Kansas in 1876
HOMER E. SOCOLOFSKY

KANSAS had a separate building for its display at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. On September 14, 1876, this building had a special reopening, showing products of 1876. A hundred years ago today that Kansas exhibit at Philadelphia was halfway through the final weeks of its new, improved display. When the six-months' exhibition period ended in November, 1876, leading Kansans expressed satisfaction with their presentation to the nation and to the world of the resources and promises of the future of the youthful state. Incoming Gov. George T. Anthony, who had a major role as president of the Kansas board of centennial managers for the world's fair, said to an unprecedented joint session of the Kansas state legislature in January, 1877:

It was not the cereals, the minerals and woods of Kansas that attracted the attention and excited the admiration of the representatives of all nations, making every American citizen feel that the victory of Kansas was a national honor. It was the boldness of conception, the daring of purpose, the intelligent and artistic arrangement, which shed so broad a light upon the manhood and culture of Kansas, as to force a conviction upon all spectators, that a people whose representatives could provide for, and whose agents could execute, such an undertaking, owned a country wherein it was good to dwell.

That work will be felt for years, and need only be supplemented, on the part of the State, by an intelligent and exhaustive collection of current facts of interest to the homeseeking...1

These remarks seemed to confirm voices heard in Kansas during the concluding days of the Centennial Exposition that credited this major state publicizing effort with at least a partial influence on the migration of numerous new settlers to the state. For example,

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from Junction City came the statement:

Whether it be the Centennial Exposition, or from any other cause, the facts exist that our roads are and for some time have been literally whitened with the wagon-covers of incoming settlers. Not infrequently the words “To Kansas,” in rude chirography, upon the side, telling to the thousands upon their route the inspiration that moves them westwards. Welcome all! ²

These comments as well as later historical accounts of the exposition accept without question that the promotional reason for displaying Kansas products at the fair did result in the increased population needed to fill the public buildings, schools, churches, lodges, and other newly created institutions and to assume debts accumulated by 1876. Thus, those who requested unusually large state expenditures for the centennial later in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy reported that people came. The board of centennial managers had argued that “a true and fair representation and exhibition of the varied resources of the State at the proposed exhibition would be worth hundreds of thousands [of] dollars to Kansas, within the next decade. No State in the union [they said] would realize such a large return as Kansas.” The legislature responded with the money.³

Early in 1875 the thinking of this board may have been too specifically stated in minutes, which were truthfully written but crossed out. They said, “Inasmuch as Kansas had suffered materially in the estimation of the world, during the past year, from grasshopper visitation and like misfortunes, that she should make an unusual effort to remove this approbriam by” and the final words not lined through were, “complete exhibition of her marvelous resources and varied products.”⁴

The concern expressed here was real—Kansas population in 1875 was down slightly from the previous year. Drought and grasshoppers had driven more people from the state than were added by birth and migration.⁵ So the economic justification of a favorable display at Philadelphia was uppermost in the minds of influential Kansans. In their view Kansas had “everything” except people. The board of centennial managers sold their program to the state legislature in 1876, with a lengthy statement including the following:

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² Junction City Union in Kansas Farmer, Topeka, October 25, 1876.
³ “Minute Book,” office of State Board of Centennial Managers, archives, Kansas State Historical Society, p. 2.
⁴ Ibid., from minutes of third meeting, January 21, 1875.
⁵ Fifth Annual Report of the [Kansas] State Board of Agriculture (Geo. W. Martin, Topeka, 1877), p. 235. The March 1, 1875, population estimate of 528,349, based on county assessor figures, was down 68 from 1874.
Kansas needs all the advantages of a successful display. Remote from the money centers, the crash of the “panic” came, sweeping away our values, checking our immigration and leaving us our lands and our debts. The devastation of the locust was an accidental and passing shadow. Our wealth of soil and climate has been reasserted in abundant harvests, but the depression still rests like a blight on the price of real estate. Immigration has halted, and investments have measurably ceased. The bountiful harvest of Eastern money, growing out of the sale of lots and lands, and which for twenty years has furnished our best revenue, is no longer ours. . . . The pressing want of Kansas to-day is men and money. A vigorous immigration movement at the “Centennial” will secure both.6

Such sentiments were echoed around the state. The Kansas Farmer justified the legislative expenditure as a “reasonable amount . . . expended in placing [Kansas] before the country,” because “We need people to fill our broad, rich valleys and to occupy the tens of thousands of acres of unoccupied land, and the opportunity to advertise the State presented by the Centennial cannot be lost.”7

Registration books maintained in the building erected by Kansas and shared with Colorado at Philadelphia contain more than one hundred thousand names.8 Presumably they list names of persons who later migrated to Kansas because of what they saw in that building. But the evidence is slim that the Kansas exhibit at Philadelphia was a major determinant, or much more than a minor contributing factor, in producing the influx of new Kansans in the next few years.

Still there was contemporary support for the success of the Kansas project in Philadelphia, but it was used mostly to justify even more state money for other expositions. For instance, when state funds were sought in 1881 to advertise Kansas at the Atlanta cotton exposition, the claim was made by a member of the old centennial board of managers that the five-year increase after 1876 of “464,170 inhabitants” was “to a great extent . . . the result of the exhibition of the State at the Centennial.”9 As a matter of fact very few Kansans participated in the gathering of products for the display at Philadelphia and a meager 8,000 Kansans, in-

6. Kansas Senate Journal, 1876, p. 87. Each new settler was felt to add wealth to the state in the amount of $1,000. The members of this board in early 1876 were George T. Anthony, Eduard W. Dennis, Alfred Gray, A. J. North, B. J. Evans, George A. Crawford, and John A. Martin.
7. Kansas Farmer, February 16, 1876.
8. “Kansas Centennial Register,” Centennial Exposition, 1876, five volumes, archives, Kansas State Historical Society. Each book contains 500 pages with 50 lines per page, enough space to record 25,000 names. The fifth volume is slightly more than half full.
cluding 60 newspapermen, were in attendance. Nevertheless, a highly vocal feeling within the state was produced by this small influential group and comments from that period reflect a pride in state accomplishment at the centennial.

It seems to me that evidence from a century ago does not support the popular notion that the action taken by the state of Kansas at the centennial exposition served as a major influence on the expansion of the state’s population. In fact, a contrary position, that the state’s centennial exhibition provided little direct input to the vast increase in Kansas population in the next few years, has stronger support, in my view, based on the nature and development of Kansas of a century ago. Admittedly, the population of the state almost doubled in the five years after 1876 but phenomenal growth was characteristic of most trans-Mississippi states and territories, some of whom had nothing in Philadelphia. It was a regional trend. An examination of Kansas in 1876 and a consideration of its resources, the hopes and aspirations of its citizens, should help explain how it was possible to sustain a substantial population increase in each year during the next decade.

So, what was Kansas like in the centennial year of the nation, just 22 years after the opening of the territory to settlement? How was the young state affected by national depression, and widespread fraud and scandal in high office? Did the decadence and lack of national purpose associated with the so-called “Gilded Age” have an influence on the lives of Kansans in 1876? Even though a single year is from a piece of time for which there is no beginning and no end, we may understand more fully the people of another age if we concentrate on the centennial year, 1876.

In 1876 most Kansans were farmers or members of farm families, and for years to come the primary attraction of the Kansas area would be in the availability of farm land. Hard, physically exhausting, and often unrewarding toil was the lot of the farmer, his wife, and his family. Most farm homes, too small for the family, were lacking in elementary sanitary conditions, and were infested with insect pests of various kinds. Fresh, clean water was no where to be found in many farm homes—the inevitable rain barrel invariably contained polluted water. Homes were isolated from most neighbors, adding to the loneliness of farm women. Faced with never-ending household and farm drudgery, the demands of laundry, kitchen, stove, a vegetable garden, and a growing family,

10. Ibid. Rail expenses and costs of a week’s stay in Philadelphia for Kansans was said to be $448, out of reach for all but a few. Between nine and 10 million people visited the fair.—See Paul Gores, “Kansas Centennial Building Won High Praise,” Topeka Daily Capital, March 1, 1976, p. 5.
many a young country wife quickly lost the bloom of good health and physical attractiveness. The lack of association with outsiders made country children seem immature.

By 1876 about one third of the entire Kansas area was in farms slightly larger than one-quarter section each. One third of the farming area—about five million acres—was in cultivation. Thus, a major attraction to potential migrants was the possibility of getting some of the remaining two thirds of Kansas. Corn had always been the biggest Kansas crop—in 1876 it accounted for 42 percent of crop value, although worth less than 25 cents per bushel. This price had considerably increased from the lows recorded earlier during the Panic of 1873. Farmers harvested wheat on nearly one million acres that year, and winter wheat accounted for three fourths of the yield. Every year more farmers sowed wheat. “The gradual growth in popular favor of winter over spring wheat,” one of them wrote, “has been for the last six years very noticeable.” Another reported that, “the present crop of wheat in Kansas is much the largest ever gathered. . . . Only give Kansas a few more years in which to get ‘a good ready,’ and she will be prepared to offer . . . proposals for feeding the world.” In 1876 newspapers and farm journals remarked on the unusually large sale of reapers and other harvesting implements, and in September the Junction City Union complained that there were not enough railroad cars in Kansas to move the grain eastward.

While the number of draft animals was increasing in Kansas to power the new implements put into use by the time of the centennial year, cattle and swine numbers were down from the peak year of 1874. Generally, the production of crops and livestock produced a meager result which found few interested buyers even at the low depression prices of 1876. Eggs sold for five to 10 cents per dozen and butter brought eight to 10 cents per pound. Usually farmers could sell these products to the grocer only if they took the proceeds in groceries. Some farmers on the Kansas frontier sold game, such as buffalo meat. They asked six cents per pound, or for antelope that dressed out 80 pounds; hind quarters sold for

11. *Kansas Farmer*, July 7, 1875, reported from the *Industrialist*, Manhattan, that corn “was ignominiously and permanently deposed” in 1872 when the market price was 15 cents per bushel.
13. Junction City *Union*, September 16, 1876. The 1876 wheat harvest in Kansas was 25 times larger than 1876.
50 cents. Prairie chickens brought a mere pittance, hardly worth the effort of shooting them.

For many Kansas farm families the centennial year was a never-ending battle for survival. Farmers had little time to consider activities outside their immediate area, but in their diaries they wrote optimistically about the land of their new home.

