Housing Experiments in the Lawrence Community, 1855

James C. Malin

An article in the Spring issue of The Kansas Historical Quarterly dealt with the initial problem of emergency in shelter for the Emigrant Aid Company colony at Lawrence. The next phase of the discussion, housing experiments, requires a broader base: (1) the people, Easterners and Westerners, and the recognition of their cultural differences; (2) the architectural traditions of these groups, the principles, forms, and practices in building; (3) the geographical setting, with its limitations and opportunities.

The People: Easterners and Westerners

Again and again the issue was raised, by various writers who dealt with Kansas affairs, of the fundamental differences between Easterners and Westerners as they were usually designated. It is significant that except when slavery was the subject of discussion, the problems of the pioneering process were mostly discussed in terms of Easterners and Westerners, rather than Northerners and Southerners, or Southerners were linked with Westerners.

Among the first reports written from the site selected by the Emigrant Aid Company, "Charleston," August 7, 1854, referred to the settlers already established there as professional squatters, "that class which exists in the west."¹ In applying this label, only one type of Westerner was involved. A short time earlier a correspondent wrote that "They attempt to frighten persons from the free States, by show of revolvers and bowie knives."² That, also, was a limited usage of the idea. On October 7 another writer from the town of Lawrence reported that besides the New England emigrant parties, there were 40 or 50 settlers from the Western states in the neighborhood.³

DR. JAMES C. MALIN, associate editor of The Kansas Historical Quarterly, is professor of history at the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

A paper, "Housing in the Prairie-Plains Region," was presented at the annual meeting of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, April, 1945, based upon a monograph of the same name, which has not been published. The present paper represents a part of that project, which has since been expanded and will be published as a part of Grassland Historical Studies, v. 8.


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Among Free-State people there was some recognition of the fact that persons unsuited to the requirements of a pioneer life had been among the first parties. Mrs. C. I. H. Nichols expressed a low opinion of some of them. The Herald of Freedom, January 13, 1855, which was established with the aid of the Emigrant Aid Company, discussed the question under the title "Stay East," idlers, persons unaccustomed to work, or accustomed only to sedentary occupations, as well as persons without capital—all of "those who wish to fall back upon Emigrant Aid Companies, or on private individuals for support. . . ."

Quite elaborately, January 27, 1855, the same paper described "The Professional Squatters" as follows: "They are migratory—passing from one region of country to another; and the whole country that constitutes the western States and Territories bear witness to their presence. . . . Squatting, with them, is a trade, profession, pursuit. They move on in advance of the permanent settler. . . ." who "must pay the squatter his price. . . ."
The other aspect that irritated the writer was that "they secure, even before territorial organization, the fords and main gateways leading into new and unsettled regions, possess the most accessible points, and the most commanding and valuable localities. . . ."

At the end of the article a distinction was recognized among Westerners: "We do not, of course, allude in these remarks about squatters to those pioneers who come westward seeking homes, and having found a suitable location, commence and perseveringly continue, to surround themselves with facilities for home and permanent residence."

The Kansas Free State, edited by Josiah Miller and R. G. Elliot, took up the defense of the Westerners and denied the accuracy of the "highly abusive article" charging "the West generally, as being speculators, robbers, pick-pockets, and swindlers." Editor Miller insisted that the Westerner did perform a positive and constructive service to the development of the country. The poor Westerner, Indiana and westward, according to the Free State, "unable to buy lands, . . . is compelled to go into new and sometimes unsurveyed regions, . . . and by hard toil makes a comfortable little farm. . . ." When the monied homeseeker arrives, he sells:

The squatter by thus selling his first choice, and giving it up to an individual who perhaps has more money than he, and can better improve it, selects another, and expends what money he has received for the first, in improving the second, &c. This every one can see is no robbery, but it is far more honorable than the conduct of some individuals not a thousand miles from here, and who perhaps
lived east of Indiana, who are acting as agents to sell claims belonging to persons who never intended making any improvement on any claim whatever.

Editor Miller expressed some positive impressions of Easterners:

We have no sympathy with that class of people who pin themselves to a small portion of God's footstool, and stick there, until by inter-marriages and hereditary transmissions their whole souls and minds become contracted into the narrowness of a nut-shell, and they know nothing of human nature, and the business of the world, outside their own selfish and contracted hearts. It is this migrating disposition of the American people that makes them pre-eminently superior to any other nation of the globe.

Miller accused Herald of Freedom Editor G. W. Brown, of the company organ, of branding as “pick-pockets and predatory speculators” all pioneers who did not give up their fords, gateways, claims, and their improvements for nothing to the “Eastern monied home-seeker.”

Josiah Miller's most comprehensive and effective editorial on the East-West contrast was entitled "Proscription of Class":

It is very seldom that we see the great principle of universal brotherhood acted out. Men may talk a great deal about natural rights, freedom, and universal equality, but their actions show quite a different thing. Every one has a natural self-respect, or pride about him that prompts him to prefer his own person to all others—but this principle expands, takes in the family, neighborhood, church, state, and finally the whole world; that is, when it operates naturally. But there are times and places when the affection for the neighborhood or clique absorbs all other affections, and will not enable one to regard any one outside of a certain sphere. This is a trait that characterizes a number of the Eastern emigration of this place. They come to Kansas for the purpose of instructing the western people how to build up a model New England State. They are advised, from head quarters, to avoid the use of all Western vulgarisms, and to cherish their New England habits and customs. They hear and conceive a great many tales about Western life and manners. They like the Emigrant Aid Company because it sends out a large body of New Yorkers, so that they can have their own society, &c. They work themselves into a belief that Western men, and especially Missourians, are of an inferior order of people, unfit for social intercourse; and unless a man agrees with them in all of their peculiar notions about building up a model State, he is charged as a “Missourian”—as this is the worst epithet, in their opinion, they can apply to any one they dislike.

We would now sincerely advise these wise men of the East of the fact; that the great majority of the settlers of Kansas are now and will be Western men. We understand from C. W. Babcock, Esq., who is taking the census, that there are more Illinoians settled in this district than there are New Englanders all together.

This being the case, these refined gentlemen may just as well make up their minds, at once, to consider Western men as human beings, and conclude

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to associate with them; as it is utterly impossible for Massachusetts or New
England to settle Kansas, though the Aid Company may have made them
believe it. They will have but a small share in making it a model State, or
in framing its free institutions. A great many who come out under the auspices
of the Company are too selfish and clamorous to effect anything in Kansas. Men
setting out in such a noble enterprise, as they at first pretended, must have souls
capable of appreciating the society and true merit of their fellow citizens,
though it should appear outside of a clique of fifty men.

