long.
I expect I will get homesick this winter. Ruth
brought us 125 cabbage plants & Irvin is going
to bring us ½ dz chickens, & sweet potatoes if
he can get them.40

... You wanted to
know my route from Peru. I went to Decatur.
Just got off of one train & on to another, then
on to Quincy via Springfield, then to Kansas
Cy. via Macon, Chillicothe & Cameron. Tell
Aunt Jemima that I thought of them awful hard
while going so near them. Then from K. Cy.
through Topeka, Osage Cy., Emporia, Great
Bend and on to Dodge, where I was awful,
awful glad to get off.43 By the way, Clark
and Meade Cos. are going to be organized, & the
county seats are to be established, & I guess

40. Appleton, citizens indeed felt that their prospects for a
railroad were bright. The projected "Cattle King's Railroad,"
which proposed to run from Dodge City to the boundary of
the Indian Territory following the established cattle trail, was
gaining great excitement. Also, the Denver, Memphis and Atlantic Railway
(DM&A) was planning to build a line along the northern edge of
Appleton (see the map of Clark County) and was pushing toward
Kingman, several counties to the east, to the end the Cattle King
remained only a "paper railroad," and the DM&A stopped short of
Appleton. The north the DM&A constructed part of the Missouri
Pacific main line which linked Kansas City and Pueblo. William
Cory Best, "Alakal Trails, or Social and Economic Movements
of the Texas Frontier, 1846-1900" (Dallas: The Southwest Press,
1930), pp. 211-217; R. E. Reynolds, Illustrated Southern Kansas:
An Industrial Publication Devoted to the History of Kingman
(Kingman: Daily and Weekly News, 1877), p. 49; A. Bower Sugar-
son, "Building the Main Line of the Missouri Pacific Through
Kansas," Kansas Historical Quarterly, Topeka, v. 21, no. 3 (Spring,

41. Land in the extreme western portion of Clark County was
available for homesteading, as it lay beyond the boundary of the
former Osage territory (see footnote 30).

42. Rachel Ridgway, the mother of Ret Smith.

43. Flora probably took the Quincy, Hannibal and Toledo line
of the Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific Railway from Peru, Indiana, to
Quincy, Illinois. From there she would have gone on the Hannibal
and St. Joseph Railroad to Kansas City, and from Kansas City to
Dodge City via the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. For schedules
and routes, see the Bend McNally Official Railway Guide, pp.
202, 251, 318.
Fowler will be a Co. Seat of Meade without doubt, & a prospect of a Co. Seat at Appleton in Clark, & in our township, about 7 miles from us. That town will be very apt to get the R. R. as it is in the route to the point in the Indian Ty. where the road will run too.

Irvin sent us a box of maple seed, last evening, and Sam planted an enormous lot of peach seed in Sumner Co. last fall, & we are aiming to set out Cottonwood trees all around our farm, & in 10 yrs we will have a beautiful fine farm. We are going to set out 10 acres of timber and have the buildings in the center so we will be protected from the winds. I do not notice the wind much any more but it was billious at first. When it blows hard, it raises the roof on the north about 6 inches. I haven't got a letter from Bennies yet, tell them I am expecting a letter.

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DEAR FOLKS AT HOME:

Your letters were received this week, and were so glad to get them. We are all pretty well. Johny was right sick yesterday, but is all right this morning, also Sam has been not very well for the last week, he has been building our other house and has to do so much heavy lifting of sod, that is bad for his old complaint. Irvin & Milt both helped him. They are putting on the second coat of plaster today, so we will move into it this coming week. We are living with Irvins now, moved here on Thursday. They took the roof off of our old house & we had to leave it. Our new one faces the east, also a door in the west, with a window in the north and south. The well is southwest of the house about two rods. We have two long boxes in the wall, one is my cupboard, and the other is for hanging up my cooking utensils. Come & see us when we get moved. Don't you think we will be tony?

We had the best rain last night & everything does grow so fast. Ret Smith came last Tuesday, and she said the sweet corn here was better than the corn back in Ind. and everything was planted so late here too, but over in the Fowler valley there is corn as high as a
horses back. The corn, beans & vines all look so healthy, we have watermelon vines running, and you ought to see what a big patch we have. They say this can't be beat for melons. We have over 100, soft maple trees up, and growing so nice, our cabbage looks well too, but I don't believe we will raise any potatoes, the bugs just eat them up into the ground. The potato bugs here are about as big as a cricket. Sam says twice as large & in an hours time they can destroy a patch. Our early garden did not do much good, except the onions. They all come up & looked so well awhile, then all turned yellow & wilted down, but we have had a plenty of rain so far. We want to sow some buckwheat, if we can get the seed. The grain man at Fowler has sent off for seed but can't find any, now if Benna can find any in the country, I do wish he would send us some.

