

# George Grant of Victoria: Man and Myth

by James L. Forsythe

GEORGE GRANT of the British Isles and Victoria, Kansas, was immortalized and praised during his later life, at least in Kansas and regional newspapers. He was known in the 1870s as the founder of Victoria colony, the purchaser of an extremely large amount of land from the Kansas Pacific Railway, the owner of one of the largest farms in the United States, the largest sheepraiser on the western Kansas plains, and the crossbreeder of purebred bulls and Texas cows. After his death, he was known as the importer of the first Aberdeen Angus bulls to the United States and the original owner of a two-story stone residence, the George Grant Villa, which is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

Grant's popular story is interesting. Marjorie Gamet Raish in her book *Victoria: The Story of a Western Kansas Town* related how George Grant and his secretary, C. Edwards, arrived in Hays City on the eastbound Kansas Pacific train in the "late afternoon on the tenth of October, 1872."<sup>1</sup> Then, as the train left for Ellsworth, the two men gazed across the prairies, and Grant had a

vision—"blooded cattle grazing, and sheep growing fat on the abundant gramma grass."<sup>2</sup> The brilliant mind that had made fortunes in the British Isles now quickly formulated a new plan for riches. These prairies rolling eastward from Hays City would become an English colony, and it would be called Victoria. Raish also wrote that, though the "exact procedure is not known," somehow a transaction was made and Grant purchased twenty-five thousand acres from the Kansas Pacific Railway. Raish also noted that by April 1873, before the first colonists arrived, it was reliably reported that Grant owned sixty-nine thousand acres of Ellis County.<sup>3</sup> That acreage was taken as accurate by many, and the Kansas State Historical Society marker at Victoria indicates this number as the large acreage of Grant's holdings.

The beautiful story of a wealthy, aging Scotsman and his male secretary standing in the dust of the red-colored Hays City railroad station in the early autumn, peering southeastward as the late afternoon sun cast its blanket of reds, oranges, and purples across the faded and dormant buffalo grass is appealing to romantic Kansans. What a beautiful pastoral setting. And what beauty to think that suddenly there flashed before George Grant's eyes an empire—where buffalo roamed, Durham shorthorn cattle would be grazing; where antelope leaped, sheep would be bleating. To the east of Hays City would be a village named for the Queen of England; to the southeast on the bluffs above the sparkling waters of Big Creek a handsome house of native stone, a villa, would be erected. This Scotsman must have this land, and he decided immediately to purchase it. Such, the story goes, was the dream, the vision, that flashed before Grant's eyes as he beheld the area around the confluence of Big Creek and its North Fork, over ten miles southeast from Hays City and some six miles south of the place that became Victoria colony.

But there are problems with this story and similar ones about Grant. I would like to suggest that there are inaccuracies in the variety of stories and that what Grant is noted for in Ellis County was in reality a speculative

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1. Marjorie Gamet Raish, *Victoria: The Story of a Western Kansas Town*, Language and Literature Series No. 3, Fort Hays Kansas State College Series (Topeka: State Printer, 1947), 7-8; see also Alvin H. Sanders, "Beginning of Black Cattle in America," *Live Stock Markets*, 43 (January 12, 1933): 8-9.

2. Raish, *Victoria*, 9.

3. *Ibid.*, 11.

venture, a venture for profit, not specifically for the improvement of Ellis County nor for humanitarian reasons—though Ellis County, the community of Victoria, the Queen City of the Plains, and the English and Scottish colonists did benefit from Grant's activities. Further, Grant was not struck by a vision as he stood in the dusty twilight of Hays City on October 10, 1872, nor did he see a vision as he bounced in his reversible railroad seat as the Kansas Pacific Railway coach traveled eastward past the site of an earlier Indian attack on railroad workers nor later as the car bumped over the railroad bridge spanning the North Fork of Big Creek near what is now Victoria.

Grant hoped to capitalize on the growing demand for beef in England and the desire of wealthy young Englishmen to purchase vast landed estates and to entice Scottish and British capital to America for investment in his venture in Ellis County. Later he would use various manipulations, especially newspaper stories, to lure American capital to his venture, but he was not successful. Thus the large-scale British cattle and sheep empire with English gentlemen as Red-coated cowboys was not to be. Less than a dozen investors, primarily Americans, and fewer than two hundred Scottish colonists joined in the Victoria venture.

An example of the problems with the stories of Grant is the supposed vision by Grant on October 10, 1872. The *Junction City Union* on October 5, 1872—a date which is five days prior to Raish's version of the vision—reported that Grant, along with a group of individuals, was seeking land, and even earlier, on September 14, Grant was noted as seeking property.<sup>4</sup> The *Hutchinson News* repeated the September item from the *Union*.<sup>5</sup> Earlier, in February 1872, the *Saline County Journal* reported that "an English manufacturer named Grant is making arrangements to locate a large colony on the K.P. road."<sup>6</sup> When Grant died, the *Hays City Sentinel* reported that Grant "came to America in 1870."<sup>7</sup> Several other accounts reported him in America in 1871; he was in America at the time of the Chicago Fire in October of that year, and he was in White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, in the summer of 1872.<sup>8</sup> Grant then was planning a colony or an entrepreneurial activity prior to the vision that Raish reported.

Much of what is known about George Grant in America comes from the newspapers, and that is because he either had newspapermen with him on his travels or had his agents prepare favorable material about his operation which was then presented to the papers. The

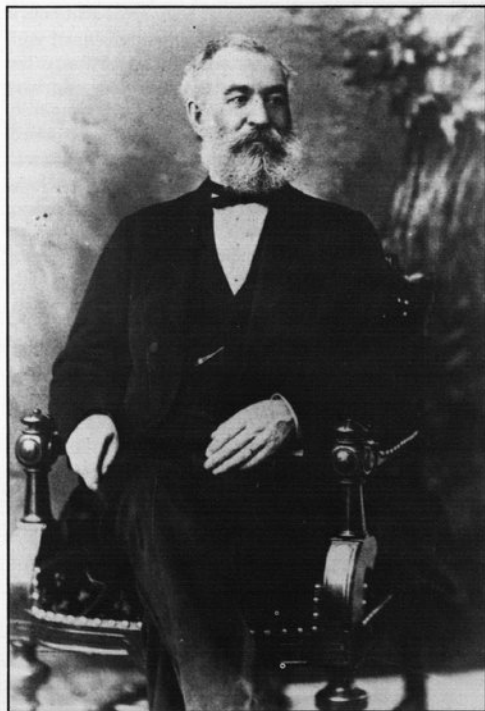
practice of favorable, though not always accurate, news stories concerning railroad land acquisition and coming settlement, as Robert G. Athearn noted in his study of the Union Pacific Railway, was not unusual for those interested in railroad lands. States, local governments, newspapers, and railroads all made efforts to attract settlers to the railroad lands.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the *Rocky Mountain News* on October 16, 1866, stretched the facts when, following congressional changes in the Kansas Pacific grant, it stated that the railroad would pass through "improved and densely populated" countryside, that is, through unsettled western Kansas and eastern Colorado.<sup>10</sup>

When Grant arrived in Kansas in early 1872 to look for property, he was accompanied by a "Mr. Collins, a representative of the English press."<sup>11</sup> Grant at the time

9. Robert G. Athearn, *Union Pacific Country* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1971), 147-74.

10. *Rocky Mountain News* [weekly], Denver, Colo., October 17, 1866.

11. *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 18, 1873.



George Grant, the founder of Victoria colony.

4. *Junction City Union*, October 5, 1872, September 14, 1872.

5. *Hutchinson News*, September 19, 1872.

6. *Saline County Journal*, Salina, February 8, 1872.

7. *Hays City Sentinel*, April 27, 1878.

