

THE CONNECTICUT KANSAS COLONY OF 1856-1857

by

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THE WAGON WARRIORS

We cross the prairie, as of old
The Pilgrims crossed the sea,
To make the West, as they the East
The homestead of the free!

We go to plant her common schools
On distant prairie swells,
And give the Sabbaths of the wild
The music of her bells.

Uprearing, like the Ark of old,
The Bible in our van,
We go to test the truth of God
Against the fraud of man.

Written by J. G. Whittier for the Beecher Bible and
Rifle Colony and printed in Wabaunsee County Truth, VII,
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pany, New York.

INTRODUCTION

It's streets have no markers, and there is only one store there. Wabausee exists however, as a relic of the past, and it's Stone Church stands as a monument to a brave, God fearing and loving people who left New England almost 100 years ago to defend the cause of freedom and uphold the dignity of Man. The history of those who built the little Stone Church belongs to the Great American Tradition, for those men and women were of the same stock that landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620. Their children and their children's children have scattered before the four winds since 1856, and few in the vicinity of the Church today carry the name of any of that brave band of fifty seven men and four women who left Connecticut with their Bibles and rifles. Their places in the community have been taken by newcomers, some from the Rhineland and others from Scandinavia, likewise they are a part of America's Heritage for our country would not have come into her present greatness without their contributions. The efforts of the Connecticut Kansas Colony were not wasted, for whether they journeyed on to Oregon and California or returned to the East they left a story in Kansas to be told to all of America's future generations.

America's people need to be reminded of the moral fibre and resoluteness in purpose of her creators, and that is why

this story has been written. It represents an effort to explain what it means to be a good American. It might also tell something of the devout character of the Kansas people who saw one of their number sworn into the nation's Highest Office in 1953 not as Mr. Republican, but as Mr. American.

This history is primarily centered around the people themselves and their way of life. It might be called "People and Life of the Early Wabaunsee Community" for it's arrangement will be as follows: Chapter I "The Connecticut Kansas Colony" will relate the story of the "Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony" throughout it's organization and journey to Kansas. Chapter II will be an account and description of the community they found already existent. It is called "The Pre-Colony Settlement." Chapter III will consist of short biographical sketches of some prominent early citizens and their descendants, most of whom came with the Colony. It's title is simply "Pioneer Families", all of whom came to Kansas prior to 1860. The fourth chapter will deal with "early day" life and will be called "Community Life."

Great assistance has been given the writer by Miss Maude J. Mitchell, daughter of Captain William Mitchell who came with the Colony; H. E. Smith, son of John Smith who came to Kansas in 1854; Mrs. Josephine Willig Machin Brown, a granddaughter of John Willig; mentioned in the text, and E. L. Cottrell, son of A. A. Cottrell who came with the Colony.

Interviews held with them have helped immensely to recapture the spirit of the "early days", and it is hoped that because of them the reader will find these words the more interesting.

The author is also greatly appreciative of the understanding attitude evidenced by his friend and teacher, Dr. V. R. Easterling of Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, who was the principal advisor in this rhetorical neophyte's first attempt at historical writing.

CHAPTER I

THE CONNECTICUT KANSAS COLONY

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act constituted a challenge to the 19th Century descendants of Oliver Cromwell's England. The colonizers of New England gave to their offspring that same zealous spirit to be useful in behalf of a cause. Slavery to the abolitionists of New England was the most abhorrent idea in existence, and its destruction provided them with the most noble of all causes for which to fight. The thought of delivering a death blow to the hated institution thrilled them. The prospect of releasing men from bondage was a great incentive for men of Connecticut to move westward to Kansas in 1856.

Most of the people taking part in this dramatic trek to the Kansas Territory came from Connecticut. They were joined by men and women from Maine, Vermont, New York, and Illinois. Regardless from whence they came, as comrades-in-arms and as co-workers, they participated in a glorious and sacrificial adventure. It was glorious in that they fought and worked for the cause of human freedom. It was sacrificial in that the men and women who came to Kansas left a society of culture with its books and learning to come to a relatively unknown wilderness. The undertaking was an

adventure, for the immigrants to the new land knew not the dangers that awaited them. Deceit, treachery, and death hovered ever near. The fate of murder or robbery beside a lonely road, miles from aid and succor, could befall them in the territory of the border ruffians.

Men of New Haven, Connecticut, and from such nearby towns as Milford, North Guilford, Cheshire, Bolton, Middletown, Minden, and West Hartford were very much aroused on learning of the issuance of the following notice by C. B. Lines at New Haven, Connecticut on February 18, 1856.

Notice is hereby given that a company is being formed for the purpose of emigrating to Kansas. Those, therefore, who desire to aid in establishing the Institutions of New England, and to secure for themselves and their families a good home in that delightful country, are requested to communicate with the subscriber as early as practicable. Men of all professions and especially farmers are needed, but only such as will be able to contribute in some substantial manner to the building up of a flourishing community.¹

Men, whose hearts were filled with the abolitionist spirit as a New England "Institution", certainly wanted to preserve that spirit in the territories that would one day be admitted to statehood. As abhorrent as slavery was to them, it for some was perhaps not the dominant motive for emigration to the new land of Kansas. Some men might have dreamed of material riches to be gleaned from the new

¹Maude J. Mitchell, Collection of Newspaper Clippings.

territory. Regardless of motive, there were probably no cowards in the group who decided to follow the leadership of Mr. Lines. They were not trouble-makers or persons who deliberately sought trouble, but staunch defenders of what they believed to be righteous. The danger of a pre-slavery majority in the Union and Congress constituted for them a real and present threat to their Yankee "Institutions."¹

The Kansas crusade had set all Yankee America afire with abolitionist fervor and zeal in 1856. The territory, which had up to that time been protected from slavery by the Missouri Compromise, had been opened for settlement, and all of New England and the old Northwest were determined to people it with immigrants from the North. The movement into the new territory was so rapid and of such proportions that the slaveholders of the South and Missouri resorted to violence and invasion in an attempt to check the advance of the free-soilers. Ballot boxes were stuffed with spurious votes to achieve a territorial legislature that would be acquiescent to their demands. Northern newspapermen filled their journals with editorials and correspondence from immigrants that were concerned with the indignities and

¹The expression "Yankee" evidently came from New England. The author of this work is a descendant of those who came to Wabaunsee in 1857. He remembers his grandmother, Mary Gotton Omer, telling him when he was a child that he was "nothing but a blue-bellied Yankee." Her people came from Maine and Vermont.

maltreatments suffered by them at the hands of the invaders from Missouri.

Kansas became a holy cause for which to fight. It was in such a time of intense feeling that C. B. Lines of the Connecticut Kansas Colony said: "We mean to vote for freedom, peaceably and courteously, if we are permitted, but if we have to, will go to the ballot box with a ticket in one hand and rifle in the other."¹ The members of that colony came to Kansas to vote for their cause, and no human hands could deter them from their purpose. They reasoned that God was on their side for their cause was a just and righteous one. Ideas of failure did not occur to them although by the ardor of their spirits and the excitement of the moment they were perhaps blinded as to what hardships might lie ahead of them.

Professional men could not see an immediate and rich reward in money for services rendered. Farmers, however, could anticipate deeds to the virgin land. Craftsmen could expect to build the homes and public buildings contemplated, and their reward would come almost immediately after the great decision between the States had been made. The teachers could practice their vocation after the arrival of the families that

¹Mrs. Willard Green, "Eightieth Anniversary of the City of Liberty," Wamego Reporter, May 30, 1936.

were to follow, when the facilities for their survival had been constructed and the first harvests had been stored. Some of the staunch defenders of 'right' could look forward to a time after the end of the period of travail and heartaches to a brighter day on their Kansas acres, to new businesses and professional careers, and since they were human that might have been the clearest voice from the West rather than pure altruism.

Whatever may have been their motives, it would have been quite evident to an observer at a meeting held at New Haven, Connecticut on the evening of February 17, 1856 that many persons living in that area were very much interested in Kansas. S. C. Pomeroy, later United States Senator from Kansas, was in the East during the winter of 1856, and on that particular evening had delivered an address on the subject of Kansas. He related information concerning the struggle then being waged in the territory, and set forth various advantages offered by the new country to prospective immigrants.¹ Other speakers addressed the assembly, among them was Charles B. Lines. At the conclusion of his speech Mr. Lines stated his intention of forming a company to emigrate to Kansas. In accordance with Mr. Line's statement an agreement to form said company was executed on February 18,

¹Henry Fairfield Burt, Wamego Reporter, August 6, 1931.

1856 to bind the interested parties together in their joint and several efforts.¹

The signatures to the agreement having been affixed to the document, the signers of it spent the next few days in the recruiting of more colonists and in ascertaining the needs of the expedition. Sometimes it was hard to convince prospective colonists of the desirability of joining the company, as some did not seem to think that the territory was worth the trouble and sacrifice involved in the undertaking.² Other areas sent anti-slavery missionaries to Kansas. Massachusetts assisted in the financing of settlers for Lawrence, Kansas. However, Connecticut supplied the majority of the membership for the Beecher Bible and Rifle Company, as the Connecticut Kansas Company later came to be known.

In order to implement their initial purposes and agreement, the Company met March 7, 1856, in the hall of the Sons of Temperance, Streets Building, New Haven, Connecticut, and effected an organization with Walter Webb of Meriden, Connecticut, as chairman and Thomas C. P. Hyde of Bolton, Connecticut, as secretary. On the motion of C. B. Lines, it was voted to appoint a committee to draft a new agreement or constitution.

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, February 18, 1856, Appendix Item No. 1.

²C. B. Lines, Letter to his son Eddie, New Haven, Connecticut, January 1, 1857.

The following men constituted that committee as appointed by the chairman: Charles B. Lines, Walter Webb, T. C. P. Hyde, Benjamin Street and E. M. Woodford. Inquiries were made as to the occupations, ages, and skills of the members. It appeared that a large percentage of them were mechanics. A considerable number of the company were farmers. There were also professional men, surveyors, teachers, and merchants. Not an inconsiderable number were professors of religion. The age range was from fourteen to fifty six years.¹

Mr. Lines, reporting for the Constitutional committee, submitted a draft of a proposed constitution. It was accepted, and as he reported each article it was in turn discussed by the organization. All of eleven articles were adopted except the fourth which was "reconsidered for further discussion."² At this same meeting of March 7, 1856, the following were elected as the organizations first officers (Dr. J. P. Root and E. M. Woodford acted as Tellers): Charles B. Lines, president; T. C. P. Hyde, secretary; Walter Webb, treasurer; and Harry S. Hall, H. A. Wilcox, E. M. Woodford, J. P. Root, Benjamin Street, and John J. Walter, directors.³

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, March 7, 1856, Appendix Item No. 2.

²Appendix Item No. 2.

³Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, March 7, 1856.

The next meeting of the Company was on March 11, 1856. It was voted at that time to instruct the directors to arrange for a supply of provisions that would be sufficient for two months. Mr. Lines suggested the inclusion of these items on the list of staples: flour, meal, rice, crackers, beans, pork, potatoes, smoked beef, smoked ham, and dried apples. Interest was also shown at this early stage of company planning in suitable buildings for a schoolhouse and a church.¹

It was also decided that the Directors should appoint a committee to explore the region to which they were proceeding, and confer with that advance party on matters that concerned the enterprise.² The committee of exploration were H. A. Wilcox, H. S. Hall, J. J. Walter, and Walter Webb. Reasonable expense allowances were voted them, and it was their obligation to precede the company to the new territory, explore the area, and select a suitable location for the Colony.³ The Directors met on March 19, 1856 to give the exploring party these instructions.

The Delegation will proceed at once to explore the most eligible sites and to take such means of conveyance as they judge best to accomplish the object.

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, March 11, 1856.

²Ibid., March 11, 1856.

³Ibid., March 11, 1856.

They may procure a quantity of tent cloth on company account if they judge it expedient. If it seems best, they should each preempt a claim, subject to the Company's disposal, on the probable centre of operations, or wherever the land will be of the greatest value, or most exposed to preemption by persons not connected with the Colony.¹

It would have been quite evident to an observer of the mass meeting held to bid farewell to the Connecticut Kansas Colony that this was not an ordinary group of men who were departing for Kansas. Regardless of motives urging them to emigrate from the East, by virtue of their education alone they were different from average men in abilities.

Few of these men were farmers. More than a third of them were Yale graduates. They were men of all professions, but they had one common bond, they were "missionaries of liberty." A few may have come to better themselves, for health or adventure, but the colony came because of "the peculiar state of things existing in the territory." They wanted to make Kansas a free state.²

Notice of the departure from New Haven was given to the public the following day in the New York newspapers, people everywhere along the Atlantic seaboard were interested.

Here is an account of the farewell meeting:

New Haven- Tuesday, April 1, 1856- One of the largest mass meetings ever held in this city assembled last evening to bid our New Haven Colony farewell on the eve of their departure for Kansas. The meeting was held in Brewster's Hall, and, although this is the

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, March 19, 1856.

²Mrs. Willard Green, "Eightieth Anniversary of the City of Liberty," Wamego Reporter, May 30, 1936.

largest hall in the city it was found to be too small to hold the assembled multitude. Every seat and standing place in the hall was filled and hundreds went away, unable to gain admission.

Professor Benjamin Silliman, Senior, was chairman of the meeting, and on taking the chair, made a pertinent address. The Reverend Dr. Bacon opened the meeting with a prayer, and then the vast multitude present joined in singing the "Song of the Kansas Emigrant" (by J. G. Whittier) to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne."

Charles B. Lines, Esquire, president of the Colony, then made a farewell address in behalf of the Colony, and spoke in an earnest and eloquent manner.¹

The Connecticut Kansas Colony became widely popularized as the Beecher Bible and Rifle Company. The idea for the organization's second name grew almost spontaneously at a meeting in the North Church, New Haven, Connecticut. At the conclusion of an address by the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, and a brief statement of the origin, aims and purposes of the Connecticut Kansas Colony by C. B. Lines, Professor Benjamin Silliman of Yale College arose in the audience, and after giving a short speech in an appeal for arms for the group, announced that he would give twenty-five dollars for the purchase of a Sharp's rifle. Following the example of that eminent man, others joined in with pledges of financial assistance. The pastor of the church said "One of the deacons of this church Mr. Harvey Hall is going out with

¹New York Daily Tribune, April 4, 1856 - an article dated April 1, 1856.

the company, and I, as pastor, desire to present to him a Bible and a Sharp's rifle."¹ Stephen D. Pardee stated "I will give one for myself and also one for my wife." Charles Ives donated three rifles. Dr. J. J. Howe, Dr. Stephen G. Hubbard and Miss Mary Dutton gave a rifle each. Two unidentified Yale seniors together raised enough money to purchase one rifle.² The assembly on this evening of March 15, 1856 pledged themselves until an amount almost sufficient to equip one half of the Company with the weapons had been contributed. The Reverend Beecher on learning this announced that on the completion of raising half the necessary amount he and his Brooklyn congregation would contribute the remaining necessary sum of \$625.00. The first half was duly raised, and in a few days Mr. Lines received the money needed for the rifles from their benefactor, and with it came a Bible and a Hymn book for every man in the Company.³ This was the gift that gave the organization it's name of the "Beecher Bible and Rifle Company." Reverend Beecher maintained an active interest in the undertaking even after it's departure. On the border the terms Sharp's rifles and Beecher Bibles became synonymous terms. The members taking their Sharp's rifles and their

¹H. E. Smith, Collection of Newspaper Clippings.

