

HOW THE PRESS AIDED EARLY KANSAS AGRICULTURE

by

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## FOREWORD

No written works upon the subject of the press as a factor in the development of Kansas agriculture were found by the author in preparing to make this study into Kansas newspapers. So far as has been determined nothing has been written heretofore upon the particular phase of the subject covered by this study. The results are therefore largely pioneer in character, so far as Kansas is concerned.

Helpful ideas were found, however, in "The Development of Agriculture in New Jersey, 1640-1880," by Carl Raymond Woodward (1); and in "Notes on the History of Iowa Newspapers, 1836-1870" (2). A "History of Kansas Newspapers," (3) by William E. Connelly was an invaluable aid in making the study.

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- (1) A monographic study in agricultural history, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 451. May, 1927.
  - (2) University of Iowa Extension Bulletin No. 175. July 1, 1927.
  - (3) Kansas State Historical Society and Department of Archives. 1916.

Credit is due to Dr. W. E. Grimes, head of the department of agricultural economics, and Prof. C. E. Rogers, head of the department of industrial journalism, of the Kansas State Agricultural college for helpful suggestions and advice throughout the period in which this study was made. The conclusions, the results of the project, whatever their value, have been made possible by hundreds of diligent, farsighted Kansas editors who, down through the years, have chronicled regularly and accurately the agricultural history of Kansas.

#### AGRICULTURE AND THE PRESS BEFORE THE WAR

A two-fold purpose caused this study of Kansas newspapers to be made. It was sought to determine first, the nature and extent of material pertaining to agriculture printed in newspapers of the state between 1854, when Kansas was organized as a territory, and 1900; and second, how this material affected the development of agriculture. In other words--how and to what extent was the press a factor in the development of the state's agriculture during this period.

To answer these two major questions, bound files of the Kansas press were referred to in the newspaper library of the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka. To facilitate

the study the 46-year period was divided into four rather distinct, well-marked periods, and then considered chronologically and in detail.

No special attention was given to the specialized farm presses in this survey. In fact, since there have been few really successful and long-lived farm papers published in Kansas, they constitute numerically only a minor portion of the publications of the state. In the course of the state's 75 years of existence as a specified territory there have been many publications founded to disseminate chiefly agricultural information. Few of these, however, have managed to survive the early lean years of their existence. A survey of the character of these strictly farm papers, looking into the reasons for their being founded, their avowed purposes, their accomplishments, and reasons for their ultimate demise, should make an interesting and comprehensive study in itself. But to make the study more general and all-inclusive the press as used in this survey refers to those thousands of newspapers of general circulation printed occasionally, interruptedly, spasmodically, or continuously as the case may be during the 54 years covered.

It should be borne in mind that where this study refers to a small number of Kansas papers, hundreds actually

were printed. Those papers selected for reference are considered representative of the whole. References, where used verbatim, are copied with as near the original spelling, punctuation, and typographical arrangement as is possible with this method of reproduction.

### The Four Periods

**First-1854-64--**The decade following the organization of Kansas as a territory in 1854 stands out like a beacon light by virtue of its border warfare during the first five years and the great Civil war during the last five. This was a period of political confusion which precluded any intelligent attention to the agriculture of the state. Between 1854 and 1860 land companies, bent on booming the fertile new territory to their own profit, broadcast through the press and by word of mouth the unrivaled agricultural possibilities of the region.

With the beginning of hostilities between the north and the south, there was a noticeable cessation of agricultural activities. As evidence of this it may be pointed out that while the population of Kansas increased 32,973 between 1861 and 1865, only 2,240 acres of virgin land came under the plow for the first time in these four years. (Connally, History of Kansas, Vol. II.) Immigrants came to Kansas then not to build homes on the fertile prairies but to save the state for the north.

**Second-1864-75--**This 11-year period was marked by a rapid after-the-war development during which the population increased about 388,000. The area under cultivation, however, increased  $4\frac{1}{2}$  million acres during the decade. "Perhaps no state or country ever showed such an increase in cultivated land in so short a time," Connally relates in his History of Kansas. (Connally,

History of Kansas, Vol. II, pages 957-960.)

Third-1875 to the early '90's--The period stands out for its steady, healthy growth in an agricultural sense. During the approximate 15-year period practically all the government land was taken up. The state had built its reputation for agricultural and livestock production, educational advancement, and favorable, healthy climate.

Fourth-1890 (approximately) to 1900--Perhaps the fourth period cannot rightly be said to end with the close of the nineteenth century since the outstanding feature of these years, agriculturally speaking, was the introduction of alfalfa into Kansas and also the coming of the grain sorghums. These crops, at least, helped to usher in a new era of prosperity for farmers of the Sunflower state at this time. Their use has continued and become more general over the state during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

#### Kansas' First Paper

In beginning the discussion of the first period a short reference to the first paper published on Kansas soil will be of interest. The "Kansas Weekly Herald" was the first newspaper of general circulation ever printed and circulated in what is now Kansas. Volume I, No. 1 was printed September 15, 1854 at Leavenworth, K. T., mythically under an elm tree. Thus, its owners, Wm. J. Osborn and Wm. H. Adams, started setting type for it under an elm tree on the banks of the Missouri river. But before the

paper was printed they moved into a building as this paragraph from the first issue shows:

Removed

"Our publication office has been removed from the elm tree on the levee to our new building on the corner of Levee and Broadway."

These editors of the Kansas Weekly Herald began publication of their paper not so much in the interests of agriculture as in the interests of politics, more particularly, the interests of the south. They did, however, have more of an idea of the importance of husbandry than one might suppose had one never seen a copy of that first issue of their paper.

In a prospectus the editors did not overlook agriculture, thus:

"We shall-----issue a weekly journal devoted to Miscellany, Literature, Agriculture, general intelligence, and the maintenance of Democratic principles."

Also, in the prospectus:

"Ours is peculiarly an agricultural state, and our encouragement will be given to all efforts to promote this branch of the industry, and for the development of agricultural science, so important to the people of Kansas, as a grain growing community."