8. *United States Biographical Dictionary*, Kansas Volume (Chicago: S. Lewis and Co., 1879), 733-34; *Salina Herald*, June 21, 1873.

was also searching for operating capital as well as seeking purchasers for the lands that he planned to acquire. He was also accompanied to Kansas in September 1872 by "Mr. J. Jaroslowski, city financial correspondent of the New York German papers"; the Hon. Walter Maxwell, son of Lord Herries of Everingham Park, Yorkshire, England; R. Ludlow Fowler, solicitor for Grant and Maxwell; and C. R. Loew, United States commissioner to the Vienna Exposition of 1873.<sup>12</sup> When Grant returned from England in the spring of 1873, he had Edwards with him as his secretary, and it was Edwards who informed the Kansas City newspapers of Grant's grandiose plans on the western plains of Kansas as well as of the types of livestock that would be brought by Grant to Victoria.<sup>13</sup> Kansas papers again in the spring of 1873 spread the story of the vast empire, as they had in late 1872.

The myths began when Grant signed an agreement in October 1872, to purchase lands from the Kansas Pacific Railway. Kansas and national newspapers carried a variety of stories on Grant's planned venture on the western plains of Kansas.<sup>14</sup> The land was to be the site of a large-scale British cattle and sheep empire. Grant had a vision, or at least a scheme, to turn the semi-arid prairie of Ellis County into large estates for Englishmen with English tenants. The farms would be at least 640 acres but preferably 1,280 acres or more. Each farm would have frontage on Big Creek, which traversed the county from west to east. Blooded cattle and sheep would be imported. The headquarters of this vast operation would be Victoria, where the railroad would build a combination hotel and station, corrals for the livestock, and accommodations for twenty-five hundred English colonists. The press responded to the announcement with stories of varying degrees of accuracy, and the man and the growing myths became inseparable.<sup>15</sup>

While there are several myths about Grant, I will only consider three, then comment on the man, and evaluate his enterprise at Victoria colony. The first myth, or at least misrepresentation by newspapers at the time, was the amount of land that was acquired by Grant in 1873 and later from the Kansas Pacific Railway.

In March 1873, Grant received a deed to the land in Ellis County and signed the accompanying mortgage.<sup>16</sup> The various accounts of the number of acres purchased,

including the number of acres listed on the state historical marker at Victoria, reflect the boomerism of the time, not reality, and also reflect the myths that surround Grant.

The newspapers were quick to carry the earlier announcement of the October 1872 agreement. The *Atchison Daily Champion* reported in December 1872 that Grant had acquired fifty thousand acres,<sup>17</sup> but a week later the *Junction City Union* stated that Grant had purchased only forty thousand acres.<sup>18</sup> Five months later, the *Union* carried a story from the *Missouri Democrat* which reported that the acreage was sixty thousand.<sup>19</sup>

The *Kansas City Journal* reported in May 1873, the month the first colonists arrived, that the water frontage of the Victoria colony traversed, "we believe, nearly two hundred miles."<sup>20</sup> Four months later the *Kansas City Daily Journal of Commerce* reported that Grant had "purchased 300,000 acres, or nearly 500 square miles of territory."<sup>21</sup>

These early newspaper reports as well as the later ones were, of course, exaggerated, and this lack of accuracy in the papers led the editor of the *Union* in September 1873 to chide the editor of Topeka's *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*. "Mr. George Grant, of Victoria, may be a 'blasted Britisher,' and all that, but," the editor chided, "that does not justify Jim King, of the Commonwealth, in calling him 'the largest land Grant in the West.'"<sup>22</sup>

The *Ellsworth Reporter* stated earlier, in August 1873, that "it will be some time before his farm of twenty square miles is under cultivation." Earlier, in May, the *Reporter* stated that it was a forty thousand-acre farm.<sup>23</sup> The next

reported that \$250,000 would be invested. The *Kansas Daily Commonwealth* in Topeka stated that the firm of Abrams, Harris & Company negotiated the land transaction. See *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*, October 15, 1872. Over three years later Grant was still receiving favorable press coverage about the size of the estates that he had for sale. A story in the *New York Times* is similar to other stories about the plans for large estates and appears to be a planted story; it appeared just as Grant was preparing to leave for London for another attempt to secure investments for his enterprise. See *New York Times*, January 3, 1876, p. 3.

16. RD, Ellis County.

17. *Atchison Daily Champion*, December 8, 1872.

18. *Junction City Union*, December 14, 1872.

19. The *Missouri Democrat* cited in *Junction City Union*, May 24, 1873; the *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*, May 17, 1873, also carried the *Democrat's* story.

20. *Kansas City Journal*, May 8, 1873.

21. *Daily Journal of Commerce*, Kansas City, Mo., September 19, 1873. Earlier in the same month, the *Leavenworth Daily Commercial* reported the land purchased as 90,000 acres. See *Leavenworth Daily Commercial*, September 10, 1873. The *St. Louis Dispatch* reported that 70,000 acres were purchased, and when combined with government land the holding was some 540 square miles in size. See *St. Louis Dispatch*, November 28, 1873. Interestingly, nearly fifty years later the *Kansas City Times* stated that Grant had acquired 2,500 acres and within a year had accumulated 6,900 acres. Apparently a zero was inadvertently dropped from the totals in the story. See *Kansas City Times*, May 10, 1952, p. 34.

22. *Junction City Union*, September 6, 1873.

23. *Ellsworth Reporter*, August 28, May 29, 1873.

12. *Junction City Union*, October 5, 1872.

13. *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 18, 1873. Note that Raish reported that Edwards was with Grant in Hays in 1872; the Topeka newspaper reported that Edwards arrived with Grant in 1873.

14. For the agreement, see Deed Books, Register of Deeds Office, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas. This office is hereafter referred to as RD, Ellis County.

15. See *Atchison Daily Champion*, December 2, 1872; *Junction City Union*, December 14, 1872. The *Atchison* paper reported that \$1 million would be expended on the stock for the colony. The *Junction City* paper



increase in acreage reported by the newspapers came two years later after Grant's abortive efforts to encourage further British and Scottish investment and immigration had failed. He now turned his efforts to the New York City area. The *Junction City Union* reported in April 1875 that, while he was in New York City to purchase stock for the farm, Grant was interviewed by the *New York Tribune*. The story from New York was that "such has been the success of the enterprise that Mr. Grant is now in treaty for the purchase of the whole county of Ellis, comprising about 800 square miles or 570,000 acres. This would be larger, with one exception, than any estate held by any dukedom in Europe."<sup>24</sup> Six weeks later the *Union* reported that "George Grant's farm in Ellis County contains only 576,000 acres." This represented a six thousand-acre increase from the original story, and this exaggeration apparently did not now bother the *Union* editor as earlier exaggerations had in 1873.<sup>25</sup>

The Topeka daily *Commonwealth* was most judicious when it picked up the same story and reported that the 576,000 acres were "mostly in Ellis County." Two years earlier the paper had reported that there were only two hundred thousand acres in the estate.<sup>26</sup> The *Wilson County Citizen* of Fredonia reported that Grant's "farm embraces the whole county of Ellis, is larger than any dukedom of Europe, and contains 576,900 acres."<sup>27</sup> The *St. Louis Republican* simply called Grant's estate "the largest farm in the world."<sup>28</sup>

In early 1876, while Grant was still seeking investors in the eastern United States and in the British Isles for his venture, the *New York Times* reported that the initial purchase in 1872 was an area of "250 square miles" to which additional acres had been added by purchase. The paper stated that Grant "now owns probably the largest tract of land ever owned by any one individual in this country."<sup>29</sup> The story appeared immediately prior to Grant's trip to the British Isles to seek additional financial support.<sup>30</sup>