²Ibid.

³T. A. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 988.

Bibles with them could still remember the words of their great benefactor upon the presentation of the money he had promised for the purchase of the twenty-five rifles.

Let these arms hang above your doors as the old Revolutionary muskets do in many New England Homes. May your children in another generation look upon them with pride and say 'Our fathers' courage saved this fair land from slavery and blood. Every morning's breeze shall catch the blessings of our prayers and roll them westward to your prairie homes. May your sons be largehearted as the heavens above your heads; may your daughters fill the land as the flowers do the prairies, only sweeter and fairer than they. You will not need to use arms when it is known that you have them. It is the essence of slavery to be arrogant before the weak and cowardly before the strong.¹

The townspeople of New Haven, Connecticut said goodbye to their company and wished them Godspeed in their journey to Kansas on March 31, 1856. St. Louis, Missouri was their immediate destination.² While traveling on the train they were warned by their leader C. B. Lines, at Indianapolis, Indiana, on the need for caution while passing through the "infected region" of Missouri.³

Upon leaving St. Louis, on board the steamer Clara, it was decided on April 7, 1856 to admit J. H. Gould to the Company, and it was voted to appoint F. H. Hart, Josiah M. Hubbard and Isaac Fenn as a committee to select needed

¹Frank W. Blackmar, Kansas, p. 168.

²T. A. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 988.

³Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, April 4, 1856.

cattle for the company and assist those who might wish to purchase them.

The journey up the Missouri River was made pleasant for the company by the captain and crew of the Clara. It seems that little excitement occurred on the voyage and that good feelings existed between crew and passengers at all times. According to the minutes of the organization these actions were taken on board the Clara on April 10, 1856.

After discussion, Voted--to present a Sharp's Rifle to Fleming Galvert, Clerk of the Clara--also a Repeating Whitney Pistol, 7 shot, to Mr. Skinner, second clerk, and a testimonial in coin to the steward and his assistants, also to the chambermaid. The President and Secretary of the company presented the gifts in the company's name. Twenty-seven dollars in gold coins were raised.¹

On disembarking at Kansas City, Missouri, that same day the following appears in the Company record:

On landing from the steamer, Mr. Lines called the company together on the levee, and after a few remarks, proposed three cheers for the Steamer Clara--which were given with hearty and vociferous unanimity. He then proposed three for the Captain McKee and when the echoes had subsided a little, three for all hands.--To which the officers and crew of the boat made ready responses, and the Company adjourned to the American Hotel.²

That evening the company met at the American hotel in Kansas City, Missouri, where the president informed the party that it was impossible for them to proceed further by water

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, April 10, 1856.

²Ibid., April 10, 1856.

transportation, due to the Kansas River being too shallow for navigational purposes, and that it would be necessary for them to take immediate measures for acquiring oxtteams. Nine wagons were purchased and fitted out with more than thirty head of oxen.¹

The members of the Company were occupied for the next several days with the purchasing of teams and provisions. Consequently, due to these varied employments and incidents of the road, they straggled into Lawrence, Kansas, in different groups between April 12 and 16. All the Company arrived in good health and spirits. On Tuesday evening, April 15, 1856, the residents of Lawrence invited them to a reception, which was fully attended by the new immigrants. Addresses of welcome were given and responses made. The reception raised the hopes and spirits of the newcomers, and they were greatly encouraged by it. The party was detained at Lawrence for some time because no information had been received from the exploring party. This time was spent in dispatching H. S. Hall and E. M. Woodford to explore a highly recommended region lying on Mission Creek and a few miles south of the Kansas River. Another committee, consisting of C. B. Linee, J. M. Hubbard, J. P. Root, and E. D. Street visited Centropolis. It was then voted by acclamation "That we go West."²

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, April 10, 1856.

²Ibid., April 18, 1856.

Ex-Governor Reeder and Governor Robinson addressed the citizens of Lawrence on the evening of April 18, and the following morning, after listening to the two dignitaries, the party proceeded westward "toward the setting sun." Sunday was observed on the prairie, April 20, by a religious service which was attended by nearby settlers. Mr. Hyde presented an extemporaneous discourse in the morning, and the afternoon was the scene of a general conference and prayer meeting near the home of a Mr. Shields from Illinois.

The next meeting of the company took place on the slope of a bluff with Mr. Lines presiding from a large rock at the Wabaunsee road crossing on Blacksmith Creek. There is little of importance to note here of the transactions of that meeting. The camp site was located near a Colonel Henry's home on Mission Creek. The company broke camp April 25, and proceeded on it's way to Wabaunsee,¹ arriving in the timber along Antelope Creek at 11:15 in the morning April 26. The teams were moved to a camp ground of a settler already at Wabaunsee, Mr. Leonard. A party of men, numbering almost thirty, was formed to cut cottonwood logs for building purposes. Mr. Webb was sent to Kansas City, Missouri with instructions that if necessary he was to go back to St. Louis, Missouri to have the company's freight shipped to Leaven-

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, April 25, 1856.

worth, and also to be the agent in the commercial transactions.

On May 1 the company set to work in earnest to build their city at Wabaunsee. Messrs. Line, Walter, J. M. Hubbard, Mitchell, and Dr. Root were appointed as appraisers to set a value on each claim as soon as possible "in pursuance of the plan embodied in the original agreement of the Company." It was voted to allow no person taking a claim valued below par to draw his bonus until two of the appraisers adjudged him to have expended half the amount of his bonus in improvements. Mr. Lines, Mr. Mitchell, and Dr. Root were appointed a committee to negotiate with the already existing Wabaunsee Town Site Association.¹

On May 7 a motion of Mr. Hall was approved to provide for the preemption of the town site.

That five persons be appointed to enter upon and occupy the town site and to preempt it at the Land office at the proper time--provided that no law shall be found by which it can be secured by the officers of the Association or town as a Town Site in which case it shall be secured by said officers as trustees--These persons so appointed to preempt shall receive fifteen acres each in the South East corner of the town site.²

Messrs. M. C. Welch, G. H. Coe, Perry Caldwell, Freeman Johnson, and T. C. P. Hyde were elected preemptors to secure

¹Mimutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, May 5, 1856.

²Ibid., May 7, 1856.

the town site. The committee that was to negotiate with the already existent town site association of the earlier pioneers reported that the earlier settlers would take no definite action as a body, but would act singly, if at all, on the question of being connected with the Connecticut Kansas Company. On that same day the auction of claims was commenced with Dr. Root mounting the wagon as auctioneer. Eight claims were sold for total proceeds of \$516.50. On the following days several important items of business were transacted. T. G. P. Hyde was elected company agent. C. B. Lines, J. P. Root, J. J. Walter, M. G. Welch, and T. G. P. Hyde were given the duty of planning and laying out the town site. J. M. Hubbard was later given that task also. Mr. Nesbitt and Mr. Hyatt were taken in as new members, and by company vote it was decided that the two principal streets should be 100 feet wide, one running north and south the other east and west. Each square was to be 600 feet in dimension each direction, and the public square or park was to be four of such squares. According to a company meeting one square was to be reserved for church sites, one square for public buildings, the wide east-west street was to be named Main and the wide north-south street was to be Elm. The survey of the town site to commence within a margin of 210 feet from the west and south sides.¹

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, May 13, 1856.

A fortnight had little more than come and gone since their arrival at Wabaunsee when on May 14, Mr. Lines received a dispatch from Mr. Dudley of Topeka asking aid for the town of Lawrence. That town was in a state of siege before armed bands of slave state men and all other free state settlements of that area were in constant threat of violence. The action of the company was to immediately respond to Mr. Dudley's appeal. It was voted to pass the following preamble and resolution:

Whereas information has reached this company to the effect that certain disturbances exist in the vicinity of Lawrence, growing out of existing differences between the Pro Slavery and Free State men, and whereas if the reports we hear should prove true, some of the members of our company, now in that region with their teams may be involved in difficulty--Therefore resolved that we dispatch Mr. Mitchell, Dr. Root, and Mr. Nesbitt for the purpose of ascertaining the facts in the case, of providing for the protection of our teams if need be, and of taking such further action as they may judge best in the premises--and to report to us as early as possible; their necessary expenses to be defrayed by the Company.¹

A military company was formed at Wabaunsee which showed "remarkable readiness at drill and promise of efficiency." William Mitchell was the first captain of the Prairie Guards, as the new organization was called. It was enrolled as Company H of the Free Kansas Militia, the officers received their commissions from C. W. Topliff, Adjutant General. The following were the commissioned and non-commissioned officers:

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, May 14, 1856.

Wm. E. Burgess, First Lieutenant; George Wells, Second Lieutenant; E. C. Lines, First Sergeant; Wm. Hartley, Second Sergeant; _____ Pillsbury, Third Sergeant; S. M. Thomas, Fourth Sergeant.¹

Information was received May 19 that Dr. Root and Mr. Mitchell had been detained by a Georgian camp near Lawrence,² and the following day J. J. Walter, J. H. Gould, and Henry Coorr were appointed as a committee to communicate with the authorities in command of the band holding the two men captive. Captain Mitchell and Dr. Root returned on May 26, and amidst rejoicing and cheers accounted to the company their experiences in captivity.

There were between fifty and sixty men in the newly formed rifle company, and hardly had it been formed when it's members were called on to march to Lawrence with their new Beecher rifles to relieve the besieged city.

Many Free State and Slave State men came to the conflict in and about Lawrence. The Connecticut Kansas Colony sent it's men to the fray that was given the name of the "Wakarusa War." Fortunately the Prairie Guards returned to Wabaussee

¹Minutes, Prairie Guards, (in archives of Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.) No initials or Christian name appear for Pillsbury.

²Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, May 19, 1856.

with no casualties.¹

It might be well to mention some of the life history of Captain Mitchell, the man in whom so much faith was placed by his comrades in arms. Captain Mitchell led a most interesting and adventurous life. It was a life that took him vast distances across land and sea. He came from the hardy, sometimes bellicose race of Scotchmen. Born in Kilmarnock, Scotland he came with his parents, as an infant to New York, New York and later lived at Middletown, Connecticut. His schooling was acquired in Connecticut. He went to California in the "days of '49" in search of gold. Australia's gold fields called him in 1853, where he spent the next two years of his life, returning in 1855 at the age of thirty to Connecticut by way of the British Isles. Such an adventurous individual was well fitted for command of the Prairie Guards. On the occasion of his capture by the Georgians his sharp tongue and refusal to do menial tasks of cooking brought him near death by hanging by the border ruffians.²

The selection of shares in the town site was by lot, for each parcel in Wabaunsee a number was given, and a corresponding number was written on a piece of paper and placed in a box from which each person entitled to draw was permitted to do

¹T. A. Andreas, History of the State of Kansas, p. 990.

²Interview, Maude J. Mitchell.

so. No drawing by a proxy was allowed. The town was divided into seventy parcels or shares.¹

At a meeting of the Colony, June 30, 1856, a circular was read from the Council Chamber at Topeka extending an invitation to the men of Wabaunsee to attend a mass convention July 3, which was to be preceded on the day before by a Convention of Delegates. The organization voted to send Captain Mitchell, Mr. Lines and Mr. Welch to the functions and defray their incurred expenses of the trip. It was not the intent of the group to assume any responsibilities of the government in Washington, but it was wisely deemed appropriate for the harmonious cooperation of all the Free State men and the "general good of the Territory" to attend the conventions.²

The next several meetings of the Colony, covering the period from July 12 to August 1, accomplished the adoption of names for the streets as follows: from north to south and in order: Front, Water, Commerce, River, Sumner, Main, Park, Chapel, Trumbull, Oak, and Meadow streets. The streets from west to east were to be named in order: Grove, Orange, Beecher, Elm, Ravine, Prairie, Washington, and Freemont. Harvey Jones, Harry Bisbey, Peter Sharai, _____ Leonard,

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, May 30, 1856.

²Ibid., June 30, 1856.

_____ Hill, and _____ Bates were admitted to membership.¹

A portion of the town site was donated to the builders of a steam saw mill to be erected in the town. Minor changes were made in the allotment of lots for church, educational, and public purposes. Resolutions were adopted for redistribution of the town lots on July 13, and on August 5 it was voted that the new streets be thirty feet wide instead of twenty five.²

New officers elected May 13, 1857, were the following: Dr. J. P. Root, president; M. C. Welch, treasurer; William Mitchell, J. J. Walter, J. M. Hubbard, J. H. Gould, P. M. Hart, Benjamin Street, directors.³ The Connecticut Kansas Colony having accomplished it's purpose of seeing the men safely to Kansas, and established in the new territory, voted to dissolve itself, and it's interests and controls over the town site passed into the newly created Wabaunsee Company.⁴ This phase of the community will be discussed in Chapter IV of this work.

This chapter has told a part of the story of the Beecher

¹The names Leonard, Hill, and Bates are listed in the Minutes of the Connecticut Kansas Colony without initials or Christian names.

²Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, August 5, 1856, Appendix Item No. 3.

³Ibid., May 13, 1857.

⁴Appendix Item No. 4.

Bible and Rifle Colony. The reader has become acquainted with some of it's most prominent leaders and with their background in New England that provided the motives for the emigration to Kansas. More information concerning the lives of those same men is given in Chapter III, but in this chapter the beginnings of the Colony have been covered, it's organization has been described, and a few of the problems of migrating have been mentioned. This chapter has taken the band of fifty seven heroic men to the Wabaunsee community; the next will describe that area as they found it, and the people who lived in it before their coming.¹

¹Appendix Item No. 5.

CHAPTER II

PRE-COLONY SETTLEMENT

There was no extensive settlement in the Wabaunsee community until the men and women came from the East with their Bibles and rifles, but to say that no one lived there prior to their coming would be a false statement. The people who arrived before 1856 were primarily home-seekers rather than Free-Staters. It is certain that some of them brought their families to Kansas with them.

At the time of the arrival of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony there were fifty nine residents in the Wabaunsee community.¹ There were twenty seven men, eleven married women and twenty one minor children.² These pioneers had as neighbors "three or four" families who lived in the Tabor Valley neighborhood west of Wabaunsee and near Manhattan, but they did not belong to this community with which we are concerned.

J. M. Bisbey established the first home in what is now Wabaunsee Township in the early winter of 1854. He and his wife with their four children located on a farm at Pavilion,

¹Interview, H. E. Smith, Appendix Item No. 6.