Some land owners found ingenious ways of making the hard work on a farm exciting and interesting. For instance, Thomas McLean, a Cloud county blacksmith, agreed to pay for breaking his prairie sod, in work at his shop at $2.50 per acre. So in late May, 1876, there was a “breaking bee” on McLean’s land involving “144 horses, 22 mules, 27 yoke of oxen and 88 plows. Eighty acres were broke[n] before noon . . . an ox was killed . . . and cooked, with many other good things, for dinner. Fifteen more acres were broke[n] in a short time after dinner; and twelve teams on their way home, broke about the same amount for a widow . . . . at whose house they took supper.”

Living conditions for the typical urban dweller in Kansas of 1876 differed only slightly from those in the country. Most towns were small, either muddy or dusty, and polluted by the wastes and discards of civilization. Few communities had a sanitary sewer; fewer still had piped-in pure water. Newspaper writers complained about the high winds and dust, and one added “cinders too.” Lighting techniques, for home, business, and street made use of devices employing either an open or enclosed flame; heating was provided by burning hay, straw, corn cobs, wood, or coal. Destructive fires were a frequent problem. Some lucky communities had organized their volunteer firemen before an emergency, but generally, fire departments and proscriptions on the nature of acceptable down-town buildings came into existence after some disastrous fire. In 1876 fires destroyed or damaged the Nemaha county courthouse, the Kansas Pacific shops at Wallace along with three locomotives and equipment, Lincoln school in Topeka, the Palace Hotel which housed Kansas Pacific offices in North Topeka, a flour mill in Leavenworth, and numerous farm buildings and city homes. Grass fires were so usual that one paper merely stated, “We regret to see the fire fiend at work again on our prairies. . . . Last season many valuable houses, as well as other property, were destroyed in our county by these fires, and in

15. *The Sentinel*, Minneapolis, June 8, 1876.
most instances the losses fell upon those who were in no wise able to bear them." 17

In warm weather windows were opened to provide ventilation. Window screens were nonexistent and flying insects easily entered. Few Kansans in 1876 associated diseases with insect carriers. Fleas, flies, and mosquitoes gained easy access to primitive housing. True, insects were pests but major efforts were not made to eliminate them from the home. Much time would go by before people, in general, would become aware of the germ theory of disease.

Politics was an overriding concern of the newspaper reading public in Kansas of 1876. In detail, Kansans learned of fraud and corruption in high places in the federal government and in New York City. Kansas found that it had its share of corrupt action on the part of some of its county and state elected officials.

Possibly more attention was directed to the crime of the Kansas state treasurer, Samuel Lappin, who was asked to resign on December 20, 1875, when forged school bonds were found in the permanent school fund. Because Lappin was the second state treasurer forced to resign in less than two years, the Junction City Union bitterly complained as the story unfolded that, "The State Treasurer's office has been rotten since the year one, with the exception of the few months John Francis was in it. . . ." 18

In his letter of resignation Lappin denied wrongdoing but acknowledged that he should have "exercised greater vigilance" in identifying the sellers of the bonds. 19 Apparently, within six months of taking his oath as state treasurer in early 1875, Lappin, with his business partner and brother-in-law, Charles G. Scrafford of Seneca, initiated a plan to defraud the state. He obtained names of clerks of local school districts from the superintendent of public instruction, then sent letters to various county treasurers requesting data on school district organization. In the meantime he chided the permanent school fund commissioners for permitting uninvested funds to accumulate. When Lappin was told there were "no desirable securities offered in which to invest, he informed them that there were bonds of school districts of northwestern

17. Inland Tribune, Great Bend, October 28, 1876.
19. Kansas House Journal, 1876, p. 1091. Lappin came to Kansas with the opening of the territory and was register of deeds in Nemaha county throughout the territorial period. He was a founder of the town of Seneca, where he had a prosperous business, served in both houses of the state legislature, and was in the Union army for almost three years.
counties, held by parties in St. Joseph, Mo.,” available for pur-
chase.20

Then, using knowledge gained from county officials, Lappin
forged school bonds which he sold to the permanent school fund
in September, October, and November. These bonds, for which
the state paid $17,848.74 came from various persons, actually
aliases for Lappin, reputed to be residents of St. Joseph and
Kansas City, Mo.21 Then in December when a new group of
school district bonds were offered by J. S. Kibby of Kansas City,
the uniformity of the signatures caused Secretary of State Thomas
H. Cavanaugh to dig deeper into these and earlier bonds. In his
investigation Cavanaugh spent four days in Kansas City, found
no evidence of Kibby and became convinced “that the bonds were
not executed in Kansas City, and were not offered for sale at
Kansas City.” 22 He told the governor of his suspicions, who
asked for Lappin’s resignation. Later Lappin was indicted, posted
bond, and fled to Chicago, where he was apprehended on January
13, 1876, and returned to jail in Topeka.

Five months later Lappin’s effort to break jail was frustrated
by an alert guard, but on July 11 he succeeded in escaping to
Chicago, then to Canada, and eventually to Peru where there was
little chance of extradition. Scrafford followed Lappin where the
two men soon had a falling out. A bounty hunter agreed to
return the fugitives for the reward money, but he captured only
Scrafford, who escaped before he could be brought back to the
United States. Eventually, Scrafford came back to face minor
charges.23 Eight years later Lappin was identified in Tacoma,
Washington territory, and inquiries came to Kansas about the
reward paid for his capture.24 He was arrested in Portland, Ore.,
and by late October, 1884, he was again lodged in a Topeka jail.
When Lappin’s trial was finally brought into court, the state at-

22. Ibid., p. 1265.
23. Charles H. Landrum, “A History of the Kansas State School Fund,” Kansas Histo-
torical Collections, v. 12 (1911-1912), p. 210. Scrafford was convicted in a lower court,
appealed his case to a higher court where the decision was reversed and Scrafford given
his liberty.” The Leavenworth Weekly Times, reported on February 24, 1876, that people
in Topeka were grumbling about the burden of the cost of Lappin’s trial required of the
city rather than the state. Of course, Lappin was never tried in 1876.
24. “Papers of Governor G. W. Glick,” criminal matters; general correspondence, in-
cluding requests to offer rewards; the capture of Samuel Lappin, etc., 1883-1884, archives,
Kansas State Historical Society.
$700 REWARD!

PROCLAMATION.

STATE OF KANSAS,
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
TOPEKA, JULY 12, 1876.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by law, I, Thomas A. Osborn, Governor of the State of Kansas, do hereby offer a Reward of FIVE HUNDRED DOL-
LARS, for the apprehension and delivery to the Sher-
iff of Shawnee County, Kansas, of one

SAMUEL LAPPIN,

who broke jail at Topeka, on the morning of July
11th, 1876.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and
cause the Great Seal of State to be affixed, at Topeka, this
12th day of July, A. D. 1876.

(Signed) THOMAS A. OSBORN.

By the Governor:
(Signed) THOS. H. CAVANAUGH,
Secretary of State.

In addition to the above reward, I offer the sum of $200.

S. P. WADE,
Sheriff Shawnee County, Kansas.

DESCRIPTION.

The Samuel Lappin, aforesaid, is about 46 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches high,
weight about 240 pounds, and is of a square and solid build, and is slow in his
speech and movements. Has a full face, florid complexion, and a large, round head,
short neck, dark hair and dark eyes, and had, when he left, a full, dark beard.

He is probably accompanied by WALTER STANLEY, who is about forty
years of age, 6 feet 11 inches high, weight about 180 pounds; has light hair, light
complexion and gray eyes; had, when he left, a full, light beard; is slightly stoop-
shouldered; his right hand and wrist is crippled.

Both left in a light, spring wagon, with a pair of ponies, one bay and the other
gray.

The rewards announced by this poster for the apprehension of Samuel
Lappin are believed to have been paid eight years later when Lappin
was returned to Topeka in October, 1884.
torney general on Christmas eve, 1885, refused to prosecute on
the grounds that the forged bonds were missing, witnesses scattered, some of them dead; that the state had been fully reimbursed for the loss; that there was no chance of conviction, and that Lappin had been sufficiently punished.”
Lappin’s subsequent life in Seneca and Lenora was filled with unhappiness.

As might be expected in such a tangled web, actions taken by Lappin damaged not only his own life, but many around him. Friends in Seneca could not understand, it was not like the Lappin they respected. Nevertheless, the Nemaha county post office named Lappin, established on August 8, 1872, was abruptly renamed Oneida on January 19, 1876, less than a month after Lappin’s resignation as treasurer.26 Through the many years of Lappin’s absence his wife worked as a seamstress to hold the family together. Sometime in late May or early June, 1876, while Lappin was still in jail, his 12-year-old son, Grover, ran away from home. A short time later, 150 miles west of Topeka, at Beloit, a boy, using the name George Edward Wilcox, rode into town on “an old sorrel pony. He told a fine story of being lost from a train that was on its way to Oregon and that he had followed on in what he thought was the way the train would have gone.” Ironically, in view of what had transpired, he was taken into the home of the county treasurer and in July his identity was discovered.27 Eight years later when Sam Lappin returned to Kansas, his son Grover was in the state penitentiary for robbery of a post office.28

If the Lappin bond frauds had been the only troubles for Kansas bonds in 1876, there would have been an easy solution. Governor Osborn received frequent complaint from bond holders in St. Louis, Jefferson City, New York, and elsewhere concerning bonds issued in Kansas.29 At the same time, inquiries came from bond merchants about bonds offered by newer counties, particularly Harper, Barbour, and Comanche. The New York Times commented in May that “Kansas bonds have recently fallen into deserved disrepute on account of the readiness of municipal au-

26. Robert Baughman, Kansas Post Offices, p. 71; Frank Blackmar, Kansas: Cyclopedia of State History, v. 2, p. 392, the material on Oneida in this volume makes no mention of the Lappin post office, but professes that the office for Oneida began in 1872.
27. The Gazette, Beloit, July 13, 1876.
Back in Seneca Samuel Lappin and Charles D. Scrafford's bank issued scrip such as this 10-cent piece.

authorities in some parts of the State to refuse to honor their obligations, pleading informalities and illegalities of issue.” Many units of local government had grave difficulty collecting taxes during the panic years of the 1870's. From a compilation of Kansas state and municipal indebtedness it is obvious that 1876 was not a time to acquire new debt—most new obligations for the period were made before 1874 or after 1877. A large share of the municipal or county debt encumbered in 1876 was for funding old scrip, bonded debt, or outstanding obligations, and not for new enterprises.