A correspondent for the Edinburgh *Scotsman* reported in the spring of 1877 that Grant's property was about one hundred thousand acres.<sup>31</sup> And in April 1878, when the

announcement of Grant's death was carried in the *Hays City Sentinel*, it was noted that Grant owned "tens of thousands" of acres.<sup>32</sup> A number of newspapers picked up a special dispatch from Hays City which announced Grant's death. The dispatch stated that Grant purchased 42,000 acres in 1873.<sup>33</sup> The *New York Tribune* reported 69,120 acres as the initial purchase and that Grant had added to that,<sup>34</sup> while the *Kansas City Journal of Commerce* stated that the farm consisted of 145,000 acres at the time of his death.<sup>35</sup>

The actual acreage initially purchased was much lower than what the first reports listed as the total acreage purchased before his death. Grant entered into an agreement with the railroad in 1872 for a large parcel of alternate sections of railroad grant lands lying on either side of Big Creek and extending from Fort Hays to the eastern edge of the county and lying north of the creek to the railroad and east to the North Fork. Three sections were acquired on the Smoky Hill River. Grant took title to these 25,244.99 acres on March 1, 1873. This purchase was the only land sale by the railroad in the state during the year and may explain partially why the exaggerated accounts were carried by the papers. The purchase price was \$50,016.34, or two dollars per acre, not eighty cents as reported. Grant paid \$10,000 down and signed a mortgage for the remainder.<sup>36</sup> He purchased additional lands, and by 1877, he held or had held title to a total of 31,165 acres.<sup>37</sup> Much of the land had been sold to others by the time of Grant's death. The total price of all the lands purchased was \$60,980.69. Grant, however, had invested only \$10,000, and the railroad was paid for individual sections as they were sold so that clear titles could be given to the purchasers.

Grant's concept or vision, as reported in the newspapers, was to sell the land to nobility in England and Scotland for themselves or for their sons.<sup>38</sup> The great empire of British Redcoats flashing across the Gramma grass prairies of the Great Plains chasing buffalo, jack-rabbits, and antelope was slow to develop. A total of 38 1/2 sections were sold by 1877, and 20 of these were sold on contract.<sup>39</sup> Then in April 1878, Grant died, and with his death died the dream of a vast settlement of English noblemen in Ellis County.

24. *Junction City Union*, April 3, 1875.

25. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1875. In September 1873 an inspection team from Scotland and New York City visited the property of the St. Joe, Kansas and Texas Pacific Railroad south of Junction City in the company of Col. H. F. Hale. Hale hoped to generate financial interest in England for the railroad. *Junction City Union*, September 20, 1873.

26. *Commonwealth* [daily], Topeka, May 15, 1875.

27. *Wilson County Citizen*, Fredonia, August 6, 1875.

28. *St. Louis Republican*, May 12, 1875.

29. *New York Times*, January 3, 1876, p. 3.

30. *Ellsworth Reporter*, December 23, 1875, reported his departure from Victoria to England.

31. *Hays City Sentinel*, February 8, 1878. This article cites an earlier reference, *Hays City Sentinel*, May 29, 1877.

32. *Ibid.*, April 27, 1878.

33. *Atchison Daily Champion*, April 27, 1878.

34. *New York Tribune*, May 11, 1878.

35. *Journal of Commerce*, Kansas City, May 9, 1878.

36. RD, Ellis County.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Tribune*, Denver, Colo., January 1, 1873; *Leavenworth Daily Commercial*, September 10, 1873; *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*, May 17, 1873.

39. The total of the acquisitions was compiled from the Deed Books, RD, Ellis County.

Actually, it had not been much more than a dream. Grant's land purchases were real, though not in the amounts carried in the papers, but his sales were not forthcoming. Of the total of 49 1/2 sections acquired by Grant, 9 were sold after his death by the administrator of his estate,<sup>40</sup> and nearly 12 full sections were sold at a sheriff's sale in 1884; they were purchased by the Union Pacific Railway Company.<sup>41</sup> Eight sections sold under contract were tied up in litigation until 1889, eleven years after Grant's death, and legal questions about clear titles continued into the 1950s.<sup>42</sup>

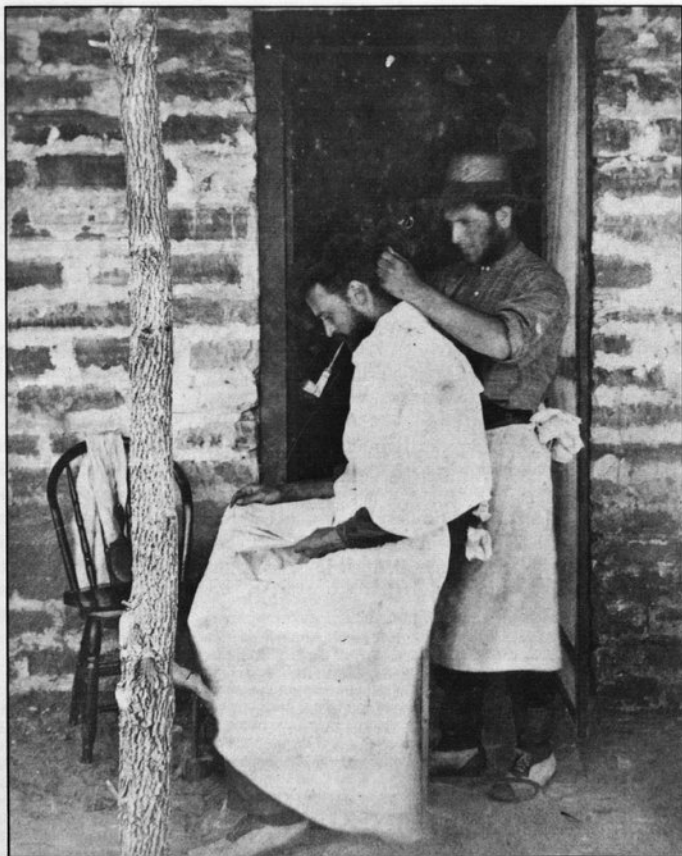
40. The sales were compiled from the deed books cited in *ibid.*

41. *Star-Sentinel*, Hays City, December 6, 1883, January 10, 1884; Sheriff's Deed, M-152 and M-166, January 7, 1884; Deed Books, RD, Ellis County.

Grant also took advantage of the federal land laws and filed on a timber claim on September 7, 1875,<sup>43</sup> and he owned acreage in Colorado, though not to the extent implied in the newspaper accounts. One report indicated

42. Deed Books, P-71, July 17, 1889, RD, Ellis County. "Publication Notices," *Ellis County News*, November 7, 1940, and "Missing Heirs of George Grant, Victoria Founder, Sought," *Hays Daily News*, August 17, 1952.

43. Tract Books, Timber Claim Entry No. 20, September 7, 1875, "southwestern one-quarter, Section 22, Township 14 South, Range 16 West," vol. 65, microfilm, Forsyth Library, Fort Hays State University (hereafter cited as microfilm, FHSU). After Grant's death, Alex Grant, a nephew, filed an entry on the land. The *Hays City Sentinel* reported that Grant's timber claim was "a valuable and improved tract of land." See *Hays City Sentinel*, August 17, 1878. In April of 1876, an Anton Lesley challenged the claim and asked for a cancellation alleging an illegal entry. Tract Books, "Section 22, T14S, R16W"; *Ellis County Star*, Hays City, April 20, 1876.