²Ibid.

a name given the neighborhood immediately south of the town of Wabaunsee. It deserves to be inserted in this account, because it's residents had frequent dealings with their neighbors to the north and east of the town of Wabaunsee. They attended the same Congregational church in that town in later years. The name Pavilion was brought to Kansas by J. M. Bisbey from his old home in New York. "I left New York on the seventeenth of October, 1854 with my wife and four children."¹

Mr. Bisbey was assisted by the Fourth Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company in his coming to Wabaunsee. The Bisbeys arrived at Kansas City on October 26. They, with a Ryan family and a cousin, Harvey Bisbey, bought supplies there including a yoke of oxen, and hired a man with a team to haul supplies westward. They engaged a flatboat that was owned by some Wyandotte Indians to haul other provisions up the Kansas River, but after three weeks had passed they went back to discover that the flatboat had run aground and the Indians had set their goods on the shore. This forced them to hire a teamster to haul the cargo and to give up their transport arrangements they had made with the Wyandottes. Mr. Bisbey lived in a sod house with a hay roof that autumn until a log

¹J. M. Bisbey, Kansas Historical Collections, XI, 1909-1910, pp. 594-595.

cabin, which was completed on the day before Christmas, could be occupied.¹ The next year in April, 1855 he bought two cows and calves to supply his family with meat and milk.²

Soon after the coming of the Bisbey family John Willig arrived in the community. Mr. Willig came from Wurtemberg, Germany in 1848 and lived and worked in Cincinnati, Ohio for a time. From being employed by a packing house in that city, he went to Michigan and mined copper. He came to Wabauensee in 1854 and located on a farm of 160 acres adjacent to and north of the Bisbey farm. He bought it from Harvey Bisbey for \$75.00. He later pre-empted it under the terms of federal law in 1860.³

So far as is known John Willig was the only German immigrant in the Wabauensee community in that early period before 1856. The other residents, with the exception of Peter Sharai, were either immigrants or descendants of immigrants from the British Isles. Mr. Willig gave the community much in service, when Quantrell and his band of border ruffians attacked Lawrence he marched along with Captain Mitchell and the Prairie Guards to defend that city. He married a widow,

¹J. M. Bisbey, Kansas Historical Collections, XI, 1909-1910, pp. 594-595.

²Ibid.

³"John Willig," Wabauensee County Truth, XI, (No. 8, August and September, 1935.)

Mrs. Mary Grimm, an emigrant from Switzerland in 1861. He became an American citizen in 1864. He rented out the first grain drill to his neighbors for ten cents per acre in 1866. He made the first shingles for the church in Wabaunsee. These shingles were "split from straight grained oak and tapered with a draw knife."¹ There was no hearse available for funerals, so Mr. Willig loaned his spring wagon for use on such occasions. He was quite accommodating to his neighbors and often made loans to them. He brought from Germany the first alfalfa seed to be sowed in the state of Kansas in 1876. Cheese was made and sold by the Willig family to the army at Fort Riley. The cheese vat used by them measured five and one half feet long, two feet wide, and one and a half feet deep. During his lifetime Mr. Willig made six trips to Germany crossing the Atlantic Ocean thirteen times.

Mr. Moses Foss located on the quarter section north of John Willig in April, 1855. He died four months later. Hiram Keyes, brother of Mrs. Harvey Jones, settled on a farm along upper Antelope Creek. Mr. and Mrs. Clark Lapham had the first occupied cabin in the vicinity of Coldwater and lower Antelope Creeks.² Mrs. Lapham was a sister of Peter

¹"John Willig," Wabsunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 8, August and September, 1935.)

²"The Original 'Who's Who' at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 10, November, 1935.)

Sharai. Their home was approximately two miles northeast of the Wabaunsee town site.

Peter Sharai was a French Canadian who came to Wabaunsee in May, 1854.¹ A promoter and a speculator, he had gained control of the farm on the west bank of Antelope Creek that lay next to his brother-in-law's (Clark Lapham) farm on the east bank of that creek. Sharai also controlled an eighty acre tract of land about one half mile northeast of the Wabaunsee town site, a tract of land along the east bank of Antelope Creek that adjoined his brother-in-law's farm on the south, and he also controlled the land that later became the Wabaunsee town site. Sharai had wanted to develop a town on that same location. In the spring of 1855 he had induced a man named Goodrich to bring a load of merchandise from Kansas City to establish a store there. Goodrich died of cholera so the store was operated for a short time by a Mr. J. H. Nesbit, who had laid claim to a tract of land on the east edge of what was later to be the Wabaunsee town site.² Bartholomew Sharai, a brother of Peter Sharai, lived in the community also, but he did not take a land claim.³ Peter Sharai's niece, Belle Bersaul, and her husband a Mr. Waterman,

¹The Original 'Who's Who' at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 10, November, 1935.)

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

later pre-empted the quarter section immediately south of Clark Lapham's farm. It is known to the residents of the area today as the 'Charlie Kreiger place' and is now owned by D. A. Foltz.

The Watermans rented their farm to a Reverend McChristian and moved to Mill Creek where they erected a mill. On a trip back from Topeka with supplies for the mill, Waterman was shot and died soon after returning to his home. Reverend McChristian was to receive the other half for distribution to those deserving of assistance. The Banks family was also in dire need of food in that year. Although he had plowed with an ox team hitched to a wooden-beam plow, and had planted by hand first a winter wheat crop and later a spring wheat crop, some corn, and buckwheat, his family was hungry for want of food that winter.

On the trip to Atchison Mr. Banks lost an ox that was injured while crossing the ice on the Kansas River. Banks knew only one man in Atchison, Samuel C. Pomeroy. Pomeroy loaned him \$40.00 for two years at 25% interest to buy another ox. He met John Smith and Arthur Reed at Atchison (Arthur Reed lived with his father on a farm south of the J. M. Bisbey farm) who were returning from a trip to Iowa with a load of "stock hogs." They each hauled a load of aid supplies home to the Wabaunsee drouth sufferers. On the way back Banks froze his feet on which he wore a pair of handmade

boots. Banks repaid his creditor at the end of the two years. Samuel C. Pomeroy later served as United States Senator from Kansas from 1861 to 1867.¹

Robert Banks, Sr., was born in London, England. His parents came to the United States in 1852 and settled first in Boston, Massachusetts, and later in Lynn, Massachusetts where Robert Banks, Sr., worked as a shoemaker. He came to Kansas in the fall of 1854 alone and without his wife and three children. The Bank's family came to the West because "first they wanted a home and second they wanted to make Kansas a free state."² Banks arrived at Kansas City in 1854 with only \$1.25 in his pocket. He walked from Kansas City to Lawrence where he spent the night in a hotel made of logs, roofed with hay, and with a floor of dirt.³ At Lawrence Banks first met Joshua Smith and his two sons, John and Henry. The four men built a log cabin at Lawrence and spent the winter there and when spring came in 1855 they went west together to Antelope Creek and Wabaunsee. Life at Wabaunsee was hard for Mr. Banks as it was the first time in his life that he had done outdoor work. While at Lawrence in the winter of 1854-1855 the Smiths

¹"Robert Banks," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 8, August and September, 1935.)

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

and Banks worked at cutting oak logs ten miles from the town. Banks also learned how to quarry rock while in the employment of Samuel C. Pomeroy during that winter.¹

Robert Banks built his first cabin on Deep Creek, a few miles west of Wabaunsee in 1855. When he came through the Wabaunsee vicinity that spring he inquired of Peter Sharai whether land was available in his community. Sharai informed him that there was none; that it had all been taken. Banks moved on west to Deep Creek, built his cabin and returned east to bring his family out that fall. While he was gone his cabin was burned. On his return, and at the sight of the wife and three children Peter Sharai said, "Mr. Banks I didn't know you had a family. There is plenty of land around here," so Mr. Banks stayed at Wabaunsee,² took a farm south of Sharai's niece, Mrs. Waterman. He later traded the farm for W. P. Cotton's farm in the river valley.³ John Willig and Robert Banks worked together for a time digging wells for the community.⁴

Joshua Smith, like Robert Banks, was an English immigrant. He had been a gardener on an estate in England and he

¹"Robert Banks," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 8, August and September, 1935.)

²Interview, H. E. Smith.

³Ibid.

⁴"John Willig," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 8, August and September, 1935.)

performed that work in New York before coming to Kansas in 1854. He came with a wife, two adult sons, John and Henry, and four minor children, William, Monica, Emma, and Fred. In the winter of 1854 and 1855 the Smiths built two log cabins on Coldwater Creek. The mother and younger children stayed in Lawrence that winter but came on to Wabaunsee in the spring. Joshua Smith located his cabin approximately one mile east of Waterman's farm, and his son, John, built his cabin north and west of his father's by just a few rods. The other adult son, Henry, pre-empted 160 acres located a half mile east of the Wabaunsee town site. It was from Henry Smith's farm that the cemetery was taken in 1862.¹

Three other claims were taken in 1855 in the neighborhood. A bachelor, Fay Brown, took a quarter section of land directly east of Henry Smith's farm. Hamilton Brown, a brother to Fay Brown, built a cabin in the timber immediately north of John Smith on lower Coldwater Creek. The Kelseys had five children including Smith Kelsey who worked as a teamster about Wabaunsee. He hauled the large stones that were used as a walk from the north gate to the door of the Wabaunsee Congregational Church. Another son, Egbert Kelsey,

¹"The Original 'Who's Who' at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 10, November, 1935.)

went to Kansas City with a shipment of cattle, took the money and never returned to Wabaunsee. The family never recovered from this financial loss and their son's disappearance. Austin Kelsey had one of the most beautiful riding horses in the community. He always rode it to Church on Sunday and on special occasions he would use an elaborately decorated bridle. "No other record has been written" concerning the Kelsey family.¹

Reverend Harvey Jones came to Wabaunsee in the summer of 1855 with his wife and two children. They settled approximately one mile west of Wabaunsee, and that location was their home for many years. Reverend Jones was sent to Kansas by the American Missionary Society. He arrived in Kansas in the spring, and Mrs. Jones came in October of 1855. They had a child, little M _____,² who died in the next spring. Reverend Jones did considerable work among the "shakes people."³ He went on horseback giving comfort to the sick and suffering. This was in addition to his regular church and Sunday School work. He held his first religious services in his

¹"The Original 'Who's Who' at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 10, November, 1935.)

²Complete spelling of child's name is not given in newspaper article.

³Harvey Jones - Missionary, Pastor, and Servant," Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 1, January, 1936.) The "shakes people" refers to those suffering from a disease known as ague.

cabin. He served as pastor of the Wabaunsee Church for three years from 1857 to 1860. He also served as it's pastor from 1875 to 1877. Reverend Jones moved to California in 1887 probably because of the damage done his property by the railroad.

I have always thought that their leaving was partly due to the damage of the Rock Island railroad cutting off 3 or 4 acres of the grove north of their house. I acknowledged the deed to the railroad, and I know that they felt badly about it. It hurt the looks of their place very much. His buildings and fences were always in good repair and the whole place neat and well kept. The farm was fenced, a cross fence with hedge. He raised all kinds of fruit, apples, peaches, and berries, hedge plants, and garden vegetables.¹

The wife of Reverend Harvey Jones came to Kansas in October of 1855. She kept a diary which is quite illuminating on the conditions of life in the years of 1855 and 1856 in the Wabaunsee community. Here are some quotations from that diary.

Oct. 14, 1855. In sight of Kansas City, nearly a week coming from St. Louis, and more than 2 from my home in Ohio. Cholera on the boat. A burial at night on the river bank very quietly lest it alarm the passengers. Myself and baby very unwell but the sight of the long looked for city - if a small hotel, a grocery or two, a few houses might be dignified by that title - gives me new life. At least I shall have a few hours of Sabbath rest and then I hope to meet my husband whom I have not seen for many months. The boat is drawing near to shore. A motley crowd gathers at the landing. I strain my eyes in anxious expectancy for the one form but all is vain. So here I must wait perhaps for days for him and for the ox team which is to take us to Lawrence, pioneer city of

¹"Harvey Jones - Missionary, Pastor, and Servant," Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 1, January, 1936.)

Kansas. It might be worse but certainly requires patience.¹

Mrs. Jones was not met at Kansas City by her husband; instead, a stranger greeted her because Reverend Jones was sick at Lawrence. For the greater part of three days of slow travel she and a three year old daughter sat on a trunk in a wagon drawn by a yoke of oxen. Sometimes she and her little girl walked ahead of the slow moving beasts. She discovered her husband's condition of sickness to be one at "times approaching near death."²

She spent a month nursing her husband back to health, in a partly finished log house. Reverend Jones had taken sick at Wabaunsee and had been moved to Lawrence for better care. The Jones family left Lawrence on November 28. At Leocompton they

"met Mrs. Judge Elmore who lives at Leocompton. They have moved to Kansas with their slaves. The conflict has begun. They are here to help make this fair land a slave state, we to help make it free. Which will win?"³

The Jones family located on the west side of Emmons Creek. Emmons Creek was called "Dead Man's Creek." It is not known why the Indians gave it that name. The Jones homestead was an eighty acre tract of land. Mrs. Jones's diary

¹Mrs. Harvey Jones, Diary, quoted in Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 1, January, 1936.)

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

continues as follows:

Dec. 2. Our first Sabbath in our own home. Truly a day of rest. That night had much to do in order to render ourselves comfortable in any degree. First, we got a stove up so as to have a fire, then there were boxes to be opened to find bedding and other supplies. The house is a frame, fourteen feet square, enclosed with "shakes" as they are termed here. They look to me like 'shingles' and we have a floor of the same material. There are two windows, one in each end with glass which as you look through makes a man and a horse look very much the same; and it is opened to the roof. The men brought hay from a little stack across the creek which we spread on the floor for bedding. Brother H. (Hiram Keyes) and Mr. A _____, are with us. In one corner I made quite a comfortable place with the feather bed above the hay, the others had to content themselves with comforts and quilts. A rude way to commence house-keeping. Our table is a dry goods box, our seats boxes or a stool. I think it is a mistake that we did not bring a chair or two, although our load would hardly have admitted it.

Dec. 15. Brother H _____ has made quite a nice table with one of the three walnut boards we brought with us. With another, he has made us stairs in steam-boat fashion to get to the loft. The other board is laid by for future use by being laid on the joists for a shelf (used later to make a casket for little M _____.) Mr. J. has put to flight all my doubt about his mechanical skill by constructing a bedstead. The frame is of cottonwood poles and is fastened to the wall, the inevitable 'shakes' laid across.

Jan. 2. The holidays have come and gone and we have hardly taken note of them. Reverend Mr. Blood, of Manhattan, has given us a call. He wants to organize a Congregational church at Manhattan soon and desires Mr. J. to aid in it. The weather has become intensely cold and he is so very weak that it seems as if he must risk his life by going. There is no other minister near and no church organization within fifty miles of us.

Jan. 5. Very cold. We have hung up quilts around the stove in order to confine the heat as much as possible. At meal times we take our plates on our laps a la camp fashion. Shawls and overcoats are in constant requisition and I keep little M _____ in my arms almost

constantly in order to keep her warm. We go to bed at dark for two reasons; one is because we can make ourselves more comfortable there, the other because the wind will not permit us to burn a lamp or candle. Notwithstanding the cold, Mr. J. started this morning for Manhattan. I could wish that he had not gone and yet I wanted him to go. It will cheer him to meet his Christian friends once more.

Jan. 8. Mr. J. has returned from Manhattan. Suffered much from the cold. He was too weak to resist it and his feet have been frozen.

March 1st. Our little M _____ is drooping. There is no physician nearer than Manhattan. We are much distressed to see her thus and no helper near us. A team or two has started to Kansas City for supplies and we have sent to Topeka again for a remittance and also hoping to hear from friends with whom we have had almost no communication this winter.

March 26. Teams have returned from Kansas City and the whole neighborhood is glad. Our friends at Lawrence have generously remembered us and we are now quite removed from "hulled corn." We have also our remittance from New York, and so far it has not been from any lack of interest on the part of the secretaries, they had sent in advance to us, fearing there might be need, and also sent it in my name lest Mr. J. might not be living. It is not a little aggravating to us to learn the letter containing the draft has been lying in the office at Topeka all winter, notwithstanding our repeated calls for it.