Criminal activity was no stranger to Kansas in 1876. In Parsons the authorities arrested the assistant postmaster for "abstracting money from registered letters," and the legislature expelled a member, by a two-thirds vote, because of his connection with the Comanche county bond fraud. Also in the year, 1876, federal indictments were brought against other postal employees, against a number of accused counterfeiters, against persons cutting timber on Indian lands, and against land claimants for perjury in their oaths rendered at the time the final certificate was obtained. For

31. First Biennial Report of the Auditor of State and Register of State Land Office (Geo. W. Martin, Topeka, 1878). New limits on bonded indebtedness were permitted in 1876.
32. Leavenworth Weekly Times, April 6, 1976; The Kansas Tribune, Lawrence, February 24, 1876. John Speer, the Tribune editor, proclaimed no sympathy for A. J. Mowry, the deposed legislator, but he felt "some regard for justice, and this is an act of injustice, unwarranted, either by law or sound precedent."
example, J. M. Smith of Lincoln county, was indicted in federal court in connection with his preemption for "wilfully knowingly wickedly and feloniously and of his own evil mind did commit willful and corrupt perjury." In spite of the harsh tone of the government case against him, Smith was acquitted when his case went to the jury early in 1877.\(^{33}\)

One of the biggest investigations before the federal grand jury in 1876 involved prominent citizens of Atchison, Luther C. Challis, George Washington C lick, Samuel N. Strickler, George Storch, and John M. Price, who were owners of the Kansas Land and Immigrant Association. In many Kansas papers this firm advertised a "Grand Real Estate Distribution" to be held in Atchison in 1876 for 2,664 pieces of property on which they placed a value of $770,800. The procedure for participating in this "distribution" was to buy a share for $5.00 or 11 shares for $50 or 230 shares for $1,000. Actually, the property to be distributed belonged to the individual members of the firm, not, as the advertisement suggested, to the Kansas Land and Immigrant Association. Moreover, the methods employed were those of an illegal lottery which brought these well-known Atchison men into court. They were granted a continuance and the suit was dropped when the business ceased to operate.\(^{34}\)

The idea that horse thieves preyed on Kansas farmers and ranchers a century ago is appropriate to the time and place. Local organizations to combat horse thieves were usually of a temporary nature, although the earliest antihorse thief association in Kansas was probably organized in 1876. Cases of horse thievery were reported that year and many thieves were either killed or captured.\(^{35}\)

In the late summer the gang of Big Ike was broken up west of Hays when he was killed and 12 of his party taken prisoner, along with many horses. Some of the thieves of this band, including Dutch Henry and Slippery Jack, escaped.\(^{36}\)

The biggest capital crime in Kansas in 1876 occurred in Osborne

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34. Ibid. This company name was almost identical to the company settling the Wakefield colony.
35. The Kansas Tribune, June 8, 1876; Wilson County Citizen, Fredonia, June 30, 1876; Smith County Pioneer, Smith Centre, June 16, 1876; Roy D. Bird, "How the Horse Thief Fared in Kansas," Kansasite, Ellsworth, September 1976, pp. 12-13, tells of a Republic county antihorse thief association. The Gazette, Beloit, on August 24, 1876, reported the organization of the "Carr Creek Horse Thief Detective Association."
36. Inland Tribune, September 9, 1876; Saline Valley Register, Lincoln, September 13, 1876.
county, which "though containing a population of only four thousand, [was] already indulging in the luxury of a murder trial, . . . the case of Henrietta Cook, who stands accused of the murder of her husband by the administration of strychnine." 37 This trial attracted large audiences to the courtroom in Osborne, and the prosecution used a college chemistry professor as an expert witness. An all male jury convicted Henrietta Cook and the judge sentenced her to die by hanging—she was not the first woman in Kansas to be sentenced to die. Reports said that Cook, throughout the trial, presented a calmness of demeanor "amounting to stoniness" and that she heard the "reading of the verdict . . . with the same comparative indifference. . . ." Kansas law required a year in confinement before the execution and the Osborne newspaper predicted accurately that the death sentence would not be carried out. 38 As a matter of fact the state of Kansas did not follow through on death sentences from 1870 until the 1940's and Cook, instead, served a long term in the penitentiary.

Brief mention should be made of a public issue that affected many newspapers in 1876, but was unlikely to interest most Kansans. That was the legal status of "patent" newspapers as the publisher of legal advertising. Newspapers with large circulations prepared all of the print for their publications through the laborious process of composing the type from type boxes and printing it on their press. Smaller newspapers, especially the weeklies springing up around the state, had available a service, out of Kansas City or some other place, which printed either the first and fourth page or the second and third page of a four-page newspaper, and provided it weekly to be supplemented on the other side by the local printer. These were the "patent outsides" or "patent insides" which were an immense help to small, understaffed newspapers. An important source of revenue for any newspaper was the printing of legal notices for the state, or for county and city governments. Newspapers not making use of the "patent outsides" or "patent insides" sought to restrict the competition for the status of "official" newspaper which carried with it the fees paid for legal advertising.

When a bill was introduced into the Kansas legislature to vali-

37. *The Industrialist*, June 24, 1876.
38. *Osborne County Farmer*, Osborne, June 23 and 30, 1876; *The Gazette*, June 29, 1876; Louise Barry, "Legal Hangings in Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 18 (August 1950), pp. 279-301. Mrs. Mary Jane Scales was tried and convicted of murder in late 1870 and sentenced to die by hanging on August 17, 1871. Governor James M. Harvey, on the night before the scheduled execution, commuted her sentence to life imprisonment.
date the use of "patent" papers there was some editorial comment. For instance, the Leavenworth Weekly Times criticized the proposal. The Emporia Ledger responded saying "It does not matter whether one side of the paper is printed in St. Louis or Havre de Grace, or whether it isn't printed at all, if the inside is printed at home, with advertisements correctly printed, and the paper is duly circulated." Later the Times announced its support of legal printing in "patent outsides," perhaps recognizing that the issue was not a vital one. The Kansas statute coming out of discussion of this nature stated:

That all legal publications heretofore made in newspapers having one side of the paper printed away from the office of publication and known as patent insides or patent outsides, shall have the same force and effect as if published in newspapers wholly printed and published in such county where such publication was made.

Provided, One side of the paper is printed in said county where said notices are required to be published.

Other political developments within Kansas in 1876 included a mixture, an unmatched potpourri. The legislature abolished color distinctions from Kansas laws, and, at the same time, granted exemptions to cities of the first and second class from the required admission of every child to the public schools. Three-card monte and other specified swindles were proscribed. The state auditor was designated state land officer to receive the public land survey records when the federal surveyor's office was closed on June 30. The State Board of Railroad Assessors was established to set a new evaluation, for tax purposes, on railroad property. A sizable item in the state budget was for printing state documents, statutes, and reports. The state did not provide care for charity recipients in 1876, leaving that to the counties, who were advised to acquire poor farms to enable charity to pay its own way. Similarly, the state penitentiary was believed well on its way in 1876 to reach a desired status as a self-supporting state institution.

Women rarely appeared in the columns of Kansas newspapers in 1876. They could not vote, none had served as notary public, and few held public office. They were making a slight dent in the body-politic of the day for women held the elective office of

40. Ibid., February 27, 1876.
42. D. W. Wilder, Annals of Kansas (1886), see date of March 16, 1877.
county superintendent of public instruction in a number of counties—Coffey, Jackson, Labette, Marion, McPherson, Pawnee, and Smith. Julius H. Noell, the runner-up challenged Mary P. Wright’s election as the Coffey county superintendent. On appeal to the Kansas supreme court, the decision was written by Associate Justice David J. Brewer, who later became a member of the United States supreme court.

Brewer examined the Kansas constitutional issue of women holding elective office, the lack of female suffrage, relevant cases in Wisconsin, Maine, and Massachusetts and the attitude expressed at the time the constitution was written. He wrote that “Whether females shall vote or hold office, is merely a question of internal public policy and not a matter affecting the life and integrity of the nation, or its relations with other states. . . . Our own constitution clearly recognizes the absence of any necessary connection between office-holding, and voting.” All the justices concurred that “without pursuing this matter further, our conclusion is, that women are in this state eligible to the office of county superintendent.”

There was some rejoicing in Kansas newspapers, saying that it “will be gratifying to the friends of women, and right and justice to learn that the decision of the court is in their favor.” Four Coffey county men had carried this case through the courts and they were complimented for their progressive action.

Women in typically male jobs were a part of the scene in 1876, but not often. From Emporia came a report of a young woman, who “has, in male attire, been serving as a brakeman on the railroad. Although she has relinquished the brake she handles the switch and occasionally manages a train.” In Marion county two young wives helped their husbands harvest wheat by operating their new reapers. Sometimes wry humor was used as in the report that “Three of the women divorced by the [Wilson county] District Court . . . last month have already formed new

43. Mary P. Wright is not listed in A. T. Andreas and W. G. Cutler, History of the State of Kansas (Chicago, 1883), p. 648. For other counties, see pp. 812, 909, 1256, 1340, 1351, while 1455 does not list the Labette county superintendent.
44. W. C. Webb, reporter, Kansas, Supreme Court Reports, v. 16, pp. 601-608.
45. Kansas Farmer, October 25, 1876. The men were Harrison Kelley, Job Throckmorton, J. M. Lane, and A. D. Brown.
46. Chase County Courant, Cottonwood Falls, October 20, 1876.
47. Peabody Gazette, June 14, 1876.
nuptial partnerships.” 48 When a group of Franklin county citizens petitioned the state senate for a “bounty to married women who raised a certain number of children,” it was given cavalier treatment and assigned to the committee on retrenchment. 49 At times births were reported in a standard informative manner, but some editors tried to be cute. For example, “C. L. Pierce is as spry as a cricket and as sociable as a grasshopper, all on account of his new girl baby, which weighs just nine pounds and a half, down weight.” 50 Or there was another report that said, “Billy Jenkins of the Smith County Pioneer is dad. A girl. Well, that is as much as we can reasonably expect of an editor who supports Guthrie for Congress.” 51

Typically, newspapers treated women in an anonymous fashion. Under the heading, “A Bold Dash,” a Lincoln newspaper reported that

On Monday evening about nine o’clock, and while the majority of our business houses were yet open, and the streets full of people, an attack was made upon the drug store of R. F. Bryant, by some persons unknown, and in an incredibly short space of time, every window in the establishment, five in number, were completely demolished,—the sash as well as glass being shivered into pieces. They then entered the building, and striking right and left, made terrible havoc with the glassware, destroying a large amount of drugs and patent medicines. Their work completed, they quietly withdrew, and all the crowd, who had in the meantime assembled, could do, was to look at the destruction and wonder. [The editor speculated that] the work was done by excited and enraged women, who, having seen and felt the evils of intemperance, determined to put a stop to its use and sale, but whatever their grounds may be for supposing that the Dr. has violated the law we can see no excuse for wantonly destroying his property. 52

The editor also stated that none of the “obnoxious fluid” was destroyed although the total loss was near $140. He condemned the action and advised “moderation and forbearance” to those who felt aggrieved.

