Letters of Edward and Sarah Fitch, Lawrence, Kansas, 1855-1863 Part I

edited by John M. Peterson

We cross the prairies as of old
Our fathers crossed the sea,
To make the West as they the East
The homestead of the free

The first verse of John Greenleaf Whittier’s “The Song of the Kansas Emigrants” was part of the rallying cry that brought many from New England to Kansas in 1854 and 1855. Who these early westward bound settlers were and if they came to Kansas primarily to make it “The homestead of the free,” as well as their hardships and successes, are revealed in a set of letters written in Lawrence, Kansas, in the 1850s and 1860s by Sarah and Edward Fitch.

The situation in Kansas during the first years of this correspondence can be traced back to the Kansas-Nebraska Act signed by President Franklin Pierce on May 30, 1854. That act established the territories of Kansas and Nebraska, opened the public lands therein to settlement, and reserved the decision on whether or not slavery was to be permitted until the people living in any would-be state framed its constitution. This provision, in effect, abrogated the Missouri Compromise, which since 1820 had prohibited the extension of slavery to any new state as far north as Kansas, and set the stage for the free-state and proslavery conflict which in only a year began to justify the name “Bleeding Kansas.” In the process it split the Democratic party and led to the creation of the new Republican party. To counteract the flood of Missouri residents who came across the border to stake claims, although many did not actually settle in the territory, various organizations in the northern states promoted the settlement of Kansas by free-state partisans. The most active of these was the New England Emigrant Aid Company whose first party of settlers arrived in Lawrence in August 1854. This activity in turn evoked countervailing action in the southern states, particularly Georgia and South Carolina.

Edward Payson Fitch, a native of Massachusetts, arrived in Kansas in October 1854 as a member of the third party of settlers sponsored by the New England Emigrant Aid Company. He was born on March 8, 1832, to John A. and Lucy Ann Howe Fitch who lived on a farm near Hopkinton. His father, in addition to farming, was a leader in the community and held several local and state governmental positions over the years. His mother’s family lived elsewhere in Massachusetts and little is known about them except for a brother who was a medical doctor. There is almost no information about Edward’s early life and education, but it is known that he had four brothers who lived to adulthood and that he taught school for a year or two before coming to Kansas. He seems to have been close to his parents and to his elder brother, Appleton, as most of his extant letters are addressed to one or the other.

As was true of many of his fellow emigrants, Edward’s motives for moving to Kansas were a mix of altruistic and economic impulses. He was sincere in the antislavery beliefs he had absorbed from his father, one of the earliest supporters of the Liberty party in their community, but he also had the problem of what to do for a career. A small Massachusetts farm would not support more than one family and there were five Fitch boys. Edward was not an adventurous type but the prospect of getting into business or making some money in real estate speculation, while helping to keep Kansas from becoming a slave state, appealed to him. Furthermore, if he wanted to ever have a farm of his own, the frontier, where land could be claimed and bought for a fraction of its price in New England, was his best chance.

Sarah Anna Wilmth was born April 20, 1834, in Tarrytown, New York, the daughter of Otis Wilmorth, originally from Massachusetts, and his first wife Eliza.
When Edward Fitch arrived in Lawrence it was not a very impressive place. Although there were a few log buildings, most of the two hundred or so settlers were living in tents or in structures with sod walls and thatched-hay roofs. The Emigrant Aid Company sawmill had not yet arrived, there were no newspapers, and very few, if any, shops were open for business on a regular basis. As the leading free-state center in the territory, it grew rapidly but its position in the forefront of the dispute between free-state and proslavery settlers attracted opposition as well as population. Edward took part in some of the significant incidents in early Kansas history and ultimately lost his life in one of the most notorious. An interesting aspect of Edward’s early letters is his fresh eyewitness account of a number of events that also have been recorded by Sara Robinson, Douglas Brewerton, Shalor W. Eldridge, and others who lived in and wrote about Kansas in the 1850s.

Presented here are the letters of Edward and Sarah Fitch. Additionally, two other letters are included: the Rev. George Lewis letter of 1857 vividly describes the destitution of many emigrants; and the 1858 letter written by Sarah’s half brother, George, provides other insights into the life and events of Kansas. The goal in transcribing these letters has been to provide a faithful but readable text, while maintaining the style and tone of the authors. Edward’s spelling, punctuation, and use of capital letters were somewhat erratic, and his penmanship varied greatly depending upon the circumstances under which he wrote. Furthermore, some of the originals have dimmed with time.* Where individual letters and words could be made out clearly, they have been followed exactly, despite misspellings and other errors; where there is doubt, the author has been presumed to spell correctly and to have used the normal rules of capitalization. Punctuation has been provided where needed for clarity or readability; all other additions have been enclosed in brackets. All deletions are indicated by elipses; most deletions are repetitive details concerning family money matters or inquiries concerning people and events of little concern to Kansas events.

These letters were preserved by several members of the Fitch family and in time came into the hands of Edward’s great-grandson, Roger K. Fitch of Omaha, Nebraska, who gave copies to the Watkins Community Museum, Lawrence. He also allowed the museum to copy several photographs, has furnished information

*The difficult and time-consuming task of transcribing these letters has been accomplished by Dorothy Norris with some help from other volunteers and staff members of Watkins Community Museum, Lawrence.
An early arrival in Lawrence, Edward Fitch saw a settlement in which there were few frame buildings and some structures with thatched-hay roofs, as illustrated in the drawing of Lawrence, 1854-1855. About four years later, the town possessed a growing number of businesses with Massachusetts Street crowded with ox teams and wagons.
on the Fitch family, has assisted the transcription by reviewing the original letters, and has graciously consented to the publication of this material.

The following two letters are all that have been preserved of those Edward wrote between his arrival in Lawrence in October 1854 and his return to Massachusetts for a visit in the summer of 1855. During that period he is known to have taught the first school in Lawrence, invested in city property, and been a partner of Charles Stearns in a boarding and lodging establishment, the Republican House.

Lawrence, Sun. Mar. 4, 55

Dear Parents

Two weeks ago tomorrow the eastern mail arrived here that was delayed on the way by the storm. It brought with it two letters from home, or one from Boston, written about the last of Jan. They were the first I rec’d of a later date than the 29 of Dec./54. A day or two since I rec’d another from Father dated Feb 17th at the end of which he says’ write oftener’. Now here I am away from home with half a dozen or more to write to me and I don’t get but about one or two letters in a month and then ask me to write oftener. I should like to receive one oftener at any rate….

I have been keeping school for the past two weeks and we have had from 10 to 15 men to board. I have to get up at about 5 o’clock in the morning, get breakfast for all the men then go into school and stay six hours and at night I have dishes to wash after supper and then I bring all the water seventy rods or more and I chop all the wood so you can guess how much time I have to write or anything else but I expect I shall soon have a better chance.

I have a bad cough. I’ll write particulars soon.

Your aff. son
E. F. Fitch

I want to hear the news from town meeting tomorrow.
I have sent the Herald to you just as you said.


Dear Parents

My time has been very much occupied for a number of weeks and I have had no time to write letters at all. I have not kept school any now for a little more than a week but I have had all I could do to take care of our boarders. We have had sometimes 15 or 20 at once that had their meals here tho they did not all sleep here and now for three or four days I have had all the work to do alone as Mr. Stearns has done nothing at all and I have had 13 or more regular boarders all the time besides lots of transient folks so you may guess that I have been somewhat busy. I think now I shall sell out my share and if I get enough to make me square, that is just pay my living through the winter, I shall be pretty well satisfied tho I expected to make something when I commenced but Stearns has acted so about the Em. A. Soc. that he is not popular here and we suffer some for it—you may have seen some of his letters in the papers, he writes for the Tribune (NY) and the Liberator also. He is down on the E. A. Co. “like a thousand of brick.” I don’t think so much of it as some do but I don’t think quite so badly of it as he does for he says it has been a curse to the territory while I merely say it has not done as much good as I wish it had and as it ought to have done. There are some things about it that I don’t like at all.

You need not be surprised if the next news you hear from me is that I have decided to go to California. There are a lot of young fellows going from here and I don’t know but I shall go with them. We shall start about the 10th of May, and go by way of Salt Lake City. We can have 30, [$30] per month and found to drive a [a] team out there—go in a train of about 100 wagons.

I want you, Father, to get the Boston Weekly Journal of Feb. 22nd if you have not seen it and read what Dr. Webb and Dr. Robinson write about Stearns and Willard. And then get the Journal of April 6th or about that time and see the answers that they have just written. Dr. Robinson has told some lies in that piece and no mistake—but they have paid him off with truth mostly.

1. Edward taught a subscription school in a structure with canvas walls and a thatched-hay roof. Located at about 8th and Vermont, it also housed the Emigrant Aid Company offices. Only enough funds were collected to pay the teacher for about three months. The school opened on January 16 with about twenty students. *Herald of Freedom, Lawrence, January 20, 1855.*

2. Presumably Edward's parents had asked for a subscription to one of the local newspapers. The *Herald of Freedom* was considered the official organ of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. Samuel A. Johnson, "The Emigrant Aid Company in Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1 (November 1899):430.

3. At the Republican House, which had sod walls and a canvas roof, board was fifty cents a day and lodging ten cents a day, according to the newspaper advertisements of Stearns and Fitch, proprietors. *Kansas Tribune, Lawrence*, January 10, 1855.