April 1st. Springlike and beautiful. Little M _____ no better. Mr. J. has been to Manhattan to see Dr. Hurting. He sent medicine for her but does not encourage us much. She requires constant care and we are full of anxiety. We have given our darling to the Lord but we do so want to keep her with us in our loneliness here. I am harassed sometimes with thoughts as to whether we did right to subject the little one to such privations. We could not see the end from the beginning. The future will reveal whether the good accomplished will compensate for such costly sacrifice.

April 24. The sad hour has come and gone and our little one, our first born and only, has been laid to rest. At sunset, yesterday, we stood by the open grave on the hillside, not altogether in sorrow, but in something like sweet peace that such treasure has been lent

us and returned to the giver. She passed away at midnight in my arms, Mr. J. and myself alone. He sat by the fire in a chill. Once he said so sadly "childless" and again "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken." With my own hands I robed the little form and laid her on the pallet sweetly sleeping. Then we lay down to sleep and strange to say, we slept. "Lo, He giveth sleep." A few friends gathered with us to sympathize and aid in the last rites. A new casket had been made by a neighbor from the remaining walnut board brought with us. Mr. L. (Leonard) read a few comforting passages of Scripture and offered a prayer. We stood around the little form, adorned with the early prairie flowers and sang that precious hymn of faith and trust.

Quiet as a peaceful river,
 Quiet as wind hushed sea.
 In Jehovah trusting ever
 We are kept in perfect peace
 Will not ask Thee what Thou doest
 Whatsoere it be 'tis right.
 Thou our friend of friends the truest
 Canst sustain 'mid storm and night.

April 30. The colony has arrived and has camped but a short distance from here. We went down this morning to call as I learned that there were ladies in the party. I confess to a little curiosity. Was cheered at the sight of friendly faces and the cheerful handgrasp. Looking within the cloth tent I saw a little child reclining on a buffalo robe. It almost brought tears to my eyes. Three little boys were racing about and shouting joyously and there was a business air on every hand.¹

Mrs. Jones's diary concludes an account of the people and life in the community before the coming of the Colony. Some of the descendants of John Smith, John Willig, and Robert Banks still live there, farming the same land of their fathers and taking an active part in community life. Since this work is mainly concerned with the first settlers, the persons,

¹Mrs. Harvey Jones, Diary, Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 1, January, 1936.)

whose lives and families will be written about in the next chapter, were their contemporaries and settled there before 1860. Their number is not large, for the actual members of the Colony who stayed in Kansas any length of time was small. However, they were joined by others who helped plant the seed and cultivate the tree of American civilization. They will be remembered also in the pages of Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

PIONEER FAMILIES

Although a large percentage of the Colony did not remain at Wabaunsee long enough to leave an impression on the community, some stayed to fill responsible positions, such as school teachers and elective offices in both the township, county, and state. Sherman Baldwin, A. A. Cottrell, J. H. Gould, W. S. Griswold, C. B. Lines, William Mitchell, Silas M. Thomas, and J. F. Willard were the only original Colony members still resident in the community in 1879.¹

Sherman Amos Baldwin was born in Middletown, Connecticut June 29, 1827, and went, soon after reaching the age of twenty one years, to New Haven, Connecticut to work in his uncle's store. There from listening to speeches of Phillips Brooks and Henry Ward Beecher, he became interested in Kansas. After going to Wabaunsee with the Connecticut Kansas Colony he returned to New Haven to wed Janie A. Barnes on March 16, 1857. The newly wedded couple started on their way to Kansas on their wedding night. They spent that summer in a tent, and that fall moved into the log cabin in which their four

¹Appendix Item No. 5.

children, Helen, (who died in infancy) Sherman, Lillian and Jennie were born. S. A. Baldwin served in various township and county offices, as well as two terms in the state legislature.¹

A. A. Cottrell was born in Delhi, New York. He went to New Haven, Connecticut before he was twenty years old and worked for Tom Law. From that employment he learned how to handle timber and operate a saw mill, which skills served him in good stead at Wabaunsee, where he sawed logs and split rails for other colonists. He served on the exploration committee of the Connecticut Kansas Colony at various times. On first coming to Wabaunsee he stood on the top of a hill on the farm that later was to become the property of Captain Mitchell, and exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I'm going to settle in this valley." He took a farm along the Kansas River approximately one mile northeast of the Wabaunsee town site.

While on a trip to Lawrence, Cottrell met a woman whose home had been raided by the Missouri ruffians. Her husband had been killed, their property destroyed, their livestock scattered, and she had been turned out in the cold of a snow storm along with her five children. Her children were all

¹Sherman Baldwin, paper read at the Eightieth Anniversary celebration of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony, at Wabaunsee, May 30, 1936, Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 4, July, 1936.)

under the age of ten years, and one of them was a baby only three weeks old. They were set out in the wintry weather two miles from help and wore "without a bit of protection or extra clothing." He came back to Wabaunsee and placed John Gould in charge of his property. The story of the woman had aroused his anger so much that he left Wabaunsee with his double barreled shotgun and started for Missouri to help end the lawlessness. He acted as a spy in Missouri for Jim Lane, military leader of the Free Staters at Lawrence. There was a band of border outlaws that had it's headquarters near Kansas City. After having gone into the locality for the purpose of finding out their whereabouts and learning their number he was detected by them and forced to leave Missouri with a pack of bloodhounds in hot pursuit. For one long day he hid in the Missouri River under a clump of willows and crossed the river into Kansas that night on a log. He "took a bunch of Kansas men back with him and cleaned out the nest. He was dogged out of Missouri several times."¹

The gold fever attacked Cottrell and he went to Colorado along with several other Wabaunsee men. He prospected near Pike's Peak. After coming back from Colorado he worked for

¹"Eightieth Anniversary of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony," Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 4, July, 1936.)

transport companies by driving trains of six oxen or mules "all over the country." Finally, when he decided to get married, there was a girl in New York that "he thought a lot of." He started back to get her, but on the way he went broke in Illinois. The Platts found him a job in Mendon, Illinois, and he married a sister of the Platt boys in 1864. He brought his family to Wabaunsee in 1876.¹

C. B. Lines was a cabinetmaker and an undertaker in New Haven, Connecticut. One day he heard a speech delivered by Horace Greeley saying "Go west, young man, go west." He developed an interest in the western part of the United States as a result of it and came to Kansas in 1854. He came back to New Haven and in 1856 took a leading part in the organization of the Connecticut Kansas Colony. In New England he was an ardent Whig. He joined the first temperance society in New England, and because of his speeches in behalf of that cause was elected to the Connecticut legislature in 1853. He was acquainted with President Monroe, J. Q. Adams, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and Andrew Jackson. In Kansas he was a member of the Kansas legislature at Lecompton in 1861, and speaker pro tempore of the House. He was a regent of the state university from 1864 to 1867, receiver of the Land Office at

¹"Eightieth Anniversary of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony," Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 4, July, 1936.)

Lecompton and Topeka from March 1861 to April 1865. He was Pension Agent from 1865 to 1874. He died at Wabaunsee on March 31, 1889, at the age of eighty two years.¹ It can be seen, from the succession of responsible positions held by Mr. Lines, that he was truly one of Kansas's most important early political figures.

The children of C. B. Lines were Elford J., Edward C., Ellsworth, Libby, Corcelia, Harriet, and Lulu. E. J. Lines came with the Beecher Bible and Rifle Company and brought his family out from the East the following year. He and his father were business partners in a store, and he also had a business interest in a ferry boat on the river north of Wabaunsee. Libby Lines married J. P. Evans and lived at Wabaunsee for many years. Later they moved to California. Lulu Lines married George S. Burt and F. I. Burt was one of their children.

Edward C. Lines was a Captain in the Union Army and was killed near Fort Smith, Arkansas while leading his company. When President Lincoln asked for 75,000 troops after the assault on Fort Sumter, E. C. Lines volunteered. He was the first man in Wabaunsee county to volunteer. During the summer of 1861 he fought in a hard and arduous campaign. While

¹F. I. Burt, paper read at the Eightieth Anniversary celebration of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony, at Wabaunsee, May 30, 1936, Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 4, July, 1936.)

serving as adjutant he rode over the battlefield carrying orders. His sword was struck and marked by three rifle balls, and his saddle raked by canister shot. Two horses went down under him, and a fragment of a spent shell struck him on the shoulder. He participated in the campaign through Texas, pursuing the enemy. He was killed after two years of such fighting and was buried temporarily at Fort Smith, Arkansas.¹ His body was later moved to New Haven, Connecticut where a burial sermon was delivered by Dr. Dutton, the pastor of North Church, New Haven, Connecticut. Here is a part of the funeral sermon:

As is well known by those who hear me, the father of our departed friend, Mr. Charles B. Lines, who had occupied a prominent place of influence in this community, and especially in the Church and congregation worshipping in this sanctuary became leader of a company, which went to Kansas and settled the town of Wabaunsee.

Hardly had the colony become settled, when the territory was invaded by armed bands of 'Border Ruffians', who murdered men in their houses and fields, burned the new city of Lawrence, and was determined to lay waste the towns and cities of the Free State citizens, and to control the elections and civil affairs of the territory in the interest of Slavery-extension. At that time, a military company was organized in Wabaunsee and vicinity, which marched at once to Lawrence. One of the most active and influential in raising this company was Edward Lines, who was chosen Lieutenant, and on the subsequent illness of its Captain, was much of the time its actual commander. This company, being armed in the most effec-

¹F. I. Burt, paper read at the Eightieth Anniversary celebration of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony, at Wabaunsee, May 30, 1936, Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 4, July, 1936.)

tual manner with Sharpe's rifles, (which, by the way, were raised for them by subscription at a meeting in this very church,) was among the most efficient and self-sacrificing in defending the territory against the savage invasions of that period, and in maintaining the rights of the Free-State majority.¹

Mention is made in Chapter I of Captain William Mitchell's adventurous life before his coming to Kansas with the Connecticut Kansas Colony. He located three miles east of Wabaunsee, in a log cabin built of cottonwood logs. His father and an unmarried sister, Agnes, came from Connecticut to keep house for him from about 1854 until after the Civil War. At Cleveland, Ohio in 1868 he was married to Mary A. Chamberlain, formerly of Middletown, Connecticut. Four children were born to them on their Kansas farm, Alex, Raymond, William, and Maude J. He was the first station agent for the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame Railroad at Wabaunsee, and was manager of the E. B. Purcell general store and grain business. His sons learned 'railroading' and business while working with their father. The eldest son Alex, went to college at Manhattan and learned telegraphy. He later worked for the Rock Island and Santa Fe railroads. Raymond went to business college at Topeka, and also went to work for the Santa Fe Railroad as a cashier at Cross and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, later he became chief clerk for that

¹"Eddie Lines," Wabaunsee County Truth, VIII, (No. 6, June, 1932.)

railroad line at Arkansas City, Kansas. Raymond resigned from the Santa Fe in 1898 to accept the position of chief clerk of the Zoological Park in New York City. He later became manager of the New York Zoo. William succeeded his father as agent for the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame Railroad, and after 'railroading' for ten years went to New York City to work with his brother at the Zoological Park as a cashier. Maude J. Mitchell taught art in Wisconsin for thirteen years at the Wisconsin State Normal College. Further mention is made of her in Chapter IV. Captain Mitchell died in 1903 and his wife survived him by more than twelve years.¹

Julius Frederick Willard was born in West Avon, Connecticut on August 2, 1835. He was a direct descendant of Simon Willard, who came from England in 1634, and a relative of Frances Willard, the temperance worker, who likewise descended from the same ancestor. He was reared in Connecticut and acquired there a common school education.² In his early boyhood leaving school at the age of fifteen, he worked in the shops and on the farms until 1856 when he joined the Connecticut Kansas Colony. Although he was a total abstainer all

¹From a paper written by William Mitchell, read by Mrs. Helen Mitchell Barnes at the Eightieth Anniversary celebration of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony, at Wabaunsee, May 30, 1936, printed in the Wabaunsee County Truth, XII, (No. 4, July, 1936.)

²Blackmar, Frank W., Kansas, III, Part I.

during his life, his membership in the Colony was objected to for some thought his red nose to be evidence of intemperate habits. His claim was located a few miles southwest of Wabaussee at first, later he pre-empted the farm in the river bottom on which he spent most of his life. He was the first member of the Colony to locate in the Kansas river valley. On March 1, 1861 he was married to Mary Elizabeth Terrass to them were born the following children: Julius Terras, John James, Henry Selden, Mary Elizabeth, and Sherman Albert. His children all were given good educations, John James Willard graduated in medicine and practiced that profession at Manhattan, Kansas for a number of years, where he eventually went into the retail drug business. Mary Elizabeth Willard, Julius T., and Henry S., attended and graduated from Kansas State College. Sherman attended Washburn College at Topeka, Kansas and was later called to the ministry of the Congregational Church.

J. T. Willard graduated from Kansas State Agricultural College in 1883, and received his Master of Science degree from that institution in 1886. He studied at Johns Hopkins University in the years of 1887 and 1888. In 1908 he was awarded the honorary Doctor of Science degree by Kansas State Agricultural College. He served as Professor of Chemistry at that institution from 1901 to 1918, and was it's Dean of the Division of General Science from 1912-1930. He also served

as Vice President of Kansas State Agricultural College from 1918 to 1935. Among other posts that he held was that of Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. His death occurred in 1950.

Another prominent early settler of this period who was one of its first school teachers, but, not a member of the Colony, was William Cotton. Born in Vermont April 7, 1831 he taught school in that state for a time. On March 9, 1854 in the state of Maine, he was married to Miss Helen M. Genn, a student in his school, and they came to Kansas in 1857 and settled on the farm where he lived the remainder of his life. Six children lived to maturity: they were Fred, Mary, Kate, Winnie, Lincoln, and Mabel. A son W. L. Cotton, farmed the family homestead for many years. A daughter, Mary Cotton Osmer, lived on a farm in the Wabaunsee community throughout her life. Mr. Cotton was an organizer and charter member of the Wabaunsee Congregational Church. As well as being a teacher and farmer, he was admitted to the Bar as an Attorney in 1874.¹ William Cotton was a direct descendant of John Cotton, the first minister of Boston, Massachusetts. He was the eighth generation removed from that early colonial pastor.²

With these few short biographical entries we conclude

¹William F. Cotton, Obituary.

²Cotton family records.

mention of these people, and in the following chapter we will take up the life in the community which they help to build. Their names will appear again on those pages in the various capacities in which they performed. These short sketches in this chapter are presented to help the reader realize the character of those who came from New England before the Civil War.

CHAPTER IV

COMMUNITY LIFE

The name Wabaunsee came from a Chief of the Pottawatomie Indian tribe. The Pottawatomes were moved west to Kansas from an area in northern Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio along with the Shawnees. Chief Wabaunsee crept into a Pawnee village one night and killed a number of their warriors single handed. At daybreak while escaping from the village he saw the early dawn in the East and cried out, "Wabaunsee" which means "break of day."¹ The Chief took that for his name thereafter, and his name was adopted by the Colony for their community.

Government

The government of the Connecticut Kansas Colony was simple. The members were to withdraw from the organization, if they could not abide by it's rules.