But in closing, Miller did for Easterners what G. W. Brown had
done for Westerners, by pointing out that there were exceptions:

In these remarks, we, of course, do not refer to all of the Eastern emigra-
tion—only to a certain clique in Lawrence, who seem to have the control of
things. We believe that a great number of the Eastern men are just as good
and enterprising citizens as we can find anywhere. And we believe that the
clique begins to see that they will incur the contempt of all honest, social and
liberal minded men, if they do not soon change their demeanor.⁵

In anticipation of a great migration to Kansas in the spring, the
Kansas Free State offered some advice:

Persons coming to Kansas with their families, by land, should start with
good wagons and ox teams, and bring with them all the little implements
and seeds necessary to go right to farming upon their arrival. As the indi-
vidual, who takes up a farm this spring, can plant and cultivate a great
many vegetables that will command a high price in the summer and fall.
There is no danger of the market being glutted. Every person who knows
anything about farming, can make money on a claim from the very day that
he goes on it.⁶

Apparently by the time of the issue of May 12, the Herald of
Freedom had seen the light. Although printing on its front page a
spirited defense of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, on the
inside editorial page an article on "Emigration" took almost the same
position as the Kansas Free State on the Easterner-Westerner issue
in relation to Kansas settlement.

He opened with the observation that "The heavy tide of eastern
emigration appears to be somewhat checked at the present, to be
resumed in the autumn." But the significant revelation came in the
continuation:

We are glad to observe that the falling off from the eastern States is made
up by the daily arrivals overland of large covered wagons from Iowa, Wis-
consin, Indiana, Illinois, &c., in which are packed all the paraphernalia of the
farm and fire-side, ready for distribution in their proper places as soon as a
claim is selected.

Our western people understand pioneer life, and know how to prepare for
it.—They come to remain; and rarely are they seen beating an inglorious
retreat. . . .

⁵. Ibid.
⁶. Ibid.
Brown cited a Westerner who would not be frightened byMissourians:

Such are the material who come from the West—single-handed, self-reliant,accustomed to toil, and the rough life; they do not shrink away when broughtindirect competition with difficulties, but brace themselves for the shock, andtriumph, as energy and perseverance will on all similar occasions.

The remainder of the editorial was focused directly upon the relationof these characteristics to housing and similar questions:

We shall soon pass through the forming stage of society, then the finishedworkmen of New England will be needed in the Kansas valley; but at presentwe want the “bone and sinew, the hard fisted yeomanry,” who can prepare thesoil, and fit it for the abode of refinement; who can grapple with life in itsrudest form, and that without repining at the ways of Providence. We alsowant the hard-laboring mechanic—not the architect, who plans and directs—but he who wills and executes, surmounting every apparent impossibility, andwithout material, only as it is found in the quarry or the forest, can erectshelters and protection from the storm for those who command his labor.

Society in its rude state cannot afford to expend means in the erection ofcostly structures, or in ornamental furniture. Utility and necessity must beblended, and with economy they must struggle together, and together triumph.

In the Osawatomie district, also somewhat influenced by the Emigrant Aid Company, a similar comment appeared in a private letter of John Everett, dated January 25, 1856:

The western people are far the most numerous in the territory. The countryis so different from our Eastern country and the character of Eastern emigrationis such (a majority as far as I have seen village mechanics with ideas enthusiastically excited) that I think one half at least of Eastern people return. Those who stay love the country as they get used to it. The Western people find muchsuch a country as they left behind them, and settle right down, build theircabins, fence and break up their fields and drop their corn, before you hardlyknow they are here.7

There was no separate census for Lawrence as of January-February, 1855, but the first census district comprised eastern Douglas county, including the towns of Lawrence and Franklin and the country to the southward, while the second district was the western part of the county including what was later the town of Lecompton. Of the 369 voters listed in the first district, 105 came to Kansas from New England (Massachusetts 72), or 29 per cent; 143, or 39 per cent came from border states north of the Mason-Dixon line, and 86, or 23 per cent, came from border states south of that line. The individual states contributing most largely to these voters were Mas-

sachusetts 72; Missouri 59; Ohio 38; New York 34; Pennsylvania 34; Illinois 27; Iowa 19. The total from the Western border states (excluding Iowa) was 147, or 40 per cent, divided 74 and 73 between slave and free states. Thus it is clear that Lawrence and vicinity, taken together, were definitely not New England in character. The course of events during the year 1855 was to diminish rapidly such relative importance as New England still retained. In November, 1856, G. W. Brown argued in the columns of his revived *Herald of Freedom* that Lawrence was not a Yankee town; the business district was controlled by Westerners, especially Missourians.

**Architectural Traditions**

Among Western people, but not among Eastern people, especially not among New Englanders, the log cabin tradition for pioneer housing was firmly established. In a book, *The Log Cabin Myth*, Harold R. Shurtleff (1939), has traced to the Swedes and to some German groups, the architectural technique of building log cabins by laying up logs horizontally, and fastening them at the corners by notching. These people had settled in the Middle colonies, near the meeting place of the three colonies, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. English colonists had adapted this technique quite late, and it did not become widely used by them until the pioneers had crossed, or were crossing, the Appalachian ranges. New England had not adopted it. In the European countries of the origin of the log cabin technique, straight pine logs were available, but in the American environment where it was used, the trees were primarily deciduous hardwoods. In Missouri and Kansas, oak, hickory, and walnut were dominant. These were only relatively straight, and required a substantial amount of hewing with a broadax to provide a reasonably close fit between the faces of the logs. In any case, there was a substantial job of chinking to do, with mud, or mud and lime, and if the logs were carelessly or inexpertly prepared, weatherproofing was difficult. Furthermore, notching of logs was an art acquired only by experience. Easterners, especially town people, were likely to find themselves quite helpless to help themselves, under these circumstances, even in the midst of plenty of suitable trees.

The architectural techniques of the Easterners, especially of the

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8. Figures computed from Report of the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas (Washington, 1856), pp. 74-76. However, difficulty in the interpretation of the original census manuscript results in uncertainty as to the exact figures.

New Englanders, were also rooted in the Old World, especially in 17th century England; the full frame construction, the spaces being filled in by several methods, wattle and daub, but especially covered with clapboards. Prior to the availability of sawmills, the frames were hand hewn and the clapboards hand rived. The frames of large timbers were prepared on the ground, for fastening together with mortises, tenons, and wooden pins. When the time came for a house raising, the timbers must fit exactly. In other words, the trade of the carpenter and joiner required great skill acquired only through a substantial experience. By the mid-19th century, however, a modified full-framing was practiced, a transition towards balloon framing which was already being adopted widely in the West. The use of iron nails became a feature in these newer techniques, but New England was fundamentally frame-house minded, in the older tradition, and for the most part yielded only partially to the newer practices. Within this background the housing techniques in Lawrence and vicinity in 1854 and 1855 must be examined.

Of the first Emigrant Aid Party of 29, the 13 from Worcester were said to be mechanics; but the contemporary accounts did not list the occupations of the Boston contingent of 16, whose origins were assigned to Boston three, Roxbury three, Lynn two, Vermont four, not accounted for, four. Miss Barry's list of 12 identified six as mechanics, two as farmers, and the others as town occupations. Of the second party, Miss Barry identified 107 for her list. The occupations of 66 were undetermined, but apparently 15 were housewives, 17 children, leaving about 34 men unassigned. Of the remainder, 20 belonged to trades and professions, only 21 being listed as farmers. Of the 162 of the third party, on Miss Barry's list, 39 wives and children may be eliminated, leaving 40 farmers and 83 assignable to city trades and professions, 14 of whom were carpenters. The first party had one carpenter, the second two, so the outside figures present were 17 carpenters, plus a few others in the wood-working trades. The only mason listed was one farmer-mason in the third party. Under these conditions much had to be left to the ingenuity and versatility of these men who probably knew a little of several trades.