In a long article the editors pictured Kansas Territory as an extremely fertile section adapted to agriculture, especially along the Kaw and its tributaries. They said in part:

"-----The peculiar nature of this soil (it was described as a porous mulatto mould) makes it very desirable for farming. -----the same soil produces corn, wheat, oats, and other cultivated grasses in the highest perfection."

These references, especially that to agricultural science, indicates considerable judgment and probably, too, more than ordinary vision for the future.

A year later (Vol. II, No. 1,--1855) the Herald carried under its name plate this banner: "A Weekly Journal:--Devoted to Southern Principles, Literature, Science, News, Agriculture, and the interests of Kansas." Its editors had not deserted the soil, this statement of their paper's purpose seems to indicate, and still later (Vol. III, No. 20) they speak of Kansas thus: "Her fertile soil and salubrious climate....."

Evidence there is aplenty that Kansas' first newspaper continued to give much space to agricultural topics. Let these brief items represent the tone of farm articles and news items:

"A Kansas Beet.--The editor of the Kansas Pioneer thus chronicles the dimensions of a beet raised and presented to him by a resident of Kickapoo City. It is a whopper: measures 25 inches in circumference, 23½ in length, weight 18½ pounds, of the common blood variety."-- (Kansas Weekly Herald, Vol. II, No. 1, 1855)

"Our thanks are due to C. W. Southard, for a large turnip, weighing 8 pounds. It was raised on his farm in this county, on the head of Little Stranger creek. This is but a beginning of what the soil of Kansas will produce...."---(Kansas Weekly Herald, Vol. III, No. 8)

And in the same issue:

"Who can beat this? Mr. Thomas Stewart, of this county, left with us 12 Irish potatoes, of his own raising, that weighed 13 pounds! They were of the pink eye, and has (sic) no twigs or branches, but each one was separate, to itself. This is the way Kansas soil produces, and that too, in the first years' cultivation. What will it do, the second or the third? We cannot tell."

This paragraph was followed by another item which referred to someone nearby who grew 12 potatoes weighing 12 pounds. A sample of sod corn was described, of which one ear had 20 rows, 1,000 grains, and weighed one pound and

nine ounces.

These items were edited, apparently, by Lucien J. Eastin, well-known early Kansas editor. The effect of such paragraphs must have been two-fold: First, the local reader must have been encouraged. Seeing was for him, believing. But he was an easterner building a home in the new west. Ofttimes he was lonely, discouraged by hard times--such glowing accounts of the things he saw daily must certainly have opened his eyes to his opportunities, given him new hope, spurred on old hopes that were dying. Second, copies of and clippings from these early Kansas newspapers filtered through the intervening hundreds or thousands of miles back to the states from whence the Kansas settlers had come. It seems logical to conclude such items must have enticed more pioneers to the plains of Kansas Territory.

To be sure, much of such material printed was of land-boom character. On the other hand, mention was made frequently of settlers in dire circumstances, of the hot winds, and later of the pestilences of the grasshoppers. Altogether the praises of Kansas' climate and soil outweighed the lamentations of her shortcomings, and since this is a study of the press as a factor in the develop-

ment of Kansas agriculture, even the lead-beam type of stories must be considered. It must be admitted they got in their work, evidence of which is, excepting the war period, to be found in the record of rapid increase in population of the state.

All the early newspaper articles bragging of the resources of Kansas were not strictly about the wonderful crops the new territory could grow. Sometimes the ability of the new territory to produce was implied, sometimes the reports sought to correct mistaken ideas as did the following:

"The opinion generally pervades with strangers that the Territory is not settled more than 40 or 50 miles back from the Missouri river, which is erroneous. There are large settlements 100 miles in the interior, and civilization is still progressing westward. Already a town has been laid off at the mouth of the Saline Fork of the Kansas river, a distance of over 200 miles from this place, (Leavenworth) and in a country which has been heretofore pronounced a desert, and unadapted to the wants of settlers. But the experience of the Kansas pioneer has exploded this false theory, and we may yet see the plains inhabited and brought under the dominion of the useful arts of civili-

zation."--(Kansas Weekly Herald, Vol. III, No. 20)

In the autumn of 1857 the Kansas Weekly Herald reprinted (Vol. IV, No. 7) a two column letter to the Missouri Republican describing the possibilities of Kansas, especially north of the Kaw and up the Blue rivers and the Republican. The correspondent thought the towns of Ogden, Marysville, and Tecumseh offered the greatest opportunities for growth at that time.

In the Topeka Tribune (Vol. III, No. 39, spring of 1859) the editors urged citizens of the town to plant fruit trees, arguing the trees would pay in dollars and cents. They urged people also to plant vines and trees for beauty.

In the following issue (April 7, 1859) the editors-- J. F. Cummings and Lorenzo Dow--asked: "Why do not the farmers bring in their eggs? They seem unusually scarce for this season of the year."

Another sample of the glowing accounts which settlers and stockholders in town companies sent back via letters and the press to their friends in eastern states is the following, a reprint from the Kansas Press (Council Grove, 1859) in the Topeka Tribune of that year (Vol. IV, No. 5):

"We say only what we know to be true, when we say

that the Cottonwood Valley is not only the handsomest but, all things considered, the best part of Kansas. Thursday of last week, we went up the Cottonwood some 12 miles, and was indeed surprised to find so much good country, and it unoccupied. The Valley at the junction of Middle and Diamond Springs Creek, with Cottonwood, cannot be beat in Kansas or anywhere else. Hundreds can yet find good claims in this valley. We took dinner with Mrs. Shaft who has one of the best farms in the whole valley. She has just harvested a fine field of wheat, and has 50 acres of the best corn we have seen anywhere. We venture that no other 50 acre field in Kansas can be found to equal it. At Mrs. Shaft's, we noticed another curiosity; at least it would be any other place in Kansas than the Upper Cottonwood. It is a large spring of water. A stream as large as a man's head boils out of a ledge of rock, drops into a basin of solid rock, holding, we should think, a hundred barrels, and then runs off in a beautiful rivulet. It is a delightful spot, and well worth a visit to the Cottonwood."