*These scenes of domestic life in Victoria were photographed in the 1870s. The gentleman receiving a haircut has been identified as T. F. Miller, but the other individuals remain unknown.*

that Grant had acquired the "Haystacks" ranch near Larkspur southwest of Castle Rock in Douglas County, Colorado, on May 25, 1875.<sup>44</sup> At the time of his death, the *Rocky Mountain News* stated that Grant owned "the Haystack farm and other landed property on the Denver and Rio Grande and Kansas Pacific Railway."<sup>45</sup> A newspaper account in 1876 stated that Grant purchased a stock farm in Colorado from John D. Perry, "former President of the Kansas Pacific road."<sup>46</sup> Records at Castle Rock, Colorado, show that Grant acquired 560 acres from John A. Roontz on March 15, 1875, and that ten days later, on May 25, he purchased 160 acres from Byron R. May. The

property was located along Stock Canyon and Plum Creek.<sup>47</sup> After Grant's death, the executor of his estate gave an executor's deed for the Colorado property to John D. Perry for the consideration of \$3,000.<sup>48</sup>

The stories of the number of sheep and cattle owned by Grant were as varied as the stories of his land holdings. Grant is credited by many for the introduction of Aberdeen Angus cattle into the United States. There were references to the cattle in the newspapers of the time though there was no clear statement about ownership.

Before Grant arrived with the first colonists in spring 1873, the *Ellsworth Reporter* stated that Grant was bringing thoroughbred Aberdeen, Polled, and Shorthorn

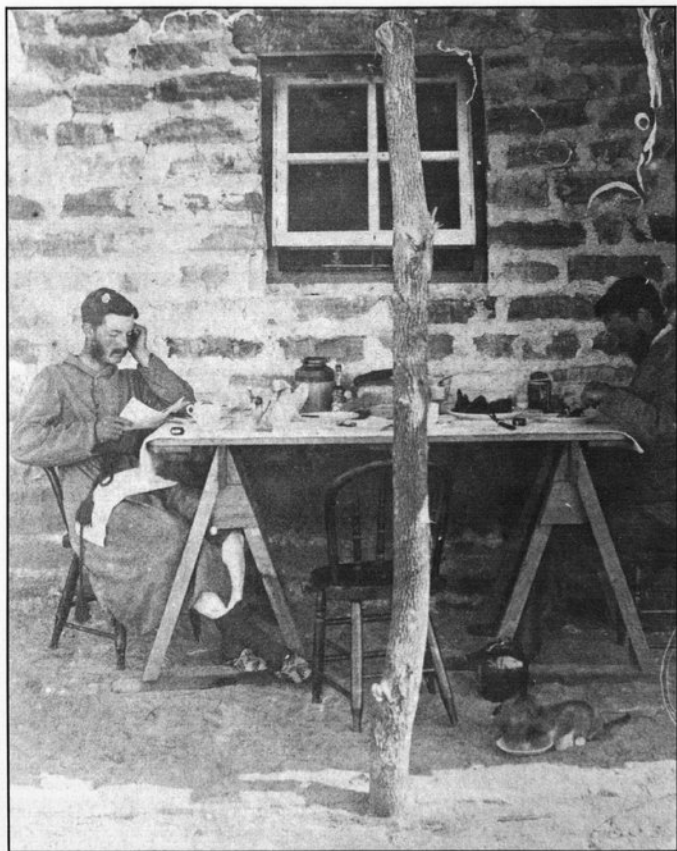
44. *Atchison Daily Champion*, April 27, 1878.

45. *Rocky Mountain News*, April 28, 1878.

46. *Commonwealth* [daily], Topeka, August 15, 1876.

47. Register of Deeds Office, Douglas County Courthouse, Castle Rock, Colorado.

48. RD, Ellis County.





cattle, and fine Cotswold Oxford, and Shropshire Down sheep for this colony.<sup>49</sup> The *Kansas City Journal* reported that there were "four black poll'd Aberdeenshire bulls," and shorthorns that were on the way to the colony. The shorthorns were of the Booth and Bates breed and had been recently purchased in Canada from a Mr. Cochrane, as were a number of Berkshire pigs which were destined for Victoria. The *Journal* also reported that "about thirty rams, of the Cotswold and Oxford, Shropshire-down breeds" accompanied the bulls, so the rams apparently also came from Cochrane's farm in Canada.<sup>50</sup> Since both reports preceded the actual arrival of the livestock, the descriptions of the types of livestock had to be provided to the newspapers. The *New York World* reported that "a number of thoroughbred Aberdeen, Polled, and short horn cattle, and five Cotswold, Oxford, and Shropshire Down sheep have been shipped from England" via New Orleans for Victoria.<sup>51</sup> The reports then were not from direct observation of the types or the colors of the livestock.

Meanwhile, the colonists had arrived in Missouri, and the *Missouri Democrat* reported that on board the steamer with the Grant colonists were "several Aberdeen Polled (or mulley) bulls, . . . [and] one short horn bull bred by Geo. Brown, of Westerton, England." There were "also thirty Cotswold [sic] and Oxford down rams." Later colonists were bringing over pigs and horses.<sup>52</sup> Again, the story did not indicate an actual observation of the livestock, only reports of the cattle and sheep that were coming. However, the *Salina Herald*, in June 1873, reported that S. Douglass Smith brought four bulls, three Aberdeenshire Polls, and one shorthorn for Grant.<sup>53</sup>

In September, after the arrival of the colonists, Grant exhibited six head of Cotswold, two black Aberdeen polled bulls, and two Durham bulls at the Kansas City Fair. The *Daily Journal of Commerce* reported that the rams were purchased from the Royal Agricultural College farm in England and that the Aberdeen bulls were imported directly from Scotland, though no statement was made about actual ownership. The story did not report the origin of the Durham bulls but did report that two shorthorn bulls had been "recently purchased from Mr. Cochran, Hillhurst, Canada." The newspaper also an-

nounced that Grant had "purchased three thousand sewes [sic] to breed" to his rams.<sup>54</sup>

In the spring of 1874 the *Kansas State Record* of Topeka reported on the *St. Louis Dispatch*'s story about Grant's return from England that spring and about his plans. The news story told of the herds that he was taking or would be taking through St. Louis to Victoria. The *Dispatch* reported that Grant had "short horn and Aberdeenshire heifers, and eight bulls of Booth's and Bate's strains" at the colony. Shorthorn and Aberdeenshire heifers were on the way, and two shorthorn bulls purchased from Senator Cochrane of Hillhurst, Lower Canada, would soon come through to Victoria.<sup>55</sup> The story did not state how or when the Aberdeen heifers got to Victoria; only bulls had been mentioned earlier at Victoria. One would assume that those early Kansas newspapermen who wrote the stories would know the difference between a bull and a heifer.

While newspaper stories about Grant referred to a very limited number of blooded cattle and his plans to crossbreed with Texas cattle, most of the published accounts referred to his plans for sheepraising. In July 1874, the *New York Times* reported that Grant had seven thousand Merino ewes.<sup>56</sup> The following October a reporter for the *New York Republic* stated that Grant had purchased 6,584 sheep in Colorado and had them in Victoria; apparently this purchase was the same as the one reported by the *New York Times* three months earlier, as the reporter added that these ewes were in addition to Grant's eighty-one pureblood ewes and fifty-nine rams.<sup>57</sup>

The *Republic* reporter also noted that Grant and two other men were constructing sheep corrals on the Victoria River.<sup>58</sup> The location of the corrals was the abandoned site of Fort Fletcher; the land was not owned by Grant at the time but still belonged to the railroad. One half of the section of land where the corrals were located was not in the initial purchase of land by Grant from the railroad. He purchased an additional quarter in the section on December 18, 1874, and the quarter where North Fork and Big Creek converge was acquired on December 26, 1874.<sup>59</sup> The site of the corrals was about two miles down river from the location of the building that became known as the "Victoria Villa."

A report in early 1875 stated that Grant had wintered seven thousand ewes over the 1874-1875 winter at Wake-

49. *Ellsworth Reporter*, May 8, 1873. Emphasis added by author.

50. *Kansas City Journal* cited in *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*, May 18, 1873.

51. *New York World* cited in *Topeka Weekly Times*, May 8, 1873.

52. *Missouri Democrat* cited in *Junction City Union*, May 24, 1873.

53. *Salina Herald*, June 21, 1873. An interesting though later account is in Alvin H. Sanders, "When the Black Bulls Came to America," *The Country Gentleman*, 93 (May 1928): 17, 54-55; reprinted in *Ellis County News*, May 3, 1928.