We have a prospect of getting to milk a cow from a herd as Sam is acquainted with the owner, and I think some buckwheat cakes would help out amazingly with cornbread this winter.

One of our oxens has been lame for two weeks, & Sam took that opportunity & built our house. Milt commenced plowing him this morning for the first. We are having lots of hot weather now and expect it will get hot & hotter, but the nights are nice and cool.

Sunday Eve. And this is quarterly meeting day with you, oh how often did I think of you all, and did wish I could be there, but we spent the day very pleasantly. We have a Sabbath School in about 1½ mi. Sam is Superintendent. We have a full school, & a good deal of interest is taken. We go with the oxens, everybody dress well, & all are real sociable & nice. Our School is going to celebrate the 4th at Sand Creek, take our dinners and spend the day, but What, oh What will we take? Irvin thinks maybe he can kill some prairie chickens between now and then. Milt Smith and Ret came here for dinner. She got a letter from home last night. Well, I can imagine how tired you are tonight.

You spoke of rattlesnakes. Yes there are a good many here, but the grass is not high as I supposed it was, it is only about six in, high, just regular buffalo grass, and the snakes are plainly seen & then they always let you know when they are around. I have never seen one alive, and only one dead one that Sam killed in about 100 yds. of the house.

We got a letter from Ma Weesner Sat. night. She said her & Pa were talking of going to quarterly meeting. You must write & tell me all the particulars about it. I can imagine how beautiful the girls looked with their new dresses. Poor Ettie, she didn't get a swiss dress but I suppose she didn't want it. I think her dress was just beautiful. I am glad I have good clothes to wear as people dress well.

Our Township & County elections are over, Ashland got the Co. seat. Englewood sent a man to our neighborhood to hire two men to vote for him for Co. Seat, so the man hired Sam & another man offered them a lot apiece if things work or two if Successful, if they were defeated so when the election was over, Sam got a card to come & pick out his lot, & he could have a deed to it, but he is too busy to go yet. I wish you could see our farm and house, I know you would be glad we came out here if you could.

Yesterday Sam & I were going through the cornfield, & by straightening up the leaves some of it reaches my waist, & the sod is rotting fast. Irvin says we have a richer soil than they have in the eastern part of Kansas. Ma said our wheat was pretty good on the farm and if we can collect our notes when due we will get along very well this winter. They all say out here if we have a plenty of rain in June, we are all right, and we think probably we will raise enough provisions to carry us through.

Well, George is with his Pa. Fern is swinging, & Johnny is laying on his back under the bed crying for tea. I took a little water & sweetened it & dropped in a little sassafrass bark & offered it to him, but he didn't propose to drink any such stuff for tea. The other day it was raining and he came in and said, "Ma, ain my eat." He can say "no" but when he means "yes," he just nods his head with vehemence too. His hair is so curly, but he is tanned so fearful bad, I just can't keep his bonnet on him. But everybody is tanned out here, although we do not have many windy days now.

45. The Appleton correspondent to the Clark County Clipper reported in the July 2, 1886, issue: "We have a Sunday school every Sunday at 3 o'clock, and singing school at 5 o'clock. 63 scholars; 54 ladies."
And so Mr. Nuzum has the Kansas fever, too. Well, I think Kansas is certainly the home for the poor man. I believe in a few years we will know what it is to have a good home, plenty around us & something for a rainy day. (I feel it in my bones that way.) Sam will start a hedge all around the farm next spring from the seed, and this fall when Irwins get back to Hesper, they will send us some sprouts of all kinds of small fruits, pieplants and the like. They can get them for nothing from their friends there. We have our plans laid how we are going to have an orchard, garden, yard & everything fixed and laid off & even have a draft made for a nice frame house when we get able to build. Sam has commenced digging a cellar about 10 feet from the west door, will dig it 5 ft. deep & then sod it up a peace & cover it with limbs, then a good coat of sod, it is 6 by 10 feet and will be handy to keep winter provisions in if we have any.

I forgot to tell you Sam was elected Township treasurer at our township election, but hasn’t any business to attend to yet.46

By the way, just to retire your anxieties, if you have any on that score, I would say there is no prospects of any babies at our house. Well, I wish that I could see you all, do not think but what I will some day Would just be glad to see you all living out here, for your health’s sake if for nothing else. I haven’t been sick since I came not even neuralgia.

Flora M. Heston.

Appleton, Kansas
Dec. 8, 1885

Dear Relatives, One and All:
I have the children all washed, combed and dressed and myself, so I will proceed to answer your letter. All are well and having fine weather with an exception of a cold windy day occasionally. One day last week, it was just fearful. It unroofed three houses in sight but all were vacated. One was Milt Smith’s which was a shingle roof. We have our roof heavily weighted and aim to sod it all over the top. . . .