Perhaps the most agitated issue in Kansas in the 1870’s, based on news commentary, letters to the editor, and petitions and memorials to the state legislature, was the “herd law.” The pro and con

48. Chanute Times, June 22, 1876.
49. Kansas Senate Journal, 1876, p. 199.
50. Saline Valley Register, May 3, 1876.
51. Osborne County Farmer, August 4, 1876.
52. Saline Valley Register, December 13, 1876.
arguments on this matter made it the abortion, bingo, and liquor-by-the-drink fight of 1876.

That the "herd law" should have such a highly charged emotional impact for Kansans of a hundred years ago may come as a surprise, because basically it was concerned with an elementary, even simple, problem. But its support and opposition groups were of almost equal influence, and thereby hangs the tale. The "herd law" dealt with the issue of fencing, and more specifically with who should be responsible for a valid fence—the cultivator, for protecting his crop—or the livestockman, for confining his animals. English common law obligated the herder to fence his animals, but in the low cost land areas of the New World the common practice required, instead, the fencing of the small, subsistence crop areas. By the time settlement reached the Kansas prairies, and their scarcity of trees, the cost of fencing land was higher than the normal cost of the land itself. So by the late 1860's the legislature responded with a "herd law" putting the responsibility for a fence on herders in specific counties and townships. In June, 1871, the Kansas supreme court found this law unconstitutional because of its "special nature and non-uniform application." 53 By 1876 almost all "herd law" agitation was directed to the merits and failures of a general "herd law," which was deemed constitutional. When a law was finally passed, as might be expected in view of the constituency, it was a compromise, permitting local option for fencing responsibility. In effect, it transferred the "herd law" issue from the state capital to the counties where it "continued as a source of community conflict in [some] county seats for another decade." 54

Pro and con arguments on the "herd law" were heatedly debated at both the St. Mary's Boarding School and at Kansas State Agricultural College, where supporters of a general "herd law" in both instances were ruled winners. 55 Opponents of such a law claimed it would drive most livestock from the state and they were able to generate immense local enthusiasm in an antiherd law convention. 56 Initially, the primary argument for a "herd law" was

54. Ibid., p. 47. Examples of petitions to the state legislature may be seen in Kansas House Journal, 1876, pp. 1060, 1062.
56. The Nationalist, February 4, 1876; The Industrialist, June 10, 1876; Leavenworth Weekly Times, January 20 and February 3, 1876.
the protection of crops, but in time, other advantages were cited—
the reduction of stray stock, and the ability of a stockman to con-
trol his animals and upgrade his herd. Actually, there were
inexpensive means of controlling livestock in use—the employ-
ment of “A boy and a small pony to herd the cattle by day and
a corral [sic] to hold them at night.” Costs of such control
were within the reach of small stockraisers. Also, another solution
was beginning to make an appearance, as seen from this Kansas
Farmer report:

Mr. B. F. Griffin has a five wire fence around a large field, and of late
some unruly cattle have been in the habit of breaking through it. He there-
upon put staple barbs upon three wires, and since then not an animal has
gone through. They have repeatedly tried it, but always desist as soon as
they get stuck. He believes that three barbed wires are better than five are
without the barbs, and from what we have heard from others we are confident
that he is correct in his opinion. We would therefore advise that those who
now have wire fences should put the staple barbs on them, and those who
intend to erect new fences procure wire, already barbed. Probably the double
steel barbed wire is the best. Mr. Griffin expects to release enough wire on
his place to fence in a large pasture.

Yes, the major barbed wire patents were granted in 1873 and
1874 so barbed wire was coming. But in 1876 wire fences were
ignored and the issue in Kansas was on some kind of “herd law,”
with a local option feature. Generally, when county commissioners
opted for the “herd law” in their county they expected it to be
repealed when every farmer had fenced his tillable land. Usually
“once adopted the herd law was accepted and retained, and the
fence questions was considered closed.” In a sense, the use of
barbed wire was antclimatic in Kansas. When the new cheaper
fence came into use it “merely ratified conditions already en-
couraged by the herd law’s legalistic adaptation to the prairie-
plains environment.” A half-dozen years after the centennial
the Wichita Beacon when reporting extensive shipments of barbed
wire, said that the “herd law question will finally settle itself. As
soon as a farmer is able, he fences his farm. There must be an
apparent benefit.”

55. Ibid., p. 49. The Sentinel, April 27, 1876, reported that “John Rush’s little boy
was thrown and hurt severely while out herding a few days ago.”
59. Kansas Farmer, July 19, 1876, from the Manhattan Nationalist.
61. Ibid., p. 50.
62. Ibid., from Wichita Beacon, March 28, 1883.
By 1875 the Kansas governments, both territorial and state, were reported to have spent more than $300,000 as a consequence of Indian hostilities, mostly in support of a state or territorial militia organization. Each state could draw on the federal government for a small amount of arms and ammunition each year. Also, the states were inclined to rely heavily on personnel of local army forts for defense against Indian attack. In Kansas the Indian hostilities of the late 1860's and in 1874 caused the formation of many local militia companies. Even in 1876 there were many letters directed to the governor regarding militia organizations or for commissions as officers for such units. Elected county officials also expressed alarm about a potential threat of Indian attacks which were expected sometime in 1876.

The behavior of Indians had something to do with the nature of these reports. For example, a Rooks county settler recorded their normal or usual behavior in his diary.

In the morning when on my way to [teach] school [I] stopped at the encampment of a band of about 60 Omaha Indians who were located on the creek a half mile east of Samuel Hebrew's. They were returning from a buffalo hunt to the southwest to their reservation in Nebraska. They were loaded down with spoils of the chase.

A little farther west another observer reported in alarming fashion that:

Small parties of Indians are seen every few days Skulking near the border settlements and try to conceal themselves from the whites and if met by the whites they refuse to converse and instead of camping on the streams as is generally [sic] their custom they go out on the divides to camp.

Similar concern came from several counties along the southern border. One example was:

Sir I Rote you last year a Bout sending Me papers to git up a company to Protect our state lines and I should like to git up a company for Fear there will be a great deal of Trouble Here this coming summer mo. There wont Bea any Harm for a Company to Bea Here an Readiness and Drilled.

For the Indians is a Half Starving and they say that they Had Rather die on the war Path then to Starve to deth on a Piece of land on the Reseruation and soe you can see there will Bea some Trouble some Place in the state

64. "Papers of Governor Osborn," archives, Kansas State Historical Society.
66. "Papers of Governor Osborn," adjutant general file, letter to Governor Osborn from J. A. Rodehaver, April 17, 1876.
and if the Troops Hant Ready they could bea great deal of nasty work Before there could bea eny Realief.

From Norton county one newly commissioned militia officer wrote the governor that:

I have just received my commition. . . . Most all of the ceters clear to the hed of the creek want to join my company. I hav not got the roll full yet but it will be no trouble to fill it to 75 if necessary if I can get guns for them.

In response to the uneasiness on the frontier, Brig. Gen. John Pope, commanding officer of the Department of the Missouri, from Fort Leavenworth, ordered the commander at Fort Hays to send out as soon as possible one company of cavalry fully equipped for field service to scout slowly by the way of the Saline or Solomon rivers to the heads of the Sappa Creeks, following these streams down to their mouths and visiting all the settlements along them.

This expedition is for the purpose of observing the movements of Indians and affording any necessary assistance to the settlers.

Pope ordered the Hays commander “to keep one Company out scouting through the region named during the summer” and then he explained that there were “toving bands of Indians in the section of country referred to.” The Indians were “peaceful but their presence is a cause of alarm to the settlers who cannot be sure they may not at any time commit depredations.” When they met Indians the troops should warn them. Later Pope issued similar orders to troop commanders at Forts Dodge, Wallace, and Lyon, the Indians, by then, identified as Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho, Fortunately, 1876 in Kansas proved to be a peaceful year for Indian-white relations, and perhaps that was lucky for the people in Medicine Lodge.

One of the urgent requests to the state’s adjutant general late in the summer of 1876, came from Medicine Lodge with an appeal for arms and ammunition. Early in October, six boxes of carbines, one box of ammunition, and one box of accoutrements, were dispatched to the Medicine Lodge militia organization. These materials lay in the depot at Hutchinson for a month before the station agent reported that they had not been picked up. So, again the adjutant general wrote the Medicine Lodge officer who responded:

I have to say in reply to yours of the 17. inst. that I have been unable

67. Ibid., letter of February 28, 1876, to Governor Osborn from N. Rogers of Little Dutch, Cowley county.
68. Ibid., letter of May 22, 1876, to Governor Osborn from J. W. Campbell of Norton county.
69. Ibid., copy of Pope’s orders of May 11, 1876, furnished to Governor Osborn.
thus far to procure transportation of those arms . . . to M. L. As no means have been provided to pay freight.

But I am Subpoenied [sic] as a witness in a case that comes up in the U.S. Circuit Court at Topeka on the 28th of Nov. and on my return via Hutchinson I will pay freight and bring the guns with me.70

The supply of arms and ammunition in the Kansas state arsenal was also a crucial matter for Governor Osborn, who complained to the state legislature as it convened early in 1876. He said:

The State has been subjected to great inconvenience and delay during this administration, as well as those of my predecessors, in obtaining from the General Government, under an act of Congress providing for arming and equipping the militia, arms needed to protect our frontier settlements against Indian hostilities. Arms were issued to the State during the [Civil] war largely in excess of our quota under this law, and were used by the Kansas militia in the service of the United States. This erroneous charge has finally been adjusted and canceled, and all of the old and comparatively worthless arms on hand, issued to the State during the war, have been returned to the War Department. By this action a credit of $44,231 has been obtained as an offset to the large balance heretofore held by the United States as due from the State. Efforts are being made for still further credits on this account, which, when obtained, will make the General Government our debtor. The State will then be enabled to secure further issues of improved arms, with which I hope to see an effective militia supplied at no distant day.71

The effort, to which the governor referred, was an act of congress for the relief of the state of Kansas from the cost of stores furnished to Kansas territory in the late 1850’s for which the army ordnance agency maintained a balance of $11,425 against Kansas. Rep. John R. Goodin introduced house of representatives bill number 2813 to the spring session of the 44th congress. The bill finally passed the house on July 10, 1876, and was forwarded to the senate. In the waning days of the session Sen. James M. Harvey called up the bill in face of the opposition from Sen. George Edmunds of Vermont, who objected to the belated state claim. Sen. Richard J. Oglesby of Illinois, came to the aid of Kansas with a floor speech which influenced its passage. Oglesby said:

This is a little bill and it has the smell and flavor of twenty years ago, of the pro-slavery pristine vigor of Kansas territorial times. It is late in the session and a little late in the nineteenth century to consider this bill, but “better late than never.” It has passed the House, and if it should pass the Senate now, as it can in two minutes and a half, Kansas will be relieved from a burden charged against her upon the ordnance books of the War Department, from which I think she ought to be relieved. . . . as soon as it shall pass here the account will be settled, Kansas will be liberated from border-

70. Ibid., letter to adjutant general from Wm. M. Friedley, November 21, 1876.
ruffianism, and stand regenerated and renewed in her brand-new, blue-jean
clothing, the daughter of freedom and the child of promise.72

On July 6, 1876, the day that many Kansans first heard about
the Custer fight at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Governor
Osborn sent a request to the War Department for a thousand
stands of arms for Kansas. Several weeks later an ordnance official
responded saying that the state would need to post a $21,310 bond,
which was provided on August 1. Then on August 7 the Rock
Island Arsenal shipped 500 Sharp's carbines, cal. 50, and 500
Springfield muskets, cal. 50, model 1868, along with cartridge
boxes and other accoutrements. The Kansas adjutant general re-
ceived these new arms and stored them "in the cellar of the
Capitol building, together with the accumulated rubbish, dirt and
old rusty and useless ordnance belonging to the State."73 When
the U.S. senate passed the relief measure on August 15, the presi-
dent immediately signed it. Finally, on December 12, 1876, Kansas
was given credit for $11,425 which had been debited on the ord-
nance books since 1859.74

Kansas comments on the Custer defeat of June 25, 1876, varied
immensely but it was one of the biggest stories in the last half
of 1876. Some journals merely reported the news as they received
it, while others editorialized on this exciting issue. In some com-

munities there were citizens who had served in the Seventh cav-

alry in the past, or there were people who knew many of the

soldiers who were killed. Several newspapers commented about

a house that Custer owned in Topeka and about Mrs. C. F.
Kendall, of Topeka, "no nearer relative" to Mrs. Custer.75 There

was strong support for Senator Ingalls's speech criticizing the

"milk and water policy of [the] government toward the hostile

Sioux."76 Editorial extremist and noted fire-eater Sol Miller in an

even harsher tone wrote that

It is upon occasions like these, that we can appreciate the style of warfare

of Harney at Ash Hollow, or Chivington at Sand Creek. Annihilation is the

72. Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 1st Sess., v. 4, pp. 1884, 4450, 4483, 4777,
5658-5663, 5698.
73. Report of [Kansas] Adjutant General, Covering the Years 1876, 1877 and 1878,
pp. 1-7.
74. Ibid., p. 1.
75. Topeka Commonwealth, July 8, 1876; Junction City Union, July 16, 1876. This
journal reported that Custer's house "is fast going to decay, having been vacant a long
time."
76. Leavenworth Weekly Times, June 20, 1876.
only sure remedy against Indian massacres. It may be asserted, as it has been before, that the Indians are imposed upon and swindled. This is true. . . . It is no excuse for their treachery and atrocities. As long as Indians have the power to commit mischief, they will commit it, no matter how good the treatment they receive. . . . Control them with fear, and this failing, by extermination.

When college opened in the fall of 1876, the Webster literary society at Kansas State Agricultural College presented the other side of the coin when they debated the question “That the Indians are justifiable in their hostilities.” Judges for this debate decided “that the Indians have good reasons for their hostilities.” Many years later the Custer battle was still the basis for a letter to a Kansas governor. Eleven years after the fight, a widow from Salina wrote seeking the governor’s assistance. Her son was in a Dakota penitentiary. She said that she had lost her husband and a son-in-law in the Custer massacre. Now, she requested help, saying: “I am left alone, I want my son to come and stay with me.”

Gold was never a cornerstone for Kansas prosperity. Even in the hard times of the mid-1870’s Kansans were skeptical of the rumors of a gold strike in the Black Hills. But by 1876 there were many Kansans among the miners. A year earlier susceptible Kansans had responded to a brief flurry of gold fever in their own state when a gold strike was reported in Saline county. That “pleasing intelligence” and the intense excitement it created was quickly deflated.

In 1876 many Kansans started for the Black Hills with the opening of spring weather and reports came back quickly that “Some rare claims had paid as high as fifteen hundred dollars per day, but these were extraordinary.” Reports indicate that some Kansans profited from their mining activity in Dakota territory. In Lawrence a newspaper said that John B. Gaston had sent $125 in Black Hills gold dust and $200 in coin to his son-in-law P. D. O’Brien. Much later in the year a Lincoln journal reported,
Jacob Jarrett, accompanied by two friends, arrived here on Sunday, direct from the Black Hills, bringing with them some fine specimens of gold. Work for the winter has been suspended in the mines. They say Wisner and some of the other boys will be home in a few days. They have no complaints to make, and will return to the Hills in the spring.\textsuperscript{83}

Most Kansas communities seemed to have someone attracted by the golden stories coming from the Black Hills. Even “Wild Bill” Hickok went there in 1876 and he could claim a home in numerous Kansas towns during the previous 20 years.

Nostalgic remembrances of the past have a tendency to overlook the sordid experience and the tragedy associated with the day-to-day living of an earlier time. Complete records from 1876 do not exist for Kansans who were inflicted with disease, suffered accidents, or death. Mortality schedules for Kansas in the 19th century were collected by the federal census takers for the year prior to the date when the census was taken. Interestingly, the death rate for both Kansas and the nation rose from between 12 and 13 per thousand in 1870 to just over 15 per thousand in 1880.\textsuperscript{84} No similar data are available for either disease or serious accidents.

For 1876 the primary source for such information are the reports published in the state’s press, which provides only a crude relationship to what actually happened. Perhaps not surprisingly, man’s faithful servant, the horse, was an instrumental cause of numerous severe injuries and deaths suffered by Kansans that year. Later estimates declare that nationally “the horse-associated fatality rate was ten times the car-associated rate of modern times.”\textsuperscript{85} Examples from the pages of Kansas newspapers bear out this assessment and the following is only a mere sample.

Runaway horses were dangerous, the motorcycles of their day, and observations of newspapers of 1876 suggest that such news was a recurring story. For example, in Lawrence, Peter Salvedoer dropped his reins. In “endeavoring to recover them he fell out of the wagon, and his horses started to run, dragging him some distance, and the wagon ran over him causing some very serious bruises about his face and body.”\textsuperscript{86} He was lucky! In Fredonia

\textsuperscript{83} Saline Valley Register, November 29, 1876.

\textsuperscript{84} Deaths from all causes were in 1870 for the nation 12.77 per 1,000 and in Kansas 12.48 per 1,000: in 1880 the national rate was 15.09 per 1,000 with Kansas slightly higher at 15.22 per 1,000.


\textsuperscript{86} The Kansas Tribune, January 20, 1876.
on the Fourth of July, fire crackers frightened a rural woman’s team. She was thrown from the buggy and seriously injured.\textsuperscript{87} At the Coal Creek schoolhouse in Douglas county three of the older boys were racing their “horses down the road to a small bridge” where they ran over one of the younger boys who “was knocked down and rendered insensible, in which condition he has remained ever since. . . .” \textsuperscript{88}

South of Independence a 21-year-old only son was killed when he was dragged half a mile by a running team.\textsuperscript{89} Near North Topeka a young boy was riding his pony with a friend. He had a long rope halter rather than a bridle and the greater part of the rope was wound around his body to get it out of the way. The horse threw him and he was dragged through brush to his death.\textsuperscript{90}

Horse-connected drownings were reported when a man with his wife and two small children sought to ford the flooding Verdigris. The water was deeper than expected and the mother and her infant child drowned.\textsuperscript{91} Similarly, a 23-year-old Swedish immigrant, who kept bachelor hall with two of his countrymen near the Wakarusa in southern Douglas county was drowned when he attempted to drive cattle across an arm of the river.\textsuperscript{92} Another immigrant, married and the father of three, only recently arrived from Russia, in much the same manner as the Swede, tried to follow his oxen across a swollen river on horseback. His horse stumbled and he was lost.\textsuperscript{93} Horses were also drowned or were killed because they wandered onto the railroad tracks in front of a train.\textsuperscript{94}

Suicides were reported, sometimes in gruesome detail. Among those in Kansas newspapers in 1876 was a waitress at the Planter’s

\textsuperscript{87} Chanute Times, July 13, 1876.
\textsuperscript{88} The Kansas Tribune, January 20, 1876.
\textsuperscript{89} Chanute Times, June 1, 1876.
\textsuperscript{90} Chase County Courant, November 17, 1876.
\textsuperscript{91} Chanute Times, January 13, 1876.
\textsuperscript{92} The Kansas Tribune, June 15, 1876.
\textsuperscript{94} The Kansas Tribune, June 29, 1876; The Industrialist, July 1, 1876.
House in Leavenworth who threw herself in the hotel’s cistern and was drowned; or a young man from Oswego, crushed by a lady’s refusal to marry him, who took poison; or a Montgomery county young lady who, after a week’s residence in Kansas, shot herself with a rifle loaded with buckshot.95

Accidental deaths, homicides, and near brushes with death were news and received much space in newspapers of a century ago. In both 1870 and 1880 three out of four deaths from accidents or injuries were male and the following news reports suggest an even greater dominance of male deaths in 1876. For instance, a seven-year-old boy in Sumner county “climbed up to a shelf . . . took a loaded pistol, and pointing it at his little sister of two years, fired, and the ball entered her head, killing her in about two hours.”96 Near Leavenworth a teenage farm boy fell off a ladder and was killed.97 In Linn county a man cutting timber on Mine creek had a tree fall on him. “He only lived till they got him into the wagon.”98 At Bismarck, near Lawrence, a young Methodist preacher tried to jump from a train after it had started, he slipped and was thrown to his death under the train.99 In North Topeka two boys, aged 12, were smothered by the fall of a sand bank.100 Extensive was the report of the drowning of a young man near Rees’s mill on the Saline river in Lincoln county.101 Other accidental deaths included a small girl near Prescott, in Linn county, who caught her clothes on fire and burned to death, and a small boy in Neodesha who fell “into a pail of hot water” and died the next day of the burns.102

In addition to the previously mentioned lynchings of horse thieves, there were many homicides reported in Kansas newspapers in 1876, and all of the following were outside of the cattle towns. Among them were a bank cashier in El Dorado, killed by a depositor, after the bank failed; a man in Sedgwick county who shot the suitor