That in the absence of all regularly organized government in our community and to the end that we may preserve peace and good order among us, it is the duty of every member as a citizen, in fulfillment of the

¹Clyde K. Rodkey, Address, August 25, 1946, Wabaunsee, Kansas.

obligation he voluntarily assumed on joining the company, scrupulously to regard all the rules and regulations that may from time to time be adopted for the common good and protection of the colony, or, if unwilling to do so, to withdraw at once.¹

When the colony arrived in 1856 the land had not been surveyed. Two members of the Colony, J. M. Hubbard and William Hartley,² conducted the first land survey. On June 17, 1857 an organizational meeting was held. It was attended by all members of the Connecticut Kansas Colony, at the Lines and Thomas store in Wabaunsee, for the purpose of organizing a Wabaunsee Town Company, membership was to include all members of the Colony. An agreement was signed at that meeting governing the new organization. It's first officers were: J. P. Root, president; J. H. Gould, secretary; M. C. Welch, treasurer; C. B. Lines, William Mitchell, J. M. Hubbard, H. Jones, trustees.³ The new company was not a permanent organization.

The Township of Wabaunsee is now legally organized and competent to hold property and is a permanent organization while the Wabaunsee Company is only a temporary association soon to be dissolved.⁴

¹Minutes, Connecticut Kansas Colony, August 1, 1856.

²"Wabaunsee History," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 9, September, 1931.)

³"Congregational Church," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 2, February, 1931.)

⁴Minutes, Wabaunsee Town Company, Book I, p. 1, (in archives Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.)

A building known as the Public Hall, was erected by the Wabaunsee Town Company and given to the newly created township for school, religious, and public uses. The first courthouse in Wabaunsee County was at Wabaunsee and was built of stone. The Public Hall was later used as a courthouse. The Wabaunsee Town Company was a legal corporation under the existing territorial laws from the date March 14, 1859.¹

Religious Life

The first church at Wabaunsee was organized June 28, 1857 and was located in a ravine east of the town. It was a small frame building that later served as the home of I. H. Isbell and A. J. Bowman. It was also used as a public school. The upper part of the Town Hall, which was built in 1858, was used for church socials. An unsuccessful effort was made in 1855 to organize a Church. Churchgoers in those days had two main enemies, slavery and alcohol in the drinking form. "The old Church was strong for discipline."² Members of it could not drink liquor, go to "rough" dances, or "mingle" with unsavory characters.³ The first member to be "excommunicated"

¹Minutes, Wabaunsee Town Company, October 5, 1860.

²"Congregational Church," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 2, February, 1931.)

³Ibid.

was for nonsupport of his family. A discipline committee operated to recommend applicants for membership. It took weeks and in some instances more than a year for that committee to decide on a prospective member of the congregation.¹

Large families made up the Wabaunsee church, and they would come to church in spring wagons with "two or three" seats. The whole family came to church and twelve Sunday School classes were held in one room. "I can remember the old Congregational Church and the tall clock with brass pendulum that hung on the north wall. The men's Bible class that gathered near the clock."² The bell of the church was used to call people to worship, to celebrate the advent of the New Year, and to wake up the community on the Fourth of July.³

The Church was organized as the result of meetings held on June 21, 27, and 28, 1857. The original members of it "who covenanted together and sat around the Lord's table" were as follows: Alpheus N. Allen, Mrs. A. N. Allen, John S. Avery, William F. Cotton, S. H. Fairfield, Mrs. Caroline Foss, Franklin H. Hart, Daniel B. Hiatt, Friend W. Ingram, Harlow Isbell, Mrs. Austin Kelsey, Charles B. Lines, Mrs. Maria

¹"Congregational Church," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 2, February, 1931.)

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Lines, Miss Cornelia Lines, Hiram Maybe, John S. Nesbit, Jeremiah Evarts Platt, Chester E. Pond, Mrs. C. E. Pond, Mrs. Mary Read, Hezekiah M. Selden, E. Dwight Street, Mrs. E. D. Street, Moses C. Welch, Julius F. Willard, John Willig, and Reverend Harvey Jones. Reverend S. Y. Lumm of Lawrence preached the first sermon on June 28, 1856.¹

The first officers of the church were Moses C. Welch, clerk; Chester E. Pond, treasurer; and Moses C. Welch and Harlow Isbell, deacons. The Wabaunsee Congregational Church was the fifth oldest congregational church in Kansas. Special services were held commemorating it's Fortieth Anniversary and it's Golden Jubilee was celebrated on June 27 and 28, 1907. The "Central Association of Congregational Churches and Ministers of Kansas" was formed in September, 1871 at Wabaunsee. The church membership numbered 141 in January, 1902. Some of the pastors who served the church were: Rev. Harvey Jones, Rev. W. A. McCullom, Rev. Chas. Guild, Rev. R. M. Tunnell, Rev. M. Officer, Rev. W. B. Christopher, Prof. J. E. Platt (supply pastor), Rev. Harvey Jones, Rev. Wm. T. Blenkarn, Rev. Herman Geer, Rev. W. J. Feemster, Rev. W. T. Blenkarn (supply pastor), Rev. H. S. Payne, Rev. E. Richards, Rev. G. H. Woodhull, Rev. Frank Jackson, Rev. D. H. Scarrow, Rev. Samuel L. Unger, Rev. W. T. Blenkarn, Mr. A. T. Boisen,

¹"History of the Congregational Church," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

Rev. W. I. Jones (supply pastor), Rev. Orlie Miller (supply pastor), and Rev. W. H. Hurlbut.¹

The Sunday schools were held at first in various dugouts and "sod shanties." Small numbers of settlers would congregate at these places for the purpose of Bible study.

The first teacher I can remember was Mrs. Isbell. She had the hallway crowded with little folks that could hardly talk. The way she used to tell Bible stories would keep that bench of children spellbound for the whole hour. We always used to hate to hear the bell that called us into the main room for the closing services.²

Carrie Jones took the Sunday school class after Mrs. Isbell gave it up. After her Mrs. Keyes had us "awhile up in the corner." The hymn perhaps most frequently sung by the children was "Storm, Storm the Fort." Later Walter Blenkarn took the boy's class. He was followed by Lincoln Cotton and Deacon Conrow. As the boys grew older they went to Deacon Willard's class, and from him to A. A. Cottrell's class that met up in the gallery of the church. C. B. Lines taught the "old Men's" class. It was later put under the charge of Enoch Platt and L. M. Benediot. Mrs. St. John, "then Mrs. Deacon Conrow," taught the girls class. Mrs. Earl also taught a class of young girls. Her class of girls

¹"History of the Congregational Church," Wabauunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

²"The Congregational Sunday School," Wabauunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 7, July, 1931.)

ranging in age from ten to twelve years, earned enough money "all by themselves" to paper the church. Mrs. Mitchell taught the young women's class in the corner of the gallery. Mrs. Willard later taught that class. Mrs. Cottrell taught the class of married ladies, "in the northeast corner of the church."¹

The special days of the Sunday School year were Easter, Children's Day, and Christmas. The church was "packed on those days." Canaries in cages hung in different parts of the room, and many flowers were used for decorative purposes. The Sunday School had dedicated workers to keep it functioning. J. H. Gould, Silas Thomas, J. F. Willard, Albert Stiles, George Burt, Sr., Sim Smith, John Conrow, Frank Burt, Sherman Willard, Horace Smith, George Burt, Jr., James Enlow, and H. E. Smith all served as Sunday School Superintendents.²

The Willing Worker Society of Wabauensee was formed by the ladies of the membership of the Congregational Church to aid and assist in the support of their church. It was organized on November 14, 1894 at the home of Mrs. George S. Burt. Its organizing members were as follows: Mrs. Byron Cotton, Mrs. Edith Stewart, Mrs. Jas. Enlow, Sr., Mrs. J. F. Willard, Mrs. Fred Earl, Mrs. George S. Burt, Sr., Mrs. Lulu

¹"The Congregational Sunday School," Wabauensee County Truth, VII, (No. 7, July, 1931.)

²Ibid.

Robinson, first Mrs. Robert Enlow, Mrs. L. M. Benidict, Mrs. E. Richards and Mrs. E. J. Lines. It's constitution was signed by Mesdames Mitchell, Willard, Earl, and Stewart, and it remained unchanged throughout the life of the organization. The organizations first officers were: Mrs. J. P. Willard, president; Mrs. Byron Cotton, vice-president; first Mrs. Robert Enlow, secretary; and Mrs. Edith Stewart, treasurer.¹

The Willing Workers held all day meetings. They sewed rugs, quilts, and garments which they sold at bazaars to raise funds for the church. Entertainments and ice cream socials also brought in finances for the church. The ladies of the church paid off a mortgage of \$400.00 on the parsonage, helped pay the minister's salary, paid for insurance on the church and parsonage, and helped to keep those two buildings in repair. In 1907 they added two rooms to the parsonage. They bought new carpets for the church aisles. During World War I the Willing Workers abandoned their regular meetings to give their time to work for the Red Cross. In 1931 the Willing Workers of Wabausee had over 100 honorary members scattered in different sections of the United States.²

Reverend P. T. Rhodes, pastor of the Wamego M. E. Church,

¹"A Brief History of the Willing Worker Church Society," Wabausee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

²Ibid.

came to Wabaunsee at the request of several residents of the town to organize a Methodist Society. Reverend Rhodes conducted the first meeting on the night of September 21, 1884. Arrangements were made then for services every two weeks at 3:00 p.m. and for Prayer Meetings every Wednesday evening. During the winter of 1884-1885 seventy names were added to the roll of the Church, and Wabaunsee was attached to the Wamego charge. Lots for the Methodist church building were donated by David McNair, Amos Cottrell, William Mitchell, Mr. Jordan, and Mrs. C. B. Lines. The Congregational Church was used by the Methodists until the completion of their own building. The corner stone of their church was laid on November 26, 1884. Reverend P. P. Ingalls of the M. E. Church at Manhattan delivered the address. On Sunday, January 25, 1885, the church was completed and the dedicatory address given by Reverend Ingalls. William Mitchell presented the church to the pastor for the dedication service. The Congregational pastor, Reverend Geere, assisted during the services. An organ for the Church was purchased for the sum of \$125.00 in 1884.¹

The Wabaunsee Ladies Aid was formed by the ladies of the Wabaunsee Methodist Church as the result of a meeting held on July 14, 1892. It's first officers were elected as follows:

¹"Wabaunsee M. E. Church," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

Mrs. Anne Stewart, president; Mrs. H. A. Foy, vice-president; Mrs. Mary Day, secretary; and Mrs. Anna Beckwith, treasurer. Meetings of the Ladies Aid were discontinued during the period of World War I (September 20, 1917 to September 24, 1919.)¹ The Ladies Aid devoted it's time to Red Cross work during that period. On September 24, 1919 the members met at the home of president Mrs. Ida McKelvey and regular activities were resumed. Anna Beckwith was elected president; Mrs. Ida McKelvey, vice-president; Mrs. Jessie Perkins, secretary; Mrs. Mary Osmer, treasurer; and Mrs. Sarah Osmer, chaplain.²

The first burials were on the bereaved family's farm. Later the people of the community used a corner of Henry Smith's farm. The present cemetery, located one mile east of the town of Wabaunsee, was deeded for that purpose by Henry Smith in 1862.³ In the early days when anyone died a walnut casket costing \$6.00 was made by Mr. Cutler. That sum was the only funeral expense in the early days of Wabaunsee.⁴

¹"Wabaunsee Ladies Aid," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

²Ibid.

³Appendix Item No. 7.

⁴Mrs. Emma Goodyear, Letter, Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

Schools

The first school of Wabaunsee County was School District No. 1 which was located in the town of Wabaunsee. It was organized by J. E. Platt, County Superintendent on October 4, 1859. The first school board of District No. 1 were Joshua Smith, George A. Dibble, and Enoch Platt.¹ Miss M. H. Cotton was it's first teacher.

School District No. 2 was located approximately two miles due east of Wabaunsee. It was organized by County Superintendent, J. E. Platt on October 15, 1859. S. A. Baldwin, W. F. Cotton, and Joshua Smith (who was later replaced by L. A. Parker) served on the districts first school board.² Miss Mary A. Dibble (later Mrs. John Smith) taught school in District No. 2 during the Civil War years in her home. Sherman Baldwin, Weldon Beckwith, Robert Banks, and Fred Cotton were some of her students. Additional teachers at School District No. 2 were: Miss Ella Dibble, Miss Carrie Jones, Miss Speer, Messrs. Donaldson, Pillsbury, and Newly, Miss Dickinson, Irene Kelly, Jessie Gould, Henry Castle, and Louise Kreiger. At one time it was a "graded school with two

¹Information given by F. I. Burt and appearing in Wabaunsee County Truth, VIII, (No. 6, June, 1932.)

²Ibid.

teachers."¹

The old school stood on the Mitchell farm. It was a frame building with dimensions approximately twenty four feet by thirty six feet "as nearly as I can remember."² Entrance was by two doors on the west end of the building between which stood the teacher's desk and platform. Blackboards behind the desks were made of walnut and pine. The pupil's desks were well marked with the carvings done by boys with their knives. Later an addition was built to the old school house on the east end and an entrance was cut into the south side of it. There was some discussion in the community as to whether the district should be divided or the new addition be built at the time. "As I recollect" there were over 100 children in attendance at the time.³ Teachers seldom taught more than one year; "few of them dared assume the burden the second time."⁴

The school house was a central part of the life of the community. Dancing and card playing were not allowed in it. A literary society was organized that was called "The

¹Information given by F. I. Burt and appearing in Wabauasee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

Lyceum."¹ The "Lyceum" was a program of music, debate, and readings from the "Chronicle with it's quaint Biblical phraseology."² There were many recitations. The music was usually vocal without an accompaniment. George Beckwith, Sr., J. T. Gonn, and Sherman Baldwin were among the singers. Frequently a quartet would sing "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming." "I can hear it today, o'er the space of more than fifty years."³ Mrs. Gonn and Mrs. Gould sang soprano, while contralto parts were sung by Mrs. M. S. Combs.

There were debates, also, in the school house.

I believe that among the debaters my father was ranked high, and never really was stirred up unless pitted against his brother-in-law William Gotton. Then there was sure to be a passage of wit and sarcasm that was worth hearing.⁴

Others who participated in the debates were Captain William Mitchell, C. B. Lines, M. S. Combs, P. K. Bowes, George S. Beckwith, John Gould and S. A. Baldwin. "I have heard my father tell of 'Lyceum' debates and programs held there as early as 1871 or 1872."⁵ "I have never known of a community

¹Information given by F. I. Burt and appearing in Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

²Ibid.

³"Old District No. 2," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

⁴Ibid.

⁵"Extracts from a Letter by William Bowes," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

where the seasons were so enlivened with so wholesome a social life, entered into by so large a section of the community."¹

Underground Railroad

Due to the illegality of its operation, little information concerning the stations of the underground railroad was disseminated. Men who were active in it maintained the strictest of silence in regard to it. Even with their wives and children they were reluctant to divulge any of their activities in assisting runaway slaves from the South that were enroute to freedom in Canada.² Because of the treatment by the United States courts at the time slaves were personal property. Slaves were subject to extradition back to their masters from whom they had fled quite regardless of the particular state of the federal union in which they might have sought sanctuary.³ Secrecy was imperative in order for them to successfully make good their escape. Caution was necessary for the violators of the law to avoid prosecution

¹"Old District No. 2," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1831.)

²Interview, H. E. Smith.