The prairie country, with its mixture of timber and grassland, released the pioneer from the necessity of clearing the ground of heavy forest for crops, and afforded livestock the best of grazing. This meant the saving of many years of hard work in the making of a farm, an inestimable asset, if the settler only knew how to capitalize upon his opportunities. The Westerner soon had a log cabin, small fields fenced with rails, and his livestock ran at large. The Easterner, without the art of notching, and of laying up hard-wood logs, had no alternative but to depend upon the sawmill, because, without water and railroads, sawed lumber could not be shipped in. The hard wood was difficult to work. Somewhat later a settler wrote:

Good planing machinery are very much needed as most of the timber is hard wood, burr oak & walnut, and it is hard work for carpenters to plane it & dulls their tools so that a man would rather work at other employments where he can get it.\(^\text{11}\)

In much of eastern Kansas a weathered limestone rock was easily available, without skilled quarrying operations. Lime could be burned for mortar. All that was necessary was to learn some rather simple makeshifts in order to build stone houses, without benefit of the stonemasons' skills. But for the Easterners, in the fall of 1854, all these resources availed little, and the several descriptions of Lawrence, as of December 1, 1854, reflected all these elements in the New England segment of the community.

The grass thatched temporary shelters constructed by the Emigrant Aid Company used the framing idea as the basis of the structure. Supervision of the thatching was undertaken by one Houghton, an Englishman, who had drifted about as a sailor and found himself now at Lawrence. Possibly, he had been familiar at sight, if not by experience, with this skill in the homeland. Lawrence is in the tall-grass country, the early settlers often referring to the grass as tall as a man on horseback. The taller species are Big Bluestem (\textit{Andropogon furcatus}), Indian grass (\textit{Sorghastrum nutans}), and others. These grasses grow in the lower lands, sending up seed stalks in the late summer four to seven feet or taller.

To provide wooden siding for cabins of similar design, S. N. Simpson and J. Savage cut off sections of oak logs and split shakes or clapboards. Mrs. Nichols called them clapboards. Probably

both had seen something of the sort in New England, where siding was laid up horizontally, or possibly they were following the Western process of riving shakes as roofing for log cabins, only applying them vertically, like shingles, to the sides of these cabins. In his recollections, Savage admitted that these were the first shakes either of them had split.\textsuperscript{12} John Doy’s reference to houses “willow built and mud covered,”\textsuperscript{13} suggests the “willow and daub” technique in use in Old England in the 17th century when the English colonists were emigrating to New England. No detailed description of the Lawrence practice has been found, but in England a lattice of willow was fastened into the spaces in the frame, and mud worked into the lattice like a plaster wall. Likewise no descriptions of the very first stone structures have survived. In banking up the several types of houses with sod to weatherproof them against the advancing winter, they were merely doing the obvious. In building sod houses outright, however, they were going further. Carpenter’s letter describing them made an explicit comparison with the Irish railroad laborers’ mud cabins, but did not indicate whether or not there was any deliberate imitation of the traditional earth house of Ireland. Thus, so far as Lawrence of 1854 was concerned, the log cabin, the Old World architectural skill which had been most completely Americanized in the West, was the one least recognized. For a settlement projected by a New England company, with a purpose of making it a new New England, this was particularly unfortunate, when taken in conjunction with the selection of a location without assured river navigation.

It was well to recognize the principle of compensation in relation to advantages and disadvantages of geographical factors, but it would have been good strategy in support of the object of promoting Free-State settlement to give nature as much encouragement as possible. The \textit{Kansas Free State}, July 9, 1855, asked: “Why did not the Aid Company find a few towns on the Missouri river? The sites are eligible, the very thresholds of the Territory, and navigation almost constant.” Sawed lumber and other materials adapted to New England’s cultural techniques would have been more accessible. Within this context, a restudy of the history of Leavenworth and its relation to the history of territorial Kansas is in order.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} J. Savage, “Recollections of 1854,” \textit{Western Home Journal}, Lawrence, August 18, 1870.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{See The Kansas Historical Quarterly}, v. 21 (Spring, 1934), p. 45.
\textsuperscript{14} Aspects of the problem are recognized in the present author’s articles on “Judge Lecompte and the Sack of Lawrence,” \textit{The Kansas Historical Quarterly}, v. 20 (August and November, 1933), and in his other studies as yet unpublished.
THE LOG CABIN PROBLEM

Not only was the log cabin the least recognized, in the New England Emigrant Aid Company colony, of the ancient architectural traditions, but in some quarters there was an active hostility toward them. The origins of this proscription of the log cabin were varied: difficulties in construction (for those without the necessary experience and skill), discomforts, lack of neatness, and waste of timber which was scarce in a prairie country. Referring to the Emigrant Aid Company’s plans at Lawrence, C. B. Boynton and J. B. Mason, Cincinnati men who toured Kansas in September, 1854, wrote that there would be two sawmills:

The Company will be able to supply the emigrants with lumber, at about ten dollars per thousand, and it is hoped that the tents will be exchanged, not for log-cabins, but for comfortable framed dwellings, before the setting-in of winter. . . . The present promise of this spot, is far greater than any other in Kansas.

At another place the deficiency of forests was made the issue:

Again, God has provided three important and complete substitutes for timber and wood [stone, coal, and osage orange]. . . . In such a country, thus supplied, neither a log-cabin nor a rail fence should ever be built. . . . In the first place, a comfortable log house, if such a thing can be, is a costly structure, and secondly, the useless waste of timber, as compared with a light and suitable frame, "balloon-frame," is enormous.15

The above observations were made by outsiders visiting the territory only as travelers. On November 11, 1854, after several weeks’ residence in Kansas, E. D. Ladd of Wisconsin wrote home from Lawrence that: "Timber is too scarce to build log houses of it."10

On March 31, 1855, the Herald of Freedom reprinted from the Phrenological Journal: "A Letter to Working People Who Propose Going West." For temporary shelter a tent was recommended, "especially should they be going so far out that lumber could not be had conveniently," and after it had served its original purpose the canvas would be available as a covering in many ways around the farm.

A good strong tent or canvas house would answer some time for a dwelling. I should prefer it in many respects to an ordinary log house, which, of all human habitations that I have ever seen or had anything to do with, is the least desirable, and about one of the hardest and most expensive in constructing, especially if made neat and comfortable. In short, I would try every conceivable way of building before I would use logs. The reasons are unanswerable and almost innumerable, why I would do it.


I have had some experience in this manner of building, and perhaps, after all that I could say, you would not be satisfied but by learning the same way. If so, go ahead; you may be satisfied with the result. There are many, doubtless, who do like log cabins, but were I now going West, I would sooner take a canvas house.