4. Charles Stearns, an abolitionist and free-state crusader who loved controversy, was continually at odds with the Emigrant Aid Company. After parting with Edward toward the end of March, Stearns and a new partner, George C. Willard, opened the Robinson House, which was the Republican House under a new name and with higher prices. In advertising their new venture, Stearns and Willard expressed the hope that past patronage would continue but did not promise "to hold their tongues about the sins of the Emigrant Aid Company." Shaler Winfield Eldridge, "Recollections of Early Days in Kansas," *Kansas Historical Publications* 2 (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1920):18-19.

5. Dr. Charles Robinson was the chief representative of the New England Emigrant Aid Company in Kansas; Dr. T. H. Webb was the company's secretary at its beginning.
NEW PROVISION STORE.

THE subscriber would inform the inhabitants of Kansas Territory, who trade in Lawrence, that he intends keeping on hand at his Store No. 19 Massachusetts St., all kinds of Provisions and country produce. The highest price will be paid for Butter, Cheese, Lard, Eggs, Potatoes, Melons, &c.

C. STEARNS.

Lawrence, Aug. 27, 1855.

*32-6m.*

When Edward first arrived in Lawrence, he and Charles Stearns were partners, advertising themselves as proprietors of the Republican House. Although Edward left this partnership, he continued at times to work for Stearns. This notice from August 1855 advertises one of Stearns' other ventures.

shall, if I can, get and send along some papers with this letter that I want you to read the Editorials and see what they say about Em Aid Soc. to read and circulate. There is a large mail at Westport [Missouri] now but we can't get it because the P. M. [Post Master] would not send to Lawrence until he received orders from the Department at Washington.

Our election will come on Friday and we shall have a hot time of it. I expect almost that the pro slavery ticket will be elected but if it is there will be some Free State men on that...⁶ You can show this to any one that wants to see it. The reason why I have not kept school has been that they have made my schoolroom into a boarding house, and many Emigrants are arriving and we can't accommodate them any other way.

Give my love to all, yours

E. P. Fitch

6. The election, held on March 30, 1855, was called by Governor Reeder to elect a territorial legislature. Although the census taken in the previous month listed only 2,905 voters in the territory, 6,318 votes were cast, probably more than half of them by non-resident Missourians. Noble L. Prentis, A History of Kansas (Topeka: Caroline E. Prentis, 1904), 51. The resulting proslavery legislature was repudiated by the free-state faction and termed the "bugus" legislature but the Pierce Administration overlooked the voting irregularities and proceeded on the assumption that its acts were valid.

The lapse of nearly five months between the date of the following letter and the previous one is accounted for by Edward's return, for reasons not known, to Massachusetts. On his trip back to Kansas, he guided an Emigrant Aid Company party of twenty women and children which left Boston on July 24 and arrived in Kansas City on August 1.

Lawrence Aug. 12, 1855

Dear Parents

I guess that you will begin to think that I don't do anything else but write letters home, well I have not done much of anything else yet since I got here that is any work and I am so much perplexed that I hardly know which side up I am half of the time. It has rained almost if not quite everyday, since I arrived here a week ago, some part of the day. Last night about 6 Oclock it began to rain very hard and to thunder and lighten dreadfully. It litterally poured down. I never saw it rain harder and as to thunder and lightening all that I ever saw & heard was not a priming to what we had here. The thunder was like the constant discharge of Artillery and the lightening kept the air all a blaze of light. Almost all the persons that I have heard speak of it say
they never knew such a storm of thunder. The Lightning struck twice in the city. The first time was just about sundown. It struck the end of a house and went down both rafters to the ground. . . . The other time it struck it came down a post of a low house and . . . two children in the house were stunned considerably. Both were very narrow escapes.4 We had one death in the city yesterday from Small pox, a child of Mr. Willis. . . . Our rainy season which ought to come in June has just commenced. I have no place to stay except the old house and when it rains outdoors it rains in there just as hard perhaps harder.

Mr. Stearns hired a horse and wagon to go look for some butter Friday and took me with him to drive. After we crossed the Wakarusa [Wakarusa Creek] ten miles from here we had to go most of the time across the prairie where there is no road. The grass on the high prairie is not more than a foot high, but on the bottoms where we crossed it was as high as the middle of the horse and some of it some higher. From Washington Creek which was some 12 miles from home we set out to come across to Blanton [Bridge] which is 5 miles from here.5 We started through the grass which was up to my waist. Saw a large copperhead snake come through where the grass was just as thick as it could grow and as high as my head. The horse could but just draw us thro and we had to get out sometimes and look ahead, for there were ravines that we might get into and break the wagon. . . . We finally got home about nine o'clock in the evening without having found any butter at all but we bought 12 dozen ears of green corn for our market. Sat. we sold some 8 or ten dollars worth of provisions in our market and made a pretty good profit in them.6

Let everybody see this sheet that wants to and all that don't want to see it read it to. Remember me to all friends. Tell Albert to write to me.7
Edward P. Fitch
When you write put your letters in an envelope.

Lawrence Sept. 8th 1855
Dear Parents

I believe it is not long since I wrote to you but important steps have been taken and of them you should be informed. I don't know what I have written to you about my city affairs exactly but the facts are these: when I arrived here this summer I found that I could not have the lot for which I bargained on Mass St. and I found that city property was almost valueless. S. N. Wood had neglected my business and taking all things into consideration with the advice of another lawyer (fight dog with dog) I have concluded to protest Wood's note and in order to have anything to show for the two hundred dollars paid, I thought it best to improve the best lot in the interest deeded to me.8 So last Tues. I made a bargain with a carpenter to build me a house on that lot and to go right to work on it and have it on before Allen. Woods' agent, had a chance to jump the lot. Wed. & Thurs. Allen was gone to Big Spring [Douglas Co.] and Mr. Jones (the Carpenter) went to work and has begun to frame the building. The house is to be 12 x 14 ft., ten feet posts, and will cost $175.00. I shall probably rent the lower part for about 1.50 per week and have the upper part to live in myself. When that is done I shall be able to hold that lot at least and if I don't get any more, that lot will be worth the two hundred dollars sometime perhaps. . . . My good opinion of Wood is gone. I have found three persons who were waiting for me to pay Wood so that they might get the money and all of them wanted about two or three hundred apiece and all to come out of this three hundred that Fitch was to pay.

Emery and I had been over once to see the man that was on my claim and on last Thurs. he came to see me to know if I would buy his improvements. . . . Sat. Emery and I went out there.9 We found that he had got fifteen acres almost fenced and quite a log cabin. After talking a while he offered to take 150 dollars and I offered him 125. We could not agree and it was left in that way. In the

8. Mrs. Charles Robinson mentioned this thunderstorm and reported that a bolt of lightning struck a Mr. D's house, tore off one corner of the roof, and stunned two children who were inside. Sara T. L. Robinson, Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life (Boston: Crosby, Nichols and Co., 1856), 83.
9. Stearns and Fitch must have driven south and west from Lawrence, crossed the Wakarusa in the Clinton area, then circled eastward across Washington Creek, and finally recrossed the Wakarusa over the bridge that Napoleon Blanton had just opened directly south of Lawrence Street.
10. Ads for the "New Provision Store" at 19 (now 615-47) Massachusetts Street began in the Kansas Free State on September 3, 1855, over the signature of G. Stearns. It offered for sale all kinds of provisions and country produce and promised farmers the highest prices for eggs, butter, cheese, potatoes, etc. Edward worked in this store off and on until the next spring.
11. Albert has not been identified. He was not a brother or cousin so may have been a neighborhood friend.
12. Samuel N. Wood was a lawyer, aggressive free-state partisan, and active real estate speculator. It appears Edward had bought a "city interest," which was a share in a number of lots, from Wood. At some point each shareholder, if he had met the requirement for improvements, received title to a lot. Edward had been led to believe that he was going to get Lot 43 (now 745-7) Massachusetts Street but decided he would be wise to settle for Lot 44 (now 744-6) Vermont Street where he had a house built. Edward's claim was south of Lawrence in what became the SW S12, T13 S, R19 E and now is between 23rd and 31st streets, east of Iowa Street nearly to Arkansas Street. As the land had not been surveyed, claim boundaries frequently did not coincide with the boundaries later determined by surveyors. Furthermore, there was no land office in the area at which claims could be registered. Thus, the "claim jumper" who built on Edward's claim may not have known it was already taken. "Emery" undoubtedly was J. S. Emery, a young New England lawyer to whom Edward had gone for advice and assistance.
afternoon he came over here and we had more talk. He offered to split the difference with me and I would not do that; at last we made this trade. He is to finish the fence and I am to give him 155 dollars. I concluded it would cost me about $30 to finish the fence and he could finish it better than I could for I could not do it alone and if it was not finished what ever crop there was would not be worth much. There is a little broken up and a crop of turnips on it.

I expect to go on to the claim in a week. I shall cut some hay I think and I don’t know whether I shall sow any wheat or not. So you see that when I have paid 175 for my house and 155 for my claim I shall not have any money, hardly, left to settle with Wood with for I had only 400 when I got here... and I have made only about 20 dollars since I got here, so it will probably be the case that I must have some more money. Though I did not mean to ask for any more. It is thought by some that I can sell my claim for about 300 now but I think after buying it twice I shall keep it.

14. Edward now realized that if he were to protect his claim, as well as to meet residence requirements, it would be necessary for him to live on his claim at least part of the time.

I am in pretty good business here now. Our sales will amount to $16 per day on an average I think and if I stay here and live on my claim, I must have a pony to ride in every morning and out at night. I have one now in view that I can have for $50, saddle, bridle and all and it will not cost me anything to keep it and I can let it for enough to pay for him in a few months. But I can’t walk out and in from my claim. It is 3 1/2 miles and I can have the school to keep if I want to. I expect, at least so one of the committee told me yesterday and it is expected to commence next month...