Sam was gone only three weeks. Mr. Elrod had a gathering on his hand and could not work so they came home. Sam brought home two of the nicest little female pigs, almost thoroughbred, paid $3.75 for the two of them—will weigh about 60 pounds. He could not bring chickens as they were loaded so heavily. . . .

Last Sunday we went to Mr. Spencer’s visiting, had a good visit. A few days before Thanksgiving, Mrs. Spencer sent her little boys over with a big cabbage head for our Thanksgiving dinner. What did you do on that day? It was very stormy here.

We have our cellar all done and it is so handy and nice. Sam will move Irvin’s house over for a barn and we will put the floor in our house as it nearly kills Sam to work with sod. We have a real nice dog, got him from Milts; he is a pup yet but real watchful. People can’t raise chickens here without a dog for the wolves. It is nothing uncommon to hear them howling at night.

I went to Fowler last Saturday a week ago and got the children some calico dresses. Will send you some samples. Hope you won’t think I am turning Quaker in my old age.

Well, as dinner is over, I will proceed to write some more. We got papers from Ma Weesner last week with some sugar trees folded in them. If you have some sage, I wish you would send us some that way. Have you had much cold weather yet? The sun is shining so warm today, we have the west door open. We have had a little rain since I wrote last. People think it will be a cold winter again but I hope not. We all have new shoes and boots for winter and the children will wear yarn stockings. One of our neighbors sent George two good flannel waist’s and a pair of pants that her little boy had outgrown. Their name is Lingonfelter and are from Indiana-polis. We have the most refined intelligent neighbors that we ever had. Our township and

46. In the election of June 16 the contest for county seat was primarily between Ashland, Englewood, and Fair West. Of the 975 votes cast, Ashland received more votes than the other towns combined. Clark County Clipper, June 23, 1885.

47. Richard Nuzum, also referred to as “the Dude,” was Emma Moorman’s sweetheart.

48. Although Flora states here that Sam was elected treasurer, the vote tabulation for Vesta Township (approximately the western third of Clark County) indicates that J. W. Jones polled 236 votes, while Heston received 23 and F. M. Parrott, 13. Most of the township votes were cast in Englewood, which gave 149 votes to Jones. Clark County Clipper, June 23, 1885.

49. A neighbor, otherwise unidentified.

50. Probably R. W. Spencer, who along with Sam Heston was elected an officer of the Lakeview school district the following March. Appleton Eve, March 11, 1886.
precinct, Appleton, is just booming. They have a daily mail and will have a paper started there in a week or so. It is astonishing how fast these little towns grow. This country can't help from being valuable some time as the soil is so fertile. It would be a grand thing for your children if you could sell off enough of your land to get them a farm out here while it is cheap, but of course, it would be hard for you to sell it that way, but if they ain't careful we will be worth the most of any of them in a few years.

And so you are going to have lots of frolies in the spring—well, I am glad we don't live in a malarial country where such diseases might be catching.

Wednesday morning. Yesterday was the worst day we have had; it snowed all day and was a regular blizzard day, but today it is pretty but cold. I patched all day. I have learned to crochet some beautiful lace and probably I can get a collar done for Etta by Christmas as she is the weakly one and of course expects the most petting. Well, I must close and get to my work as Sam wants to take this to Mr. Elrod as he is going to the office. Tell Mary she had better keep those baby clothes as they are no use to me, but will not brag that they never will be for it's dangerous to brag.

Love to all—write soon.

FLORA M. HESTON

Sunday Eve. Dec. 27th. [1885]

DEAR FOLKS AT HOME:

Well, how did you spend Xmas? We were at home & Just had the common stuff as usual, although Santa Clause remembered us with candy & apples. The next day after Christmas we got a box of presents from Jont & Becca, & it was hard to tell which was pleased the best of us all but I think Johnny was over a little pocket knife. It hardly seemed like Christmas to us as it was so warm we had to keep the door open, as we have done for the two weeks, but it is a little cooler now. I never saw such pretty weather before, this time of year. We got a letter last eve. from Ma Weesner with 30 cts to buy the children Christmas candy, also some little cards. Those cards you sent pleased the children so much. George & Fern kept theirs nice but Johny litterially wore his out looking at it.

Well, we have a floor in our house & a carpet down & it seems like living. Just think of living on a dirt floor for six or eight mo. & then changing to a board floor & carpet; it was about as much as a fellow could stand of a sudden. We have the roof all sodded & it is a real warm house & right cozy inside.

I wish you could see the children, they are so fat, & Sam & we aint far behind. Sam weighs 148½. Tell Benna I would like to measure arms with him again.