³Ibid.

until Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1861. The provisions of that act made secrecy no longer necessary. Reliable information concerning the underground railroad was therefore scant and almost completely dependent on personal memories given orally to close friends or relatives after the period of secretiveness was safely ended for the conductors and station keepers.

Probably there were few activities of the underground railroad prior to the coming of the Connecticut Kansas Colony in the vicinity of Wabaunsee. "Underground operations apparently became active at Wabaunsee when the Beecher Bible and Rifle Company colonized that locality in the early part of 1856."¹ One of the reasons for this inactivity was that there were few inhabitants of the area before the coming of the colony. There were only fifty nine residents in what is now Wabaunsee township at the time of the arrival of the main body of abolitionists in 1856.² The committee of welcome for the colony consisted of three men: Peter Sharaf, J. M. Bisbey, and Joshua Smith.³ Reference is made in this work to H. E. Smith and it might be well to mention the fact of his relationship as son and grandson to John Smith and Joshua Smith

¹W. H. Siebert, Paper, in possession of Maude J. Mitchell.

²Appendix Item No. 6.

³Interview, H. E. Smith.

respectively. John Smith in particular was, so far as is known, one of those men most actively engaged in the underground railroad's conveying system in the area in and around Wabaunsee.

One of the stations of the underground railroad was a one room log cabin in which Captain Mitchell lived.¹ The runaway slaves were kept hidden in the attic of the cabin by day and away from the eyes of curious and dangerous observers. This historic station of the underground railroad has been maintained in it's early Kansas condition. The present house in which the daughter of Captain Mitchell now lives has been built around the original log cabin of her father. Reference in this work is made to Miss Maude J. Mitchell, who is now living; and it is interesting to note here that she is the daughter of Captain Mitchell. She is a former art student at Columbia University, New York City, and uses her father's log cabin as an art studio. Her art studio exists today as one of the most historic spots in the state. This station of the illegal transportation system was most conveniently located on the Mitchell farm adjoining the farm of John Smith who was one of the conductors of the underground railroad.²

¹Interview, Maude J. Mitchell.

²Interview, H. E. Smith.

There were other stations in the southeastern part of Wabaunsee County near the town of Harveyville.¹ They are, however, not within the scope of this work. It was at these stations that doubtless numerous runaway slaves were given places of refuge. Many of them later passed through the stations in the vicinity of Wabaunsee and of the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony in the northern extremity of the county. The scope of this work is confined mainly to the vicinity of Wabaunsee town because that area was the center of activity of the Connecticut Kansas Colony. The farms of Enoch Platt and J. M. Bisbey, located several miles south of Wabaunsee, also served as stations along the route to freedom. J. M. Bisbey did not act as a conductor on the system, but rather as a station-keeper and agent who passed instruction and warnings to the conductors and their passengers.² If there were other underground railroad stations near Wabaunsee, John Smith did not divulge knowledge of their existence to his son H. E. Smith.³

The conductors of the underground system were Captain Mitchell, Enoch Platt, and John Smith. The operations were carried out at night under cover of darkness. H. E. Smith

¹Interview, H. E. Smith.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

relates that frequently his father would hear a knock at the door about 9:00 o'clock in the evening and be informed that Captain Mitchell wanted to see him. His father would say nothing, put on his coat, and leave the house to be off into the night.¹ There is no way of knowing how many runaway slaves passed through Wabaunsee or the number of occasions that the railroad was used. At no time were any of the operators of it apprehended by law enforcement officers.²

Although most draft animals used in the area were oxen, the fugitives from the South were always transported by a team of horses. Horses were more valuable for the purposes of the conductors, because of their speed. Four or five slaves would be put in a wagon covered with hay and sped northward drawn by a team of mares. The team used belonged to John Smith.³

There seems to be a difference in opinion as to the route of the underground railroad system. According to H. E. Smith, his father forded the Kansas River in it's shallow waters a fraction of a mile east of the site of the present bridge at Wamego. His father also forded a crossing a short distance

¹Interview, H. E. Smith.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

east of St. George, passing through the ripples there. After leaving either St. George or Wamego they would proceed in a northwesterly direction along a trail passing near what is now Fostoria and ultimately going to a station in Nebraska.¹ Charles E. Drum, Postmaster of Centralia, Kansas, seemed to think that the underground railroad went farther to the east of Fostoria and near Centralia.² Both routes may have decided which one would be most advisable to follow for safety's sake, and one might have been used as an alternate to the other in instances when pro-slavery forces were in close proximity to the trail.

Music Activities

The first band was organized at Wabaunsee in the year "1878 or 1879,"³ and was called the "Early Dawn Cornet Band." Its membership and instrumentation was as follows: Henry M. Jones, E flat cornet and leader; Louis Woods, E flat cornet and instructor; Horace B. Jones, B flat solo cornet; Milt

¹Interview, H. E. Smith.

²Letter, November 11, 1935 to W. H. Siebert, Professor at Ohio State University, mentioned in a paper in Maude J. Mitchell's collection.

³"The Wabaunsee Brass Band," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 7, July, 1931.)

McClain, first B flat cornet; George Shanks, solo alto; Charles Kreiger, Jr., second alto; Jude Lapham, first "tenor" or trombone; Sherman A. Baldwin, first B flat cornet and tuba; Louis Kreiger, bass drum; Henry O'Briard, snare drum; George Evans, snare drum; Hart Perry, tuba; and Albert Combs, piccolo or clarinet. The band was "short lived." While it existed however, it was a "real" one.¹ One of its engagements was to play in support of a bond election for the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame Railway.

"As I remember, it was in 1884² that the second band was organized."³ This musical group used the old instruments that had been used by the Early Dawn Cornet Band. It also functioned under the "same by-laws and governing" rules as had it's predecessor. Almost one half its membership had played in the earlier band. "This band was in big demand on gala days." It played for Sunday School picnics, "Decoration Days," and Fourth of July Celebrations.⁴ Frequently it participated in such events held at nearby towns. On one occasion the band rode to Alma in a lumber wagon with board seats. The discomforts of that trip were so great and the pains so real that

¹"The Wabaunsee Brass Band," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 7, July, 1931.)

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

the members of the band a short time thereafter constructed a band wagon with a comfortable seating capacity for all the bandsmen. This wagon was drawn by four horses. The following is a list of the members of the second band and the instruments they played: Horace B. Jones, solo cornet and leader; Henry M. Jones, E flat cornet; Louis Woods, E flat cornet and instructor; Sherman Smith, E flat cornet; William T. Stewart, E flat cornet; Henry Isbell, first B flat cornet; Sherman Baldwin, B flat tuba; George Smith, first tenor; William Wiley, second tenor; Jude Lapham, trombone; J. E. Stewart, baritone and tuba; George Shanks, solo alto; Chas. McCutcheon, tuba; Frank Lemly, alto; D. W. Johnson, bass drum; Orville Johnson, snare drum; Albert Peterson, snare drum; Arthur Foltz, B flat bass; Geo. W. Johnson, tuba.¹ F. I. Burt stated that several members of the Connecticut Kansas Colony brought band instruments with them, and "played together back in the 50's and 60's."²

Singing Schools were held every year at Wabaunsee, dating back to the early 1870's. Professor Everts Platt of Manhattan, Kansas started the first one which was held in the

¹"The Wabaunsee Brass Band," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 7, July, 1931.)

²Article, Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 7, July, 1931.)

Congregational church. The pupils met once a week for ten weeks, and the fee was \$1.00 for ten lessons. Professor Platt taught singing for more than two years at Wabaunsee. Each year's school was completed by a concert at which the pupils exhibited their talents to the public. Later D. S. Abbott held a singing class in the school house at Wabaunsee. Mr. Charles Mortimer Hubbell, who was a Yale graduate and a "superior musician," gave lessons on the organ since there were no pianos in the community at that time. Louis Wood, of St. George, held a singing school and was director of the town band. Professor Slie came from Topeka to instruct the community's residents in singing, and his pupils presented a cantata "Queen Esther."¹ Other music teachers were Mr. and Mrs. Dunham, a Mr. Harris, and a Mr. Brady.²

Sports

Sports were an important part of the early day life of the Wabaunsee community, and the American national game of baseball had it's "goodly" number of enthusiasts. In the words of Raymond Mitchell, "I regard my experiences as Major-

¹Taken from a letter written by Mrs. Mabel Cotton Smith, Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 10, October, 1931.)

²"The Old Singing School," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 3, March, 1931.)

Dome of the Wabaunsee Base Ball Club of great value and I look back upon that period as one of great profit."¹ Saturday afternoon games were usually scheduled after several nights of effort during the week had been spent in persuading the fathers to "let off" their sons from work. Transportation to and from the games was usually on horseback. Sometimes the railroad velocipede which "my brother Alex owned" was used to transport the baseball team, "without permission of the railroad authorities - over the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame Railway."² At that time the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame Railway extended from Alma to Manhattan. Eleven dependable players could always be counted on to play baseball for Wabaunsee. They were "four of the Smith boys, - George, Sim, Howard, and Bert, - Charlie Goff, Jack Wiley, Joe Buzzard, Fred Conrow, 'Lex' Cutler, and my brother, Will, and myself."³ Sometimes during farming seasons all could not get away from their work to play ball, and a full nine for the game was not always easily mustered. Wabaunsee played baseball teams from the surrounding towns of Alma, Manhattan, Tabor Valley, Eskridge, and Wamego. The Wabaunsee ball club could not financially

¹"Baseball at Wabaunsee in the 80's," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 7, July, 1931.)

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

afford uniforms and so dressed according to individual taste. Equipment for the players was limited. "My brother Will and I had a homemade catchers mit." A Manhattan shoemaker made it from "our design." Places on the team were interchangeable. The following "general arrangement" was used: Catchers; Jack Wiley, Ray Mitchell, Pitchers; Charlie Goff, Joe Buzzard, First base; George Smith, Will Mitchell, Second base; Charlie Goff, Joe Buzzard, Howard Smith, Third base; Sam Smith, Short stop; Jack Wiley, Ray Mitchell, Fielders; Will Mitchell, Howard Smith, Fred Connor, 'Lex' Cutler, Bert Smith. Will Tall served as umpire. Only one game played on the Wabaunsee grounds ended in a misunderstanding, but there was not a fight at that game over it. Tall's decisions were "fair, definite," and promptly given. The ball used in the game went to the winning team. When the team played at county fairs there was sometimes a percentage agreement arranged in advance over the division of the purse but usually there was no "consideration" for playing the game. The use of the curve ball was first taught the Wabaunsee team by Al Chamberlain, who came to Kansas from Michigan about 1885. Al Chamberlain was a cousin of Alex and H. Raymond Mitchell.¹

¹"Baseball at Wabaunsee in the 80's," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 7, July, 1931.)

Business

Business life began at Wabaunsee soon after the arrival of the Connecticut Kansas Colony. E. J. Lines built his own store building and was the first merchant in the town. Stock for the store was freighted in by oxteam from Leavenworth. Many of Mr. Line's customers were migratory Indians.

Indians would stop at his store to trade skins. Mrs. Lines told of a group of Indians who tricked her husband. As Mr. Lines would receive the hides from the Indians he would throw them outside of the building on a flight of stairs. The Indians would sneak around and pick them up and go in and resell them to her husband. Mr. Lines wanted mink skins primarily. There was no market for skunk skins but he was forced to pay ten cents a piece for them in order to get the mink skins. The Indians would not sell the hides separately.

E. J. Lines died in 1861, and his father, C. B. Lines took over the management of the business. C. A. Read, who lived at Wabaunsee as late as 1883, was a clerk in the store. Mr. J. P. Evans was also a clerk in the store during the 1860's. The store was unused in 1877, and was not again stocked with groceries until 1880. At that time a Mr. Jackson, who had been living near the Wild Cat Crossing west of Manhattan, put a stock of groceries in it. Mr. Jackson was in the store but a short time.

The E. B. Purcell Elevator Company built a store at Wabaunsee in the spring of 1881. They stocked their store with a line of general merchandise. W. H. Blenkarn went to work in that store on July 21, 1881 and stayed with the firm until late in 1884. Captain Mitchell, who had been the depot agent for the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame Railway and the superintendent of the E. B. Purcell Elevator Company since its beginning business at Wabaunsee, bought the store in 1884. He was successful in getting the post office moved into his establishment. The store was built on the railroad's land a little distance northeast of the depot.

When Mr. Blenkarn started with the store in 1881 granulated sugar sold for \$1.00 per seven and one half pounds. One could buy canned fruit, but no canned vegetables were to be obtained. Packers did not think vegetables would keep in cans. Canned vegetables did not come on the market until after 1884. The store paid the farmers six to ten cents a pound for their butter. In the winter eggs were bought for ten cents per dozen, but in summer the prices paid to the farmers for them dropped to as low as three cents per dozen. Eggs were shipped out of Wabaunsee to various commission houses in returnable cases which had a capacity of thirty dozen each.

Mr. Blenkarn in the spring of 1885 went into partnership with S. R. Weed. S. R. Weed was known as "Uncle Sam" and he had been operator of the Line's store. Miles Osmer and L. C.

Johnson later operated a store in a building south of the old Woodmen hall. A Mr. Marsh succeeded them. Other merchants at Wabaunsee were a Mr. Dermit and J. E. Pett. Ernest Wilson operated a store in the second Woodmen hall. A Mr. Stone succeeded Mr. Mitchell for several years. Louie LaTour managed the first store in the old Woodmen hall in 1900. Sylvester Fowler took over his business in 1901 and was followed by Mathew McKelvey in 1904. Mr. McKelvey's business was destroyed by a fire shortly after he took over the enterprise. It happened that on the night of the fire an entertainment was in progress. No one lost his life, but all the records and lodge equipment of the Woodmen, Royal Neighbors, Grand Army of the Republic, and the Women's Relief Corps were destroyed. Mr. McKelvey went into business again at another location in Wabaunsee.¹

The Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame Railway came through Wabaunsee in 1879. To celebrate the completion of that road a special train was run from Manhattan to Alma and everyone was given a free ride. There was no Wabaunsee station in use on that day, so a temporary side track was built on a curve southwest of the Congregational Church. A crowd assembled around the old courthouse that stood on a hill a short distance

¹"Short Story of the Mercantile Life of Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 2, February, 1931.)

west of the track. The train was late on that day so the Wabaunsee band entertained the people with a long concert. Just as darkness was approaching the train came up the hill. It was made up of about a dozen flat cars with ties lying crosswise on them for seats. Mr. E. B. Purcell of Manhattan had charge of the train on that run.¹

Personal Experiences

Early pioneer life remained vivid in the mind of a granddaughter of J. M. Bisbey, and she has recorded many instances told to her of the conditions of life in the Wabaunsee community in the 1850's.

When my grandfather, J. M. Bisbey, decided to take his family and go out into the wild west to make for them a home somewhere, the whole village of Pavilion, New York, where they lived were concerned and interested they gathered to bid them goodbye and God speed. They presented them with a fine big cook stove with an acorn design on it and a big copper lined reservoir at the back. This stove lasted for many years. Then there was a big iron kettle and an iron tea kettle, a large copper boiler and the iron ladle and dipper and pans. All these conveniences did lessen the hardships of pioneering very materially.²

Mr. Bisbey brought along with him a big iron sap kettle that

¹"When the Santa Fe Came to Town," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 2, February, 1931.)

²"Tales of Pioneer Times at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 9, October, 1935.)

had been used for making maple sugar in New York state, and a Seth Thomas Clock.