It was so hot yesterday that large hard apples laid on a bench at the east end of our store baked almost through, a number of them. I eat some of them and they were much like apples baked in the stove but such days are uncommon though Sept. is our hottest month here.

15. This refers to the produce store where Edward was working. Although he implied that he had a proprietary interest, all the store’s advertisements were issued by Charles Starns as owner.

There has been a great convention at Big Spring fifteen miles from here. They had adopted a platform and nominated Gov. Reed for Congress. We have a ratification meeting here tomorrow night at which Col. Lane, (formerly of Congress and Gov. of Ind.) and others will speak, perhaps I among the rest. You probably saw by the paper that I spoke at the ratification after the great Con. here. I am going in strong for Gov. Reed though he is a Democrat though I should rather have him go to the Senate from Penn[sylvania].

There has been a free negro here for a little while back and the Pro Slavery men have been trying to prove that he was a slave and get him away. He was on a claim just north of mine and last Sun. the news came in that there had a party gone to take him. A lot of us armed with Sharps rifles went out under the command of our Orderly Sargent to protect him but the slave holders backed out and dared not try anything. If they had we should have pitched in to them with our rifles...

If you will come out father and live here I will give you half of my claim. Give my respect to all inquiring friends but the most of this letter it will be proper to keep to ourselves.

Your affli, Son Edward P. Fitch:
If I find that I must have more [money] can you raise it of that Sudbury man? I should think if not that Uncle Doctor might help me a little.

Lawrence Sept 19, 55

Dear Father

...I have dated this letter Lawrence but am writing it in my log cabin on my claim and about this same claim I am in a great quandary. I have got the claim it has cost me first 25 dollars cash last spring and a note of 75, which is now standing against me and I don't know but I may have to pay it but I don't mean to if I can help it and keep out of law. Then for the improvements now on it I have paid in solid gold $155.00...

And if I sell my claim I don't know exactly where I can get another one and I want a farm and don't think I had better sell so I think I shall keep my claim and get a pony. Still I may sell.

Then in regard to my city interest...I have built a house on the best lot in the interest and by that means intend to hold the lot and sometime it will be worth the two hundred dollars cash that I paid Wood last spring.

I made my contract with my carpenter and had my house begun before I had any idea that I should get my claim even by buying it, for if I had expected to have done that I should not have built so expensive a house. It cost me $175, and I have let the lower part for $1.50 per week and intend to have the upper part to keep my things in and to sleep in any odd night that I may stay in the city. Mrs. Wood is very angry with me and says I am trying to cheat them and Mr. Wood is expected back very soon and will try to make some settlement probably for my withholding that money has been the means of the Tribunes not being issued for two weeks so it is of great consequence to them to get it now. If he is willing to settle with me anything like reasonably I shall want to settle and have it done with.

If he gets me the lot that he promised me which was 45 Mass. St. instead of the one that I have built on 44 Vt., I should be satisfied to pay him the whole 800, for that Lot is now worth about $400, but the one that I have built on cannot now be sold for $200...

The fact is I shall have to settle with Wood some how or other but if he will not agree to some terms that are advantageous to me I think I shall let him sue on the note and then he may get the whole and may not. But the great question for you to answer is can I draw on you if I must have more money...I hate to ask you for more money for you have done all that I think you could do and yet you see how it is. If I sell my claim... I believe I shall sell out entirely and come to Mass to live and gain what I shall have lost by coming to Kansas but that I don't want to do. Now write and answer immediately and then ask Dr if he can't let you have the money for me. The fall emigration does not begin to arrive

17. The free state partisans in a convention held in Big Spring on September 3rd agreed to organize a government and draft a free state constitution. Andrew Reed, removed as governor by President Pierce on charges of land speculation, was nominated by the convention as delegate to Congress. The free-staters held that Reed had been removed because of his opposition to the "bogus" legislature.

18. James H. Lane, in a Democratic convention held on June 27, had attempted to subordinate the slavery issue to other issues but failed to do so and joined the free-staters. Many anti-slavery Democrats did not follow him. William Frank Zornow, Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 70.

19. A mass free-state convention, held in Lawrence, August 14-15, endorsed the actions taken at Big Spring. No mention that Edward spoke has been found.

20. This is the first overt act mentioned by Edward of the conflicts between free-state and pro-slavery settlers. Sara Robinson graphically reported the same incident but provided no further identification of the participants. Robinson, Kansas: Its Interior and Exterior Life, 91-92. She dated it Sunday, September 9; possibly Edward wrote the last part of his letter on the 9th.

21. Dr. Appleton Howe, referred to by Edward as "Uncle Doctor," was a brother of his mother, Lucy Ann Howe.

22. John Speer published the first number of the Kansas Tribune in Lawrence in January 1855. Later S. N. Wood became his partner. As Edward believed, the paper missed two issues because he failed to pay Wood $300, its financial status must have been very shaky. Possibly this accounts for the move of the paper to Topeka in November 1855.
here yet much but we expect it will soon; then city lots will rise in value.

Why under the sun don't the boys or some of the rest write to me? I want to know about the farm—whether you have any apples & Peaches, are you making any cider? And lots of things. We had some very nice peaches brought up from Missouri last week they cost us 1.50 per bush. and we sold them at 30 cts per doz a great many of them. Apples that we had at the same time we sold at 25, per doz they were very large sweet ones. There was a barrel of cider brought into town yesterday and sold for 17 dollars, [which is] 50 [cents] a gallon. Stearns & I did not make very large profits while we were in business but he has got pretty well started and if he carries on right he will make something... We had a big meeting last Sat., the day the great Gag law went into force and we spoke our sentiments against the infamous laws and their makers. We all committed a State Prison offence. The Gov. came here on Sat afternoon but refused to speak and when he started away the crowd gave him three groans, he is a Dough face, Dough head & a Fool Knave Rascal and all.

Yours as ever
E. F. Fitch
Don't forget to answer immediately.

Lawrence Sept 30 [1855]

Dear Parents,

If the adage is true that we have but little of what we prize highly, it must be that 'Letters from Home' are very valuable with me for I have but few of them. . . .

I have got my house done and am now writing in it. I let the lower part . . . and keep the upper part to sleep in myself. I have got all my things here - a chair, table & book case and I can sit here and write or read at my ease.

I have been at work on the Hotel for the last week and more. My work has been to boil the tar or rather Composition to put on the roof. It is made of Gas Tar & rosin & some other things. It comes in Barrels. I have to open the barrels to boil the tar or melt it and haul it up on top of the building. I have boiled six barrels. I get myself all covered with the Tar stuff. It is dirty or rather sticky work. The overall is that I have worn will be good for nothing else when I get done. I have got about a barrel more to boil before the roof will be finished. I can have work on the hotel all along for some time but I don't know about it for today I hear that my claim will be jumped if I can't there. I was out there one night last week and like to have froze to death. I ought to put in a wheat crop this fall but I have not the capital. I shall have to stay more on my claim and I can't hardly work here and do it with out a horse and I have no money to get one. What to do I hardly know! . . . Tomorrow is the day appointed by the Legislature for the Election of Delegates to Cong. and today we hear there is a large body of armed men within a few miles that say they are going to burn this town and kill all the Yankees and that they say will not take more than ten minutes! The town is in a state of intense excitement; there have been large numbers of cartridges made made today. The company have cleaned up all their rifles and put new caps in all of them and are preparing to give the Missourians "jess" if they come here. I hardly think there will be a fight but can't certainly tell. You have no idea of the state of things that exist here and you cannot conceive of our feelings. We are going to let them have their election all their own way and not vote at all until Tuesday the 9th inst and then the Free State men have an election called by the Sovereign People so that two men will probably

23. The "bogus" legislature adopted the body of the Missouri statutes and added a series of "black laws" such as the one disqualifying anti-slavery men from holding office. Prentis, History of Kansas, 54. The "gag" law referred to provided that, on or after September 15, 1855, "If any free person, by speaking or by writing, assert or maintain that persons have not the right to hold slaves in this territory, or shall introduce into this territory, print, publish, write, circulate or cause to be introduced into this territory—any book, paper, magazine, pamphlet or circular, containing any denial of the right of persons to hold slaves in this territory, such person shall be deemed guilty of felony, and punished by imprisonment at hard labor for a term of not less than two years." Statutes of the Territory of Kansas, 1855 (Shawnee M. L. School: Public Printer, 1855), 717.

24. This refers to newly appointed governor, Wilson Shannon, who declined to meet or speak to the people of Lawrence when he was in town on the 13th. Sara Robinson reported that when Shannon "entered his carriage to drive away, smothered groans struck on his ear.—the natural language of an indignation towards a man so weak, so pusillanimous...." Robinson, Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life, 92.

25. The Free State Hotel, a three-story stone building, was being constructed by the Emigrant Aid Company at 401 Massachusetts, now the site of the Eldridge Hotel. It was scheduled to open in time for the rush of emigrants expected in spring 1856. S. W. Eldridge had been granted a five-year lease to furnish and operate the building as a hotel. Eldridge, "Recollections of Early Days in Kansas," 24.

26. " Ain't" was a colloquial contraction of "are not" or "am not." " Ain't" is considered by some authorities to be a later form.

27. The proslavery legislature had set October 1 as the election date for a delegate to Congress. Sara Robinson mentioned a rumor circulating on September 30 that two 1,000-man regiments were on their way to Lawrence to hang Record and shoot Lane which, as she suspected, turned out to be false. Robinson, Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life, 94.