Well, I must tell you what I am doing. I get yarn out of the store and knit it up into socks, make 25 on a pair, as I get 50 a pair. I can knit a pair in three days & every little bit helps. Mr. Savages are looking for a barrel of provision from their folks such as sausage, kraut, potatoes, cabbage & the like. Mr. Savage said his wife laid awake at nights thinking how good they will taste; it makes my mouth water to think of such things.

I asked John what Ma done with his curl & he said cut it off & send it to Aunt Etta, he talks so plain & is the pet of the neighborhood. Oh yes, we have a rocking chair. Mr. Thomas gave us a chair & Sam put rockers on it. So you can think of me sitting by the stove in my little rocker & knitting, knitting, knitting all the day. I'll bet my old dress Emma & the Dude are having an old fashioned squeeze tonight.

Write Soon

FLORA HESTON

Appleton, Kansas

DEAR KINFOLKS:

We are all well and have not had
any more blizzards, have had warm spring days all the week. Some plows were running but it is cold today with some snow falling. We have received so many letters from the relatives since the blizzard, inquiring after our safety, all felt very uneasy. We got nine letters and three papers one week.

Our registered letter was from Irvin with a five dollar “William”, so I guess it’s an “ill wind that blows nobody good.” Now I don’t want you to ever feel uneasy about us for we have as warm friends here as man could wish for and have gained reputation enough so we can buy eatables on time if necessary, which we have done a few times.

Well, this is the eighth anniversary of our marriage and we had a little extra good dinner. Sam got a can of peaches and I baked a good splendid cake and had good light bread, butter, gravy, tea, ham meat, cake and peaches and it tasted far better than the wedding supper eight years ago. Well, after all our poverty in the meantime, we think we are worth more now than when we were married. We have sent off for some early garden seeds and it won’t be long now before we can begin gardening. We have spring at least a month before you have it in Indiana. I have churned ten pounds of butter off of those cows, sold five pounds last week at twenty-five cents a pound. Thomases will be home this week and then, oh then, we will get chickens shortly, don’t know what they are a dozen. Mr. Elrod on the claim joining us on the north, has given an acre for a school and church house. So as soon as spring opens up, we will have a house built, (a sod one, I expect), and won’t it be handy? We

52. Clark, Ellis, Ellsworth, Finney, Ford, and Wallace counties were among those affected most severely by a series of intense early winter storms, especially one on New Year’s Day, that were known as the “Blizzard of ’96,” John D. Bright, ed., Kansas: The First Century (New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1925), v. 1, p. 383-384; Kiefer Mechem, ed., The Annals of Kansas, 1856–1925 (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1934), v. 1, p. 1. The Appleton Era noted on January 14 that “the great storm has been the topic of conversation for the past few days, and will continue to be for some days to come.”

53. On March 11 the Appleton Era reported that the first school meeting had been held in the Lakeview district, and that “a school house will be built immediately, and efforts made to have three months schooling before August 1st.”

A typical promotional advertisement from the Appleton Era, February 11, 1886.
will send George and Fern to school this summer. The children are always as eager to hear all the letters read as we are. Fern thought it was awful funny that Ettie liked her the best. She says, "Aunt Ettie likes me of the whole pack and that means that she likes me the best, don't it ma?" Johnny commences nearly everything with an "H", so I get him to say he was Heaven years and didn't care a "hent" and I tell you he can say it to perfection. He sings little songs like George used to, I wish you could hear him. George is quite an old man. He has saved up him a lot of seed and aims to have a garden that he aims to sell the produce off and I believe get him a pony. He is a regular little worker but Fern is lazy, she gets out of all she can. Those books that Elva gave George and her have done a world of good as I have read them over and over to them. I never saw little children as eager to hear reading but I guess they get it honest.

Yes, I got the Vicks catalogue, was pleased with it.54 We aim to have a good garden if possible. We will have our garden where the buckwheat grew as the ground is rotted there so well and is as black and loamy as an ash heap; it is about two hundred yards from the house to keep from the chickens.

I want to tell you some things that I have learned since I came here. One is how to make splendid good yeast—take about six big potatoes and boil them up with a handful of hops in one quart of water; when done drain the water off of them on to one pint of flour, stir well, mash the potatoes and add to the scalded flour, set aside until cool enough to put in the yeast. Do this in the morning and let it rise all day, stirring it down as often as necessary; again night it will be very light, then stir in enough cornmeal to work out in little cakes which we lay on a board (or something else) until morning, then crumb fine to day and every few hours give it a good crumbling until dry and you will have the best yeast that I have ever used.

Another is, get a can of concentrated lye to break your wash water with and you have no idea how much easier they are to come clean and so much whiter, too.

Well, I would like to see all your pretties you have made. I have been busy making some too that looked nice to me, such as Sam's shirt, the children's panty, aprons, waist for George, aprons for me and the like. I laid in a nice lot of clothes with my socks and butter and want to get it all made up before garden making.