The Bisbey's came westward to Kansas City in the spring of 1854, coming "partly by rail and partly by steamboat." They stayed long enough in Kansas City to procure an oxteam and a covered wagon, and with these continued on their journey to Wabaunsee. Between Kansas City and Wabaunsee they encountered Indians.

Grandmother said that one day as they journeyed along, when one of the boys was driving the oxteam and grandfather was walking a little distance behind, all of a sudden from they didn't know where, there came a band of Indians toward them at full speed on their ponies. They circled round and round them. It was very alarming. Grandfather didn't know what to do. He did the only thing there seemed to be to do. He raised his cane high above his head and swung it around and shouted 'get out of here!' at the top of his voice--they got!

It might have been that because of Indian superstition the Bisbey's escaped with their lives. Mr. Bisbey had a stiff knee and always walked with the aid of a cane. Mr. Bisbey's unusual affliction and the fact that he did not carry a gun may have saved the whole family from death.

The Bisbey's "never made more than five miles a day with the oxteam." The tasks of cooking, eating, and camping, together with the slow gaited oxen made the journey a slow one

¹"Tales of Pioneer Times at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 9, October, 1935.)

for them. Finally they came to a site on Antelope Creek, and the location pleased them with it's "rich black" soil. They liked the creek and the woods so well they just stopped at Wabaunsee to make it their home.¹

One of the first things to be done was to provide for a water supply. Mr. Bisbey made a bob sled "just large enough, with cleats to hold the big water barrel. It had shaped logs for runners." In summer Mr. Bisbey always hauled water for the house on "every other" day with a big horse that he owned. Mrs. Bisbey used the water to make "that sweet golden butter I shall never forget." There was much to be done that first year. The weather was very mild so they went through that first winter with only a tent with a built up foundation. "An old bachelor," who had once been a candy maker, made candy for the Bisbey children in the form of "ships and fruit and such things." The Bisbeys had taken in the bachelor and given him a home.

The first winter passed "quite well and comfortably but not so the second." The log cabin did not keep out the cold of winter and the family suffered. The third winter the Bisbeys erected a new and larger cabin from heavier logs. One day the old bachelor found a little badger in the woods and gave it to

¹"Tales of Pioneer Times at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 9, October, 1935.)

one of the Bisbey girls for a pet. The badger went away frequently. He always came back home, but one day the badger "learned some tricks with chickens that grandmother didn't think were a bit cute. Mother was his only mourner."¹

Mr. Bisbey went to Fort Leavenworth to obtain supplies at the trading post there. The trip for provisions usually took two weeks. On one occasion he was gone a month with his oxteam. The family was almost out of food when he returned. All they had to eat was some old frozen potatoes, and a little meat from an "old old cow" that was "tough" even after an "all day's" cooking. While he was gone there were Indians near the Bisbey home. One day "the ooys came tearing into the cabin" to tell their mother not to worry they would take care of her. They took down the guns and bolted the door, only to have the Indians hurry by without the anticipated clash. However, they thought the Indians had "gotten" Mr. Bisbey. One night after putting the children safely in bed, and sitting down to wonder what had happened to her husband she heard the oxchain fall on the ground in the yard. "It was the most welcome sound she had ever heard. Grandfather was back and with plenty of provisions." Mr. Bisbey had been detained because of high water. He had to ford several

¹"Tales of Pioneer Times at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 9, October, 1935.)

streams, and there had been a continual downpour that had made the roads impassable and streams too high to cross.¹

An Indian Chief came to the Bisbey's cabin one day. He wanted 'chicken' and pointed to some pullets. "Grandmother pointed to some large cockerells and nodded her head." She did not want to part with her hens. The chief grunted in disapproval, jerked his head and said 'Ugh--me want squaw chicken!' "He got it."² Mr. Bisbey cured his own bacon. Pioneers of those days were almost selfsustaining. One day the Indians came asking for bacon, and Mr. Bisbey traded the only piece of bacon he had for a "little runty" Indian pony. The piece of moldy bacon was about seven inches square. The trade was made and "mother was very happy for she had a real pal." The Indian pony was only a little larger than a sheep. Mother rode him to school, favored him with sugar, and "spoiled him to death."³ One of the Bisbey girls taught school near Alma and the pony carried her to work on days when the weather was good. Indians frightened the school children, but never hurt them. They would peer curiously in the windows of the school house.

"It must have been in the '60's that grandfather cut down

¹"Tales of Pioneer Times at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 9, October, 1935.)

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

a big walnut tree on Antelope Creek."¹ Mr. Bisbey, aided by A. C. Cutler of Wabauunsee, made a "secretary" from it. He locked his "prized" books of history and law, along with several volumes of an encyclopedia, behind it's glass doors.

The Bisbeys never used their big iron sap kettle that they had brought from New York for the intended purpose for which it was made. Mrs. Bisbey saved wood ashes and soaked them in water to make her own lye. From homemade lye and the fat and drippings from the family's home butchered meat she made her own soap. She would take the big sap kettle, build a fire under it, and make a big barrel of soft soap. The family used this homemade soap for the laundry, dishwashing, and the hands. In those days homemade soap such as this was the best obtainable. When butchering time came the big sap kettle was used to render the lard. Beef and mutton tallow was used to make candles. Most families possessed candle molds among their household utensils.

Reading was mainly from Mr. Bisbey's law and history books, and it was not until several years after their arrival that regular mail service from the East was possible. After regular mail service was established the New York Tribune came into the Bisbey home. Since the family had come from Pavilion,

¹"Tales of Pioneer Times at Wabauunsee," Wabauunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 9, October, 1935.)

New York, they named their location in Kansas after the town from which they came. Pavilion is today a name that still denotes the area immediately south of Wabaunsee. At one time there was a post office there and it was a station along the Manhattan, Alma, and Burlingame railroad. Mr. Bisbey was postmaster at Pavilion for many years. Thus is in substance an account of early day life in the Wabaunsee community, as remembered by the granddaughter of those who lived it, and as it was told to her.¹

Wild Life

Residents of the Wabaunsee community who are accustomed to familiar domesticated animals can not realize the quantity of wild life and the numerous species of it that once roamed the area. "I think that around the year 1860 the Kansas outfit of buffalo, elk, antelope, deer, wolves, bobcats, prairie dogs and badgers, must have been at it's maximum."² The buffalo was the largest game animal of the area and of Kansas. It was also the first to be a victim of civilization's march.

¹"Tales of Pioneer Times at Wabaunsee," Wabaunsee County Truth, XI, (No. 9, October, 1935.)

²"Wild Animals in Kansas Sixty Years Ago," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 2, February, 1931.)

In the spring the herds of buffalo would come north from Oklahoma and Texas. Some of these herds of buffalo numbered into the millions. One immense herd of buffalo was fifty miles in depth, and it required five days to pass a given point.¹ This particular herd numbered approximately 480,000 head. The buffalo migration was about 300 to 400 miles in length. They would return south again to spend the winter on southern pastures. The Kaw and Pottawatomie Indians would go westward in the autumn for buffalo hunting and bring back wagon loads of meat to sell to the people of Wabaunsee. The buffalo was exterminated between the years 1867 and 1880, and the great herd that once numbered roughly 4,000,000 head vanished as a result of systematic slaughter.

Hundreds of prong-horned antelope roamed the Kansas ranges in the early days. Elk also once lived in the state. White tailed deer, badgers, bobcats, prairie dogs and gray wolves made the state their home too.² Civilization came and with it the extinction of much of the wild life. Kansas is not the hunter's dream that it once was long ago. Only coyotes to hunt during the winter months, the cotton-tails that hide in the corn fields in the fall, and the squirrels

¹"Wild Animals in Kansas Sixty Years Ago," Wabaunsee County Truth, VII, (No. 2, February, 1931.)

²Ibid.

that chase in the timber along the river and creek banks, still survive for modern Nimrods.

This final chapter has described some of the phases of community life that developed in a few years after the arrival of the Colony. It tried to convey an idea of what life was like in the community to which the Colony came. Little information was given concerning the practice of agriculture, and while that came to be the dominant economic factor in the area much has been written on the subject elsewhere. The information in this chapter was intended to give the reader facts concerning government, the religious and social life, and business activities in the Colony area. Education in the community was covered, and information on the Underground Railroad and early wild life were included, because it was thought that these two subjects would be of special interest.

SUMMARY

Wabaunsee never became the second New Haven, Connecticut that the men of Yale and the Connecticut Kansas Colony had planned. Its mercantile life withered to almost nothing, and the building of the Union Pacific Railroad on the north side of the Kansas River made its position, as the trading center it was in early times, untenable. It became, instead, an agricultural community, which has endured drouths, floods, and grasshopper invasions while progressing from oxen and Indian ponies to multi-horsepowered tractors and automobiles with air foam rubber cushions.

The respect and love for both God and Man that was brought from New England by the Colony helped to produce people capable of living when the dark clouds of danger frowned ominously and the sunshine of good fortune smiled beneficently on them. The "common schools" that in the words of Whittier they came to plant "on distant prairie swells" placed instruments in the hands of their children with which they could help to shape their own destinies.

Descendants of the Colony have gone into every corner of America, building sinews of character and strength into Her body, and although few remain in the community to bear their names, the Stone Church still stands as a reminder to our generation of that brave band who would venture into the

savage unknown to protect the cherished ideals they held near
and dear in their hearts.

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APPENDIX

ITEM NUMBER ONE

AGREEMENT OF THE CONNECTICUT KANSAS COMPANY

We, the undersigned, do hereby agree to unite in a Company for emigrating to Kansas in the Month of March next, and to be governed by, and act upon the following principles--

The Company shall consist of from twenty five to one hundred and fifty men, and when twenty five names are subscribed to this document a meeting of the subscribers shall be called by C. B. Lines and H. A. Wilcox to organize the Company temporarily.

The business of the Company shall be so managed as to give equal facilities and advantages, as far as possible, to all according to their circumstances.

A majority vote shall decide all questions in regard to the Company's affairs. New Haven, Connecticut, February 18, 1856

Chas. B. Lines	New Haven
H. A. Wilcox	Manhattan, K. T.
Weston Ferris	New Haven
Timothy Read	Milford, Conn.
Rollin Moses	New Haven, Conn.
Daniel F. Scranton	North Guilford, Conn.
John J. Walter	Hamden, Conn.
C. E. Pond and Lady	New Haven, Conn.

H. W. Tomlinson	New Haven, Conn.
Amos A. Cottrell	Cheshire, Conn.
William Hartley Jr	New Haven, Conn.
Benjamin Street	East Haven, Conn.
E. Dwight Street	East Haven, Conn.
Thomas C. P. Hyde	Bolton, Conn.
Silas M. Thomas	New Haven, Conn.
Joseph D. Farren	New Haven, Conn.
Nathan Wm. Oviatt	New Haven, Conn.
Franklin H. Hart	Durham, Conn.
Alfred J. Huntington	Bozrah, Conn.
Julius F. Willard	West Avon, Conn.
Harvey D. Rice	West Hartford
Buel E. Root	West Hartford
Walter Webb	Meriden
Luther H. Root	Meriden
John Breckenridge	West Meriden
Rollon C. Crane	Thompson
E. M. Woodford	West Avon
L. A. Parker	West Avon
Isaac North	Berlin
Joseph P. Root	New Hartford Centre
James H. Kellogg	New Hartford Centre
Josiah M. Hubbard Jr	Middletown
Edward N. Penfield	Middletown, Conn.

Harvey S. Hall	New Haven, Conn.
Ezekiel Hall	West Meriden, Conn.
Wm. A. Parmele	New Haven, Conn.
Augustus S. Lankester	Ellington, Conn.
Edward C. Lines	New Haven, Conn.
Edwd Church	New Haven, Conn.
Wm. Mitchell Jr	Middletown
Charles Tverell	West Meriden
Orange Bardwell	New Haven
James L. Hull	New Haven
Henry Kibbe Pease	Hartford, Conn.
Geo. H. Coe	New Haven, Conn.
R. P. Norcott	Portland, Conn.
Andrew P. Bailey	Middletown
Charles F. Beekley	Meriden, Conn.
H. Ranney	Cromwell, Conn.
Hiram Elmer	West Hartford Frenches Hotel N. Y.
Henry Barrett	Wethersfield, Conn.
Richd. W. Griswold by CBL	Guilford, Conn.
E. H. Penfield by CBL	Middletown, Conn.
Lemuel Tuttle	Bloomfield, Conn.
George H. Thomas	Berlin, Conn.
Henry Ocorr	Hartford, Conn.
M. C. Welch (per T. C. P. Hyde)	Hartford

Edward N. Crapman	Derby, Conn.
Levi W. Clark	Middletown
Hezekiah M. Selden Jr	Middle Haddam
Bryan C. Porter (per T.H.)	
George Wells	Hartford, Conn.
Abel Allen by CBL	Devereux, N. Y.
Freeman Johnson by CBL	Middletown, Conn.
Alfred C. Oviatt	Milford, Conn. pr T. R.
Isaac W. Goldsmith	Milford, Conn. pr T. R.
Lewis Neale by CBL	West Minster
Sherman A. Baldwin	New Britain, Conn.
H. D. Bishop	Plymouth, Conn.
Ward Terry	Plymouth, Conn.
F. W. Ingham	Middletown, Conn. per Hyde
Harlow Isbell	Guilford
John W. Wilcox	Milford
Perry Cadwell	Plymouth
Walter S. Griswold	Guilford, Conn.
Ferris Lake	New Haven, Conn.
Elford J. Lines	New Haven, Conn.
Isaac Fenn	
Chas. A. Ford	New Haven, Conn.
Wm. G. McNary	New Hartford, Conn.
Westen W. Tomlinson	New Haven
Hiram Griggs	

Sam'l F. Kelsey	New Haven
S. A. Wilcox	New Hartford
Wilfred Ford	New Haven
Geo Henry	Hartford, Conn.
Wm. Henry	New Haven

Copied without alterations or additions from the original
Minutes of the Connecticut Kansas Colony by W. A. O.

ITEM NUMBER TWO

AGREEMENT

The undersigned having associated together for the purpose of emigrating to Kansas, agree to be bound and governed by the following articles of agreement. 1st. The Company shall be called the Connecticut Kansas Colony, and consist of all who subscribe to these articles and comply with the conditions herein contained, the number not to exceed one hundred and fifty. 2nd. The officers of the Company shall consist of a President, Secretary, Treasurer and six others who together shall constitute a Board of Directors, all to be chosen by Ballot at the first regular meeting of the Company and to hold their office for six months and until others shall be chosen in their stead.

The President, Secretary and Treasurer shall perform the duties ordinarily assigned to those offices, and the Board of Directors shall have the entire control of the affairs of the association under the direction of the Company. 3rd. The President, or in his absence or disability, the Senior Director shall call meetings of the company whenever requested to do so by any ten of the members. 4th. It is understood and agreed that a Committee of five to be appointed by the Board of Directors shall proceed to the Territory, leaving New Haven as soon as possible after the 15th and before the 20th twentieth

of March 1856 whose special business it shall be to traverse the most eligible portions of the territory and fix upon a location for the Company, it being understood that said Committee shall associate with them all such members as may find it practicable to leave in their company, and consult with them, in relation to the different localities, and whenever the Committee shall have decided upon a location it is then agreed that each member present shall temporarily file upon one hundred and sixty acres of land and hold it until the remaining members of the Company shall arrive upon the ground. 5th. All persons who shall have subscribed to this Agreement or by letter indicated their wish to join in the enterprise, and shall have been approved by the board of Directors shall be entitled to a full and equal participation in all the privileges of the members of the Company provided he arrives upon the ground on or before the fifth* day of April, 1856, and any person arriving after that time may for good and sufficient reasons be admitted to full membership by vote of the Company. *Time extended to April 15 by vote.