28. Edward had joined one of the military companies set up for Lawrence's defense. "Jesse" was a slang term used in the 1840s and 1850s meaning "to scold, to thrash, to beat soundly." Its derivation is unknown.
go to Congress, Whittfield, and Reeder! And Congress must decide which is entitled to a seat. Why don’t Albert write? Tell him that we shall not send a National Democrat to Congress this fall. It has been very cold here for a few days so that on low lands there has been some frost but not much, so not much but we are still having around here.

Yours as ever
Edward P. Fitch

Edward’s next letter was written near the end of the two-week siege of Lawrence, which culminated in the “Wakarusa War.” The trouble began on November 22 when a proslavery settler killed a free-stater. In ensuing events a determined group of free-state men forced Samuel J. Jones, the proslavery sheriff of Douglas County, to give up a prisoner. Jones notified Gov. Wilson Shannon that rebellion had broken out and Shannon called out the territorial militia. As the militia was not manned, his call was answered mostly by a large group of armed Missouri residents who saw an opportunity to strike a blow at Lawrence, the hotbed of free-state sentiment. Many camped near Franklin southeast of town but others concentrated at Leavenworth to the west and across the river to the north. Together they cut off all regular traffic to Lawrence. Their threatening attitude led to frantic defensive activity in the city and to an influx of free-state supporters from nearby areas.

Hunts Fort, Camp Lane, Lawrence K. T.
Headquarters of Company E, 1st Reg.
[Dec. 8, 1855]

Dear Parents

The mail arrived last night and brought me a letter from Appleton of 32 pp but none from you and as the mail is

29. The free-state voters refused to participate in the October 1 election and scheduled their own election on October 9. Edward’s prediction of the election of Andrew Reeder and John W. Whittfield was correct. Congress refused to seat either of them. Prentis, History of Kansas, 56.

30. Hunt’s Fort, one of the five earthen forts hastily thrown up by the Lawrence defenders, was named for Morris Hunt, a free-state leader. Andrews, History of the State of Kansas, 1:118. Camp Lane was named for James H. Lane who, although second in command to Charles Robinson in the free-state forces, was in charge of field forces in view of his Mexican War experience. Wendell Holmes Stephenson, “The Political Career of General James H. Lane,” Kansas Historical Publications 3 (1930): 55. The volunteers were organized into several companies which constituted the First Regiment; Edward wrote this letter from Company E but later said he was in Company G.
Writing of the siege of Lawrence, Edward declared, "We have a number of forts threw up which we mean to defend to the death." These forts, described by some as "mud forts," were earthen breastworks.

to go back this morning I must write a few lines as it may be the last time I shall ever have to write. As you probably know before this time, we are in a state of siege. An army lays near our border. The Company to which I belong slept under arms last night not knowing at what moment we might be called upon to repel an attack from the enemy.

We don't know what may come; we may possibly (possibly I say) escape without a battle. A man from our Camp was killed day before yesterday and is to be buried today.

Give my love to all my friends whether I ever see them or not. Pray for us and for me; our help is in God.

I cannot write more as I fear the mail will go. We have a number of forts threw up which we mean to defend to the death. My station will be Hunts Fort. We have one cannon. Yours Edward

Lawrence Dec. 12 [1855]

Dear Parents

"The War that for a space did fail etc." Scott

The Battles fought, the victories won.

"I still live" D. Webster. Peace, Peace! and it was Peace.

We have gained the victory without a battle. The mail starts again tomorrow morning and I have just been discharged from service in the Army this P.M. after standing the siege that we have for two weeks. It cannot be expected that I could write much until I get some rest so I must leave details for next time; suffice it to say we have gained a complete victory without bloodshed. The Gov. has come round on to our side and all is right. I would not go through what I have gone through for the last fortnight for considerable.

Wait until I am rested and I will give you particulars. The murdered Soldier will be buried with military honours on Sunday next. I have sold my drum which I gave six dollars for for ten and I got the money today.

Edward F.

Thank God that we are spared. For if the Lord had not been on our side. May Kansas now say the 124 psalm.

P.S.

Mr. Legate who perhaps you will remember as the man who taught the centre school when Appleton taught at Lumbre St. is here. He arrived from Miss. where he

32. Thomas W. Barber, a young free-state settler from the Bloomington area, was shot and killed while riding to his claim on December 6 after having helped in the defense of Lawrence. His body was lying on a table in the Free State Hotel when Governor Shannon came there the next day to discuss the "war" situation with the free-state leaders. Robinson, Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life, 144-46.

33. In the words of a recent historian: "For the first time now, Kansas and Missouri armies faced one another, both with cannon peering over fortifications—the beginning of a civil war that would last until 1856." Jay Monaghan, Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865 (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1905; reprint ed. 1984), 39.

34. The "victory" which so elated Edward was the result of Governor Shannon's personal mediation. He got Lane and Robinson to sign a "treaty" with him in which he stated he had not called on persons from any other state to aid in the execution of the laws of Kansas and would not do so in the future. The free-state leaders promised to aid in the execution of the laws when called upon by proper authority. At a meeting with thirteen proslavery captains, both sides agreed to release prisoners and suspend forces. The Missourians reluctantly began to leave their positions on December 9. Stephenson, "Political Career of General James H. Lane," 56-57.

35. Barber's body was buried with military honors on Sunday, December 16, in what now is known as Pioneer Cemetery located near 15th and Iowa in western Lawrence. Robinson, Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life, 163-64.

36. Verse 2 of Psalm 124 reads: "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us."

37. James F. Legate, from Massachusetts, had taught school and studied law in Mississippi before moving to Kansas in July 1854. At first on the proslavery side, he soon switched to the free-state position and in time became a Republican stalwart.
has been teaching ever since. . . . He says that Appleton
will not make out very well the first one or two terms for
he will not know their fissions and ways. He says they
are so different from New Englanders that Appleton, he
is afraid, will not do well. I am going to have him write
to Appleton as soon as I know how to send to him.

The way I know anything of this is Whitteman wrote
a letter that I rec'd a week ago today in which he said
that A. was going to teach a High School in Natches,
Miss.

The settlers' first winter in Lawrence was relatively mild which
led them to an unwarranted conclusion about the climate. The
next winter featured a spell of severely cold weather, as this
letter attests.

Lawrence, Jan. 6, 1856
Dear Mother

I received the letter written by the family on Thanksgiv-
ing night on the 28 ult, but have had no time to reply
until now or rather the weather has been so cold that I
could not write. Today is the first day for 15 days that it
has been warm enough for the snow to melt. So long a
spell of so cold weather I never knew in Mass. even and
we are in a warm climate. I came here expecting to have
warm winters and to find 'that same'. I think I shall
next year emigrate to Lapland. Some idea of cold may
be obtained when I tell you that apples, of which we had
24 bush[els] frozen, we sell at 1.50 per bush and frozen
potatoes at 1.25 per bush. We bought eight bush of
frozen potatoes a day or two since for .75 and retail at
1.00.

The cold weather commenced on Sat the 22nd ult and the
thermometer has ranged from zero to 26 deg below. Several men have been frozen more or less and
one died from its effects. There was a week together in
which I was not really warm except part of the night.
Now I am going to answer your letter written Thank-
sgiving eve. . . .

You say 'The family are all here but Edward.' Where
is he? What is he doing? I was in the store all the time
that I was not up in town listening to hear the latest
news from the enemy who were camped not far distant
and were intending to attack us. Late at night I went to
bed with my 'Sharps Rifle' loaded and lying by my head
not knowing at what moment in the night the drums
would beat to arms & I should be called up to help
defend the town. The military companies were guarding
the town from that time until the war was over. I always
had my rifle with me wherever I went; even when I went
to escort ladies home I carried my rifle along with me
and thus I lived for some time. My rifle was my constant
companion. One evening there was a young lady at the
shop helping Mrs. Stearns and our company (Com. G.)
called out under arms and we had to bring large
piles of wood and set them on fire to give out light to dig
a ditch that we had to dig and throw up a breastwork in
front of the shop after we were ready to begin to dig.
Our company were divided into two part; one part dug
the other part watched the guns. To the last I belonged
& so I got leave to go into the shop about nine o'clock.
I had engaged to go home with this young lady and Mrs.
Searns but just before we were ready the drums beat to
arms & we were ordered to be ready to march against
the enemy who were then expected. Every man's gun
was examined and 30 rounds of balls delivered to every
one who had not that number & then we stood in the
armory waiting for the command from the Col. Then I
thot of friends that perhaps I might never see again but
I thought also that, "Whether on the gallows high, or in
the Battles van the fittest place for man to die is where
he dies for Man!" And here was that place in the
forefront of the Battle of Freedom but the battle came
not on that night but the mail arrived bringing me a
letter of 32 pp from Appleton which I managed to read
by the campfire. This was the only time that I felt alarmed
in view of a Battle.