Appleton, Kansas
Feb. 28th, 1886

Dear Folks at Home:

Guess I will write you a letter this morning as I have some news that will of course, interest you. We are all in usual health and have been having beautiful weather. The plow has been running and the children have been going barefooted a little. It is just like April in Indiana without the mud. Well, we have sold the oxen and have bought a good team of horses, got them of Mr. Elrod, our neighbor—a good team but not fancy ones. Sam got new harness at Dodge and is ready for business. He will plow away from home this week, thinks he will make $9.00 a day as we have to make our living this summer as we will not have money like we did last summer to live on, but a man with a good team can get work for cash about whenever he wants to. We aim to get a cow, can get a heifer for $25 but oh, dear, chickens are $18.00 a dozen. How I wish someone would come here from Amboy with a chartered car. . . . Well, I expect you are having a pleasant spring but I don’t envy you the mud which is one of the inevitables in Indiana. I can hardly realize it is only February. We got a letter from Milt Smith last week. They do not aim to come back again. The people here all liked Ret but had no use for Milt. . . . Sam backset our orchard again last week to put it all out in melons. We ordered a few fruit trees last week to be delivered in April. We got 10 apple, 10 peach, 2 pear, 2 cherry and 1 apricot for $6.00 so when we raise seedlings we will have some slips to draft with. We got our peach seeds that Uncle Enoch sent. He had paid the express on them. He said to plant them all as he said they would furnish us food, fuel, shade and windbreak; we are cracking them before we plant. My pie

plant is up an inch high. I have cabbage, tomatoes and a few other things planted in boxes. We aim to get a pile of sweet potatoes and raise our own plants. Now I am going to do a little job of beggining. I want you (if you will) to send us some berry roots, take the little ones coming up, cut the tops off and you can get a good many in a small box. Also want some currant, gooseberry and grape slips and would like so well to have some strawberry plants, are those at Ben thick enough to take up some plants? We are so destitute of everything of the kind and you don’t know how bad we want them. Just get a paste board box and fill it full and sew a stout cloth all around it and mail it to us and we will gladly repay the mailing—that is the cheapest way we can get such things and they do add so much to the home comforts. Sam aims to put out ten acres in oats and ten acres in millet on Irvin’s place. Irvin furnished the seed; will put out 15 acres of corn at home and has rented 12 acres broke last fall for seed corn. Got it for plowing one and one-fourth acres of sod; so you can see he will have his hands full, besides he will have to do a little freighting to keep us in provisions. I don’t know why people can do more work in a day here than in Indiana. I guess it is because the fields are large and no stumps to bother. Sam says he could. Do you give my letters to Bennie’s to read? They are written for them too.

Appleton, Kas. April 18th [1886]

DEAR ETTIE AND ALL THE REST:

Your most welcome letter was rec’d yesterday morning & I had my lip up for just such a letter, as I told Sam when I heard you had been to Wabash, now we will get a long letter from Ettie telling all about her trip. I was more than tickled to learn of your good health, & do hope you will get entirely well. Sam says to tell you to come & stay this summer with us & it will be cheap medicine in the long run. Sam has been down with his lungs & a low grade of fever for the last week. He came home sick from a freighting trip, but is a good deal better now. He made $34 in about 12 days but will not haul any more untill the weather gets more settled. We have had fearful high winds this spring. One day it raised our roof several inches, & just rolled up the sod on it. Fern was on the bed asleep, & George just bauled & I was scared pretty bad, so the next day I thought I saw another cyclone coming so took the children & run into the cave but no damage was done. It is very warm today with a high wind. We had a good big rain last week, our first. Your box of plants came all right & I think they will all live. The strawberries have commenced putting out new leaves. Our trees came last week, & we have them all out. Pa’s box had a nice lot of fruit slips, & about a bush of dried apples, & they said not to send money for expressage, so it just cost us $1.40 for the sack to bring it to Appleton, as it was directed there. We have a nice start of a variety of fruit which bids fair to live. Our pieplant is large enough to use but have not commenced on it yet; the garden has not done much good yet, as we have had too many cold days. The spring is backward. Sam hired a good hand 15 days for five acres of breaking, so the work went on last week. He ploughed old ground for corn. Sam aims to plant it this week, he would have planted corn last week but was not able. That horse that I wrote about that had the colic, just kept on having it every few days, & we got real uneasy and as nothing else would do any good Sam got a beer bottle full of Perry Davis made & went to pour it down him & he hasn’t had it since, of course it was our best horse, & if he had died we would just have been busted. He is a pretty bright boy about 8 yrs old without blemish. Sam said if he had a mate to him, 8300 wouldn’t get them. The other horse is old, is the coller of Uncle Arches Pelican & has feet a little like him, only not so much so, is a real stout horse but not a valuable one, but the two make a good work team, which is far far ahead of the oxens.