#### Advertising Was Indispensable

As a means of advertising the public sale of lots in the early Kansas towns the newspapers could not be

equelled. In the Kansas Weekly Herald (Vol. I, No. 33) appeared advertisements of land sales in the following towns: Nebraska City, Nebr.; Lawrence City, K.T.; Jacksonville, K.T.; Port William, T.P.; and St. George, K.T. In addition there were numerous other notices and announcements of similar nature. And this was when Kansas Territory had been so organized and designated for less than a year. Later on the notices were more numerous and appeared in many, many more papers.

If there be any who think early Kansas settlers lacked visions of agricultural development in this state, let them study the following on "a progressive science." In a letter of column length, to the Topeka Tribune (Oct. 1, 1859) an anonymous writer advocated establishment--in Shawnee county and the Territory--of good schools, and closed the article with:

"A few words in relation to your agricultural interests. This early period of your history as a community, is the time to set your stakes, and establish rules for the protection of your agricultural interests. You have natural advantages equal to any other in the Union, and if the farmers are not successful in their efforts to develop the wealth of the soil, it will be their own fault. Let

them, then, commence right, and avoid everything that will militate against their interests. Nothing will prove so injurious to these interests as the importation of poor seed, as well as of miserable puny stock of every description. Let our agriculturists express by their actions, their unqualified disapprobation of such impositions, and accept nothing but the very best, both of seed and stock, --In conclusion, allow me to suggest the immediate organization of an Agricultural and Horticultural society, as the best medium through which to secure the improvements I have mentioned.--It will be calculated to raise the standard of everything in that line, to create a laudable spirit of emulation in every department, and to make farming here, what it ought to be--a progressive science.

Topeka, Sept. 29th, 1859      "Americus"

Kansas was not without many such far sighted individuals in its early days. But for every "Americus" there were hundreds of careless, less intelligent farmers. The newspapers to a broad extent helped to equalize this situation inasmuch as they gave voice to such community leaders as Americus and thus broadcast helpful ideas on husbandry. On the contrary the narrow, careless, non-progressive farmer, without this aid, probably scattered his



ideas of farming not to thousands through the press but to a handful of listeners merely by word of mouth.

#### Agricultural Literature Improves

By 1860 Kansas papers were devoting more space to sound agricultural principles, this study indicates. For example, in addition to the frequent references to the size of products and to enormous yields, papers were printing more articles such as the foregoing one by Americans and frequently reprinted longer articles from eastern agricultural papers. In an article "Points of Cows," reprinted by the Topeka Tribune (Nov. 26, 1859) from the Rural New Yorker, some ideas of a New York dairyman are given. The article deals with the type of animal one should breed and suggests by implication the terms "form" and "function" which are associated closely by breeders today.

In the same issue of the Tribune appeared notes on handling horses, taken from the Michigan Farmer. The week following (December 3, 1859) appeared an article "To Make Good Butter," taken from the New England Farmer. The directions, though somewhat more complete were about as follows: Skim the milk as soon as it sours. Stir when new cream is added. Set in cool place. After last cream is

added "go a-visiting" 24 hours. At nightfall, fill churn with cold water--start churning at early dawn. It will soon churn--free from white specks, etc. Add cold water slowly when buttermilk starts.

That procedure will make butter for any table, the article claimed.

Another article, credited to the Country Gentleman, advised farmers that after September cattle need feed other than only dry pasture grass and that in cold weather they need shelter instead of being allowed to sleep in open fields. Both theories were based on the belief that it was "the opposite of economy, as it is much easier to keep on fat than to put it on."

In the same issue the Tribune editor hazarded the opinion that corn and hogs would bring a good price the following spring due to a light crop in Missouri and Illinois, and to the heavy immigration and travel through Kansas to the Colorado gold mines.

Altogether, the articles seem to indicate a greater interest on the part of the public in sound agricultural practices and suggests that the Kansas editor, alert to the state's needs, sought to supply that agricultural information which the Kansas farmers wanted and needed.

A typical example of the sort of publicity Kansas papers gave to their state in the early days is afforded by a comment from the Topeka Tribune (December 17, 1859). After pointing out advantages of the location of Kansas on the Missouri river--allowing crops to be sent to the gulf and imports to be brought back by return voyage; rail connections of four days with New York; the strategic location of the Territory as the westernmost outpost on the frontier, allowing sale of supplies to miners, the militia, hunters, and New Mexico--with these advantages and added to them "a soil unsurpassed in fertility, and a climate as healthful and at the same time as balmy and as mild, as that of Mexico or Lower California," the editor admitted that it would "be seen at a glance that Kansas offers to the farmers, the mechanic, and the trader, (not speculator) inducements never before held out by any state or territory on the continent."

It should be added that at that time Kansas was enjoying September weather in December.

Just as it is today, agricultural items printed in the early papers sometimes were impractical, put the emphasis in the wrong place, or were published prematurely. A sample of a "blind" or impractical effort to promote the interests of agriculture is the following (Topeka Tribune,

Vol. V, No. 35, 1861):

"South American Wheat.--Wm. C. Pickereel has on hand a few bushels of South American wheat, which he offers for sale. He says it will yield not less than 100 bushels to the acre, and makes a fine article of bread. One quart of this wheat will plant an acre. Every farmer in the county should have some of this wheat for seed."

That even an early Kansas editor would believe a single quart of wheat, sowed on an acre, would produce 100 bushels seems impossible. However, the paragraph concerning the South American Wheat apparently was published in good faith. It is possible the paragraph was a paid advertisement but the manner in which it was printed does not indicate that it was. The editor's zeal to promote agriculture apparently outstripped his good judgment as an agriculturist.

#### The Press And The Indians

A point that should be mentioned in a study of this period concerning the relations of the press to agriculture is this: the early Kansas papers, apparently without exception, continually lambasted the federal government for the inadequate protection settlers were afforded against

the Indians.