Yours for Freedom in Kansas
Edward

Lawrence Jan 29th, 1856
Dear Parents

I commenced a letter to Mother two weeks ago and
have just finished it. . . . It is so cold that I have no
chance to write at all except on Sun. when I can come
down to Mr. Stearns house where I am now writing. It
is a log house on New Hampshire St No 51. For eight
Sabbaths I have been to meeting but one half day. Today is the eighth and I don't know certain whether

38. Other accounts agree with Edward's description of the bitter
cold and heavy snows which began on December 22 and did not let
39. Here some details are given of Edward's participation in the
two-week siege, in particular recalling the evening of December 8
when he wrote the letter from Hunt's Fort.
40. Edward quoted, almost correctly, from "The Place to Die" by
Michael J. Barry, an Irish barrister. Barry's verse, first published in
1844, reads, in part:

But whether on the scaffold high
Or in the battle's van
The fittest place where man can die
Is where he dies for man.
41. This undoubtedly refers to the Sunday services of the Plymouth
Congregational Church.
Edward's letters were filled with the excitement and apprehension surrounding the free-state and proslavery conflict in Kansas. He made several references to being armed with a Sharps rifle, and of the Missourians who streamed back and forth across the border, he wrote that the citizens of Lawrence would give them "Jesse" if they come here." Shown are an advertisement for Sharps firearms and (opposite page) a contemporary drawing entitled "Missourians Going to Kansas to Vote."

there is any meeting or not but probably none as it is so cold. Last Sun there was a meeting but I did not go on account of sore hands and disinclination. The other Sundays there was no meeting on account of the cold and the War. It has now been extremely cold for four weeks with the exception of two or three days and during those ... days the Government Surveys came along near my claim rendering its position certain. The survey throws me in a direction which I did not expect and gives my house and most of my fence to a proslavery man, Whitlock, so if he can he will prevent me from moving off either my house of [or] fence, 250 dollars gone to the dogs... But I still hold on and may get a claim, as part of my improvements come on this claim... If I lose my claim now I don't know but I shall leave the country and go to California. Many are going from here in the spring. That is unless we have a war which I think is likely enough. I recd a notice to appear at the Head Quarters of our company armed & equipped for inspection and ready for marching.

We hear that the Missourians attacked our men at Easton [Leavenworth Co.] ten miles from Leavenworth on Election day (last Tues.) and demanded their Ballot boxes but our men would not give them up.43 They then fired on our men which fire was returned badly wounding two Missourians. Some men were sent to Lawrence for help and two of them taken prisoners by the Missourians who say if the wounded men die they will

43. This refers to the election on January 13 of state officers under the free-state Topeka Constitution, which had been written by a convention held in Topeka in October. The Topeka Constitution and the officers elected under it created a free-state government operating in competition with the existing proslavery government recognized by the Pierce Administration. The attack mentioned took place in Easton because the mayor of Leavenworth forbade the free-state election in his city.

42. Under the public land law then in effect in Kansas Territory, land could be claimed before it was surveyed but the claimant had to make certain improvements to hold his claim, including erecting some sort of dwelling and fencing or breaking was required to file a declaratory statement but he did not have to pay for the land until just before it was offered for public sale. Paul Wallace Gates, Fifty Million Acres: Conflicts Over Kansas Land Policy, 1854-1890 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954), 74.
hang our men and if they do that there will be fighting.44 God only knows how it will end. We have sent men there to see about it and they have not returned yet. The opinion of most is that we shall have to fight in the spring. The Missourians are concentrating a force all along our border and in the language of Judge Cato they are going to drive every d——d Free State man out of the Territory.45 We want men money and ammunition. We are just sending and have sent men to the States to raise these. Mr. Schyler raised $1950.00 in one evening in Chicago, the draft for which have arrived here now so that we shall be better prepared to fight now than we were before when we had no money.46

Men are now engaged in making cartridges for Sharps Rifles all the time and we have sent for a whole load of powder & lead! This moment the news has arrived that the Pro Slavery men have actually butchered a Mr. Brown one of the prisoners whom they took. I have not heard the particulars except it is said they cut him to pieces with hatchets and soon after left hearing that men were coming from Lawrence with Sharps Rifles.47 How long O Lord must we suffer this. I hope you will raise an army in the East and March through Missouri and Proclaim liberty to the slave.

Edward
Lawrence Feb 24 1856
Dear Parents,

I received a letter from you last night in answer to the last one I wrote which was mailed here Jan. 22... I

44. One proslavery man was killed in a gun battle which took place when some free-state men rescued a Mr. Sparks and his son from confinement by a proslavery group. Robinson, Kansas, Its Interior and Exterior Life, 170-71.
45. Sterling G. Cato served as associate justice of the supreme court of Kansas Territory from September 1855 to July 1858.
46. Edward probably was referring to P. C. Schuyler (not Schyler) who had just been elected secretary of state under the Topeka Constitution and was one of those selected to tour the eastern and northern states to induce emigration to Kansas and raise money for the free-state cause. "The Topeka Movement," Kansas Historical Collections, 1913-1914 13 (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1915): 148.
47. The prisoner was a Leavenworth man, R. P. Brown, who was one of the few from that area to come and assist Lawrence during the "siege." Robinson reported the same gruesome story. Robinson, Kansas, Its Interior and Exterior Life, 171.
am in great trouble to know what to do this spring. I should rather come East than doing any thing else but that will not do. It is going to be very sickly here this spring.

I am much obliged to Calvin  for writing to me and I would write to him if I could but you must tell him I have no place where I can write except on Sunday at Mr. Stearns home. I have been to meeting twice a day. It is getting warmer and we have meetings more regularly and shall continue if we are not all killed. March is near at hand and our Legislature will meet. Pierce says we are traitors so of course the Missourians are to put us down but if they try it we shall have a bloody time out here. God grant that it may be avoided. Our cannon was fired 17 times on the reception of the news of Banks election as Speaker, 16 for the Free States and one for Kansas.

The Merchants of Lawrence had an oyster supper on the 14 inst, speeches etc. & closed with a dance. I was one of the Merchant princes attended and had a good time. The Military Companies or rather one of them, Com. A, gave a ball on the 22. Washington's birthday, but it was stormy & they did not have a very large gathering.

March 9th

... We have had no Eastern mail for about three weeks now though the contract for carrying the mail says three times a week. They don't get it through Mo., partly on account of the muddy roads and partly because they are so shiftless down there. Consequently Eastern news is at a discount here. Our Legislature assembled on the Fourth inst. at Topeka. We have seen no Missourians yet and don't expect to at present.

I want you to find out John Wheeler's P.O. address and let me know as soon as you can...

My house has now cost me about 200.00 cash beside a little time that I worked out and I have rec'd about 7.00 rent and am now renting it at 2.00 per week besides keeping my things in the upper part of the house, 200 for the house & 200 for the lot; 2.00 per week pays a pretty good interest on 400 dollars. That is the best investment a man can make now is to build houses to let; if I had money enough I would build me another but the cash is wanting. I shall probably a little more than make my living this winter but I hope next year I shall be able to raise a crop to sell. Has E.D. Ladd been at Hopkinton?

March 9 1856

Now about my business difficulties. First I have got through at Mr. Stearns as he hired me for the winter at 6.00 per week he said my time was out Mar. 1st and as he was not doing much just now he did not want me any longer so for a week I have been away. I have earned just 1.00 in that week beside my board and what to do I cannot tell. A Mr. Wilmarth who now keeps a Book store and periodical Depot has talked with me some about

88. Calvin, Edward's youngest brother, was eleven years his junior.
89. In a message to Congress on January 24, President Pierce said the course of government in Kansas had been disturbed and that it should be preserved. The movement in Kansas in opposition to the constitutional authorities was revolutionary in character and if it reached the point of organized resistance, would become treason and insurrection. The conflict was clearly referred to the free state Topeka government. "Herald of Freedom," Lawrence, February 3, 1856.
90. Nathaniel Banks of Massachusetts, elected speaker of the house of representatives in 1856, was an anti-slavery man who recently had joined the Republican party. The cannon used to fire the salute at his funeral was "Old Sacramento," now on exhibit in the Watkins Community Museum, Lawrence.
91. This party was held in the Free State Hotel and was attended by the merchants and their families. After the supper there were speeches and toasts followed by an organizational meeting at which officers were elected. This was the first merchant's association known to have been formed in Lawrence and may be the earliest fore-runner of the chamber of commerce. "Herald of Freedom," Lawrence, February 16, 1850.
92. Company A was the most noted of the free-state military companies and commonly was called the "Stubbins." Sara Robinson's commentary disagreed with Edward's: "many were there to partake of their hospitality, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather." Robinson, Kansas, Its Interior and Exterior Life, 1856.
going in with him and enlarging the business somewhat but I dont know what arrangement I can make. He is going to move into my house with his family as soon as I can get the present occupant out; they pay me no rent and are therefore not very profitable tenants. The reason is this. the last fall when Wood found that I had a house on the lot and would not pay that note, he went and told Pike (the man who is in the house) not to pay me any more rent. Wood has been gone since the middle of Nov but is expected back soon and I want a tenant in that he can not scare and that will pay me the money for rent.

March 15

If I can only get Pike out and Wilmarth into my house before Wood comes back I shall be all right.

Next comes my claim matter. You remember my writing about having it surveyed and finding my house would come off from the claim, but very soon another survey told me that I should get a claim where my house was and told me not to move my house. So it was left until the Township line was run within four or five miles. Then by getting a private survey from there a Mr. Longfellow found that my house came off from my claim and so on the first of Jan. he goes on to my claim and puts some lumber there. Since that the weather has been so cold that he has done nothing until lately he has commenced building a house.

On the 17 of Jan. the U.S. surveyors run the township line in near my claim. I was out there with Mr. Searl, the city surveyor, and from their line he ran for me a half mile and found that my house did come a few rods off from the claim that Mr. Longfellow was on and that I claimed.

Lawrence, April 21 '56

Dear Father

We have had quite an excitement in town in regard to locating a bridge over the ravine between Kentucky & Ohio St., some wanting to put it at Pinkney St. and some at Winthrop. We had a number of meetings and the excitement was about equal to what it was in Hopkinton about locating the Town House. It was finally agreed to leave it to a vote of the town and the election was to take place on the 19 inst. Mr. Legate whom you probably recollect (he taught the centre school the winter that I taught at Lumber St.) Mr. Christian & Mr. Sutherland were appointed judges of Election and I was appointed Clerk. As well as Messrs. Legate & Christian went for Winthrop St. but the moneyed Aristrocracy went for Pinkney. Well the long and short of it was Winthrop St. beat by some 26 maj. and now the other side say we allowed illegal voting but they cant prove it for it is not so. They had a meeting night before last and are to have another tonight. I expect to be hauled over the coals but I can defend myself.