Well it don’t seem a year since I left you, & yet to look back it seems several. Yes, I think it has been a successful yr to all of us. I know our prospects are much brighter than last year & if we still continue to prosper this fast I think in a few years Flora will go home on a visit & see her mother, but hope to see her out here before that time. As Emma don’t tell her secrets,

55. Perry Davis’ Pain-Killer, a patent medicine which according to one source was made up of spirits of camphor, tincture of opium, gum myrrh, gum guaiac, and alcohol. A. W. Chase, Dr. Pratt’s Third, Last and Complete Receipt Book and Household Physician, or, Practical Knowledge for the People (Detroit: F. B. Dickerson Co., 1890), p. 42.
well can’t you try the popping corn plan on him. I should think that would be a sure pop, but some times it is well enough to let well enough alone. As to Elva she will need to be turned across Mothers knee if she dares to even think of getting married yet, for it will bring with it cares, be you ever so prosperous. If Benna was out here on one of these fine farms of his own with his start, he would be almost independent & would not have half the hard work to do, but of course he can not leave the old home place. I would like awful well for some of my folks to settle close to us. Emma cant you get your dude in the notion? You could get a few claims at a bargain, & with a good team & willing hands in a few years with no bad luck, you would have a fine home, & plenty around you for this country bids fair to be a second garden of Eden & I have no ax to grind eather.

Well, you wanted to know lots about the children. Well Fern is setting on top of the machine looking in the glass, doing a big job of primping. She feels terrible insulted if anyone tells her she ain’t pretty. Mr. Kirkpatrick told her so one day & she came right home & wanted me to make her a red skirt & a white waist so he would think she was pretty, but John don’t care only he is proud of his kurly pate as he calls his head but his hair is getting so long & so much trouble to comb I guess I will have to cut it off. Do you girls want it for a hair wreath? It is about six in. long. He takes special delight in bringing in the eggs, but they are usually bussed (as he says) when he gets in with them. He has a great habit of coming up & holding something in his hands behind him saying, Or ess it, Ma or ess it and he never lets up until you guess what he has got, which is generally a little weed or chip. He just came booming in the house the other day, & fairly pulled Sam out in the yard to see the Antelopes & get the gun & shoot them. It was a drove of cattle that he saw. George just about lives with the horses, he follows the plow nearly all the time & keeps the stable all cleaned out, takes the horses to watter, carries corn cobs & stalks to burn, and is a very useful little boy, but has the same babyish peevish disposition as ever. I don’t believe he will ever get over it.

Our hand’s name is Will Shoel, he makes lots of the children, we board him but he goes home of nights, he don’t eat meat but just loves corn bread & beans so I give him a good dose every day. We have bought butter all the spring at 20 c. lb. It is as cheap as so much meat & as we have it all to buy, we might as well get what we like. My hens are laying nicely & what a help it is. Mrs. Elrod gave me a hen so I have seven hens & a rooster, mostly buff Cochins.

We have lots of prairie chickens, tell Uncle Jess to step over with his gun & take a hunt.
Yes Mother we get our mail several times a week. We have a box with a neighbor & by that way get it oftener. When one neighbor goes to town, he generally brings it to all the neighbors. We do our trading at Fowler it is so much cheaper than Appleton. Groceries are very cheap this spring, nearly as cheap again as last spring. We can get 12 lbs granulated sugar for 1.00, 14 lbs prunes, 17 lbs dried apples, 22 lbs beans, 11 lbs bacon, or 12 lbs of dry salt; each for $1.00; flour is from 1.70 to 2.00 a hundred, we generally get the best as it don't pay to get poor flour.

. . . I am going to send Bennie some much mellon seeds from the finest big mellon I ever saw. We got a new wire clothes line this spring for $8.50 and also a set of big heavy teacups with handles on for 30 cents. . . .

Well, Sam has made a plate of sorghum wax, so guess I will quit a while. . . .

Fern often talks of Logan, she says he and Elva is mished. She reminds me of Elva every day. I have not cut her hair off since I came to Kansas and it hangs way down her back, & I braid it at the sides and she wears heavy bangs and is right pert. I think George was the best tickled little fellow I ever saw when we got our horses. They are gentle and I expect George will be plowing before you are thinking about it he helps a good deal now. I hope Mother is better of her lame back and that Ettie will still keep on improving. I nearly know a season out here would cure her. Would like for her & Mother to come out here this summer if they can arrange it, and we will plant an extra patch of mellons as we are not aiming to only raise an acre. We have the best prospect of prosperity we ever had and believe it was right for us to come here, if we didn't have much encouragement to come. By the way, we are going to have some little piggies after while. . . . Sam wrote to the Methodist Church Extension Society for help to build a church here & got a very favorable reply. They said they helped to build 60 churches in Kan. last year. It will be so nice when we have a church to go to again. Now write soon & often.