The writer warned, however, not to waterproof or fireproof the tent, because that would only add weight, make it crack, and shorten its life. A month later, April 28, another long article was printed, written to the New York Tribune, by a man from Grand Prairie, Ind. He claimed to have made a farm in the timber and on the prairie, and out of that experience was presenting his conclusions:

Poor people's houses in a new country are often of logs, without windows or door. They are often built without a nail, or a foot of sawed lumber. A company of emigrants who have sense enough to follow me thus far, have too much sense to put up a log house on the prairie. If they can get lumber, they may put up a balloon house, such as are common here, and was described in The Tribune a few weeks back—or they may put up one of gravel and lime—or entirely of clay and straw.

In the final recommendation, the writer was referring to the earth houses of the Spanish Southwest. But in this recommendation as well as the others, few if any of the New Englanders at Lawrence would have had any experience.

Evidently some of the New England colonists went out on farm claims and built log cabins, and possibly most of them who actually settled on farms did so, but few accounts of these have been found thus far in print. Most of the letters to the press and news stories from the Lawrence area were descriptive of town controversies and town housing. It was the town residents, not the farmers, who were most vocal. One of the Ogden brothers from Chelsea, Mass., members of the third party, built six miles south of Lawrence. Wm. L. G. Soule, of the same place, a farmer, and a member of the fifth party, built two miles from town. He lived with Ogden during the construction period of his own log cabin, a 10 x 12-foot structure, with split shingles for a roof, a mud and sticks chimney, and the ground for a floor. The fifth party had arrived at Kansas City November 19, and Soule's letter written Christmas eve, reported that his cabin would be ready for occupancy within the week.

The first reports of the cost of log cabins were quite low. One writer reported that they could be built for $40 to $60. John Doy wrote in one letter, that the cost was $30 to $50, and in another

letter, $25 to $30. Boynton and Mason had insisted that log houses were not only costly, but were unsatisfactory even if built.

In contrast with all the ferment over housing at Lawrence, it is well to enter into the record a Missouri report by G. S. Park on a tour of Kansas territory. In printing it, Editor L. J. Eastin of the Leavenworth Herald stated that few from the East understood pioneer life, expecting to find a country where they could live without work. Park thought too much time was devoted by them to organizing leagues, and making constitutions:

Precious plans, drawn with precision on paper, are not worth a straw on the ground. An actual settler needs a team that he may bring with him his provisions and necessary utensils; then he can go on to his claims, make camp, and commence cutting logs, notching and laying them up, and covering over his cabin with 3 or 4 feet boards rived out of some good oak tree near by. The outside has to be chinked and daubed with mud; the inside may be boarded up; while for a floor, some puncheons can be split up and laid down,—after which the family can "move in." The next movement is to split rails, or lay up stone walls for fences, &c. It is useless to go away out from the settlements as many have done, without provisions and implements to work with, especially at this late season; all who are prepared to do as we have indicated should stay on the frontier till spring. . . . Money can't purchase comfort and convenience.19

To the experienced Westerner, the process of settlement, including the log cabin, was just that simple. The conflict or rivalry of cultures exhibited throughout these discussions had nothing per se to do with slavery. Yet regardless of Eastern suspicions, there was little room for slavery in a pioneer society establishing itself by such procedures in a new country like Kansas. Writing July 14, 1854, Richard Mendenhall, the Quaker missionary to the Indians, and later associated with the Osawatomie community, estimated that "Three-fourths of those coming from Missouri are coming to get away from Slavery, and will, consequently, vote for Freedom."20 The question the Free-State historians have never even faced, is how and why so many of these Western settlers with Free-State sentiments were so soon alienated from the cause.

S P R I N G  I M M I G R A T I O N  A N D  H O U S I N G

Partly because it was newspaper custom at the turn of the calendar year to take stock of the city's status, the accomplishment of the past year, and the promise of the future, the Lawrence papers conformed

with the tradition. But there was more involved in this instance; the spring immigration, if it was to come, would soon be arriving and in the East from which so much was expected by the New England contingent, prospective emigrants from that area should be making definite preparations. The Kansas Free State, January 3, 1855, pictured Lawrence as a town of 117 buildings completed or under construction, and insisted that city planning was geared to a goal of 50,000 to 100,000 population, therefore the streets were 80 feet in width, except Main street, which was 100 feet. The Herald of Freedom, January 13, recalled that “Three months ago there were no residences here other than tents; now there are over ninety in the city limits, and new ones added daily.”

In comparing past and future immigration, the Kansas Free State deplored the exaggerated reports about Kansas, emanating from the aid societies, and the resulting disappointments, but did not regret the loss of those “unexperienced in pioneer life, and unwilling to endure the privations and hardships which they found connected with the settlement of a new country.” The editors thought otherwise, however, about the many worthy settlers, who through “ignorance and mismanagement of these agents, were delayed until the dead of winter, and then thrown into the territory in such numbers that it was impossible for them to obtain shelter. . . . They were obliged to return or go elsewhere with their families. Out of this experience the Kansas Free State admonished that prospective settlers “come, as little dependent upon associations, or agents, as possible,” and with a willingness “to sacrifice the superfluities of life. . . .”

The Herald of Freedom adopted substantially the Western point of view in its instructions to prospective emigrants: “Settlers invariably first select wood claims and springs” even “though it will be necessary to go further into the interior to find them.” In emphasizing the timing of arrival, Editor Brown advised the earliest possible arrival: “Get in your spring crops as soon as possible, and then look after your dwellings, having in the mean time lived in tents.” He told them also: “The first settlers generally put up hewed log houses, log stables, and set up low posts for sheds, roofed with prairie hay.” For the log cabin “he must rive his boards for a roof, from the largest oak in the forest,” and he must “with prairie mud and lime stop up the spaces between the logs, making his house

tight and warm.” The chimney and fireplace could be built of stone, and the door, and the window if he wanted one, covered with cloth.  

To serve its spring emigration, the Emigrant Aid Company (trustee agreement of 1854) which had become the New England Emigrant Aid Company, under a charter, issued an information circular which reflected substantially the experience acquired over the previous few months. Much of the Western point of view was in evidence. Settlers were advised to purchase tents at St. Louis, on the way West, or build “a sod cabin, (Lawrence style of architecture) . . . at an expense of eight to twelve dollars.” But they were referred also to the instructions printed in the Herald of Freedom. And furthermore, emigrants from the East were warned that only at Lawrence and Topeka were receiving houses to be available during 1855.

**The Company, Sawmills, and Lumber**

The firmness of the grip of the framing tradition in building techniques is ever in evidence during the first months of the history of Lawrence. The Kimball brothers were reported at the opening of the year of 1855 as preparing a three-story frame building, 30 x 50 feet, for a planing mill. And shortly after, the comment was made that “A large number of frame houses, ready for covering, scattered all over this city, suggests that lumber is indeed the great want of Lawrence.” Then J. P. Wood was negotiating for a lot for a warehouse on the levee, but in the meantime, “He has the frame now nearly ready, which is 20 by 40 feet, two stories high.” Two months later it was reported completed. When the word frame was used in these connections, it is evident that the English form of construction with timbers, morticed, tenoned, and braced, was the basic system, although probably in the modified version then currently described in mid-century books on carpentry.