6th. On or before the fifth of May the board of Directors shall cause an apprizal of all the Separate quarter Sections of land that shall have been secured by the members of the company to be made and a report of the same to be presented at a meeting of the company, and when said apprizal shall have been approved by a Major vote, the choice of claims shall be

sold at auction to the highest bidder, provided that the average price of all the choices shall be \$200.00 and that each person selecting shall pay into the Treasury the amount his claim may be appraised over the average, or receive from the Treasurer the amount it may be appraised less. 7th. It shall be the duty of the board of Directors to secure, as far as possible a survey of the land, based upon the probable boundaries ultimately to be fixed by the Government, and to agree upon a compensation for such services and any other necessary expenditures for the good of the Company and lay an assessment upon the members for the payment of the same -- provided no funds shall be in the treasury, from other sources. 8th. It shall be the privilege of each member to withdraw from the Company at any time after arriving in the Territory, provided he wishes to locate in some other Section. 9th. The village property shall be distributed upon some plan similar to that proposed for the distribution of the claims; to be agreed upon by the Company. 10th. The Company shall be dissolved whenever a Town Government can be legally organized.

Chas. B. Lines

Henry W. Tomlinson

William Hartley Jr

J. D. Farren

Geo H. Coe

L. B. Humphries

Nathan Wm. Oviatt	
Franklin H. Hart	
Weston Ferris	
Silas M. Thomas	
Luther H. Root	
Josiah M. Hubbard Jr	Middletown, Conn.
Rollon C. Crane	
Walter Webb	
Wm. Mitchell Jr.	Middletown, Conn.
James L. Hull	
Edward Church	
Andrew P. Bailey	Middletown, Conn.
Orange Bardwell	New Haven, Conn.
Rollin Moses	New Haven, Conn.
Amos A. Cottrell	
Isaac North	Berlin, Conn.
R. P. Norcott	
Benjamin Street	East Haven, Conn.
John J. Walter	Hamden
Thos. C. P. Hyde	Bolton
Charles F. Beckley	Meriden, Conn.
Edward C. Lines	
E. Dwight Street	East Haven, Conn.
Hiram Elmer	West Hartford, Conn.
Henry Ocorr	Hartford, Conn.

Timothy Read	Milford, Conn.
Ira T. Neal	Winsted
William A. Parmele	New Haven
Hezekiah M. Selden Jr	Middle Haddam
Edward Gillette	New Haven
Lemuel Tuttle	Bloomfield, Conn.
George Wells	Hartford, Conn.
Alfred C. Oviatt	Milford, Conn.
Sherman A. Baldwin	New Britain, Conn.
Perry Cadwell	Plymouth
John W. Wilcox	Milford
Isaac W. Goldsmith	Milford
W. S. Griswold	Guilford, Conn.
Isaac Fenn	
Ferris Lake	New Haven, Conn.
Hiram Griggs	
Sam'l F. Kelsey	New Haven, Conn.
Sherman A. Wilcox	New Hartford
Joseph P. Root	New Hartford Centre
E. M. Woodford	West Avon
Julius F. Willard	West Avon
Harvey P. Rice	West Hartford
B. E. Root	West Hartford
Henry Barrett	Wethersfield, Conn.
Harlow Isbell	Guilford, Conn.

Daniel F. Scranton

Guilford, Conn.

Peter Eastman Jones

Wallingford, Conn.

Copied without alterations or additions from the original
Minutes of the Connecticut Kansas Colony by W. A. O.

ITEM NUMBER THREE

Wabaunsee, Kansas, July 18, 1856

The resolutions were adopted, as follows:

Whereas the original object of this company in preempting land for a town site was in part to secure to the members of the company who remain and become residents in the vicinity, the pecuniary advantages resulting from the enterprise--Therefore

Voted That the division of lots recommended by the committee be approved and adopted, and the distribution of the parcels be made in accordance therewith, subject to the following terms and conditions:

1st All the parcels into which the Town Site has been divided, as represented by a map in the possession of the Treasurer, and attested by the Com. except the reservations, shall be numbered and registered, under the supervision of the committee, in a book kept for that purpose by the Treasurer of the Company and corresponding numbers shall be prepared and placed in a box, to be drawn from by the members.

2nd Each regular member of the Company, who shall have paid his assessments, and at the time of the drawing resides among us, shall be authorized to draw one parcel, which when drawn shall be duly entered and

described in the Treasurer's book, and a certificate furnished of the same, but it will not be competent for any member to draw by any other member than himself.

3rd Absent members of the Company, and all others prevented in any way from drawing, at the time first designated, may have an opportunity on application to the President, and by consent of the board of Directors, at any time previous to the first day of July, 1857, and the Company, for good and sufficient reasons, may extend the privilege to original members beyond that period, but no person can claim it as a right. No special drawing shall take place except at a meeting of the Board of Directors, a record of the same being made at the time.

4th The Company convey no title to the lots by virtue of the certificates given to the members, but only a guarantee to secure to each member the parcel drawn by him, whenever a title shall be obtained from the Government by the preemptors; but this guarantee cannot extend to any member who shall have abandoned the company prior to that time. The parcels drawn by such persons of necessity revert to the Company, to be disposed of as they shall judge best.

5th Any member wishing to convey to others his right to

ultimate possession of any part or all of the parcel of lots held by him, has full right to do so, but the Company cannot be held responsible by virtue of such conveyance to secure to the purchasers a good title to the same in the event of the withdrawal from the Company of the original owner: and in all such cases the purchaser must rely solely upon the ability and good faith of the person of whom the purchase is made, to perfect his title when the time arrives, although the Company may at their discretion assume such responsibility upon such terms and conditions as they may judge fair and equitable for the protection of any purchaser, provided he or she be an actual resident among us, at the time when the land is acquired from the Government.

6th In the event of the death of any resident member of the Company before a full title has been secured to the lots held by him, the company will be bound as far as practicable to secure all such rights to the legal heirs, administrators or executors of the deceased.

7th All transfers of lots must be recorded upon the books of the Company--kept by the Treasurer for that purpose, and a certificate issued to the purchaser within five days of the date--and no claim based

upon any sale which has not been so recorded will be recognized by the Company. The Treasurer shall be entitled to a fee of ten cents for every such record or certificate.

8th The certificate to be issued to the members drawing lots shall be in the following form--namely--

This is to certify that A. B. has this day drawn parcel No. ____ of the Town Site of the "Conn. Kansas Colony," containing lots No. ____ and that he is duly entitled to hold and improve or dispose of the same according to the rules and regulations of the Company.

Attest

(Date)

Treasurer

ITEM NUMBER FOUR

At a meeting of the Connecticut Kansas Colony June 26, 1857, the following preamble and votes were passed.

Whereas in completing our arrangement for securing the town site, it has become necessary to organize a new company, which must necessarily possess entire control of every matter pertaining to the town site, and inasmuch as the new company is competent to transact all business heretofore devolved upon the Connecticut Kansas Colony, therefore

Voted That the Treasurer of the Connecticut Kansas Colony be instructed to pay over to the Treasurer of the "Wabaunsee Company" all the funds in his hands, and assign all claims, with the necessary stipulations in regard to the use to which the funds are applicable in order to secure a faithful appropriation of the same to the object, for which they were originally collected provided that the Board of Trustees of the New Company shall agree to pay all just claims now existing against the Connecticut Kansas Colony.

Voted That as there is no longer any necessity for the continued existence of this organization, it be and is hereby dissolved and that the Secretary be requested to hand over the books, papers and other property of the Connecticut Kansas Colony in his possession, to the Secretary of the Wabaunsee Company, and the Board of Trustees of the Wabaunsee Company

are fully authorized to take possession and control of all property of every description now belonging to the Connecticut Kansas Colony.

Voted To dissolve and adjourn sine die.

Now first copied, this 7th Day of April 1858, into the Records of the Connecticut Kansas Colony, from the original record among the papers of the Wabaunsee Company.

M. C. Welch

ITEM NUMBER FIVE

In Archives Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas

Roll of the Connecticut Kansas Colony, July 18, 1856

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Sherman A. Baldwin r | 21. A. J. Huntington |
| 2. Orange Bardwell | 22. T. C. P. Hyde |
| 3. Henry Barrett | 23. F. W. Ingham |
| 4. Hobart D. Bishop | 24. Harlow Isbell d |
| 5. Wm. C. Burgess | 25. Freeman Johnson d |
| 6. Perry Cadwell | 26. S. F. Kelsey |
| 7. Levi W. Clark | 27. Ferris Lake |
| 8. George H. Coe | 28. C. B. Lines r |
| 9. Amos A. Cottrell r | 29. E. C. Lines (killed in
army) |
| 10. H. W. Elmer | 30. F. J. Lines d |
| 11. Isaac Fenn | 31. Wm. Mitchell r |
| 12. C. A. Ford | 32. Wm. G. McNary |
| 13. Wilfrid Ford | 33. Rollin Moses |
| 14. J. H. Gould r | 34. Ira T. Neale |
| 15. W. S. Griswold r | 35. Henry Ocorr |
| 16. R. W. Griswold d | 36. L. A. Parker |
| 17. H. S. Hall | 37. C. E. Pond |
| 18. F. H. Hart | 38. B. C. Porter |
| 19. Wm. Hartley | 39. L. D. Porter |
| 20. J. M. Hubbard | 40. Timothy Read |

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 41. B. E. Root | 50. H. W. Tomlinson |
| 42. J. P. Root | 51. W. W. Tomlinson |
| 43. D. F. Scranton | 52. Lemuel Tuttle |
| 44. H. M. Selden d | 53. John J. Walter |
| 45. Benjamin Street | 54. J. F. Willard r |
| 46. E. Dwight Street | 55. Walter Webb |
| 47. Ward Terry | 56. M. C. Welch |
| 48. George H. Thomas | 57. George Wells |
| 49. Silas M. Thomas r | |

Members admitted after arrival of the Company at Wabaunsee

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. J. H. Hesbitt | 6. _____ Hill |
| 2. J. M. Bisbey | 7. Peter Sharai |
| 3. H. Jones | 8. D. B. Hiatt Noes 6 |
| 4. H. Bisbey | 9. H. P. Leonard Yeas 19 |
| 5. D. Bates | |

Persons having died at Wabaunsee marked d

Persons remaining at Wabaunsee March 1, 1879 - 23 years after leaving New Haven, marked r

ITEM NUMBER SIX

A LIST OF PRE-COLONY SETTLERS AT WABAUNSEE AS COMPILED BY

H. E. SMITH

J. M. Bisbey, wife, and four children (James, Charles, John,
Emma)

A. M. Ryan - Sold his claim to John Willig in early 1855.

John Willig

Moses Foss - Died in August, 1855.

Hiram Keyes - brother of Mrs. Harvey Jones.

Clark Lapham and wife

Peter Sharai

Bartholomew Sharai

J. H. Nesbit

M. Waterman and wife

Joshua Smith, wife, and four minor children (William, Monica,
Emma, Fred)

John Smith

Henry Smith

Robert Banks, Sr., wife, and three minor children (Julia,
Robert, Jr., James)

Fay Brown

Hamilton Brown

Austin Kelsey, wife, and five minor children ("Lib", Smith,
Huff, Hattie, Egbert)

Reverend Harvey Jones, wife, and two children

Reverend H. D. Leonard, wife, and two children

Abner Allen and wife

Harvey Bisbey

Calvin Lawlin, wife and two minor children

George Hill and wife

Mr. Dowd

Christian Wrath

ITEM NUMBER SEVEN

WARRANTY DEED

Know All Men By These Presents: That I, Henry Smith of Wabaunsee County, State of Kansas; for and in consideration of the sum of fifty Dollars to me in hand paid by George C. Hall, Trustee of Wabaunsee Township of Wabaunsee County, State of Kansas, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have sold and conveyed and by these presents do sell and convey unto the said George C. Hall Township Trustee and to his successors in office the following described Real Estate situated in Wabaunsee County, Kansas; to-wit:

Ten Acres of land in the N. E. corner of the Southwest Quarter of Section Twenty-nine (29). Township Ten (10) of Range Ten (10), said piece being forty (40) rods square.

To have and to hold the above granted premises with the privileges and appurtenances thereunto belonging unto the said Trustee, his successors in office forever. And I, the said Henry Smith for myself and my heirs, executors, and administrators do covenant with the said Trustee and his successors in office that the said premises are free from all incumbrances, that I have full right and power to convey and sell the same unto the said Trustee and his successors in

office against the lawful claims and demands of all persons.

In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal
this eleventh day of February, 1862.

Henry Smith

Signed, Sealed and delivered in presence of:

Sam'l R. Weed

H. M. Selden

THE CONNECTICUT KANSAS COLONY OF 1856-1857

by

WILLIAM AIMONT OSMER

B. S., Kansas State College of
Agriculture and Applied Science, 1949

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of History

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1953

Abstract

The Centennial of the Connecticut Kansas Colony of 1856-1857 (also known as the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony) will take place in just three years. Little has been written concerning these early Kansas settlers, and undoubtedly public interest in these pioneers will be renewed at that time. Descendants of the Colony living in different sections of the United States, as well as in the vicinity of the old Stone Church, may want to read an account of their ancestors. People now living in that community will want to know something about the people who first settled there and their way of life. Not many records remain of the Colony, and with the passage of time materials for the historian will be more difficult to obtain. These are the reasons for the selection of this particular topic. It has been the writer's purpose to write a factual account of the Colony and the part it played in Kansas history that would be authentic and interesting to laymen and professional historians alike.

Some facts concerning the people who came a short time before and after the arrival of the Colony and a description of the later life in the community are included in order to illustrate the society to which the Colony belonged and the pattern of life that they helped to establish on the Western Frontier. The first chapter deals exclusively with the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony, and is concerned with it's organiza-

tion, membership, and journey to Wabaunsee, Kansas in 1856. This chapter also covers the life of the Colony until it's dissolution in 1857. The second chapter describes the community and the people who lived in the area prior to the arrival of the Colony. The third chapter consists of short biographical sketches of some prominent Colony members, their families, and others who came a short time after them and prior to the Civil War. The last chapter tells of the community life and is divided according to the following topics: government, religious life, schools, the Underground Railroad, music activities, sports, business, personal experiences, and wild life. The topics of this chapter are intended to give the reader an idea of the culture established by the Colony as it existed until approximately the turn of the twentieth century.

The research involved in this thesis has enabled the writer to rediscover many of the contributions which the Connecticut Kansas Colony made to the early history of Kansas. The scholarly people who left the academic halls of Yale found in Kansas an environment that was vastly different from what they had known. The rugged individuals helped to forge a unique member of the Union; a Union soon to be tried in the crucible of war. Their prized books of history, law, and the classics together with experience gained in Eastern legislatures and a strong religious tradition assisted in the forma-

tion of a government based on the firm foundation of education, self-reliance, and moral integrity. The Connecticut Kansas Colony made a definite contribution to what we proudly call "The American way of life."