54. *Daily Journal of Commerce*, September 19, 1873.

55. *Kansas State Record*, Topeka, April 29, 1874.

56. *New York Times*, July 6, 1874, 3.

57. *Kansas State Record*, November 4, 1874.

58. *Ibid.*

59. RD, Ellis County. A Hays City newspaper also reported that Grant had sheep at the abandoned Fort Fletcher site. See *Hays City Sentinel*, March 9, 1877.

field and planned to have ten thousand ewes before the following winter.<sup>60</sup> However, the successes with sheep did not continue, and Grant suffered heavy losses.

The press was interested in Grant's work with sheep. There was an item in the *American Agriculturalist* in June 1875 explaining how Grant wintered his sheep on the hostile plains of western Kansas.<sup>61</sup> The article did not mention that his blooded livestock were wintered near Wakefield to protect them from the hostile elements. There was also a story in the *New York Times* which gave details about the breeding and care of sheep on Grant's farm, including details about how he dipped his sheep.<sup>62</sup>

Though the sheep were the attraction in his campaign for property sales and to raise funds from investors, Grant's twentieth-century fame rests on the introduction of Angus cattle. As indicated earlier, the evidence is not clear as the stories tended to be prepared stories for the papers rather than actual observations by reporters or the editors. The lack of clarity about the Angus is supported in a newspaper article.

The *Junction City Tribune*, after Grant's death, did not report on Black Angus on the Grant estate but rather on Galloway cattle, which are also polled and black. The *Tribune* noted Grant's contributions. "The experiments of the late George Grant, of Victoria, have demonstrated the wisdom of crossing Galloway cattle with the Texas. The Galloways are splendid beef cattle, easily fattened, black in color, and without horns. From eight to one hundred per cent of the halfbreed calves from Texas cows, possess all the characteristics of the full-blood Galloways. No horns, black color, and much improved in every respect."<sup>63</sup> Thus, those amorous black bulls gazing with a glint in their eyes at the vast herds of Texas Longhorn and Cherokee cows may have been Galloways, not Angus.

Like the issue of the Angus cattle, the ownership of the house known as "George Grant's Villa" is also clouded by

the many later accounts. While it has long been held in some quarters that the house was built by Grant or at least built for him, the original settlers in the colony knew better.<sup>64</sup>

Early newspaper accounts do not reveal that Grant built the villa. The *Kansas State Record* carried a story from the *St. Louis Dispatch* in April 1874 that Grant was bringing carpenters and masons to build "a residence for himself, farm houses for his estate and a church for the colony." He had with him an English architect so that the houses in his colony would "conform much in style to the manors and country places of England."<sup>65</sup> In late July 1874, a report stated that Grant lived at Victoria Station and would build "his residence some three miles south on Section twenty-one of his purchase, plans and estimates which are already in the hands of the contractor." The section was adjacent to his timber claim. A correspondent for the *New York Republic* wrote a story, which appeared in the *Kansas State Record*, of his visit to Victoria in October 1874. He reported that Grant had not built a house, was waiting for suitable plans, and had selected a site northwest of Victoria; the villa is south of Victoria.<sup>66</sup> No mention was made in later papers that Grant was building a home.

Nearly two years later an item in the June 1876 daily *Commonwealth* told about a reporter's visit to "Windsor Castle," so named by the same reporter. The individual said that the residence, "which Mr. Grant has just finished," was five miles south of Victoria and near old Fort Fletcher. The reporter called upon Grant "in his library" and found him "at home." Later they drove south to the large stone house. Apparently the reporter visited with Grant at the Victoria railroad station—the residence provided by the railroad under its agreement with Grant—looked over the blooded cattle in the corrals at Victoria, and then visited the area around Fort Fletcher which included the large house two miles southwest and which was described as "just finished."<sup>67</sup> Actually, the visit by the reporter was soon after Grant had taken over the

60. *Commonwealth* [daily], Topeka, May 15, 1875. The *Junction City Union* reported that Grant wintered his blooded livestock near Wakefield, a British colony in east-central Kansas, during the winter of 1873. *Junction City Union*, May 16, 1874.

61. "Sheep Shelters in Kansas and Virginia, Notes of Successful Experiences," *American Agriculturalist*, 34 (June 1875): 219-20.

62. *New York Times*, January 3, 1876, p. 3.

63. *Junction City Tribune* cited in the *Hays City Sentinel*, June 1, 1878; "Cattle Corral, Victoria Colony, Kansas," *American Agriculturalist*, 35 (February 1876): 60. An item in the 1941 biennial report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture contended that there was "wide distribution" of the crossbred cattle after Grant's death. The author of the item stated, "it appears, however, that many of the Angus half-bred females were mated with Galloway bulls, which had found their way to the Plains country in increasing numbers in the early 80s, and the results have been disappointing." I. D. Graham, "George Grant, First Importer of Aberdeen Angus Cattle in the United States," in *Thirty-second Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture* (Topeka: State Printer, 1941), 201-04.

64. See Mrs. Anne Jeter's account of the Victoria English Settlement (untitled manuscript, n.d.), 6, in the Ethnic Heritage Studies Collection, Forsyth Library, Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas. Mrs. Jeter wrote that Shields built the house and that Grant purchased it. The manuscript was prepared in part from interviews or from stories from some of the original Scot and English settlers.

The *Hays City Sentinel* reported soon after Grant's death that a rumor of a deed from "Charles Shields, the original possessor" of the Victoria villa to Thomas R. Clark had been filed. See *Hays City Sentinel*, May 18, 1878.

65. *St. Louis Dispatch* cited in the *Kansas State Record*, April 29, 1874. The report was in the *Junction City Union*, August 1, 1876. Grant had entered a timber claim on a quarter section in Section 22 in 1875.

66. *Kansas State Record*, November 4, 1874. The villa is located southeast of Victoria, not northwest as observed by the reporter.

67. *Commonwealth* [daily], Topeka, June 17, 1876.

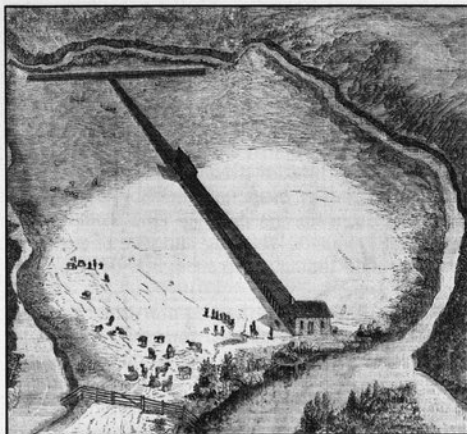


villa and had had people from St. Louis come to paint and to paper the house. He began to use the house as a residence in 1876.<sup>68</sup>

The Grant Villa was built on the northeast quarter of Section 8 in Township 15 South, Range 16 West. The location is on high ground overlooking Big Creek which is about one-half mile north. The site is about five and one-half miles south of Victoria. Section 8 was government land, not railroad land, and could be acquired only under federal land laws. Walter A. Shields of New York City purchased the land for \$400 on July 20, 1875, from the federal government under the Pre-Emption Act of 1841.<sup>69</sup>

Shields was one of the few easterners who believed George Grant's advertising about his enterprise and who emigrated to Victoria in 1874 to establish an estate on land acquired from Grant. Prior to his purchase of the quarter section from the federal government, Shields had constructed a costly and elaborate house on the quarter section and had purchased materials and property necessary for farming.<sup>70</sup> His mother Mary M. Shields had entered into a contract with Grant on May 11, 1874, to purchase for her son one and one-quarter sections adjoining the site of the house for eight hundred pounds plus interest; the agreement called for four annual payments.<sup>71</sup>