Government officials in whose hands protection lay held forth in a Washington, D. C., office and were not alive to the genuine terror in which roving bands of Indians kept people in the outposts of the western frontier. Scalping parties were frequent, even massacres were all too common. Yet it seemed to the settlers that all the protection their federal government made was a futile bargain with the Indians for peace--which always meant the Indians were given more guns and more ammunition as reward for future peace which was never maintained. With the additional guns and ammunition, the Indians were in position again to wage war against the westward marching whites.

The early agriculturists were the ones who suffered most heavily at the hands of marauding Indians. The farmer and his wife and family, new to the west, sought always to build their home a little beyond the last settler. This put them in a position to be attacked by the Indians. No one was in better position for attack by the Indian than the homesteader, barring possibly the early stage drivers, who frequently were attacked when far from the outposts of civilization.

### Editors wrote on Varied Topics

Perhaps enough material has been reproduced to give the reader an idea of the type of agricultural literature published by Kansas newspapers just prior to and during the Civil war but a few short articles, reproduced verbatim, and reference to a number of longer ones will serve to give a broader scope of the material used.

Planting of hedges was a major agricultural topic of discussion with farmers building their homes in Kansas Territory and later in Kansas as a state. The hedges were the cheapest fences that could be built, they provided some shade and fuel, had considerable value in breaking the winds of level prairies, and contributed something to the all-too-meager forests of the state.

In the Topeka Tribune (Vol. V, No. 36, 1861) there appeared an article on the method of planting Osage Orange hedge. Planting hedge then was as important a problem as planting corn is today, which explains why many other papers dealt with the subject.

The Topeka Tribune (Vol. V, No. 40, 1861) gave directions for tarring seed corn to keep birds and worms from eating it. The gist of the directions: "Soak until

kernels are plump, in order to make them germinate quicker. To a gallon of hot water (almost boiling) add two or three large spoonfuls of tar. Stir well and pour over corn."

The same issue of the Tribune referred to severe drouths in Kansas in the years 1844, 1850, 1854, and 1860. The drouth in 1860 was the worst of the series but two farmers wrote to the Leavenworth Conservative with highest hopes for better crops in 1861. They had faith in Kansas as a cropping state (see above reference) and a reprint from the St. Joseph Gazette also said prospects for abundant fruit and grain crops were excellent.

The Leavenworth Daily Conservative (Jan. 28, 1861) in its announcement editorial and statement of platform declared: "The Press of Kansas has never yet done justice to her agricultural and commercial interests...." and proposed to guard more carefully these interests.

A number of references to the Kansas Daily Tribune, published at Lawrence in the early sixties will add to the general information concerning agriculture and the early press.

In Vol. I, No. 3, Nov. 29, 1863, appeared this item: "Watermelon.--Mr. Sands paid us a visit yesterday, bringing an immense watermelon, almost as good as in summer, with him,...."

In the same issue was printed a paragraph on branding sheep economically and serviceably. In Vol. I, No. 12 the Tribune carried a half column article explaining in detail how a Vermonter stored apples successfully through the winter.

Tobacco was once thought to be destined to become one of the staples of Kansas. The Tribune (Dec. 31, 1863) gave this account: "A Mr. Livingston, on the Smoky Hill, recently took a quantity of manufactured tobacco to Junction City, which the Union says is equal to that procured from abroad. Kansas can raise good tobacco." Many times tobacco culture in Kansas was given space by early papers.

Sometimes the editor played the role of market forecaster. The Daily Tribune of Lawrence (March 5, 1864) furnishes an example of this as follows:

"Plant Corn.--If we might presume to advise our farmers as to their appropriate work, we would say plant all the corn you can this spring. It will pay. It is scarce all over the country, and will bring a big price next season."

And in the following issue:

"Plant Trees.--Everyone may not be able to purchase a



supply of ornamental shrubbery from the nurseries, but all are certainly able to get trees from our native forests to ornament their lots. Plant trees of some kind that will give you and your friends shade to tend to alleviate the woes of our Kansas winds and improve the city."

That summer of 1864 proved to be a dry one by the time August had arrived. The editor of the Tribune, John Speer, prominent among early Kansans, shows that he had agronomic sense by the following paragraph which followed another paragraph discussing the dry weather (Kansas Tribune, Aug. 2, 1864):

"One thing we have noticed, which is that there are some crops raised in Kansas which seem peculiarly adapted to withstand a drouth. Our great saccharine staple, sorghum, is one of these. Cotton, too, is flourishing finely, and, in its thousands of blossoms, gives promise of a most bountiful supply of the fleecy fibralia. Sweet potatoes are sending out their vines as though nothing was the matter, and will undoubtedly give a good yield. So, taken all in all, whether we have rain or not we have much to encourage us."

The foregoing account, published at a time when the worries of war were heavy upon all, indicates the position of leadership--even agriculturally--of the editors of the

time.

A month later the Tribune editor (Sept. 7, 1834) printed another encouraging article on the agriculture of Kansas. Following a short article praising the Kaw valley in comparison to agricultural land further east, and with reference to a soaking rain of the night before, the Tribune editor wrote:

"It stands the farmers in hand to put in all the wheat they can, as it will now grow to a certainty.....It is quite well established that winter wheat will do well in this country. It is true that the yield per acre is not as large generally as in some other Western states, still, sufficient wheat can be raised for our own consumption...."

#### News Of Agricultural Fairs

Agricultural fairs were not frequent during the territorial day of Kansas but a number of expositions showing the agricultural and mechanical products of Kansas were held. If the Freedom's Champion of Atchison has its records straight the first agricultural fair of the territory took place in Johnson county. The Champion's account of the fair (Nov. 13, 1858):

"First Agricultural Fair in Kansas.--On the 20th and

1st Ult., the first agricultural fair ever held in Kansas took place at McCamish, Johnson county. The Lawrence Republican says that the exhibition was highly creditable to the county, and a large number of people were present. Premiums were awarded, addresses made, and officers of the Society for the ensuing year elected. We hope that by next season we may be able to chronicle a like event in Atchison county."