95. Leavenworth Weekly Times, January 27, 1876; Chanute Times, January 13, 1876; The Kansas Tribune, January 6, 1876.
96. Peabody Gazette, June 9, 1876.
97. Leavenworth Weekly Times, February 10, 1876.
98. Pleasanton Observer, February 12, 1876.
99. The Kansas Tribune, March 16, 1876.
100. The Nationalist, February 25, 1876.
101. Saline Valley Register, August 30, 1876.
102. Chase County Courant, November 9 and 17, 1876.
of his niece; and a stabbing death of a young man at a singing school some seven miles from Kirwin.103 From Kimeo, Washington county, came a report of a fatal shooting.104 Under the heading, “Tragedy at Hutchinson” was the story of Jens Geussa, a Texas cattle-herder, who was killed while breaking jail. The news stated that Geussa was of Irish “extraction and was considered a dangerous character.”105 Two heated quarrels which resulted in violent deaths have many similarities. The first was an argument between two men at Michigan Valley in Osage county, over horse trading. One man stabbed the other, who picked up a “fence railing and struck” his antagonist on the “head breaking his skull,” and his death came three hours later.106 The other was the consequence of a quarrel between 18-year-old Ben Waters and 20-year-old John Arnold, near the Fort Scott “baseball grounds . . . on the Fourth [of July], and before the bystanders could interfere, Waters picked up a bat and dealt Arnold a heavy blow on the head, fracturing the skull.” Waters fled to Missouri, before Arnold died, and reports indicate that he was not arrested.107

Near brushes with death range all the way from the man who severed his big toe while chopping wood, the person who fell into a steam operated buzz saw, the boy who received a fractured skull when the wheel of a windmill struck him, to the blacksmith who broke his leg on a wooden sidewalk.108 There were also the cases of a contractor who had a building fall on him, and a three-year-old boy near Beloit, who was attacked by a large hog and badly hurt, when he was attempting to drive it away from a door.109 In greater detail was the story of John Bear, living at Spillman, near Pottersburg in Lincoln county, who went down into a 40-foot well to clean it out, and collapsed because of “foul air, or damps” associated with both mines and wells. Another person went down after Bear, got him out, and the doctor in attendance had great difficulty

103. Peabody Gazette, August 4, 1876; Chase County Courant, November 3 and 17, 1876.
104. Leavenworth Weekly Times, January 27, 1876.
105. The Kansas Tribune, June 29, 1876.
106. Ibid., January 29, 1876.
107. Pleasanton Observer, July 8, 1876.
108. Saline Valley Register, May 10 and September 13, 1876; The Kansas Tribune, January 20 and June 8, 1876.
109. Pleasanton Observer, July 15, 1876; The Gazette, June 29, 1876.
in reviving him.\textsuperscript{110} In line of duty the city marshal of Fredonia, H. M. Boszor, received nine stab wounds and cuts from a large pocket knife in the hands of a captured horse thief. Boszor was expected to recover.\textsuperscript{111} Another dispatch told of a man “badly injured in a steam threshing machine near Solomon City.” The doctor found him with his “left foot so badly torn and crushed that he was compelled to amputate it about half way up to his knee.”\textsuperscript{112}

Numerous other deaths were reported in the Kansas press of 1876. Most reports were brief; obituaries, as such, were not usual, and on many occasions the cause of death was unreported. Sometimes the deceased was said to have had a long and lingering illness, and many deaths were due to consumption (tuberculosis), measles, small pox, and similar infectious diseases. Deaths due to heart trouble of some sort were more numerous than cancer, which was hardly mentioned. A sampling of the cause of death on the Kansas mortality schedules of 1870 and of 1880 show similar death causes although diarrhea, paralysis, and pneumonia appear frequently. Other causes of death cited in these schedules include “fell in well,” kicked by horse, crushed on railroad, and the cause of one infant’s death was listed as “mother overworked.” Croup, malarial fever, “unknown,” and “old age” add to confusion about why Kansans died in the period from 1870 to 1880.

Not until after 1876 was the cause of contagion understood. People did associate contagious disease with “filth, impure drinking water, and close personal contact” but they did not know how malaria or similar diseases were spread. Nevertheless, a survey of Kansas doctors in 1876 which asked the question, “Do you believe the State to be as healthy as the one from which you came?” got a yes answer from every doctor interviewed.\textsuperscript{113}

No doubt, many illnesses and some causes of death in 1876 were due to an inadequate diet. Corn was the basis for the pioneer’s food and through a year it generally appeared on the table fresh or as grits, mush, fritters, hominy, or corn bread. Fresh vegetables and fruit were available to many Kansans during the growing season, and there were means of keeping vegetables and fruits

\textsuperscript{110} Saline Valley Register, September 20, 1876.
\textsuperscript{111} Wilson County Citizen, June 30, 1876.
\textsuperscript{112} The Industrialist, July 29, 1876.
\textsuperscript{113} Thomas N. Bonner, The Kansas Doctor (University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, 1959), pp. 25-40.
through the winter. As time went on, many families were able to make use of these food-saving and preservation techniques. Apples, for example, could be dried, and one Kansas editor repeated an old poem:

“I do abhor, detest, despise,
Abominate, dried apple pies.

Tread on my corns, or tell me lies,
But don’t give me dried apple pies.” 114

Most Kansas families depended on the produce from their own gardens, fields and pastures for the larger amount of their food. One group showing much activity to improve the Kansas diet were the members of the state horticultural society who met in a two-day semiannual meeting and a three-day annual meeting in 1876. Profoundly discouraged by the grasshopper days of 1874 and the cool, rainy spring in 1876 this group was optimistic about the potential for Kansas orchards and gardens. Their attitude was summed up in remarks at the annual meeting which stated:

The people of Kansas have done more right hard thinking in the past three years than in all our previous history. They have learned that there is no royal road to permanent and enduring prosperity. They have learned that it is the patient, persevering intelligent thinker and worker, not the idle visionary schemer, who achieves valuable results. 115

Game birds and animals were providing a substantial part of the diet for many Kansans in 1876, as they were available and cheap. Some changes were taking place in the meat offered by town butcher shops, as shown by a Great Bend advertisement:

Go away with your Texas cattle,
Your jim crow stringy beef;
We keep the short-horn Durham,
Come and get relief.

Come where there’s meat nutritious
Beef, Mutton, Poultry and Game;
Ice-cool, tender, delicious,
At the market of Stone & Grain. 116

Kansans by 1876 were increasingly observing the environment around them and were expressing feelings about the natural and artificial landscape. In almost poetic fashion one writer got attention with the following comment:

114. Kansas Farmer, December 30, 1874.
115. Transactions of the Kansas State Horticultural Society, for the Year 1876, v. 6, p. 25.
116. Inland Tribune, September 9, 1876. Interestingly, pork—usually the low-cost meat of the period—did not fit into the rhyme.
If you want to enjoy all the sensations of genuine “sea-sickness,” go out and stand in a large wheat field on a windy day. If you are at all susceptible to this little disorder, the waving, billowing motion of the grain will give you the jim-jams in short order.\textsuperscript{117}

The governor’s Arbor-day proclamation was commended with assurances that it would provide “greater benefit or attractiveness to Kansas” than any other official act “if the suggestion be generally followed.”\textsuperscript{118} Tree and hedge planting was discussed and encouraged for both practical and esthetic reasons. In Osborne county the seven acres of two-year-old cottonwoods and several hundred black walnut trees on the farm of Andrew Storer was described as a success story.\textsuperscript{119} An inquiry directed to county horticultural societies shows local attitude about “timber claims” taken up under the timber culture act of 1873. Davis [Geary] county reported few timber claims with none complying with the law, and explosively came the statement that “it has only enabled the settler to steal one more quarter-section of the Government domain.”\textsuperscript{120} Morris county reports were similar to Davis, but mixed response came from McPherson, Mitchell, Pawnee, Republic, and Rice counties. For instance, the McPherson county observation was:

Some claims have been taken under the “Timber Act,” and some of the claimants are complying with the law; while others, having bad luck with tree planting, have failed. Trees planted previous to 1874, were most all destroyed by grasshoppers during 1874, but large numbers were set out in the spring of 1876, and are doing well.\textsuperscript{121}

Pawnee county had more than 400 timber claims with the number increasing daily. “The result has been very encouraging, when properly managed. Not more than thirty per cent. of the claimants will comply with the law.”\textsuperscript{122}

Some Kansans were well aware that game was rapidly decreasing with settlement. By 1876 most of the buffalo in the state had been killed and professional hunters were moving to buffalo grounds elsewhere. Earlier the Kansas legislature had passed a buffalo

\textsuperscript{117} The Industrialist, June 3, 1876.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., March 18, 1876.
\textsuperscript{119} Osborne County Farmer, August 11, 1876.
\textsuperscript{120} Transactions of the Kansas State Horticultural Society, for the Year 1876, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p. 148.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 158.
protection bill which the governor vetoed. No doubt such a measure would have been difficult to enforce.\textsuperscript{123}

In 1876 the state legislature passed a law which provided an eight-month protected season for specified game birds. The title of the law did not include “wild buck, doe or fawn” which appeared in the law, requiring an amendment the following year for agreement of title and contents.\textsuperscript{124}

To some persons the increase in insects was related to the decrease in birds. One wrote about the 20 million prairie chickens and quail which he said were killed in Kansas last season and calculated that they would have eaten 10 million bushels of grasshoppers.\textsuperscript{125} A Chanute reporter said, “When Mr. Dildine returned last week from Ohio, he brought with him a half dozen English sparrows, which he freed at his farm south of town. We shall hope they will do well, as this bird is one of the very best protections against insects we have.”\textsuperscript{126}

Two years earlier a group of Topeka men had 28 sparrows shipped to them from New York City. “They were received with the kindest attention, though not so intelligently cared for” as they should have been and many died. Finally, when their number got down to five they were released to fend for themselves. By the fall of 1876 the Topeka sparrows numbered 60 and the account written in 1886 said that the “city was soon filled with them. .. . When the country was first settled, there were scarcely any signs of insect life, but when the ground was brought under cultivation they appeared like the plagues of Egypt. The sparrows soon wrought a change, and in a few years the insect annoyance was entirely abated; and being abated, the people forgot the deliverers, as of old, and the cry ensued, ‘Away with the dirty sparrow!’”\textsuperscript{127}

Typical attitudes toward killing snakes and carnivorous animals are seen in the literature of 1876. The Lincoln newspaper reported that “The rattle snake that came into the Vesper school house, on last Sunday, to hear Rev. Mr. Bradbury preach, lost his life. He

\textsuperscript{124} Kansas Session Laws of 1876, ch. 82, pp. 183-186, and Session Laws of 1877, pp. 186-188.
\textsuperscript{125} The Industrialist, September 21, 1876.
\textsuperscript{126} Leavenworth Weekly Times, February 27, 1876, from the Chanute Times.
\textsuperscript{127} F. W. Giles, Thirty Years in Topeka: A Historical Sketch (1886, 1960), pp. 155-156.
had nine rattles on the end of his narrative.”¹²⁸ Two wildcat stories coming from counties at great distance from one another are so similar, and they seem to have happened the same week in October. The first told of “a Cowley county boy, twelve years old, caught a wildcat all over three trees and finally to the ground, where he killed it.”¹²⁹ From Rooks county, Elam Bartholomew wrote in his diary, “Husked corn... until 3 P.M. when I started home along the creek and treed a wild cat with which I had a battle royal for about an hour fighting the animal with stones and clubs and finally after knocking one of his eyes out he came down the tree where I attacked him with a club and killed him, and brought him home.”¹³⁰

Kansas townspeople and groups in rural areas celebrated the centennial of the nation’s independence in some special way. In preparation for Fourth of July activities many communities sought the use of state or federal artillery which would add a mighty booming sound to the festivities. Usually requests to the governor for cannon came belatedly and were unfilled. Confusion, in the minds of local people, was evident in directing to the state executive inquiries that should have gone to a federal official.