As Ever,

FLORA

I have a great deal more leasure time than I used to have it don't take near the work to keep up one room that it does a big house

Read the fourth page first

Appleton, Kansas
May 12th, 1886

DEAR BROTHER, SISTER AND BABY:

Mary's letter was received a few days ago and we were glad to get a letter from you. And you have been too smart for us, well it's all right so guess I will just fess up and say that the bees are ready to swarm any day, as we have been looking for them for two weeks or more but you know you can't rush the thing. I think I was never so good for nothing before but as luck would have it Milt Smiths drove in over a week ago and have taken a homestead in the Sand Hills two miles from our house (he and Will Ridgway) and are staying at our house til they get their house done. So Ret goes ahead with the work and we have hired all of our washing done since spring work began. Sam washed all winter. I just couldn't wash. Ret will take care of me while I am sick. They furnish their half of provisions and sleep in their covered wagon, so it is an accommodation to all of us. Was glad to hear of your prosperity in other things, but Ben how about that corn crop. We have ten acres of corn all up and aim to put out ten more acres. Our pigs are so nice, will each have some baby pigs the first of June; they are almost thorobred Berkshires and Poland China mixed and Sam said he wouldn't take $2.00 a piece for them. You know they are our start. Our horses are about or quite well but real thin. I tell you we felt blue when we had no hopes of them at all but they are good for work now. We are having it real dry but think we will have rain ere long as we are having every indication it is too dry to break sod and everybody has gone freighting and that is about exhausted except long trips. Sam thinks of sending our team to Indiana Tuesday this week as he can't leave home.

56. In 1864 the Methodist General Conference established the Church Extension Society to aid in the erection of church buildings. By 1885, 306 of the 385 Methodist churches in Kansas had received some support, and the Church Extension Board reported that on the average, over 50 churches a year were being helped. Don W. Holter, Fire on the Prairie: Methodism in the History of Kansas (N.p.: Editorial Board of the Kansas Methodist History, 1969), p. 101.

57. Ret Smith's brother.
Fern has been real poorly for a week, has high fever every night but she missed last night and seems better today. . . . Johnny is so fat too and I believe he remembers you all for he talks about you all. I think we would surely call around for that cow you spoke of but we are so very busy watching the bees you know but I don’t intend for this letter to be sent until after it is all over, then you will have all the news in one letter. I am aiming to have a girl and I think it will surely be a twelve pounder for actually I am outgrowing my Mother Hubbards. Tell Ettie I didn’t aim to story but meant my dresses were all Mother Hubbards and plenty big but couldn’t say that now. Well, who let the cat out of the bag anyway but I’ll guess it was Debbie. But I was glad you didn’t tell it to Mother for I know how she would worry; that was the reason I was trying to keep it. We have the best of neighbors and I will be taken good care of, then Ret will not be like a young strange girl. Oh, Mary, it’s just thundersing awful loud and I think we will surely have rain as we have only had thee this year, but things are not suffering but beginning to need it. Our wheat is all heading out and looks well. Our plants that were sent us are all living, we have little walnut trees up six inches high and peach trees up by the hundreds; the goosebarry and currant slips are
green and nice. We have onions to use all the time and Oh, I have the biggest bed of flowers just planted. Fern brought in some wild flowers the other day and says she wants them pressed for Aunt Ettie so I pressed them for her and will send them in this letter if it ain’t forgotten. Oh yes, we are going to have two prairie chickens for dinner with dumplings and a big jack rabbit roasted with dressing so just please step over, won’t you for I have an idea that it won’t be too bad to take. Milt brought a gun and the men killed them yesterday. There are many chickens in the Sand Hills; the claims are there second class ones but we talked very strong about taking one awhile, but thought it would hardly pay for the trouble of building again and moving.

Dinner over and Oh, how good it was, the rabbit was as good as the chicken. We had a nice little shower with a good bit of hail, that is one of the drawbacks of this country, it is still raining some. By the way, we and some of our neighbors got quite a puff in this weeks Appleton’s paper, about our fine wheatfields. They said it was the finest in the state (industry and thriftiness). Our wheat is the May wheat and way ahead of the others. 59

Oh yes, I have one whole little chicken, the hen just commenced hatching today. I have another hen I aim to set tomorrow.

One of Smith’s children fell in our well today and Sam took a pleasure trip down after it, only about 100 feet underground. Do Nusbaums still aim to come to Kansas? I am afraid that they could not get claims to suit them as all the first class claims are taken in western Kansas. Our crops are far ahead of those in eastern Kansas as they are suffering for rain. Irvin sent us a lot of soft maple seed yesterday. We have a lot of nice maple trees that we planted last spring. We have them set all around our yard, barnyard and other places. We don’t have any places to go to yet on Sundays yet. All too poor to build a house. I don’t expect we will have any school this summer, there is few children here to go to school.