In this first issue, January 3, 1855, the Kansas Free State, owned and edited by Josiah Miller and R. G. Elliot, although airing a grievance, spoke candidly about a number of facts usually suppressed in connection with the Emigrant Aid Company’s town and its operations. According to Miller’s initial editorial article, they had decided, in April, 1854, to establish a newspaper in Kansas.

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23. The most of the circular was reprinted in *ibid.*, April 14, 1855, under the head “Information for Kansas Pioneers,” and signed by Thomas H. Webb, secretary. The circular was not dated, but internal evidence indicates that it was composed between March 20 and March 27, 1855, or between the departure from Boston of the second and third parties of the spring migration.

They received a promise of lumber, which was confirmed by Charles Robinson, if they would locate at Lawrence. "... We went to work and prepared a frame house, all ready for the lumber." At that stage, they were informed there would be no lumber, and even the logs assembled, upon which Miller had advanced gold, were sawed into lumber and delivered by the Company mill to G. W. Brown for his *Herald of Freedom* office. Their own office was eventually located "in a building made of very ordinary split oak boards. It is not at all comfortable, having no floor, ceiling, or window sash." A second building was ready in April, 1855, and the *Free State*, April 30, announced that the "office has been recently moved from out of the ground, on Kentucky St., on to a floor, about eighteen inches above the surface of the earth, on [12] Massachusetts St." Within the year, still another move was contemplated—into the second floor of Duncan's stone building—before cold weather, according to the announcement in the *Free State*, October 22, but was not made at that time on account of delays in construction. This episode is important to the early history of Lawrence, because the Miller-Elliot paper provided an anticompany record of its early months.

When the company sawmill began operations about December 1, 1854, according to Carpenter, the Delaware Indians on the north side of the river contracted to deliver 600 logs at one dollar each and to take their pay in lumber.25 On January 23, 1855, the company signed a one-year lease of its mill to the Kimball brothers, by which they were allowed five dollars per thousand feet for all lumber they sawed.26 As reported in the *Herald of Freedom*, February 17, two-thirds of the lumber sawed, supposedly 4,000 feet per day, was delivered to the company for its hotel. Some complained because the lumber was to go to the hotel, and others because there was no adequate hotel.

The *Kansas Free State*, January 24, 1855, insisted that the town of Douglas, a Proslavery project five miles above Lawrence was operating on the proper plan by securing a good private sawmill, with a capacity of 8,000 feet per day. In the advertising column the owners offered lumber at three dollars per hundred feet, which could be rafted down to Lawrence.

The *Kansas Free State*, February 14, was incensed by a letter,

published in the Boston Traveller, as an example of exaggeration relative to Emigrant Aid Company activities at Lawrence:

We need only remark, that the machinery spoken of . . . consists of a very ordinary, worn out saw mill, a "Burrows grist mill," which has not even been geared, and the timber framed for a planing and sash mill; the brick hotel in process of construction is a frame, and the occupants of claims are about 300 to 400 voters in a district of 10 to 15 square miles.

Later the Kansas Free State of March 3 reported:

Various views exist as to this Company. While many of the Eastern papers regard the Company as the great death blow to slavery, nearly all here, except a few who are connected with it, consider it as productive of the greatest injury to the cause of Freedom in Kansas.

An Eastern newspaper article which stated that the company sawmill was delivering 3,000 to 4,000 feet of lumber per day was denounced as a falsehood; "As to the saw mill . . . it has been a greater drawback to the settlement of this place than all other things together. It has not cut three thousand feet per week." The article insisted that but for the company and its claims, private capital would not have been scared off, and Lawrence would have had two sawmills at least. The charge was made that the company "exhibits a shallow insight into human nature"; it boasted of "civilization and refinement" that could be introduced only by itself: "Western and Southern men have become tired of hearing . . . that none of these things can come from any other quarter, except the East." And what had the company actually contributed?—About 300-400 people, one old sawmill that did not saw most of the time; the Herald of Freedom, which denied it was a company organ; these were the total of its accomplishments for "civilization and refinement." 27

A month later the Herald of Freedom, April 7, was demanding more sawmills, or Lawrence must remain unoccupied for years. Deitzler and Shimmons were reported to have decided to establish a sawmill and the latter had gone east to buy machinery. A week later the company sawmill was denounced again by the Kansas Free State: "The apology for one which encumbers a portion of the town site, has been absolutely an injury to the place, causing most persons to depend upon it, and at last disappointing them." Yet, the editor of the Herald of Freedom, April 7, had insisted, logs of the highest quality, one and one-half to three feet in diameter, were on hand at the mill yard.

Even the favored few who received sawed lumber did not escape troubles. Unseasoned cottonwood, so largely cut for lumber, was notorious in its performance—assuming amazing shapes under the influence of rain and the Kansas sun. The Herald of Freedom office was built of that material, and the editor admitted it would be well ventilated by the time spring came. Likewise Charles Robinson, agent of the company, built on Massachusetts street a combined office and dwelling, 25 x 35 feet, covered with green cottonwood boards, and well ventilated in due time.28

Emergency roofing practice has been described, but 1855 brought little betterment apparently unless shingles and composition roofing were hauled in by wagon, or after navigation of the Kansas was attempted, brought in occasionally by boat. The need of a shingle machine was emphasized, although “suitable lumber for shaved shingles is very scarce and all of it so difficult to work that they cannot be made for less than $5.00 to $6.00 per thousand.”29 The first local shingles advertised were offered through the Herald of Freedom, April 21, 1855. Shingle material was mostly black walnut, selling at five to six dollars per thousand, and young men were urged to engage in the business.30

In June, 1855, three additional, or “private” sawmills, were assured for the near future. The Smith, Green and Company mill was being erected; the Hunt mill had arrived by river boat within the week; and the Deitzler and Shimmons mill was expected soon.31 On June 9, both the Smith-Green and the Hunt mills were advertised as beginning operations on the 11th, and customers were advised to bring their logs, first come first served, also logs would be purchased.32 The Deitzler and Shimmons mill had arrived in Kansas City late in July. Mill capacity had scarcely been built up, however, until the Hunt mill was eliminated by a boiler explosion.33 Thus, not more than three sawmills were actually operating at the same time during that latter half of the year 1855. On November 5, 1855, the Kansas Free State asserted: “There are not less than one hundred buildings in the course of construction, at present, and many more would have been built had the lumber been easily obtained.” Not until April, 1860, was the claim made that: “For the

29. Kansas Free State, March 17, 1855.
31. Ibid., June 2, 1855.
32. Ibid., June 9, 16, 1855.
33. Kansas Free State, November 28, 1855.
first time in the history of Lawrence we have an abundance of good lumber, and at reasonable rates.”