On July 26, 1875, Shields signed a written agreement between himself and Grant to turn over to George Grant the land, house, and other property as security for the earlier agreement signed in his behalf by his mother to purchase the adjoining land. The July 26 agreement provided that Shields had until May 1, 1876, to pay the eight hundred pounds due on the one and one-quarter sections that he had acquired under the contract signed by his mother. If not, Shields' quarter section with the two-story house as well as the one and one-quarter sections that were purchased from Grant under contract would all become the property of Grant. The agreement was



This engraving of a cattle corral at Victoria appeared in the February 1876 issue of *American Agriculturist*. The accompanying article identified the illustration as a "representation" and stated that although Grant had proven that "stockkeeping on the western prairies... may be made very profitable," it took capital to begin such a venture, "\$5,000 at least."

filed in the register of deeds office in Ellis County on January 29, 1876.<sup>72</sup> Grant had no right to the house or the property until May 1, 1876, but Grant apparently occupied the house in October 1875, perhaps earlier. The Grant Villa, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was built for Walter A. Shields, not George Grant, on property acquired by Shields from the federal government, and Grant never held uncontested title to the property during his lifetime.<sup>73</sup>

The story of the villa has another interesting facet, and it illustrates Grant's method of operation. The agreement between Shields and Grant was drawn up by Ben Davidson, Grant's manager, at Grant's request. According to legal testimony, the agreement was not read by Shields, but he signed it just before leaving on a train for the east.<sup>74</sup>

Testimony by Davidson and by Mary L. Clark, who received from Shields a deed to the quarter section where the villa stands, over the ownership of the property indicated their belief that Shields was coerced into signing

68. See the following court cases concerning Grant's occupation of the houses and land, as well as how the land transactions were made: Equity Case 2877, *James R. McClure and Margaret Grant, executors of the Estate of George Grant v. Mary Lesure Clark*, in the District Court of Ellis County, Kansas; Equity Case 3584, *Mary L. Clark v. Margaret Duncan et al.*, in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Kansas; Case 3768, *Margaret Duncan et al. v. Walter Shields et al.*, in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Kansas; and Case 4731, *Mary L. Clark v. Margaret Duncan*, in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Kansas. The files for these cases are in the Federal Record Center, Kansas City, Missouri (hereafter cited as FRC).

69. Tract Book, "Northeast one-quarter of Section 8, Township 15 South, Range 16 West," vol. 65, microfilm FHSU.

70. Answer of Walter A. Shields, files of *Duncan v. Shields*, FRC. Shields was identified in November 1874 as "a young gentleman of good birth and superior education, and of extensive travel, and who is also heir to the Shields estate." *Kansas State Record*, November 4, 1874.

71. Agreement Book B, RD, Ellis County.

72. Ibid.

73. *Duncan v. Shields*, FRC; National Register of Historic Places nomination form, December 29, 1971, file copy at the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

74. Deposition of Benjamin Davidson, September 22, 1881, in *Clark v. Duncan*, FRC.

the agreement. They believed that Grant convinced the immature and homesick young man, who had no experience in farming, that Shields's mother had become liable for the contract signed by her in 1874 in his behalf and that she would have to pay the eight hundred pounds to Grant if Shields did not pay for the property. The property in question was the section immediately east of the villa and a quarter section immediately north of the villa, through which Big Creek flowed to the east. After lengthy legal proceedings in the 1880s, the quarter section where the villa stands was awarded to Margaret Grant Duncan, George Grant's niece.<sup>75</sup>

The court proceedings after Grant's death over the ownership of the villa and other properties reveal financial, or at the least, record manipulation by Grant. One interesting facet of the villa ownership concerns the agreement in 1875 which concerned land acquired by Shields through his mother from Grant in May 1874. George Grant did not own the section to the east of the villa when he sold it to Shields on contract; the section was not a part of the original agreement between Grant and the railroad. Grant did purchase the land on December 8, 1874, eight months after he sold it on contract to Shields.<sup>76</sup> Walter Shields, Mary Shields, and Mrs. Mary L. Clark, wife of a former partner of Grant's in one of the Victoria enterprises, believed that the 1875 agreement as well as the 1874 contract were not legal as Grant did not own the property when he sold the one and one-quarter sections to Mary Shields. The courts ruled otherwise; the contract was binding, even though Grant did not own the land at the time he sold it on contract to Shields.<sup>77</sup>

Grant used other people's land for his cattle, implied that other people's cattle were his own at fairs, and freely grazed cattle over the public domain. He had difficulties with some of his investors, and he was not always popular with all of the citizens of the region. The editor of the *Russell County Record* in August 1875 criticized a report in the *Wathena Reporter* which called the colonizer "Sir" George Grant and which stated that Grant owned Ellis County. The *Russell* editor asked, "Where did he get that handle? We believe that Mr. Grant didn't import anything of the kind; and then, he does not 'own Ellis County.'"<sup>78</sup> The editor of the *Junction City Union*, who personally liked Grant, also chided Kansas newspapers which "in-

sisted to the last gasp" on calling him Sir George Grant.<sup>79</sup>

The editor of the *Saline County Journal* apparently tired even earlier of the glowing reports of the English gentleman in the spring of 1873. After a visit by Grant to Salina the week prior to the arrival of the first colonists, the editor wrote:

After a lot of staring on the part of some of our citizens at what they supposed was a live English lord, or some other titled chap, it was discovered that Mr. *Graunt* [sic] was no better than any other common Englishman who was a little capital on a nose beautifully frescoed by a steady use of London gin. He sampled Salina whiskey, interviewed the Land Office, several corn cribs, the sunflower region, and other monuments of Salina enterprise—then folded up his pint bottle and, with his companions, stole silently away.<sup>80</sup>

After local Salinians defended Grant against the charges made in the *Journal's* article and the statement about his gin-flowered nose, the *Lincoln County News* commented that "it looks rather bad for Mr. Grant that his friends did not deny the coloring described [sic] to his nasal perturbation [sic], merely pronouncing it a shame and disgrace" that the *Journal* had attacked him.<sup>81</sup>

After his death, testimony during the legal proceedings over his properties indicates that Grant was given to drink, enough so as to incapacitate him at times so that he could not carry on his business functions. On occasion Grant would have to be driven in a buggy across the prairie to sober him. Ben Davidson so testified as did Grant's nephew, Alex Grant. Alex testified that Grant drank at times and that "he would go off on a spree and when he was that way we didn't ever see him much, at least where I would go to see him I could never see him." The nephew also testified that Grant "didn't drink quite as much as he did after he went to the Villa."<sup>82</sup> Grant took up residency at the villa after his partners and creditors began to demand compensation, or at least an accounting, for their investments. The pressures of his failing venture apparently pushed him to further drink.

Not all Ellis Countians found Grant to be a good neighbor. The Volga-Germans who came into Ellis County in 1876 and who homesteaded near Grant's property were concerned with the practice of Grant's cattle being allowed to run loose across the prairies to destroy yards, gardens, and crops. One of the Volga-Germans even brought charges against John Duncan, Grant's herder who cared for the cattle on the Smoky Hill River, but the

75. Ibid.

76. RD, Ellis County.

77. *Clark v. Duncan*, FRC. The court testimony over the villa and other property revealed that the original books on the Victoria enterprise were destroyed because of financial problems, so the microfilm copy of the cash book in the Kansas State Historical Society is not of an original book.

78. *Russell County Record*, Russell, August 5, 1875.

79. *Junction City Union*, September 27, 1873.

80. *Saline County Journal*, May 15, 1873. Note that the first colonists had not yet arrived when this episode occurred.

81. *Lincoln County News*, Lincoln Centre, May 22, 1873.