Well, I have written about all the news I can think of so I will leave a blank space for Sam to fill in when my little gal comes to port. Please write soon.

Lovingly your sister,

FLORA M. HESTON

P.S. Ettie must hurry up with that name or I will call it Daisy Pearl, sure to suit the sod house and fine furniture.

FLORA

May 18, 1886

Well! Well! That girl happened to be the opposite sex. Both are fine and doing the best kind. Flora got through better than ever before. But (have her charged up with the usual price any how). One of the neighbors sent her some butter and canned peaches. We have the best neighbors we ever lived by. Now begin to think of pretty names and DRESSES. Break the news gently to Jots so as not to upset their nervous system. As none of the children are at home yet, I can’t tell you what they think of it.

So now don’t worry any for she will have the best of care and all of the washing goes away from home. She says tell you that it is awful nice and looks like George and Jack; weighs nine pounds and of course will vote the Republican Ticket when old enough. Born about 9:00 P.M. on the 17th inst. 60

Resp.

SAM

EPILOGUE

by Josephine Moorman Reiley

FLORA HESTON passed away on June 12, 1886, following the birth of her little son Alfred Elliott. 61 Her brother Ben Moorman,

59. In an article entitled “Crops and Improvements,” the Appleton Era stated that “for fine fields of wheat, Lakeview neighborhood comes to the front.” C. C. Thomas, A. D. Parsons, Chas. Slaughter, S. C. Heston, and in fact nearly every one in the neighborhood have fields of wheat, some of which is now beginning to head, which we venture cannot be surpassed by any in the State. All of these farmers are making extensive improvements. Mr. Thomas having nearly one half of his farm now under cultivation. Although the newspaper is dated May 13, 1886, one day after the date of Flora’s letter, this is obviously the item she mentions.

60. Obviously Flora had already developed complications after what seemed to have been a normal and uneventful delivery. The notice in the Appleton Era on June 24 that marked her passing was brief but compassionate: "DIED.—On Saturday June 12th, at her home six miles southwest of Appleton, Mrs. S. C. Heston, aged about 30 years. Mrs. Heston is spoken of as having been an estimable lady, and a kind and affectionate wife and mother. She leaves a husband to mourn her loss, and four small children, the youngest only a few days old, to grow up without a mother’s care."
Sam's mother Mrs. Weesner, and Debbie Weesner went to Kansas and brought the children back to Indiana. George was given a home with his Uncle Ben, while Fern and the baby were reared by their Grandmother Moorman and their aunts Emma and Etta. John was given a home with his paternal relatives and lived in Wabash, Indiana, until he died in 1890. George became a successful traveling salesman, but fell victim to typhoid fever and died in 1903. Fern married a farmer named Harvey Lamb and lived her life near Amboy, Indiana. Fred joined the army and later became a licensed embalmer, with mortuaries in Swayzee and Fort Wayne, Indiana. He died in a hospital in Washington, D.C., in 1917.

As soon as Sam Heston disposed of the Kansas homestead he returned to the Amboy, Indiana, area. At one time he operated a "huckster wagon," a miniature grocery installed in a wagon which he drove through the countryside, exchanging staple groceries with the farmers' wives for eggs and live poultry. Later he was ordained a Methodist minister, and it was during this stage of his life that he met a very religious woman named Elizabeth Fletcher from Canada. They were married in 1893 and lived in Toronto, Ontario. Two daughters were born to them, Evelyn in 1896 and Mildred in 1900. Sam engaged in the construction business in connection with his wife's family and did very well. He then decided to get rich quick, traveled to Cuba and bought an orange grove, and went bankrupt. He died in 1930.

Flora Heston's untimely death was not only a loss to her family but also a loss to Kansas. Few pioneers possessed her courage, faith, and hope in the future. Her body lies in an unmarked grave, and although a great-nephew spent a week in the vicinity searching courthouse records and contacting ministers and old-timers, he learned nothing of the exact location. It is comforting to her family to know that her little sod house on the homestead had become the prosperous farm she had envisioned.

61. Emma sacrificed her romance with "the Dude" to help raise Fern and Fred. Etta, who was always considered "poorly," never married. Elva, who was much younger than the other children, married Alvin Thomas after Flora's death.
62. Fern Heston and her husband Harvey Lamb had three children, Robert and Hermon, both deceased, and Maurine Lamb Johnson. Fern died in 1941.
63. Alfred Heston married Lucile Moody in 1909. They had one son, Alfred Elliott, Jr., who taught in the business school at Arizona State University, Tempe.