Who would deny that reading of the foregoing article and similar ones would have a strong tendency to encourage business men and farmers in other sections to foster a similar agricultural fair? There is evidence in abundance that it did, for the county agricultural fairs continued to increase in numbers and in size through the years that followed. Always the Kansas papers were more than willing to print the news concerning the fairs. Obviously, they would be, since the fairs created their chief commodity--news. But the editors went further than merely printing news. They wrote editorials promoting fairs, printed column after column of premiums offered or awarded, and worked personally outside their offices in the interests of the fairs. That phase of the subject will be touched again later in a discussion of the period following the Civil war.

The Lawrence Republican (Nov. 4, 1858) also reported

this agricultural fair in Kansas. Its record reads in part: "The neat cattle, horses, and vegetables on exhibition were of very superior quality, and would have reflected credit on any of the old States." A partial list of premiums and winners was given.

#### Dependable Advertising Helped

Brief mention should be made again of advertising matter and of its effect on the agriculture of the state. This agricultural item in the Freedom's Champion (Feb. 27, 1858) leads into the subject:

"Fruit Trees--The season is approaching when all who wish to set out orchards should supply themselves with fruit trees. Mr. W. L. Gaylord, at the Graves place, two and a half miles from Atchison, has a large variety of all descriptions of young fruit trees, and all who wish them can be accommodated. See Advertisement."

In the advertisement Gaylord listed for sale on or after March 1, the following: "101,000 one year old apple trees from graft; 10,000 large and thrifty apple trees for orch.; 2,000 English cherries; 300 Standard and Dwarf pear; 1,000 fine and large peach; also a quantity of grapes; currants; gooseberrys; raspberry; Ornamental trees; Shrub

rose; plants for Hedges, etc."

This advertisement is significant because, since it appeared in one of the territorial papers of the state, it suggests that the press as a force in disseminating information as paid advertising dates back to the beginning. Other advertisements were of hardware, clothing, real estate, and general merchandise, much as it is today. There was a large advertisement of stoves using a cut about 2 by 5½ inches of a stove. Farmers are influenced today by the information they read in papers and magazines, and so long as it is constructive, reliable information it will promote the good of the industry. Just so, 70 years ago, the good of agriculture was promoted by the publication of dependable advertisements such as those referred to here appear to have been.

#### An Early Agricultural Column

Some detailed attention to the first issue of the Lawrence Republican will not be amiss. It was here (Vol. I, No. 1, May 28, 1857) that the first agricultural column was discovered in the present study. It is doubtful if any strictly agricultural column preceded that of the Republican in Kansas. If it did, the column was not discovered

in this project.

The Republican was edited by T. Dwight Thatcher and Norman Allen. It made an auspicious start agriculturally with the farmers' column in the first issue and continued more or less regularly with it. The column was headed "Agricultural" and signed by X.Y.Z. Considerable space--about 500 words--was devoted to the need and uses of hedges in Kansas. Siberian Crab, Honey Locust, and Osage Orange were three varieties discussed, their good and weak points made plain, chiefly from the standpoint of their suitability for fences.

Other items in the column were: 150 words on making homemade soap, directions for planting lima beans (this was timely), treating garden plants against cucumber bugs, "Beef or Pork Pickle," coffee making, Indian bread, and toothache remedy. It will be noted that at least half these items are devoted to that which fell within the pioneer housewife's realm in the home. Other papers tended to neglect the home in the early years.

The next issue of the Republican carried a half column article on the time of planting, method of tilling, and other phases of corn production. The agricultural column under date of June 11, 1857 was constituted of a story of

the "Sloven Family," which pointed out many alovenly methods of farming. In the following issue (June 18, 1857) I.Y.Z. wrote about 600 words on breaking prairie, concluding the article thus:

"Prairie should be broke at least four inches deep. It rots better and insures a better crop than when plowed more shallow, and makes it much easier plowing the second time. For this year's crop, lap and sod flat, otherwise it dries up. For winter wheat, most farmers like to kink it a little, as it harrows up better. I.Y.Z."

Other agricultural topics covered by I.Y.Z. in succeeding issues of the Republican were:

"Raising Vegetables," "Growth and Management of Hedges," "Haying," "Early Planting," "Tobacco Worms," "Building Clay Houses," "Cutting Grain," and "State Agricultural Society."

That subject of the "State Agricultural Society" must be taken up in detail later.

The editor of the Lawrence Republican's agricultural department continued his chats with farmers. They dealt with a variety of subjects. In one issue (Aug. 27, 1857) his two and a half columns were devoted to: First, a "talk with the reader" about being a thinking farmer and

thereby putting science into the farming operations; Second, to "Winter Wheat"--how to prepare the seedbed, how to plant, the variety to plant, how to avoid winter killing, and similar angles of wheat farming.

Certainly the writer of that farm column, in the absence of scores of the modern means of advocating better farming, was a real factor for good in the development of Kansas agriculture.

A year later, in August 1858, a change of ownership of the Republican was made. Norman Allen, founder of the paper, turned over its reins to T. Dwight Thatcher, who since its inception in May, 1857, had borne the principal editorial burdens of the paper. Associated with T. Dwight Thatcher was his brother, Solon O. Thatcher.

In their prospectus they devoted their attentions chiefly to the manner in which they would champion opposition to human slavery--that bone of contention that was soon to throw the nation into turmoil for a half a decade. However, in the next issue (Aug. 19, 1858) they printed a comprehensive statement, headed "To Farmers," which is both interesting and indicative of the influence they as editors had on Kansas agriculture. Their statement:

"To Farmers--We intend hereafter to devote a liberal



portion of the Republican to the interests of Agriculture, and shall be happy to receive practical suggestions and communications from our farmers. We shall never attain to real and permanent prosperity in Kansas until we raise at least all of our own provisions. Probably during the last year the inhabitants of this Territory paid more than five hundred thousand dollars, in cash, for provisions--wheat, corn, meat, potatoes, fruits, etc., etc., all of which can be grown at home. We shall not pay out nearly as much this year. Probably there will be quite a large surplus of corn, about half a supply of wheat, and a small surplus of potatoes. We shall pay out a great deal of money this year for poor, miserable, good-for-nothing butter, at a high price, when we might manufacture, right here at home every pound of butter we eat, of an excellent quality, and at a reasonable price. Indeed, Kansas might soon export a large amount of butter every year. We shall pay out a great deal of money to Missouri for fruit. This we can and ought to raise ourselves. No man should think of living on a farm or lot for a single year, without planting some fruit trees. Let them be growing.