82. Testimony of Alex Grant, files of *Duncan v. Shields*, FRC.

courts in Ellis County found in favor of Duncan and against the immigrant whose crop was destroyed by Grant's free-ranging cattle.<sup>83</sup>

Grant died in April 1878, and what was left of his grand colony came unravelled. The will of George Grant provided for a total of \$35,000 in direct cash bequests to a number of individuals as well as the bequest of the villa, its furniture, and the 160-acre site of the villa to Margaret Grant, his niece.<sup>84</sup>

Initially, it appeared that Grant had the money to accommodate his will. The *Chicago Inter-Ocean* reported that Grant's estate was "estimated at over \$700,000."<sup>85</sup> The *Rocky Mountain News* reported a similar value of the

estate which consisted of cattle and London property. The *News* also reported that "it is said that he had nearly 100,000 head of cattle that he bought to grass his lands."<sup>86</sup>

But the sad situation was that George Grant was bankrupt and that there were claims against the lands that he had acquired from the railroad. Perhaps the leaden skies overhead and the monotone of the drizzle falling on the roof of the unfinished church at Grant's funeral were indications of the gloom which was soon cast over the Victoria enterprise, an enterprise which was composed in part of myths and of the puffery of Kansas newspapermen.<sup>87</sup>

It was this puffery which prompted D. L. Dickinson of St. Louis to write to the editor of the *Hays City Sentinel*. Dickinson stated that "there is nothing gained by overestimating his [Grant's] work or good influences. I noticed an extract from a Denver paper, which, speaking of Mr. Grant's immense wealth, makes his fortune colossal, and estimates his stock at one hundred thousand head. If ninety-nine thousand were subtracted, it might come nearer the actual truth. It is funny how you newspaper

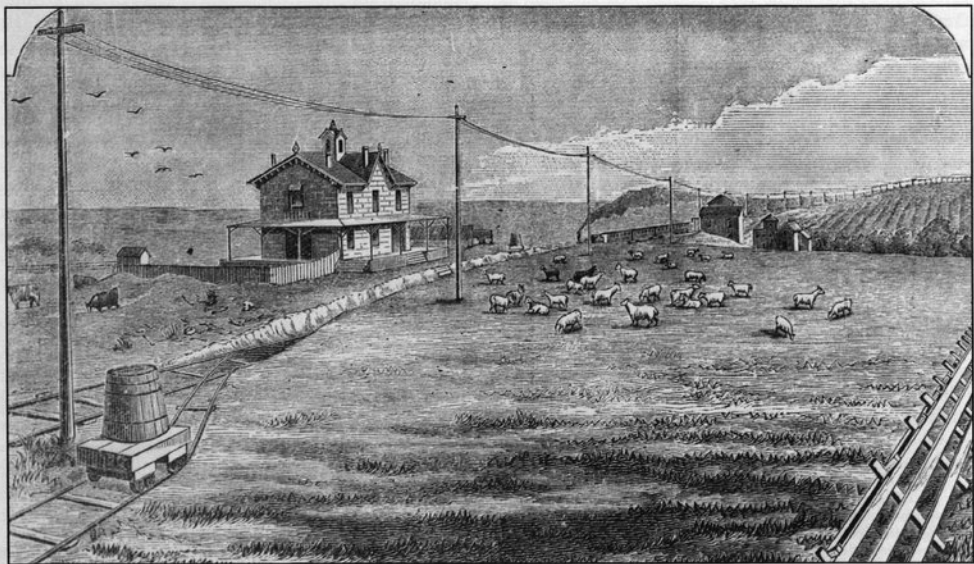
83. *Hays City Sentinel*, February 15, March 2, 1878. Grant had other legal problems. See *S. M. Strickler v. George Grant*, District Court of Davis County, reported in *Junction City Union*, November 25, 1875, and *W. E. Dabney v. George Grant*, a district court case that ended in the Kansas State Supreme Court. *George Grant v. W. E. Dabney*, in *Kansas Reports*, 19, 2d ed., annotated, July Term, 1877, 388-93. For the original Dabney case, see *W. E. Dabney v. George Grant*, reported in *Hays Sentinel*, April 26, 1876 (note: this is same paper as *Hays City Sentinel*, but masthead for this date in 1876 did not include "City").

84. Will of George Grant, Journal Book A, Probate Judge Office, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays. The major items in the will were listed in the *Hays City Sentinel*, May 4, 1878.

85. *Chicago Inter-Ocean* cited in the *Hays City Sentinel*, May 11, 1875.

86. *Rocky Mountain News*, April 28, 1878.

87. For a description of the day, see *Hays City Sentinel*, May 4, 1878.



A focal point in Victoria was the building which served as the Kansas Pacific depot, a hotel, and Grant's headquarters. Included in this 1874 engraving are the depot and specimens of the livestock brought to the colony.



men like to boost people up occasionally. . . . But I suppose your readers know how to make allowances for these things."<sup>88</sup>

When one evaluates Grant, one must conclude that his colonizing efforts ultimately collapsed, in part because of harsh, adverse publicity in Scotland and England about his property and his plans, and in part because of the harsh climate of western Kansas. The Panic of 1873, the drying up of Big Creek in September 1873, and the destitution of the western frontier counties in 1874 did not help his efforts, nor did the prairie fires and the grasshoppers that consumed the grass on the grazing lands.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, an evaluation requires that the venture of George Grant must be placed in its time in Kansas and national history. The adverse publicity of the Poland Committee and the stories in the *New York Sun* in 1872 and the Credit Mobilier Scandal in 1873, as well as the Panic of 1873<sup>90</sup> and court cases related to land titles and to railroads paying taxes on grant lands forms the backdrop for the favorable stories in the newspapers about Grant and his grandiose scheme.<sup>91</sup> Good news about Grant replaced bad news about railroads in order to encourage settlement on the plains of Kansas.

Locally in Kansas, Abilene saw its last big herd of Texas cattle in 1871, and Ellsworth became the end of the track in western Kansas for cattle from 1872 to 1875, as Dodge City was only beginning in 1872. The severe winter of 1871 was discouraging for settlers, but Grand Duke Alexis of Russia traveled western Kansas in 1872 and thus offered positive publicity about the state. Then the Timber Culture Act of 1873 offered a new inducement to acquire government land, in addition to a double entry homestead in railroad lands. Perhaps the settlers would even purchase railroad lands after their homesteads were entered and timber claims filed. The Indian activities of 1874 caused a discouraging note in the history of western Kansas, but times began to change in 1875.<sup>92</sup> Thus,

Grant's venture started during difficult economic and climatic times in Kansas and the nation, and success would have been difficult under these circumstances.

Further, Grant faced British and Scottish opposition to his quest for investors in the British Isles. At least three prospectus-type pamphlets, or circulars, about Grant's enterprise were published in the British Isles between 1873 and 1876. In 1873 *Scotch Enterprise in America. Mr George Grant's Great Property: Victoria, in Kansas, The Central State of the United States, An Explanation to an Enquiring Scotchman who contemplated Emigration* was prepared by D. Curror, and was published in October of that year in Edinburgh, Scotland. The author expressed caution about investing in the Grant enterprise.<sup>93</sup> Another pamphlet entitled, *English Enterprise in America. Notes Addressed to Investors and Settlers Concerning the Estate of Victoria (Ellis County, Kansas, U.S.). The Property of Mr George Grant*, was published in Edinburgh in March 1874, but Curror was not involved in its publication.<sup>94</sup> English investors were to contact Robert W. Edis of London. The American agent was Robbe & Fowler, Solicitors, of New York City. An 1876 pamphlet bore the same title as the one in 1874. Edis was still an agent in 1876, as was Robert Thompson of Berkshire and William Steele of Edinburgh.<sup>95</sup>

The pamphlets had favorable narrative and individual letters lauding the venture. However, a series of letters in the Edinburgh papers thwarted any effective subscription in the British Isles to the Kansas property. The letters to *The Scotsman* and *The Courant* in Edinburgh discouraged investment and immigration. Questions were raised about the healthfulness of the western Kansas climate, as well as about opportunities for economic growth, and if one could really farm the land. The questions were raised by D. Curror of Edinburgh and Craigdueckie in Fife, who wrote the 1873 pamphlet, and others. They questioned the favorable reports of the survey party from Scotland that visited Victoria. The survey team was composed of Robert Scot Skirving of Campion,

88. *Hays City Sentinel*, June 1, 1878. The *Sentinel* also commented on a Kansas City *Journal of Commerce* report that Grant owned 145,000 acres and 100,000 herd of cattle by stating, "And Kansas City is only 300 miles away," as if the Kansas City reporter should know better. The local paper knew that the various reports of landholding and cattle ownership were not correct. *Hays City Sentinel*, May 11, 1878.