When the polls were about closing Sherriff Jones came into the office where we were holding our election and found S. N. Wood, who had just arrived from Ohio here and he tried to arrest him on the old warrant issued last fall for the rescue of Branson. He got his hands on him and with another man tried to keep him but we crowded around him and took Wood away. Jones raved and swore and he would S. N. Wood or kill every D——d Son of a b——h there and then he went off to Lecompton. This was Sat. Sun he came back with five or six men and tried to get Wood again and also to arrest some others for rescuing him the day before. He has got the names of several persons as concerned in that rescue whether he has my name or not I do not know. Certain it is that I was there. I wish I had a good Colts revolver. I wish you would tell Uncle Doctor or some body that is able to send me one. Jones has gone to Mo. for help and the

57. This is Edward's first mention of Oris Wilmarth, his future employer and father-in-law, Wilmarth's book and stationery store at No. 30 Massachusetts Street was visited by Brewerton in January 1856 and began to advertise in the Herald of Freedom on March 8, 1856.

58. In December 1855 the free-state leaders advised S. N. Wood to leave the territory for a time because of his part in "rescuing" Jacob Branson from Sheriff Jones custody. He spent most of this period in Ohio recruiting free-state settlers for Kansas.

59. Charles Longfellow, a native of Maine who came to Lawrence in 1855, claimed the quarter just east of Edward's. His claim was successful and the Longfellow family lived and farmed there for many years.

60. A. D. Searl, or Searle, ran the first survey of Lawrence and was active in the free-state cause. Although Edward's statements here are not clear, subsequent letters reveal that he was able to hold only eighty acres of his claim.

61. The ravine referred to ran through what now is Central Park in Lawrence. Pinkney (not Pinkney) is now Sixth Street and Winthrop Seventh Street.

62. Samuel Sutherland was the proprietor of the Lawrence to Leavenworth stage line. His untimely death was blamed on the treatment received as a prisoner of the Border Ruffians in Lecompton in the fall of 1856. Lawrence Republican, June 4, 1857. James Christian began practicing law in Lawrence in 1853. Although on the proslavery side, he was so fair and honest that he got along well with the free-staters and impressed outside observers. See Brewerton, The War in Kansas, 294.

63. Here some eyewitness details are provided concerning two of the incidents that incensed Sheriff Jones against Lawrence. In a letter to U.S. Marshal Israel B. Donaldson, Jones wrote that S. N. Wood was "rescued from my hands by a mob." Robinson, Kansas, Its Interior and Exterior Life, 197-98. (Some other sources spell the marshal's name Donaldson or Donelson.)
prospect is for another war. The Kansas Committee is in the city.64

Mrs. Wilmarth of whom perhaps you heard Esq. Emery speak died this morning and I have been busy preparing for the funeral which takes place tomorrow...

The opinion is gaining ground that we are to have war.
Ora Pro Nobis65
Edward P. Fitch

After the events recounted in the previous letter, Sheriff Jones on the night of April 23, while in Lawrence, was shot by an unknown assailant. His wounds were not serious but he immediately appealed to Marshal Donaldson who issued a proclamation calling on all able-bodied citizens for aid in enforcing the law. This was responded to by a large number of proslavery supporters who had surrounded the town by the time Edward’s next letter was written.

Lawrence Kansas May 18, 1856
Dear Parents

It is some time since I have heard from home and I am beginning to be anxious to hear from you... I am on my claim now.... The U. S. Surveyors finally got as far as my claim last Tues. and they ran the line through my house throwing part of it on the claim where I wanted all of it but, as the person who holds that claim does not live on it, I expect I shall be able to hold but having a claim is not going to do me any good if I don’t live and we don’t know how soon now we may be cut off. We are surrounded by an armed mob and they may attack us at any time and in our present condition we stand a chance to be wiped out which is what they say are going to do. We never have been quite so near a war as we now are. I think if it begins here God only knows where it will end. Not here, at least if the North has any principles left, and not I trust until slavery is abolished through out the country.67

I just hear that the commission from Congress has been obliged to leave Leavenworth and the Territory. That will probably be a good thing for us in the end but we wanted to have the rest of the evidence taken.68 I am in trouble about my city property. Wood is gone, left the country again without making a settlement with me and I can do nothing unt the war is over and the thing settled. I suppose that there is a great deal that I might write to interest you but when I get to writing I can’t think of it. But if you lived in such a fevered excitement as we do here for one week you would not blame me for not writing more but I do want to hear from home oftener. It is now more than a month since your last letter was dated...

How is your spring work? Farmers here cannot do much on account of this trouble. The enemy take their horses right out of the plow teams and run them off, kill their cattle and commit such depredations that we can do nothing. We are in a bad fix all around. What is Appleton doing now? I have not heard from him for a great while...

And now one word on politics. You Republicans were beaten in Mass last fall; now in the coming Presidential Canvass make this up. Carry the State for the Republicans nominee whoever—Mr. Fremont, Seward, Hale, Sumner or who not. Kansas depends on a Republican President for the next term. Fremont is my choice at present. But I suppose I shall not have a chance to vote being in a Territory. Pomeroay arrived a few days ago. I was in hopes he would bring me a pistol but it seems he did not.69

Yours for Kansas Free
Edward

Can you find somebody that will give you ten dollars to send to me and I will send you ten dollars in Kansas State scrip.70 It is drawing ten per cent interest and

64. "Committee" refers to the commission appointed by the U.S. House of Representatives to investigate the trouble in Kansas under a resolution passed on March 19, 1856. Members were John Sherman of Ohio, Montreal Oliver of Missouri, and the chairman, William A. Howard of Michigan.

65. Julia Ann WilmARTH, Ota WilmARTH’s second wife and Sarah’s stepmother, died at the age of thirty-five. No details of her illness are known.

66. In Latin: "Pray for us."

67. Edward and others began to realize that the proslavery versus free-state controversy in Kansas might be the beginning of a much larger conflict but they would not have guessed that the conflict on a national scale would not begin for nearly five years.

68. The House Committee examined records and took testimony at several locations in the territory. Some sources say that proslavery individuals and groups disrupted the taking of evidence and intimidated witnesses. The committee itself cited "public disturbances in the Territory" which caused witnesses to fail to appear as the reason for adjourning its hearings in Westport in early June, rather than any feeling of personal danger or cause for complaint of their treatment in that area. "Kansas Affairs," in Minutes of the Committee, House Report 200 (Washington: Cornelius Wendell, 1856), 34th Cong., 1st sess., serial doc. 860, p.129.

69. This may refer to Samuel C. Pomeroy, financial agent for the Emigrant Aid Company, who frequently traveled between Massachusetts and Kansas.

70. The executive of the free-state (Topeka) government issued certificates of indebtedness bearing ten percent interest in payment for goods and services. "The Topeka Movement," 197-98. These certificates, generally called scrip, circulated in the territory along with many other kinds of scrip issued by local governmental units. The chief form of paper money, state bank notes, varied greatly in reliability, and reliable currency was in short supply on the frontier. George L. Anderson, “Some Phases of Currency and Banking in Territorial Kansas," in Territorial Kansas: Studies Commemorating the Centennial (Lawrence: University of Kansas Social Science Studies, 1954), 119.
will undoubtedly be good some time. I am all out of money but I have Scrip.

The next letter, although dated May 18, undoubtedly was written on the 19th. The excitement over the killing of the two free-state men and the fear of an attack on Lawrence led Edward to write to his parents even though he had written the day before.

Monday May 18th 1856

Dear Parents

The Blow has been struck, the war has begun. Two of our men have been killed, murdered, this day. One within a mile of town and the other at Blanton's bridge four miles from here. God only knows who will be killed next or where this will end, not here at any rate.

We must have help from the Free States. We are not in half so good condition to fight now as we were last winter for then we were thoroughly organised. Now we are not and have got no head man to organise us that we can trust and that will take hold and again we are not as much concentrated as we were then.72

The man at the bridge was shot about noon and is now dead. He was shot with a U.S. musket in the back while going away from the men who shot him. The other man was shot in the head just over the eye with a Sharps rifle. I think he was on the California road and only two or three with him. They snapped their rifles at the men who shot him but the rifles did not go off. They however wounded one of the pro Slavery men with a Revolver so that he dropped his rifle and they

71. Edward dated his letter incorrectly, as the 18th was a Sunday. Sara Robinson wrote that Jones and Stewart were killed on Monday, May 19. Robinson, Kansas; Its Interior and Exterior Life, 238-39.

72. Lawrence, and the free-state cause, lacked a recognized leader as Charles Robinson was in U.S. custody, as noted in footnote 74, and Lane was in the East recruiting support and lobbying for the admission of Kansas to the Union under the Topeka Constitution.

73. The California Road was a name applied after 1849 to the Oregon Trail and its California branch. The original Oregon Trail, which started in Independence, Missouri, separated from the Santa Fe Trail in Johnson County, angled across Douglas County just south of Lawrence, and then went westward toward Topeka on the route now generally followed by U.S. 40.