"But we cannot talk more on this subject this week.

Farmers: if you have anything to say which would be of interest to your brother farmers, let us have it. Give us your experience."

Let that statement speak for itself! It is sufficient to say that the Republican's agricultural department continued with frequent contributions from Kansas farmers, and those of other states as well. Surely such items and articles, appearing in the Republican and in other Territorial papers had a profound effect on the agriculture of the state, and were no small factor in its advancement.

#### AGRICULTURE AND THE PRESS AFTER THE WAR

The foregoing statements are representative of the agricultural material published by Kansas papers in the state's territorial days and during the Civil war. There seems to have been a perceptible shortage of such material during the period of hostilities between North and South just prior to and during the war. However, there was much agricultural miscellany printed for the simple reason that the newspapers continued to be printed, regardless of the warring factions, and the editors' job then, as always was to fill the paper with type. If the agricultural items were not written by the editor about a bumper crop grown

up "Sandy Hollow" then they were quite likely acquired by the dexterous use of scissors on one or more of the agricultural periodicals of the eastern states. Many, if not quite as many, articles as were printed before the war, continued to find their way into the newspapers of Kansas.

We now may take up some of the agricultural developments of the after-war period and the manner in which the press dealt with them.

#### Early State Agricultural Fairs

One of these developments was the growth of interest in agricultural fairs. The second annual "Fair of the Kansas Agricultural and Mechanical Association" occurred at Leavenworth in September, 1867. Accounts of the fair were printed in the Leavenworth Conservative for several days before, during, and after the exposition (Sept. 18, 1867, and succeeding issues). One to two columns were devoted to discussion of the fair in a news way, editorials commented on its management and progress, and names of winners in the many classes were printed.

By reproducing the names of winners in the livestock, horticultural, and educational events, the papers of eastern Kansas must have created stimuli to those making

entries. They stimulated a greater interest in finer livestock, better fruits, and higher ideals in education.

The fair was sponsored by the county of Leavenworth. A short item in the Daily Conservative gives an idea of the fair program for the first day:

"The Fair Today--The first day of the Fair will witness some of the most important as well as interesting exhibitions of the season, and we learn that a large number of contestants for each premium have been entered. The following is the programme of today:

10 a.m.--The trial of draft horses will take place, to be followed by the award of premiums for all draft animals. (The trial was a pulling contest)

12 m.--Work oxen, steers and calves.

2 p.m.--The examination and award of premiums for jacks, jennets, and mules.

4 p.m.--Trial of speed for running horses, mile heats.

8 p.m.--Examinations will take place in specimens of Botany, Geology, and Natural History."

The Daily Conservative carried each day the winners of the previous day's contests, and the scheduled program for the day at hand.

Exhibits of furniture, riding vehicles, sewing, painting, stoves, and numerous other articles, had a place in the fair, accounts in the Conservative show. This fact indicates also that the fair was broad enough in its scope that it did not narrow down to only agricultural topics but took in allied subjects.

Two comments by the reporter are of interest from our viewpoint (Leavenworth Daily Conservative, Vol. XV, No. 68):

"For best fat cattle, Wm. Armstead, of Grasshopper Falls, Jefferson county took all the premiums, having brought upon the ground three cattle that could not be beat. Their aggregate weight is 7,230 pounds, and one of them weighs 2,600. That Kansas is one of the best stock states in the country has never been disputed, but we never expected to see the equal of the cattle displayed by Mr. Armstead." And from the same column:

"J. F. Legate, Thos. Campbell and others have on exhibition some creditable samples of jellies made from Kansas fruits; apples, peaches, plums, pears, grapes, and every variety of fruits raised in this latitude can be found in profusion, and should be seen by those silly persons who assert that this is not a fruit growing state."

And this reprint:

"Tall Corn.--The Iola (Allen Co.) Courant says: 'Mr. Inge, living at Geneva, last week took from his field three stalks of corn measuring respectively, 16 feet, 5 inches, and 17 feet and 7. He informs us that his whole field will average 15 feet or more. Think of it: A stalk of corn measuring 17 feet, 7 inches in length. Who can beat it?'"

Kansas pioneers never got over this land-boom spirit until the frontier had passed well beyond them. By the time counties in the central western part of the state began to develop, the editors there took up the "tall corn" cudgel while the editors of the easternmost counties settled down to a more sombre accounting of the possibilities of Kansas.

However, items such as these just given must have fired the interest of those who, not yet in Kansas, chanced to read them. And they must have been encouraging to those farming pioneers already winning their homes in the Sunflower state.

Papers of this period continued to make prominent mention of the fight against Indian outrages against settlers. The press urged the government to provide great-

er protection against the redskins who attacked most frequently the isolated farmer. The editors were bitter toward and had little sympathy for the Indians. They flayed repeatedly the federal government's leniency in dealing with the atrocious natives.

#### The Press And The Railroads

How the railroads cooperated in promoting the fair and how the papers helped out as always by printing news and advertising concerning the fair may be seen from the following article taken from the Manhattan Independent (Sept. 21, 1867):

"State Fair--Passengers Half Fare, Stock Free--The Gen'l Supt., Anderson, writes as follows: 'The U.P.R.R. Company will transport persons to the Kansas State Fair on excursion tickets, one-half fare. Tickets, good from Sept. 23 to 28, inclusive. Livestock and articles for exhibition will be transported free, when certified that they have not changed owners.'