**Balloon Framing**

The *Herald of Freedom* of March 10, 1855, reprinted from the New York Tribune a description of balloon framing, a relatively new mode of building with lumber. It had been developed most fully to the west of the Appalachian mountains, the arguments for it being a saving of material, labor, and time, and furthermore, the carpenter work could be done by unskilled labor or by the owner, with a minimum of tools and experience. Instead of large timbers, often cut to specifications in each case, standardized sawed lumber, 2 x 4, 2 x 6, or 2 x 8 inches was used. Instead of mortise, tenon, and wooden pins fitted by master joiners, the balloon frame was put together with machine-cut iron nails: “If it had not been for the knowledge of balloon frames, Chicago and San Francisco could never have risen, as they did, from little villages to great cities in a single year.” Had Lawrence been built upon a navigable river, where lumber could have been shipped in by water, this innovation would have been more important immediately, but under the circumstances, balloon framing depended upon the local sawmills.

**Ready-made Houses**

One significant aspect of the social ferment in the United States during the mid-19th century, was an aggressive interest in domestic architecture. An important facet of it concentrated on homes for the low income groups. In Cincinnati, Ohio, an answer was offered by the firm of Hinkle, Guild & Company in the form of ready-made houses, and in 1855, Kansas and Nebraska Portable Cottages. The argument for ready-made cottages in Kansas turned on scarcity of skilled labor and of suitable seasoned lumber on the frontier, and on the economies of factory production. These cottages were available in 1855, “containing two or more rooms, which can be put up and taken down in a few hours.” The saving was said to be 30 per cent. A one-story house, 16 x 32 feet, was quoted at $230, plus freight, and from Cincinnati to Kansas City that was estimated at $50. Assembled houses were on exhibit at Cincinnati, and one was promised at Kansas City in June, 1855. A price range of $150 to $500 was quoted for different styles. The materials were avail-

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34. *Lawrence Republican*, April 12, 1860.
35. *Kansas Free State*, April 14, 1855, carried the advertisement of Hinkle, Guild & Company, and an editorial paragraph, a disguised advertisement, called attention to it, giving further explanations; *Herald of Freedom*, June 2, 10, 1855.
(Upper) LAWRENCE, SUPPOSEDLY IN MAY, 1856, from an artist's sketch in Henry Howe's *Historical Collections of the Great West* . . . (early 1857 edition). The building under the flag in the center is the Free-State Hotel, now the Eldridge Hotel site.

(Lower) LAWRENCE BUSINESS DISTRICT IN 1867, seven hundred block, Massachusetts street. Extreme right, the Eldridge Hotel; next door south, Fraser Hall, the third floor of the building being used for public gatherings. An Alexander Gardner photograph, owned by the Kansas State Historical Society.
(Upper) **Looking South Into the Wakarusa Valley in 1867** from the present site of the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

(Lower) **Looking Northeast Over Lawrence in 1867** from Mount Oread (Old North College), the present site of Corbin Hall. The Methodist church (right center) was at the corner of Tenth and Massachusetts Streets, site of the present Masonic Temple.

Note the uniformity of frame architecture, rectangular, with gable roofs. Gardner photographs, K. S. H. S.
able, ready to be assembled, at St. Louis, as well as at Cincinnati. In Lawrence, high rents were advanced as an argument to induce investors to bring many of them as an income proposition. “The meanest shanty brings one dollar per week, and rough houses, containing only a single room, without plastering or ceiling, rent readily at $6 to $25 per month. Generally, the rent per annum is from fifty to one hundred per cent on the cost of building.” When E. Simmons advertised them in Kansas City, the notice listed as references, C. Robinson, and S. C. Pomeroy, agents of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, and G. W. Brown, editor of the *Herald of Freedom*. The first one of these cottages to appear at Lawrence was credited to Hiram Hill, on Massachusetts street, south of the *Herald of Freedom* office, a two-story building, 16 x 34 feet, the material being shipped in on the steamboat Hartford, which arrived May 21:

The boards are of pine, one and an eight inch in thickness, running perpendicular, matched together, and must make a very warm and comfortable building. The whole cost, when completed; will not exceed eight hundred dollars. Mr. E. Jones of Wilberham, Mass., is master builder. We hope others wanting a good building will be induced to examine this and erect similar structures.

Lawrence was handicapped, however, by the lack of river service. The Hartford was grounded on a sandbar and never made the return trip. Other boats did reach Lawrence during the navigation season, but successful service was not established. Leavenworth imported many Hinkle cottages, so many that one section of the town was nicknamed Cincinnati. Parenthetically, it may be stated here, that the housing problem in all its aspects, in relation to river navigation, afforded a basis for a telling accusation against the Emigrant Aid Company of 1854 which was made by the *Kansas Free State*, July 9, 1855, for bungling the whole Free-State cause by selecting an inland rather than a Missouri river site for a Free-State town. Later, the company tried to remedy the situation, but the damage had been done. It was not geography that determined the situation, but the bungling of the men who did the planning.

**SUBSTITUTES FOR WOOD**

The most conspicuous evidence that the New England Emigrant Aid Company group had benefited from experience appeared in the section of its “Information for Kansas Pioneers” (1855), dealing

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with “Wood and timber.” The limited supply of timber was represented as an advantage as well as a disadvantage, but the former was the greater: “The law of compensation is here found admirably exemplified. . . .” So far as building materials were concerned, the compensation was found in limestone, and clay, and in the potential tree growth after prairie fires were controlled. Also, the Herald of Freedom had made the acquaintance of a book by O. S. Fowler, A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building (New York, Fowler and Wells, 1854), which took the ground that “nature’s provisions are all perfect. . . . Of course what is objectionable is not hers.”

BRICK

In the particular Lawrence situation, the possibilities of substitutes for wood, were made specific, although they had often been pointed out in general terms for the Kansas-Nebraska area over the months since the territory had been opened. When the pioneer parties began prepararations in September for the sawmill at Lawrence, they had no brick for the arches and stack of the chimney, so they used stone. Probably it was natural for New Englanders and other Easterners from the brick-using regions to turn to brick as the first substitute for wood, although stone was more readily available. Early in February, 1855, the announcement was made that the first kiln of brick would be burned in the spring: “From the difficulty of procuring timber, it is evident our city must be built up of brick and mortar. . . .”

Although the brick plant was slow in materializing, the discussions went on, and among the substitutes for wood, the conclusion was expressed that “as brick can probably be used most readily, it would be generally adopted in the city if they could be obtained.” To attract capital to invest in Kansas brick making, a price of six dollars per thousand was named as a minimum. An advertisement asking for 200 cords of wood appeared April 28, and a hope was expressed to have any quantity of brick available in six weeks. Evidently this first attempt failed. An article printed in May, 1857, described a new enterprise and explained that the sponsors thought

99. Herald of Freedom, April 14, 1855; Ibid., February 10, March 10, 81, 1855, referred to the book. The quotation is from p. 16 of the book.
10. Ibid., January 20, 1855.
41. Ibid., February 3, 1855.
42. Ibid., March 10, 1855.
43. Ibid., April 28, 1855.
that the fault of the former attempt lay in improperly tempering the clay, which was different from Eastern clay.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{STONE}

The New Englanders did not appear to have a stonemason’s tradition—at any rate it did not seem to be represented among the New England contingent at Lawrence and vicinity during these months of beginnings. Limestone was plentiful both as building material and for burning for lime. Quarrying and dressing of stone to be laid up by line, was not only slow, but prohibitive in skilled labor costs on the frontier where all labor was scarce and capital available for investment in skilled labor was even more scarce. In the vicinity of Lawrence, and in much of eastern Kansas, a hard, relatively free, partly weathered limestone, was available in the outcroppings along the hillsides and bluffs. The shapes and sizes of the fragments were highly irregular. The pressure of necessity was strong, however, for utilization of the material available on the ground, and ingenuity was challenged to find a method suitable to the material and the circumstances.