In May 1856, Edward wrote of the "leading" free-state men who had been taken as prisoners to Lecompton. This drawing, taken from a daguerreotype, shows the free-state prisoners George W. Brown; John Brown, Jr.; Judge George W. Smith; Charles Robinson; Gaius Jenkins; Henry H. Williams; and George W. Deitsler.
(our men) got it. We are in a bad fix and no mistake. The enemy have got a number of our leading men prisoners viz. Gov. Robinson, G. W. Brown (Ed. Herald), Jenkins, one of our good true and prominent men, Judge Schuyler (Sec. of State), Conway (Judge of our Supreme Court) and some others of less consequence. Stewart who was killed at the Cal. road was from N.Y., Jones killed at the bridge was from Ill., both young men. I am badly armed for war and ought to have a good Revolver.

Pray for our success and also help us for probably men will have to come from Mass., even, to fight here.

Yours until death
Your aff son E. P. Fitch

Give what is on this sheet as much publicly as possible. Tell every one who has the least interest in Kansas that now we want help - men money and arms. Unfortunately, at this point there is a gap of several months in Edward's correspondence. Consequently, we do not have his reaction to the Sack of Lawrence on May 21 by Sheriff Jones and his "posse" of proslavery men who had been encamped around Lawrence, the killing by John Brown and his followers of five proslavery settlers on Pottawatomie Creek on May 24, or other events of the period from May through October 1856. The next extant letter was written to Edward's younger brothers, Elijah, age fifteen, and Calvin, age thirteen, in the summer or early fall of 1856.

Dear Brothers E & C

I am very glad that you wrote to me...and if I had time I would write to you and then I hardly know what would interest you.

Two weeks ago today Muzzy & I started for my claim when we got a mile from the city we found the prairie on fire and we saw it was going towards a house where there was a hay stack and we thought it would get burnt. I supposed that...the man who lived there was away and so told Frank that we would go and keep the fire from the hay. When we got there we found Mrs. Hancock taking on terribly and no one with her. Directly two more men came and the fire was coming.

We began to burn around the stack and pretty soon our fire got away from us and four of us and one woman started after it and we worked for two or three hours and finally put it out after it had burnt over a hundred acres, just before it got to another mans stack of hay. If we had not got it out it would have burnt them and there was a great many tons of them. The other fire that first started run like a race horse and burnt over hundreds of acres and only stopped when it got to the woods. I then rode horseback about 12 miles and got caught out on the prairie after dark and staid all night at Mr. Savage who lives on the claim close by mine. Thus ended one days adventure. You must write again and I will try to answer it.

Edward

The following letters to Edward's older brother, Appleton, were written after the "sack of Lawrence" in Kansas was beginning to recede, partly as a result of the efforts of the new governor, John W. Geary. Appleton appears to have been in Dover, New Hampshire.

Lawrence, K.T.
[Nov. 21, 1856]
Dear Brother

I rec'd a day or two since a letter from you dated Nov. 6 and in it two dolls, which you say nothing about so I suppose the letter must have been opened and the bill put in. I wish they would do more the same way. We had Thanksgiving yesterday in accordance with Geary's proclamation. The Ladies here got up a drive and the tickets were two dollars so that bill just bought my ticket. The proceeds are to be used to give a dinner to the Free State prisoners at LeCompton but I acted as door keeper and gave them a part of the time and so did not have to pay anything. I rec'd a letter some time ago giving me leave to draw on you for $25.00 which I think I shall do in a few days but whether I shall come home or not is uncertain. We intend to make Kansas a Free State in spite of Buch, Breckinridge, Geary or the D—if the Lord is on our side.

74. Robinson, Brown, Lane, Gains Jenkins, S. N. Wood, and others were indicted for treason by the U.S. District Court in LeCompton presiding over by a proslavery judge, Samuel D. Lecompte. Robinson, Jenkins, and others were arrested on treason warrants, bail was refused, and they were confined in Camp Sackett, three miles southwest of LeCompton, where they were guarded by U.S. troops.

75. Franklin A. Muzzy came to Lawrence from Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1854 and was an early member of the Lawrence Comet Band.

76. A family by the name of Hancock settled one mile north of Edward's claim.

77. Joseph Savage claimed the 160 acres just north of Edward's claim; his brother Forest had a claim farther north and west.

78. Governor Geary, who arrived in the territory on September 9, proclaimed November 20 as Thanksgiving Day; this appears to have been a week earlier than it was celebrated in Massachusetts.

79. This refers to the free-state troops under Col. A. M. Harvey who, about September 15, were taken prisoner at Hickory Point by U.S. troops, marched to LeCompton, and held there for trial for several months. All, or most of them were from Company A, the "Stubb," Towson, Kansas, 75.

80. Edward abbreviated the name of James Buchanan and John C. Breckinridge. Democrats, who had just been elected President and Vice-President.
I went to Leavenworth a week or more ago, was out in a hard storm. Brought a load of stoves but broke one of them and had to pay 8.00 damage. The pay for hauling the load was 16.00 and it cost me 4.60 on the way to feed myself and the team so the trip was not very profitable. I was gone 4 days and part of another. I am going to keep Thanksgiving next week at Mr. Savages where I stay at present. We shall have a kind of family party and I shall think of home much, especially if we have it on the same day that you do in Mass.

I wish you had written a little if not more to my Sarah for she would probably have been glad and I am sure I should and perhaps she would have answered it. (try and see) The bbls. of clothing sent by ladies in Hopkinton to me have arrived, or at least 3 of them, and have been distributed to some extent among the destitute and those who have thus far rec'd them seem very thankful. I hope they will do much good.

Buch & Breck have gone in. We are sorry that you did not elect Fremont but are glad that poor benighted N. H. has done so nobly in the struggle. (did you vote) Gov. Robinson, Lieut. Gov. Roberts & others with whom I have talked seem to think that we shall have a change which if not for the better cannot be for the worse. When Buch. comes in God grant that it may be for the better but he knows best and his will will be accomplished.

How does it happen that you are to lecture at Teachers' Institutes! Are you among the profs! Saul is among the prophets, sure! What are your prospects for another year, shall you teach! John P. Wheeler has been here with me the past week or so. He thinks of opening an office in Lecompton soon. I am now in hopes that I can enter my claim within a few weeks and prove up my preemption. If so I may come East this winter. Shall you be at home to Thanksgiving? I wish I could be there then!

I attended the Sabbath School Concert last Sun. eve. The exercises were principally singing by the children interspersed with verses recited from the Bible and some questions by the Supt. It was very interesting. There were probably 60 or 70 children present. We have from 60 to 80 scholars in our Sabbath School every Sabbath.

I have no more time but must close.

Yours truly,
Edward P. Fitch

Lawrence, Ks. Dec 3/56

Dear Brother

I have written to you I believe within a few days and now write again to tell you that I have drawn a draft on you for $25.00 at the Strafford Bank, Dover, N.H. A copy of which draft I send you. The reason of my drawing on your charity is this: I want a stove and must have one and I had not the money to pay for one. I went to Leavenworth two or three weeks ago and brought a load of stoves for Allen & Brothers. One of the largest size and the best kind I broke so that they docked me eight dollars on the hauling. I have now agreed to take the stove. It is not broken so as to hurt it at all, only the sale of it, as it just broke off part of the hearth.

I don't think that I shall come to Mass this winter tho I should like to very much but I cannot without running some risk of losing my claim and I have had trouble enough with that...there was another man on my claim that was going to contend with me for it at the Land Office but today I have made an arrangement with him to divide, he takes eighty acres and leaves me eighty. I am much better satisfied with the eighty clear of incumbrance than with my chance for the whole. I am in hopes by shrewd management to get 160 acres yet but may fail.

Edward P. Fitch

I am very much obliged and very thankful to you for this 25.00 as it will do me a great deal of good.

Time fails and I must close. Sarah sends her respects to Brother A. Please write to her.

Your aff brother

Edward P. Fitch

---

81. Besides being neighbors, the Savage brothers were fellow members of the Lawrence Cornet Band.
82. Edward first gave mention here of his future wife, Sarah Wilmarth.
83. The destitute in the Lawrence area in 1856 were those who had lost their property and means of livelihood as a result of the raids, depredations, and battles which took place during the summer. (See the letter of George Lewis, dated January 14, 1857.)
84. In November 1856, New Hampshire gave Fremont, the Republican candidate for President, a plurality of a few thousand votes over Buchanan. In 1852 it had gone heavily for Pierce, a Democrat and native son.
85. This refers to the Sunday school of the Plymouth Congregational Church, said to have been the first Sunday school in Kansas. At the time of his death Edward was its secretary.
86. Allen & Brothers, a Lawrence firm, dealt in stoves and tinware.
87. As Edward noted here, he lost half of his claim in land survey troubles. The eighty acres he obtained title to were the north half of the southwest quarter of 12-13S-19E. He owned it when he was killed.
The author of the next letter was the recipient of some clothing sent to Kansas by Edward’s mother in response to the relief program mentioned in Edward’s letter of November 21, 1856.

Lawrence Kansas Territory
January 4th, 1857

Mrs. Fitch
Madam

Your Son handed me a coat and a shirt, few weeks ago, which you sent to him to give to some needy minister in Kansas, the coat was a wedding coat of George Harrington who was drowned in the Mississippi River at New Orleans. When your son presented the above articles to me, he requested me to write a letter giving a history of myself and the prospects which I have before me in Kansas; when you have read my letter you can judge then how appropriate those articles were to my condition.