The style of celebration was left to each local community and something extraordinary was usually planned for July 4, 1876. In Lincoln the “4th of July Committee request[ed] that all parties come with well filled baskets, and also that all hands turn out on Saturday and Monday and help prepare the grounds.”¹³¹ Chanute’s announcement stated that the “4th of July will settle in Wherrett’s grove, half mile west of the city, at 9 o’clock a.m. Numerous spread eagles will be on hand. Everybody, with the ghosts of their forefathers are invited on this occasion.”¹³² The Riley Center celebration was set for Weible’s grove, with a “Basket picnic, ample dancing floor, good music, speeches and toasts. All are invited.”¹³³

At midnight as July 4th arrived in Topeka “a cannon was fired from the capitol grounds and the firing kept up until sunrise.”

¹²⁸. Saline Valley Register, August 16, 1876.
¹²⁹. Chase County Courant, October 20, 1876.
¹³¹. Saline Valley Register, June 28, 1876.
¹³². Chanute Times, June 29, 1876.
¹³³. The Nationalist, June 16, 1876.
People then went through the streets with horns and bells to make sure everyone would get to the parade. At Manhattan, where an editor wrote that they did not have “one of those grand hurrahs that some cities had, but a quiet yet patriotic affair, an earnest thanksgiving for the prosperity of a century,” the day’s activity also began with the midnight firing of cannon and ringing of bells, then at sunrise 13 guns were fired, followed at nine A.M., by 37 guns, one for each state.

The centennial parade at Chanute had a procession of 90 wagons; at Junction City 500 vehicles, 2,000 horses, and fully 5,000 people stretched out a mile and a half; at Topeka the parade was of similar dimensions and some 10,000 people attended the day’s activities. There the size of the crowd and the location of the city park platform kept many people from hearing the speakers.

Other Kansas communities had a parade followed by ceremonies which generally included prayer, music, reading of the “Declaration of Independence,” one or more orations, toasts, special activities appealing to children, and fireworks. Foot races, baseball, and horseracing were featured as afternoon activities in some cities. Large-scale picnics were held and refreshment stands offered ice cream, lemonade, and other delicacies. Smith Centre had a centennial ball following day-long festivities. Many of the activities in Junction City took place in Centennial Hall put up by the combined efforts of 14 carpenters who worked three or four days. Main streets were decorated with flags and bunting, but in 1876 there was no staff or flag pole at the state capitol building from which to fly a flag.

Most of the available Kansas diaries of 1876 mention July 4 and what the writer was doing. In Cherokee county, E. Leslie Tunison went with his parents and brother to the celebration in Cherokee Station. Mrs. W. W. Dimond of rural Cawker City completed her chores, “got ready and went to Osborne City. . . . We had a very good time but [we are] very tired tonight.”

135. The Industrialist, July 8, 1876; The Nationalist, June 23, 1876.
136. Chanute Times, July 6, 1876; Junction City Union, July 1, 1876; Snell, “Topeka.
137. Junction City Union, July 1, 1876.
E. Goodnow of Manhattan, not knowing that he had only 15 days to live, wrote on July 4, "Nice day. Got up early & left home for Blue Rapids. Called at Condras grove on Fancy Cr[ee]k & saw the big crowd & heard S. K. W. hold forth & the St. George Band play." 140 His brother, Isaac, living in Neosho Falls at the time, recorded "Pleasant Fourth but no celebration here. Pleasant quietness." 141 Too busy for entertainment or relaxation two farmer-diary-writers, one in Riley county and one in Shawnee, acknowledged the celebration but they were hard at work. One wrote "I chock [shock] rye" and the other at greater length recorded, "A windy day but clear Plowed corn all day—very few went to town, less than any other day—harvesting and picnics in other places." 142 Elam Bartholomew, writer of one of the longest Kansas diaries, returned to his former home in Illinois in May, after more than two years on his Rooks county land, to marry Rachel Montgomery. Still in Illinois, his July 4th entry was "Centennial, Centennial, Centennial! 100th year of American Independence! Went to Farmington again with Rachel, where we, with thousands of others spent the day enjoying the festivities of the great occasion consisting of soldiers

140. "Wm. E. Goodnow Diary," Kansas State Historical Society. Goodnow fell dead on July 19 after working all day on a threshing machine.


A portion of the "Kansas Centennial Register" for June 26 which indicates that Dom Pedro, II, emperor of Brazil, was the first visitor at the Kansas-Colorado building that morning. The entry was probably made by Henry Worrall, the emperor's guide at the exhibit.

parades, the booming of cannons, speech making, music and fireworks. Returned home at 10 oclock p. m. greatly pleased with the great occasion!" 143

A significant contribution to the state's heritage, inspired by the centennial activity, was the preparation of local historical accounts. At least 75 of the state's newspapers published local histories, compiled or written by persons having a personal connection with the happenings in the area about which they reported. These first hand accounts have assumed a fundamental role in much of Kansas local history prior to the centennial year.

Of interest to many Kansans also, were the activities associated with their state's display at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. The leading foreign visitor at the fair was Dom Pedro, II, the emperor of Brazil, who visited the Kansas-Colorado building early on June 26.144 Among notices of this visit was the story in a Topeka paper which said:


144. "Kansas Centennial Register." For June 26, 1876, the emperor's name was recorded, along with the entry "7:30 a.m."
Dom Pedro, his sensible majesty of Brazil, . . . spent several hours in the Kansas building, at Philadelphia, in conversation with Prof. Worrall. He bestowed on the Kansas collection, as became his character given him by Agasiz [sic] that being the most intelligent [monarch] in the world.145

Much later another paper reported that, the Emperor of Brazil said of the Kansas exhibit, “This is a wonderful show, the most practical of anything I have seen.” 146

With pride a report was spread about the state that P. T. Barnum wanted the Kansas display when the exposition ended.147 Singled out in Kansas were stories about the Kansas display in Saturday Evening Post, Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, the Philadelphia Times, the Philadelphia Inquirer, and the New York Times.148 These journals reported activities at the fair continuously, not only during the six months visiting season, but during the preparation and the demolition of exposition buildings. Their remarks about Kansas were trivial compared to their extensive coverage of the entire proceedings.

The Kansas-Colorado building contained about 12,000 square feet of space for display, half used by Colorado and railroad companies. When the governor of Nebraska visited Philadelphia he was “impressed with the efforts of Kansas. . . .” Nebraska’s exhibit, in contrast, occupied 750 square feet and was presented in the fair’s agricultural hall in 10 walnut cases.149

The Kansas exhibit, the pride of Kansas publicists, featured “massive apples, tall corn shocks, varieties of timber, and other products,” including grains, grasses, minerals, and stuffed birds. No where in this exhibition, nor that shown by any other state or nation was there a display of hard red winter wheat under the name “Turkey” or its synonyms. Instead, the reputation of the Kansas display was based almost entirely on corn, on horticultural products arranged in interesting shapes, and on almost the entire output of a new Franklin county specialty—silk culture.150 Ad-

145. Topeka Commonwealth, July 8, 1876. This account listed June 27 for the Emperor’s visit.
146. The Industrialist, September 21, 1876.
147. The Nationalist, July 28, 1876.
148. Smith County Pioneer, July 6, 1876; Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, New York, August 3, 1876, p. 359; Kansas Farmer, November 1, 1876; New York Times, October 7, 1876.
149. Anne P. Diffendal, “Nebraska in the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia, 1876,” Nebraska History, Lincoln, v. 57 (Spring, 1976), p. 73. The Kansas-Colorado building was constructed for $10,000. The amount of $520 was paid for it after the fair was over.
ditional Kansas exhibits—a few head of livestock and some manufactures—were housed in other buildings on the fair grounds.

Clearly the displays of Kansas and other Western states in Philadelphia could not rival the age-old forces found in westward migration, nor the communication techniques employed by common folk wherever they might live. The possibility of getting land, of adventure, of participating in the development of a new area, of trying out abilities without so much competition, of finding neighbors and an occupation more compatible to goals and ambitions, and of departing from uncongenial surroundings which offered little opportunity were all part of the westering urge. Persons who were discontented with their lot, who were also strongly motivated to move to a new area to better themselves were ready candidates for migration to the west. In the language of the 1870’s, the migrants were the “movers” who often provided their own means of transportation in prairie schooners or “mover” wagons.

Migrants or “movers” did make their appearance in Kansas early and late in 1876, and their movements were reported extensively in the Kansas press. Only a year earlier when the general passenger agent of the Kansas Pacific railway sought to control the newspapers by privately asking “editors to suppress all unfavorable crop reports, and also ignore the presence of grasshoppers, etc., in Kansas, and to fill their papers only with accounts of unusually large crops, accounts of prosperous farmers” he was vigorously criticized. Now in their reports of new people coming in there was no reluctance on the part of the state’s press; departures from Kansas, on the other hand, were likely unreported. To some extent other sources must be employed, such as the report of the surveyor general of Oregon, who wrote in 1876 that:

Within the past year the business of the country has increased in tremendous ratio, and a home seeking population is flocking in from all quarters, particularly from the “grasshopper regions” of Kansas and Nebraska, to fill the waste places and reclaim the unmeasured wilds of the State.

A single sentence told of another departure from Kansas because a family lost three members to small pox, while “en route from Chautauqua county to Washington Territory.”