The agricultural and mechanical fairs, the county agricultural and horticultural societies, and the state agricultural society which later became the present State Board of Agriculture are closely associated together. How

the county societies were made up of township groups may be seen by reference to the Troy Reporter (Jan. 3, 1867):

Farmers and mechanics of Centre township met to organize a township farmers and mechanics club. An account of the meeting is recorded in this issue of the Reporter. The township meeting, according to the editor, was a preliminary movement to organization of a county agricultural society. Washington township also was organized, and the same issue of the Reporter records the permanent organization of the Doniphan County Agricultural Society. The association was incorporated at \$5,000 capital stock, each share of capital stock worth \$5. The editor of the Reporter urged editorially the formation of the society.

It has been previously noted that the Leavenworth Conservative promised to give more attention to agriculture and commerce of the state--two branches of industry which the Conservative editors thought had been neglected by too much attention to politics. In the years that followed this promise, which was made in the first issue (Jan. 28, 1861), the Conservative did give much space to agricultural subjects.

As would be expected, the material printed was largely of the type that boomed the resources of Kansas.



That seems now to have been inevitable. Town companies were formed by the hundreds in those early days, a newspaper was one of the first business ventures on the town sites, and if the company didn't "boom" everyone there went broke. The best way to make it boom was to have the local paper print column after column of "hot shot publicity" concerning the resources of its surrounding territory.

After a town once was established, the boom propaganda was given in behalf of the entire state as well as for the town. With Leavenworth one of the gateways to the new Sunflower state, and well established at that, Leavenworth papers could then afford to promote the interests of all Kansas--which they did.

The Conservative reprinted (July 3, 1867) an account from the Emporia News of a Welsh farmer near Emporia who purchased a farm and in one grain crop raised enough to pay for the farm and buy a breaker plow. With this plow he earned \$500 breaking prairie, then sold it for within \$5 of what he had paid for the implement.

Another Lyon county farmer sold a 220 acre farm for \$1,000. This was in the Cottonwood Valley. The Conservative printed these accounts and similar ones to show what could be done with Kansas land and good management.

A Salina correspondent to the Conservative sent an interesting account of possibilities in that section (Leavenworth Conservative, July 4, 1867):

"During the last spring, Saline county received a large immigration; and, fortunately, of a class that will one day make it one of the best producing counties in the state. They have settled on the rich bottoms of the Saline and Smoky Hill rivers, and went to work with a will to open up farms and turn the so-called desert into a garden."

#### Early Crop Reports

Appreciating that its readers wanted news of markets and crop conditions in other sections the Conservative printed (July 4, 1867 and other issues of the time) market reports from New York, St. Louis, Chicago, and other cities. It provided also a crops column with brief reports of conditions in such widely separated sections as Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, Minnesota, and the southern states.

There are frequent references in the files of the Conservative (Sept. 17, 1867 and other issues of the time) to the Texas to Abilene cattle trade. That Kansas editors were quick to grasp an opportunity to help the cattle

trade in the state, let this item (Conservative, Sept. 18, 1867) testify:

"An Illinois farmer owning a farm of 17,000 acres, has started an agent to Kansas to buy a thousand head of cattle to stock his farm. Several other cattle buyers are also coming to purchase heavy lots here and in the Indian country. The great demand for cattle in Illinois will have a tendency to advance prices here, as they look to Kansas principally for their supply. So says the Lawrence Tribune."

#### Suggestions for Home Improvement

A benefit of no small proportions to Kansas farmers has been given by editors of the Kansas presses, both general and strictly agricultural, by the pointing out of many, many potential improvements which the farmer could make to the profit and happiness of himself and his family. Oftentimes the farmer has been too close to his own problems to appreciate their significance.

An example of this sort of editorial assistance to the farmer is sensed in a portion of a longer article in the Kansas Farmer (Nov. 1865) on improving farm homes:

"Now that the more pressing duties of the farmer.....

are over, there will be an opportunity of turning attention to the.....matters of preparing.....a pleasant home for the family." Then followed a two column article encouraging rural dwellers to beautify their homes as much as possible--which of necessity were all too often perched unprotected on the lonely, bleak prairie. Fences about the house, shrubs and flowers, vegetable gardens, and similar improvements were suggested--the things pioneer farmers were frequently failing to provide for wive and children in the serious business of providing food, shelter, clothing, and other bare necessities.

The dream of the writer of the foregoing article has long ago come true, with the gradual fulfillment of his timely advice. It may be noticed there was no mention of adding convenience to the household for the farm wife's work or to make the dwelling more pleasant within. That step of advancement was to come later.

And it did! In the very next number (December, 1865) of the Kansas Farmer was the following:

"Make Farm Life Attractive--By adorning the home. Nothing is lost by a pleasant home. Books, papers, pictures, music and reading should all be brought to bear upon the indoor family entertainments; and neatness

and comfort, order, shrubbery, flowers and fruits should harmonize all without.....Ease, order, health and beauty are compatible with farm life, and were ordained to go with it."

The article was preachy, dictatorial, to be sure, but a hint of what was coming can be seen there. It was a long stride from that little article, printed in 1865, to the magazines devoted exclusively to the problems of the farm woman's home today. Moreover, the advancement has been negotiated by millions of short steps not unlike the one described here.

#### The Manhattan Papers

Among early Kansas newspapers devoting much space to general agricultural material were the Manhattan Independent and the Manhattan Standard. In the Independent (Sept. 7, 1867) there appeared numerous agricultural paragraphs, discussing: crops in west Riley and east Clay counties (corn there had suffered drouth which had not been noticed so much around Manhattan), an excellent peach crop, grasshoppers that had passed down the Republican valley, and this boom paragraph: "The Republican Valley presents, at this time, we think, the greatest inducements to Emigration (sic) of any portion of Kansas, the inhabitants are

anxiously awaiting the advent of the Rail Road which they are sure to have e're long."

