Territorial Character:
Julia Louisa Lovejoy

Julia Louisa Lovejoy was a religious woman. She fought against the spread of slavery with her pen. She wrote countless letters to those in the eastern United States about the events in Kansas Territory. Through her writings, as well as others, national attention was focused on the violence over slavery. This gave rise to the name "Bleeding Kansas."

What did Julia Louisa Lovejoy do before she came to Kansas?
Julia Louisa Lovejoy was born Julia Hardy in New Hampshire. At a young age she became very religious. She felt the purpose of her life was to influence the world around her. Lovejoy once said, "If I have not done good, I have done evil." She was married to Charles Lovejoy, a Methodist Episcopal preacher.

Why did she come to Kansas Territory?
The Lovejoys came to Kansas as part of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. The company recruited antislavery settlers to move to Kansas Territory. Lovejoy saw a way to make the world better by working to end slavery. To do this, she became a writer for several eastern Methodist newspapers.
The move to Kansas was a difficult one. Lovejoy’s four-year-old daughter came down with measles. The daughter’s health became worse when the driver of their wagon took longer to reach their destination. The last day of the trip, the driver stole the family’s personal and household goods. So ill was the child that she died the first week the family was in Kansas.

Shortly after they arrived, Charles Lovejoy was put in charge of the Fort Riley mission. The family made their home in Manhattan. Within five months, Charles Lovejoy was transferred to a position in Lawrence. However, the family stayed on for a while in Manhattan. Charles Lovejoy was transferred over and over again around the territory. Although the family moved often to be with him, they spent much time alone.

What was her role in Kansas Territory?

Julia Louisa Lovejoy became the voice of “Bleeding Kansas” for many in the East. She wrote in detail about the bloody clashes over slavery. She exaggerated some to make her point. She wanted her readers to understand the importance of the struggle in Kansas. She also was asking for help. The free-state movement needed people, supplies, and money. She wrote, “Do help us in some way and God will reward you.”

When Sheriff Samuel Jones and other proslavery supporters attacked Lawrence, Lovejoy was forced to run from her home. She wrote, “women and children fleeing on every hand … cattle as though aware danger was near, huddling together … will never fade from memory’s vision.” Lovejoy experienced first hand the difficulties in Kansas Territory.