I was born and brought up in South Wales, Great Brittain, I was instructed in the Christian religion among the denomination called Congregationalists. I united with the Congregational Church, and was invited to preach, when I was 28 years of age. I emigrated to the United States in 1841 when I was 32 years old. I was married in 1842 to a young lady that had emigrated from the same country. I have since labored among the Welsh Congregationalists in Ohio, Illinois and Iowa, as a Missionary of the American Home Missionary Society. In the month of July 1855 I emigrated to this territory, I have labored since among my own countrymen in this vicinity. I have not received any pecuniary compensation for my labors since I have been in Kansas, I have been exposed to outrages and insults from Proslavery men who call themselves the law and order party in this Territory, but if we judge of them by their deeds we must give them the name of Band of Robbers and Murderers for murders and robberies followed their track. On Sunday morning August 31st they put my fence down and drove in for melons, they helped themselves to all the melons they wished. They left the field exposed, and cattle crowded in and destroyed my corn where I expected to realize 300 bushels of corn. I did not obtain a bushel of sound corn. On Monday evening September 1st, my house with three other houses were burnt to ashes. I was not at home at the time, it was not safe for anyone to remain at home, had I been at home they would have taken me prisoner, or murdered me; because they could not have pressed me into the service in their ranks. My family left the night before, and went to the United States camp among the troops. When they heard of the threats to burn the house, they took on the waggon what they could with them, came back next morning after another load, and after that they [the proslavery men] did venture to come about. I had many pamphlets and periodicals destroyed. After the house was consumed we had to live in a tent for some six weeks, during that time we had a storm of rain in which every thing we had got dripping wet, and many of my most valuable books were almost destroyed in consequence of that storm. I calculate my loss $800.00, besides the exposure, and inconvenience we had to put up with in consequence of being without a house, by the above act of Outrage. Myself and wife, and six children, were made houseless and homeless and without anything to support ourselves this winter. Many have lost more property than I have; but I contend that few if any met with more of a loss than I have, for I lost near all I had.

With regard to my prospects, I beg to state that my prospects are rather gloomy. I have a claim with no house on but I obtained a hundred dollar to assist me in building a house, where the money is to come from to pay for the claim I cannot tell, in a new country like this it is very difficult to maintain a family and spare some money for something else. I know not what we would have done this winter had it not been for the charities and contributions of friends in the east. We are thankful for the sympathizing aid we have already had but we need more. That much for temporal prospects.

I will now say few words of the prospects of religion. The disturbances that have occurred, the outrages that have been committed, and the distracted state of affairs that have been witnessed in this territory have had a bad tendency, and have operated unfavorably against religion; but we must continue to sow the good seed looking to God for the outpouring of his Spirit to convert sinners from the errors of their ways, and bring sinners to the fold of Christ. We hope for a bright future in Kansas. The proslavery party is busy at work, devising ways and means to make this a slave state: but it is too late in the day. There is a majority of Free State men in the territory four or five to one and when the question will be submitted to the people there will be an overwhelming majority in favor of Free State. It must be made a Free State. It shall be a Free State. The bogus legislature is now in session at Lecompton, and when the proceedings thereof shall be reported we will have another development of the legislation of men under the influence of King alcohol. There is a better market for whiskey at Lecompton than any thing else, the proslavery assemblage there is a scene of intemperance and uproar.

Thanks a thousand times to you for your kindness. May the blessing of him that maketh rich be yours, and may you and we be qualified for usefulness here, and at
last find a seat around the throne of Jehovah, where sin and sorrow will not annoy us, where 'Border Ruffians' will not demolish our habitations or devour our comforts. Is the prayer of your brother in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

George Lewis

From subsequent letters it is apparent that Appleton had moved from New Hampshire to Chicago when this letter was written. The first sample of Sarah's correspondence is the note appended to this letter.

Lawrence Apr 6th 57

Dear Brother

I rec'd a letter from you last December in which you said "don't write to me again until you hear from me again" and I have had no letter from you since, until three days ago when I rec'd one in which you say that you have written several times. I have no time now to answer your letter as I must put this in the P.O. just this minute and I start for Quindaro in company with Mr. Barnard tomorrow morning early. Shall be gone four or five days. Will write from there if possible. I don't think it possible for me to get those views taken that you spoke of. I have been to see the only persons that I know of that could do them since our only daguerreotype artist left some days since. I have sent to Lecompton today to see if they can be got there; if they can I will let you know by the next mail and will send them on as soon as possible but I don't expect that I can get them. We had an artist here but he has now gone to St. Louis and will not be back for some time. I want you should be here on the 19th of April as that will be my wedding day if nothing breaks. I mean that Sarah shall send you an invitation in this. If she does not then consider this as an invitation. I am getting along first rate, have sold all the property that I had in this city and have only my claim round here now. I have some city property in Quindaro and some other places. I sold a lot today that I paid $112.50 two weeks ago for, for $150.

That was the last I owned here. I got $1000, for the lot and house that I owned so long ago, the house I built.91

Yours

Edward P. Fitch

Monday Eve Apr 6th 1857

Dear Brother

Edward insists upon my adding a few lines to your letter. Altho I told him I could say nothing to interest you. I had hoped to receive an answer to my letter before this, but will excuse you in the "multitude of business" which seems to be pressing upon you. I shall be sorry however, if your engagements are such that you cannot visit Kansas this summer. We shall always be glad to welcome you when you can find time to favor us with your presence. We should be particularly pleased to have you in Lawrence on the 19th of this month. Perhaps you can guess why if E. has not already told you. Could you not possibly come? Let us hear from you often. And ever believe me - Yours affec.

Sarah A. W.

Lawrence April 19th 57

Dear Brother Appleton,

Since I wrote before I have in company with Mr. Barnard been to Quindaro & Delevar City.92 We left here on Tuesday morning and got back on Fri night. . . . I could not get those views that you spoke of for Mr. Gideon the only man that I could get them of left the territory some time since. . . .

(Sarah bothers me so that I can't write but then as you may know I am quite willing to be bothered in that way so it is of no consequence.) But after this week when she is with me all the time I don't know as I shall be able to write any more so you can consider this as my farewell address.93

As to when you can get the information that you wish on this subject I can not tell you if I could compose


89. Quindaro, now part of Kansas City, Kansas, was a new town on the Missouri River a few miles north of its junction with the Kansas River.

90. A daguerreotype was an early type of a photograph produced on a silver plate or on a copper plate covered with silver. Lawrence had a daguerreotypist, William Bell, as early as April 1856. Appleton appears to have requested Edward to obtain some views of Kansas and/or Lawrence to illustrate an article he was writing or planning to write.

91. It seems that Edward decided to sell his Lawrence property and move to his claim after his marriage. He sold Lot 44 Vermont Street, and the house thereon, to James S. Emery for $1,000, giving a deed dated May 4, 1857. Only a month earlier he had received, at long last, a deed for this lot from S. N. Wood for a consideration of $300. Deeds, City of Lawrence, Book H, 155, Book E, 16, Douglas County Courthouse, Lawrence.

92. Delaware City, a new town on the Missouri River just below Leavenworth, was incorporated on February 14, 1857. A group of Lawrence citizens are said to have joined the town company and spent $20,000 promoting it as a center for forwarding Missouri freight to points in Kansas. "Autobiography of R. G. Elliot," Kansas Historical Collections, 1907-1908, 10 (1908): 194.

93. Sarah Ann Wilmeth and Edward P. Fitch were married on April 19, 1857, by the Rev. S. Y. Linn, pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, Lawrence Republican, May 28, 1857.
my mind long enough I could tell you more but it is
impossible for me to sit down and write any length of
time. I am so nervous. If you want to get the Kansas
news you had better subscribe to the “Lawrence Republi-
can” which is to be started here in a few days. It will be a
good paper. I think I am going to take it instead of the
Herald of Freedom myself and hope it will kill the
Herald out. You want to know what I am doing with 7 or
8 hundred dollars. Well I am speculating some. I bought
a share in Quindaro which is a new town on the Missouri
river which I think to be the second Chicago of the
West.*

I am glad that you are prospering so well as you
seem to be there with 1000$ a year. I think you ought to
be able to lay up considerable and if you wish to put
some of it where it will be bringing you something you
had better send me two, three or four hundred dollars as
the case may be and let me buy a qr. section of land.
The Delaware Trust lands are to be sold at auction in
June and I am going to attend the sales and buy a qr.
sec. for myself if possible, and I expect likely that I shall
buy some for other folks too.** The terms of the sale are
cash. That is if I bid off a qr. sec. I have to pay in gold
for it the same day or it will be sold over again the next
day.

None of the lands will be sold at less than $1.25 per
acre and they will probably range from that up to five
dollars per acre. Wheeler has been over the tract to be
sold quite extensively and has taken down minutes of
the most desirable locations and I shall take advantage
of his knowledge to help me about buying. I think it
would be a good thing for you to have 160 acres of land
and the way for you to do if you want me to will be to
authorize me to draw on you for as much as you can
spare and then if I can buy a qr. sec. for that price or
less I will buy in your name.

Sarah has just read your letter of the 8th inst and will
probably reply to it soon. She says that when she gets
out into the country to live she shall have more time
to write. She is just now very busily engaged in getting
ready for next Sunday.

I have no more time and must close.

Yours

Edward P. Fitch

94. Edward's hopes for Quindaro never were fulfilled, as subsequent letters show. Rather than the "Chicago of the West" it recently has been termed the "Pompeii of Kansas" in recognition of the extensive ruins revealed by archeological investigations. Kansas City Times, July 10, 1867.

95. Sale of Indian Trust Lands was proclaimed by President Buchanan in May 1857. The western portion of the lands of the Delaware Indians were scheduled to be sold at Otoe (Otoe) beginning on July 15. All sales were for cash and no bids were considered for less than the value placed on the lands by the commissioners appointed to appraise them. Lawrence Republican, May 29, 1857.