One of the most interesting migrant stories came from Linn county early in the year, which stated:

151. Kansas Farmer, June 16, 1875.
153. Chase County Courier, November 3, 1876.
A mover passed through this city last Monday, and informed us that when within a few miles from Pleasanton one of his young children fell from the wagon, and as there were only thirteen children therein, the little one was not missed until they arrived at Muddy bridge. Filled with harrowing fears as to the little one's fate, they hastened back, carefully scrutinizing every nook and corner in the vicinity of the road over which they had traveled. All was in vain. As they approached nearer and nearer the lakes the thought flashed across their minds that the child might have been drowned! When they arrived there, oh horrors! they found the corpse—no, the little one alive and throwing mud balls at some black birds! 154

Other news reports said that “immigration to Kansas this winter is larger than it has been for eight years,” or “A large number of strangers have been looking for land in the past few weeks.” 155 Closer to the unoccupied regions of Kansas, the news was more specific. For example, from Lincoln county, the report was, “A great many strangers are at present in our county looking up locations. Fully one hundred families have settled here since the first of January.” 156 From Washington county came a report that 25 French families from Illinois had settled in Strawberry township. 157 In Lincoln county, in late summer, a news item in uncomplimentary fashion stated, “A long line of immigrants, principally women and children, came in from the north on Wednesday evening, after the rain. They were a sorry looking sight. They have all settled in and near town, we believe.” 158 Nearby in Osborne county, newsmen saw “prairie schooners . . . through town this week, loaded with immigrants. It looks like our good old anti-grasshopper days.” 159

A similar report from Sumner county said that “fifty immigrant wagons have passed through Wellington, destined for the south and west part of the county within the past week.” 160 Stories also appeared in 1876 of foreign immigrant colonies, primarily Russian Mennonites, who were locating in Kansas. No reports were seen in 1876 of black migration from the lower South.

154. Pleasanton Observer, February 12, 1876.
155. The Nationalist, February 18, 1876; Chanute Times, June 29, 1876.
156. Saline Valley Register, May 10, 1876.
157. The Nationalist, March 10, 1876.
158. Saline Valley Register, August 23, 1876.
159. Osborne County Farmer, August 18, 1876.
160. Kansas Farmer, October 25, 1876, from the Sumner County Press.
Late in 1876 a Barton county newspaper described new settlement with almost every issue. Examples were, “The Arkansas Valley and Barton county are on the high road to fortune. People are settling with us every day, and the immigration never lags. We are just as certain to have a rich and prosperous people in a few years, as we are certain that water runs down stream.” Usually, names of settlers were not employed, but on September 30 they were. “And still they come. This week Mr. James Armstrong, James Skinner and Samuel Clive, with six good teams, and twenty one persons in the three families, arrived here from Woodford county Illinois. They came by wagon, and went out to their land at once, to prepare for winter quarters. They bought land last spring about four miles west of town.”\(^{161}\) A month later this paper reported that in the Zion valley “portion of the county [is] rapidly settling up and expects to have three or four hundred persons there by spring.”

Jubilant reports about expected large-scale migration to Kansas were presented in many of the state’s newspapers. For example, one paper said, “The eastern papers generally admit that the ‘hard times’ will cause an unusually large emigration from the eastern States to the West during the present year. A very large proportion of this emigration will come to Kansas.”\(^{162}\) Later, in the year, an editorial on “Immigration Prospects” emphasized the density of population in the East, a drought in Ohio but too much rain in Indiana, Missouri, and Illinois, and the widespread and continual prostration of business in the East. For these reasons many people were expected to be ready for Kansas in spite of what they had heard about grasshoppers.\(^{163}\) The idea persisted, in these comments, that “hard times” immediately generated mobility and the search for new homes. Actually, some people who wanted to move could do so under depression conditions but for most people the story was far different. Those who desperately wanted to find a new home at the low point in the economy were usually tied much closer to the region where they were. The unsettled economy, the lack of jobs or similar problems, might be so great that these people would find a way to move, but they would do so when the economy improved, not during the “hard times.”

\(^{161}\) *Inland Tribune*, September 16 and 30, 1876. Zion Valley was in the area of present-day Stafford county.

\(^{162}\) *The Industrialist*, April 29, 1876.

\(^{163}\) *Ibid.*, October 12, 1876.
While these mover reports and optimistic predictions were both extensive and frequent, actual new settlement in Kansas in 1876 was not nearly as great as the news of the year suggested. A recent analysis of the frontier of settlement in Kansas shows that new area settled in 1876 was the smallest amount for any year in the 1870’s, for the decade began with widespread settlement in new areas. But the effect of the Panic of 1873 quickly decreased the ability of persons who might want to settle on the land frontier, to gain the resources that were needed to undertake a move. The year 1876 was the low point of the decade with declining settlement patterns obvious after 1870 and increases noted for 1877, 1878, and 1879.\footnote{James R. Shortridge, “The Post Office Frontier in Kansas,” \textit{Journal of the West}, v. 18 (July, 1974), pp. 83-97. This study concentrated on new areas of settlement as shown by the creation of new post offices. It did not deal with settlement on vacant land within three or four miles of previously established post offices.} Population growth except for the single year, 1874 to 1875, was apparent in Kansas during the 1870’s, but 1876 had only a modest increase when compared to most of the other years of the decade.

The lack of economic development in Kansas during the centennial year is also shown by the fact that not a single county was organized in 1876 whereas 30 of the state’s 105 counties have their beginning somewhere in the 1870’s. Town development was sparse; the few towns established or platted in 1876 include Catherine, LaCrosse, Liebenthal, Lowell, Lyons, Pittsburg, and Ossurle. A similar lack of new enterprises is shown in the 266 corporation charters issued by the state in 1876. Grange charters and other agricultural organizations accounted for the largest total—22 percent—followed closely by churches and Sunday school associations—21 percent. Lodges and fraternal groups had 11 percent of the charters and cemetery associations 10 percent. Railway and other transportation had the highest business-oriented total—11 percent. Other business corporations formed that year were in small number and included corporations for manufacturing, mercantile, and milling, for banks and insurance companies, for coal mining companies, and for water power and waterworks companies.\footnote{“Corporation Charters,” v. 7, archives, Kansas State Historical Society.} In spite of the numerous churches and lodges organized in 1876, lack of space prevents telling that story here. Neither will the Kansas educational effort, exploited in the centennial exhibit, be dealt with.

It seems obvious to me that immigrants, migrants, and “movers” came to Kansas for reasons of their own and not because of the
publicity generated by the centennial exposition. Many, perhaps most, of these new Kansans were prompted to make the trek to the new area because of word passed to them by friends or relatives, some of whom were already residents of the state. This communication network was most effective and generally it operated through personal correspondence or personal visits.

Such was the case of Gottfried and Katharina Socolofsky, both in their early 20’s, who got off the Santa Fe at Peabody on July 4, 1876. Their long journey from a village near the Volga river in Russia had begun in April. Their account comes to us out of the past as oral history, for there was no mention of their arrival, along with their two small sons and Gottfried’s sister, in any newspaper. Why did they come to Kansas? They were planning to leave Russia anyway and presumably they came to the sunflower state because of a letter from a cousin who had arrived some six months earlier. Other members of this family, Gottfried’s parents and his four brothers, came to Marion county in 1877.166 None of the 11 members of this family, nor the two babies born by 1880 were influenced in the slightest degree to settle in Kansas because of the centennial exposition. Moreover, I doubt whether they knew anything about the happenings in Philadelphia and they certainly did not have either the time or the resources to visit the fair. These 13 people and many like them came to Kansas for their own private reasons before the claim was made in 1881 that Kansas population growth was “to a great extent” influenced by the Kansas exhibit at the centennial exposition.

Two other illustrations will suffice; there is relatively little information of arrivals during 1876. The first is Rachel Montgomery Bartholomew who came to Kansas with her husband as a young bride on September 7, 1876. The couple got to Hays the following day and to their land in Rooks county a short time later. Within a month the Bartholomew sod house was nearly completed and they returned to Hays for their household goods. Certainly Rachel knew about the centennial activities in Philadelphia. Her husband, Elam, recorded both the beginning and ending days of the fair in his diary. Realistically, the Kansas publicity in Philadelphia had absolutely no bearing on this Illinois farm girl’s decision to go to Kansas.167

John Rankin Rogers was another person to arrive in Kansas in 1876, with an intention of farming near Newton in Harvey

167. "Diary of Elam Bartholomew."
county. Rogers was born in Maine 38 years earlier. At 14 he went to Boston to take training to become a druggist and for a number of years before the Civil War he operated a drug store in Mississippi. When that state seceded he moved to Illinois and then to Iowa in the late 1860's. In 1870 he returned to Maine to operate a pharmacy and from there he departed for Kansas which was his home for 14 years. Rogers's motivation for coming to Kansas was to farm but his intense interest in third-party politics led him into a newspaper career in Newton. After departing for the newly organized state of Washington in 1890, Rogers served in the state legislature and for two terms as a Populist governor of Washington. Articulate and knowledgeable, Rogers knew about the Philadelphia fair, but the story of his career does not answer the question about the influence of the Kansas publicity on his decision to migrate to Kansas. However, it is obvious that he moved frequently from state to state and that the 14 years he spent in Kansas was exceeded only by his first 14 years in Maine and the six years he later spent there. Rogers was a peripatetic mover most of his life. Probably his most satisfying success came when he followed his westering urge all the way to the Pacific Northwest.\textsuperscript{168}

The contents of newspapers from a century ago are important in trying to reconstruct conditions of that time to give us a better understanding of our heritage. Their use is limited and sadly deficient in some respects. Studies, using manuscript census returns, suggest that some 80 to 90 percent of the entire population were never mentioned by name in the local newspapers of their community. When a family spoke a language other than English, or was black or Indian, they were likely to be ignored altogether, except when they were involved in a serious breach of the law. Oral history accounts, even family legends, need to be used to augment the written record and it is almost too late now even for additional second-hand information on Kansas in 1876.

In their life style, their attitudes and their outlook, Kansans of 1876 were far closer to Americans of 1776 than we are to the people who celebrated the centennial in 1876. As 1876 ended, diarists Barholomew and Goodnow, in spite of the problems, failures, and shortcomings of the year which failed to live up to its potential, in spite of a presidential election with the outcome still in doubt, made their last entries for 1876 cheerful and optimistic. One wrote of "greater achievements and of more momentous

character than any of the preceding five years!” The other said the year “has been a busy one & a short one! It hardly seems possible it has gone! Thank the Lord for all his benefits.”

Some time later the *Kansas Farmer* presented “a Centennial contrast. First, as ‘Poor Richard’ had it in 1776:

‘Farmers at the plow
Wife milking the cow,
Daughter spinning yarn,
Son threshing in the barn,
All happy to a charm.’

“And now for the modern improvement in 1876:

‘Farmers go to see a show,
Daughter at the piano,
Madam gaily dressed in satin,
All the boys learning Latin,
With a mortgage on the farm.’”

Do we dare write a third verse for 1976?