A number of methods were considered for making walls with lime as the binding agent, the names used being grout, concrete, and composite. Although other sources contributed, the book, \textit{A Home for All}, by Fowler, appears to have been the chief source of inspiration. By grout was meant the use of gravel as the aggregate, bound together by sand and lime, and poured into forms (boxes). By concrete was meant strictly a sand and lime wall poured into forms, but the term was used by Fowler to cover a wall of lime, sand, and any kind of aggregate. The composite wall, as the term was used in Lawrence, appears to have meant one in which the rocks were laid up in layers in mortar, without being dressed, thus becoming a form or box which was filled with broken rock and mortar. But in Lawrence the usage of these terms was not exact.

The \textit{Herald of Freedom} developed the theme, insisting that there was no doubt that concrete houses “will come into general use. Several gentlemen have already combined to erect one which shall serve as a model for the Territory. . . .” Furthermore, the editor reprinted a prediction that the new material “will form a new era in the art of building, and be the means, we ardently hope, of providing homes for all.”\textsuperscript{45} The next week the editor concluded

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid.}, May 9, 1857.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Ibid.}, February 10, March 3, 1853.
that, for city building, brick would probably be preferred but many concrete houses would be used, and for country building “concrete houses are to become the principal structures.” A local paragraph commented that the large piles of river sand in various places indicate “structures of concrete” to be built on the plan of Fowler and Wells.

Nevertheless, there is some question whether the term concrete was always used accurately or consistently. If poured into “boxes,” lumber would be necessary. The most specific description of concrete in the strict sense is one written in December, 1856:

Almost any man of common ingenuity can lay up what we here call concrete houses which simply means laying up the stone in boxes as concrete houses are laid up, instead of by lines. Boxes are used by filling in mortar & small stones and laying up large stones regularly with the largest stones at the corners: the large stones are cemented together by this process more cheaply than in the ordinary way. 15 cts. pr foot is the price for such work: $25 for line work. $150 would put up a house of this sort for a small family, & this house would in after years serve for a granary or out house of any description when the parties were able to build a better.

This description did not specify board forms, as lumber was not mentioned. The language is open to the interpretation that the stone itself was so placed as to effect essentially that purpose.

Confusion in usage between the words concrete and composite become evident in the newspaper stories. The composite was not fully described, but one statement said “a mixture of stone and mortar, laid up after the order of concrete structures, with the exception that the stone will be put up in layers. . . .” Probably stones with one fairly regular surface were laid up by line in mortar so that the faces of the wall were not too rough and irregular, and then the spaces were filled with smaller rocks inbedded in mortar, using an occasional long rock extending the full width of the wall, or nearly so, to tie the faces together. Thus, instead of a wooden form or box, the stones themselves would be laid so that they served virtually that function. G. W. Hutchinson built the first major concrete building, 50 feet square and two stories, divided below for stores, the upper floor designed for a public hall. Later, when the walls were completed, the method of construction was called com-

46. Ibid., March 10, 1855. Future articles on concrete and its cost were promised, but no formal article of that exact nature appeared, although related material was printed.
47. Ibid., March 31, 1855.
49. Herald of Freedom, May 19, 1855.
In May, many were reported to be about to build concrete buildings, the abundance of stones and gravel making it the cheapest method.51

A discussion of walls in Wisconsin was used to introduce a description of an invention of concrete building blocks claimed by Ambrose Foster, Portland, Dodge county, Wis. The assertion was made that it "bids fair eventually to drive clay-made bricks entirely out of the market, and to supersede in many instances the use of stone," because lime and sand were more widely distributed than brick clay. In grout construction little care had been given to the proportions of lime to aggregate, but for the concrete blocks the formula of 12 parts of sand to one of lime must be observed strictly, the sand and dehydrated powdered lime being "mixed together in a nearly dry state," and compressed in a machine with 120 tons "on a single brick of the ordinary size." The bricks were then air cured. They could be moulded also with air spaces which would provide dead air spaces in the wall. An argument for this mode of operations was that skilled workmen were not required, and a farmer, with a machine, could work up his own brick out of material on the spot, on his own time, and build his home, barns, fences, etc., economically. By the judicious use of metallic oxides, it was said that attractive colorings could be provided.52 Probably this process is of more interest to the history of these building materials than to the practice of actual building in Lawrence, but these discussions are an important reflection of the ingenuity being exercised by the people in trying to solve their own problems with what was at hand, rather than waiting upon the company to saw lumber for them or return to the states defeated.

Each of the modes of construction just reviewed, brick, concrete, and composite, required the use of a binding agent. As of 1855, Portland cement was not available, and in the Lawrence area natural (hydraulic) cement had not been discovered although later a small deposit of the requisite material was found and exploited northwest of town. The burned limestone yielded common lime, and that was the material used exclusively in 1855. Estimates of the cost of production of lime were based upon limestone free of cost, hard wood fuel at two dollars per cord, common labor at $1.25 per day, at which a price of 30 cents per bushel, was estimated, with 25 cents

50. Ibid., March 31, June 16, 1855. The building was occupied, but still unfinished.—Ibid., August 4, 11, 18, 1855.
52. Herald of Freedom, April 14, 1855.
as a possible volume goal.\textsuperscript{53} Evidently this discussion was based upon lime manufacture as a commercial enterprise. In actual practice lime was being burned by individual settlers, or groups of them, for their own use. Of these undertakings, however, there is little record, unless, as in the Coleman-Dow murder case at Hickory Point, other circumstances made it an issue.

**Earth Construction**

The use of sod for housing at Lawrence, either as a supplementary or as a basic material, was treated frankly as an emergency make-shift to be discarded at the earliest possible moment, which meant within a few weeks or at the most a few months. There was no room in the point of view or the practices at Lawrence for founding a “sod house culture.” Discussion did develop, however, looking to the utilization of earth for housing, but in all its forms these were inspired by special treatments of earth materials rather than natural sod, and had their origin in older civilizations and therefore involved a possible transit of culture rather than the creation of an indigenous culture. This was as true for the earth techniques as for lumber, brick, stone, and concrete or composite.

After reviewing the other materials for houses, Editor G. W. Brown commented on adobe houses of New Mexico and Utah built of “well-tempered clay” bricks, sun-dried, and argued that they would be durable in Kansas, with an Italian roof extending well over the sides and laid on a good stone foundation extending below the frost line and high enough to prevent the absorption of moisture.—“the clay here, mixed with sand, will furnish as good walls as those of Mexico and Utah.” Again he cited A Home for All, which suggested that clay alone or clay and stones could be built into a wall tamped into boxes (forms) in the same manner as gravel walls.\textsuperscript{54}

Nearly two months later Brown was still convinced of the possibilities of clay and sand walls, properly mixed, and he announced that

\ldots we have resolved on trying the experiment in the erection of an office, using the clay from the cellar, and the sand from the river. If the enterprise shall prove successful it will be a proud event for Kansas, and one which will add thousands to her population.