89. For the hardships, see Robert W. Richmond, *Kansas: A Land of Contrasts*, 2d ed. (St. Louis: Forum Press, 1974), 113-43. For reasons for failure, see Raish, *Victoria*, 46-47, and Oscar O. Winther, "The English and Kansas, 1865-1890," in John C. Clark, ed., *The Frontier Challenge: Responses to the Trans-Mississippi West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1971), 264.

90. Ahearn, *Union Pacific Country*, 124-27. The committee was named for Rep. Luke P. Poland (R-Vermont).

91. Leslie Decker, *Railroads, Lands, and Politics: The Taxation of the Railroad Land Grants, 1864-1897* (Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 1964), 18.

92. Richmond, *Kansas: A Land of Contrasts*, 129-30.

93. D. Curror, *Scotch Enterprise in America. Mr George Grant's Great Property: Victoria, in Kansas, The Central State of the United States, An Explanation to an Enquiring Scotchman who contemplated Emigration* (Edinburgh: Colston & Son, 1873).

94. *English Enterprise in America. Notes Addressed to Investors and Settlers Concerning the Estate of Victoria (Ellis County, Kansas, U.S.). The Property of Mr George Grant (Late of the firm of Grant & Gask, now Gask & Gask, Oxford Street, London)*. (Edinburgh: John Lindsay, March 1874).

95. *English Enterprise in America. Notes Addressed to Investors and Settlers Concerning the Estate of Victoria (Ellis County, Kansas, U.S.). The Property of Mr George Grant (Late of the firm of Grant & Gask, now Gask & Gask, Oxford Street, London)*. (London: T. Pettit & Co., 22 & 23 Frith Street, Soho, 1876). The copy in the Kansas State Historical Society is a typed copy with additional notes handwritten, apparently for another version of the 1876 pamphlet.

Midlothian, president, Royal Physical Society, and ex-president of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture; A. Bethune of Blebo, Fifeshire, deputy lieutenant of Fifeshire, Scotland, a director of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture and of the Scottish Steam Cultivation Company; Charles Prescott of Stroud Park, Kent, England; Robert W. Edis, fellow of the Society of Architecture, past president of the Architectural Association of London; John Ferguson, Aberdeenshire, Scotland; and Thomas R. Clark of Fisk, Clark & Flagg, New York City. The survey team visited Victoria in late August and early September 1873.<sup>96</sup>

Curror was to have accompanied the survey party in mid-1874 to visit Victoria but did not do so. He asked his constituents to postpone decisions about investing in Grant's venture until objective information, such as official Kansas state reports on climate, items about shelter materials, respiratory diseases in the region, and the nature of markets, including shipping costs and prices, were received in Edinburgh.<sup>97</sup> Letters to American and Scottish newspapers pursued the advantages and disadvantages of settling on or investing in Grant's property.<sup>98</sup> The results were disastrous for Grant's efforts to secure additional capital and immigrants in the British Isles.<sup>99</sup>

George Grant did leave a legacy, in part based on myth, but also on hard facts. Many of the Scottish colonists who came in 1873 stayed, took advantage of the homestead law, and became property owners. Some became cattlemen and others merchants. Three ranches were developed from his properties.<sup>100</sup> The experiments to adapt blooded livestock to the harsh winters and summers of the plains attracted attention, and soon others were raising large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle in the

country, frequently with disastrous financial results, especially along the Saline River in northern Ellis County. The story is not clear as to Grant's actual success with the livestock experiments, but at least others tried to imitate his efforts.<sup>101</sup>

And last, Grant left another legacy, if we can call it that, and that is in the examples of extreme boosterism of the Kansas press. Much of the legend of George Grant was built on the extreme puffery of the Kansas newspapers as the newspapermen tried to sell Kansas to attract European immigrants as well as settlers from the eastern part of the United States. The Kansas newspapermen were never at a loss for colorful adjectives to describe their beloved state or to push for its settlement. They were used by Grant, and they, in turn, helped make the myths about him. After all, who but a Kansas newspaperman would coin the beautiful, but inaccurate, phrase that George Grant of Victoria was "the largest land Grant in the West." KH

100. Alex Philip, who later started the Philip Ranch; James "Scotty" Philip, later an owner of a private buffalo herd; Hon. Walter Maxwell, son of Lord Herries of Everingham Park, Yorkshire; and William Faulkner, orphan son of a clergyman in the Church of England and an Oxford student, were among the many who came initially. Two of the ranches that were developed later was the Philip Ranch and the Beech Ranch. The rollicking, heavy drinking attitude of some of the colonists also prevailed on the part of some after Grant's death. For instance, one of the colonists, Andrew Loftus Todd, "Lord" Loftus to the patrons of his Victoria saloon, caused quite a stir in Kansas City, Missouri, in January 1880. The *Kansas City Times* of January 10, 1880, reported that "Lord Loftus" cashed a check about Christmastime, "immediately started out on a gigantic 'tare' which he kept up with remarkable success to the present time." He drank heartily, enjoyed the sensuous association with the demimonde from the bagnios of the Queen City of the West, paid high fees to the local hackman, and ended up in the Kansas City calaboose. He was rescued by a creditor, who obtained from Todd the money owed to the rescuer, and the "Henglishman" was returned to Victoria. This activity resulted in an item written from Victoria about why the English of Victoria acted as they did. See *Kansas City Times*, January 10, 1880, 8; *Weekly Times*, Kansas City, January 20, 1880.

101. Professor Larry McFarland, Northern Arizona University, has noted that George Grant differed from later British and Scot cattlemen in Kansas and on the Great Plains. The British who came later tended to be investors in cattle operations, while Grant was an early importer of blooded cattle. Larry McFarland, "British Interest in Midwestern Livestock Enterprises, 1872-1910," a paper presented at the Western Social Science Association meeting, Reno, Nevada, April 23-27, 1986. Grant did try to maintain purebred cattle. In 1877 he purchased fifteen purebred shorthorn bulls and some cows from Capt. J. S. Maynard, Meadow Springs Farm, Carr, Weld County, Colorado. The ranch was located near the northern Colorado border, south of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Alvin T. Steinel, *History of Agriculture in Colorado* (Ft. Collins, Colo.: State Agricultural College, 1926), 160.

96. Several papers reported the visit. See *Topeka Daily Blade*, August 27, 1873. A favorable letter, dated September 10, 1873, was sent by the survey team to George Grant. The letter appeared in several Kansas newspapers. See *Junction City Union*, October 4, 1873.

97. Curror, *Scotch Enterprise in America*, 12-14.

98. A series of clippings on the dispute can be found in "D. Curror, India Building, Edinburgh, Scotland, Scrapbook of Clippings Concerning Victoria, 1872-1874," Kansas State Historical Society Library. For a positive letter, see *The Field*, January 3, 1874. For a negative item, see *The Farmer*, December 8, 1873.

99. The issue of opposition in Scotland to Grant's colonization effort was noted in James L. Forsythe, "Environmental Considerations in the Settlement of Ellis County, Kansas," *Agricultural History*, 51 (January 1977): 40-41, 49-50.