Probably additional inspiration for this decision was derived from a New York Tribune letter reprinted in the Herald of Freedom the same day. It was dated from Grande Prairie, Ind., and cited, be-

\textsuperscript{53} *Ibid.*, March 10, 24, 1855.

\textsuperscript{54} *Ibid.*, March 10, 1855.
sides the houses of the desert Southwest, examples in Ohio.\textsuperscript{55} In spite of his apparent enthusiasm for the experiment, there is no evidence that Editor Brown acted upon his announcement. The idea recurred from time to time, however, in the housing history of the grassland region.

The building situation in Lawrence was evidently most unsatisfactory in 1855; lack of lumber, scarcity of capital and unemployed labor. Action was taken in May resulting in the organization, May 14, 15, of the "Lawrence Building Association" a combination of mechanics, laborers, and capitalists, to provide employment, good wages, residences, and business houses. They proposed using "composite material wholly," stone and mortar laid up in layers. The plan was designed to provide division of labor allowing each to work at his individual artisan skill, the form of organization being a sort of co-operative joint-stock company. A wage scale was agreed upon, May 17, for carpenters and joiners, stone masons, hewers, painters, and glaziers, and common labor, $1.50 to $3.00, the stone masons commanding the highest rate. Apparently the plan contemplated building on company account for sale as well as under contract. The officers were chosen from the substantial leaders of the community, but no evidence has been found thus far to determine whether the organization ever really functioned.\textsuperscript{56}

\section*{Hotel}

Because of the manner in which it became involved in the political controversies of territorial Kansas, the Emigrant Aid Company hotel became a symbol as well as a building. Yes, even more a symbol than an architectural achievement. Yet, from the standpoint of building construction, it stands as a sort of climax to the building program of the beginnings at Lawrence. As originally planned, the hotel was to have been a three-and-one-half story frame building, over a basement with stone footings and walls.\textsuperscript{57} The term frame-building was used in this connection evidently in the strict architectural sense—large timbers fitted together by mortice, tenon, and pins. By the first of November, 1854, the foundations were being laid.\textsuperscript{58} In February, 1855, the leasing of the sawmill was announced with the clause requiring that two-thirds of the output

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., April 28, 1855.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., May 19, 1855. The text of the constitution and bylaws and the full complement of officers is published.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., February 3, 1855.

\textsuperscript{58} Mrs. C. I. H. Nichols, letter of November 2, 1854, Springfield (Mass.) Republican, November 18, 1854.—"Webb Scrapbooks," v. 2, p. 14.
be delivered for the hotel. 59 Two weeks earlier a construction contract was announced by which S. N. Simpson pledged to complete the frame building 50 x 70 feet, three and one-half stories by May 1, 1856. At this time the statement was made that the basement was nearly ready for the frame. The fact should be pointed out that this time schedule would not insure a hotel in time for the third year of immigration which should have arrived prior to May 1, 1856. Late in April, 1855, the basement was ready for the timbers, but work was suspended, probably on account of scarcity of timbers. Editor Brown reported a rumor that the walls were to be of concrete. This was after he had experienced his first spring dust storms, so he approved with this comment, that concrete walls would not only be durable, but “dry and healthy” as well, “and impervious to wind and dust.” But Brown was not fully satisfied, because he recommended that the hotel should be made fully fireproof; Warren’s composition roofing, fireproof windows, iron doors, with inside walls of concrete. Subsequent developments suggest that this was somewhat too extreme for adoption by the company. 60

One becomes a little skeptical about the basement of the hotel, because in May it was again reported completed, and “the balance, it is said, will be of concrete,” because of difficulties in building with lumber “which no person unacquainted with a new country can even dream of.” The same account reported that grooved and matched flooring was to be shipped from St. Louis, as well as Warren’s composition roofing, which was advertised in the same issue of the paper. 61 Some weeks later a further explanation was made:

the very great scarcity, in fact the almost impossibility of procuring lumber sufficient for so large a building, induced them to change their plans somewhat, and composite walls, both for the exterior and for each side of the hall, extending the whole length of the building—seventy feet—as well as from the basement to the roof, was substituted. 62

This was not the fireproofing that Editor Brown had asked for, but it went farther in that direction than might have been expected in view of some of the adverse criticism leveled at the company.

The anticompany Kansas Free State, May 21, 1855, gave the hotel an unfavorable notice:

This famous building, about which there has been so much said in the papers for the last year, and the one so much looked for by emigrants upon their arrival, is now completed to the first floor, and the work has been stopped for some time. [Work was resumed Monday], and they have concluded

59. Herald of Freedom, February 17, 1855.
60. Ibid., April 29, 1855.
61. Ibid., May 12, 1855.
62. Ibid., July 28, 1855.
to make a concrete building of it... Lawrence has been injured no little for the want of a good hotel. Private enterprise would have had a hotel here long since.

The successive interruptions of work on the hotel are somewhat confusing. The *Herald of Freedom*, June 16, reported that work was resumed, the walls being built by B. Johnson, a member of a Pennsylvania colony—not a New Englander. On this occasion the term "composite" instead of "concrete" was used, the news story stating that the composite wall was going up rapidly.

Again the dissonant voice of the *Kansas Free State*, July 9, was raised in criticism of the Emigrant Aid Company on several scores: "Why did not the Aid Company found a few towns on the Missouri river? The sites are eligible, the very thresholds of the Territory, and navigation almost constant." The editor went on, that the company's claim of eight centers of light, is all a humbug. The [saw] mill here has been a perfect nuisance. The Hotel, which has been building ever since the Company had an existence, still lingers. It is now up one story, the work having stopped, and the contractor has taken his hands off, not being able to get his pay, and of course cannot go on with the work.

The mill and the hotel are all they have attempted here, and they have done nothing at the other points. This hotel being delayed thus, has been more injury to the place than all other things combined.—Hundreds of persons have left our place for want of a comfortable hotel to stop at. Yet the Company will neither do anything itself, nor give up the work to individuals who would put it up immediately. We think that this powerful Company has scared the citizens of Lawrence into acquiescence, silence and submission long enough. If you have any regard for your own pecuniary interests, you will no longer submit to their tantalizing humbugging operations. Let us have a hotel ready for the reception of the immense emigration that will pour in here in the fall. It is suicidal for us to depend on the Aid Company doing anything for Lawrence, or for any other point in Kansas Territory.

The later history of the hotel need not be told here. It was not completed until 1858, when the *Herald of Freedom*, April 12, announced the event with a full description. And then, on May 21, following, it was burned by Sheriff Samuel Jones and his mob. It had become the principal target of the Proslavery attack upon Lawrence as a center of Free-State agitation in Kansas. As a hotel for receiving Free-State immigration intent upon settling in Kansas, it had scarcely functioned. As a symbol, although destroyed, the Emigrant Aid Company hotel was the most important building in territorial Kansas. In its service to the cause as a symbol, it paid for itself several times over.