In the Independent (Sept. 21, 1867) were items from the Farmers Advertiser, discussing: the best time to prune apple and pear trees and how to bake apples. In the same issue in the local column this item was found:

"Planting in the Furrow.--Mr. W. Earlatt showed us a field of corn this week which has not been in the least affected by the drought. The stalks are even now quite green while other fields in the vicinity are dry as husks. The difference is attributable only to the fact that Mr. W. planted it by plowing in. This is worth remembering, especially for those who cultivate the high lands."

The Independent (Vol. V, 1867) frequently clipped with credit farm articles from eastern newspapers and farm magazines. Examples of the articles, found by thumbing through several numbers of the Independent, bore these various titles: winter management of hogs, sheep rack, care of milch cows, age of sheep, cure of garget, training animals, whitewashing trees, the Goodrich potatoes, and Japan or Chilean maize. In fact, the Independent printed each week several farm articles.

True, they were chiefly reprints but were most certainly eagerly read by those pioneer farming people who were to profit, in many cases, by the reading.

A "Farm and Household" column, appearing in the Independent (Jan. 18, 1868) included a dozen items, long and short, on agricultural miscellany. The paper carried also complete market reports on lumber, provisions, and grain in all issues.

In the first quarter century of Kansas' existence as either a territory or a state the farmers themselves were the principal advocates of agricultural practices. Experience taught the most observing and scientific-minded husbandmen many things--that sort of information learned today in the agricultural experiment stations' laboratories. Hence, new ideas in the early days originated chiefly with farmers themselves. The question was: how could the idea or proven superior practice be disseminated to the less observing but equally interested farmers?

#### The Press A Vital Factor

This study clearly shows that one of the most vital factors in broadcasting farming ideas was the general news press, and in a later period, the agricultural press, in addition. It is true, county farmers' clubs and the

Kansas State Agricultural Society were important factors in exchange of useful ideas in the arts of husbandry. Those farmers who attended the state society meetings in 1862 and subsequent years, heard valuable discussions of timely farm subjects and problems. But what of the far greater number of farmers who stayed at home? Some information would and no doubt did trickle back to the stay-at-home farmer. However, in the final analysis, it was the general newspaper which, plying its way into the thousands of households on Kansas homesteads, offered the greatest and surest method of what newspapermen now call "coverage."

As an example of this theory, consider the following story reprinted from the Lawrence Journal in 1868. It is a sample of hundreds or thousands of articles based on experiences of farmers and passed on for their worth by a pioneer editor, anxious not only for "copy," but to contribute to the upbuilding of the state's chief industry, agriculture. The Journal story, reprinted in the Manhattan Independent (Aug. 1, 1868):

"How to Raise Wheat in Kansas--Mr. E. Poole, of the firm of S. & E. Poole, has laid on our table a handful of winter wheat of this year's growth, the stalks of which will average 18 inches in length. He informs us that this



is a sample of over 100 acres growing on their farm at the present time.

"The Messrs. Poole are among the most successful wheat growers in Douglas county, and their method of cultivating this most important and profitable crop is worth the attention of farmers throughout the state. Their success may be summed up in those two significant words-- deep plowing. They are unflinching opponents of the prevalent western notion that prairie sod should be plowed shallow. They do not believe in it either for corn or wheat.--Some of their best crops of wheat have been raised upon raw prairie, broken for the first time. Their plan is to plow deep, turning the sod five to eight inches under.

"Then they harrow thoroughly, with a sharp harrow, sharpening the teeth as often as they get dull, until a fine, deep bed of mellow soil on top of the sod is secured.

"They put in the wheat with drills.

"The practical method of tillage is, that the wheat does not winter kill, the roots become firmly and deeply established in the fall, and thus able to withstand the dry weather of winter and heavy frosts of the spring. The yield runs up from 20 to 27 bushels to the acre, and the

quality of the wheat is most excellent--often making 47 pounds of flour to the bushel.

"Now this is the kind of farming that Kansas needs. We ought to have 500 just such wheat growers as the Pooles in Douglas county alone. If such were the case we should not be sending tens of thousands of dollars out of the state to Missouri and Illinois for flour. Kansas is one of the best wheat growing states in the Union. We only need the proper attention paid to this crop, and we might be exporting it to a large extent every year.-- Lawrence Journal."

Now this article was first printed in the Lawrence Journal, then reprinted in the Manhattan Independent, and possibly and probably in others of the 50 weeklies and the 10 dailies printed in Kansas at that time. This gives one an idea of how potent an article it was in the farmers' behalf. Other articles of that kind were handled similarly.

A full-column article appeared in the Manhattan Independent (Aug. 29, 1868) on the subject of full plowing. It was a reprint from Prairie Farmer, analyzing the reasons why fall plowing was thought best. The reasons advanced compare favorably with reasons given by

agronomists today.

Shortly after the consolidation in September of the Manhattan Independent and the Kansas Radical the paper was changed to the Manhattan Standard. The editor under the heading "Agricultural and Horticultural" said (Sept. 26, 1868):

"We shall keep up as full a department under this head as possible, and invite our friends--farmers, gardeners, fruit growers, to contribute the records of their experience for the benefit of the public. Rev. R. D. Parker has sent us a few notes for this issue."

A week later (Oct. 3, 1868) the following satirical comment, containing some wholesome, veiled advice, was printed:

"A Crack in the Hog Trough--A few days ago a friend sent me word that every day he gave nearly 20 pails of buttermilk to a lot of 'shots,' and they scarcely improved at all. Thinks I, this is a breed of hogs worth seeing. They must be of the sheet iron kind. So I called on him, heard him repeat the mournful story, and then visited the sty. In order to get a better view of the miraculous swine, I went into the pen, and on close examination found a crack in the trough, through which most of

the contents ran away under the floor. Thinks I, here is the type of failure of our agricultural brethren.

"When I see a farmer omitting all the improvements because of a little cost, selling all his farm stock to buy bank or railroad stock, or mortgage stock, robbing his land, while in reality he is also robbing himself and his heirs, thinks I, my friend you have a crack in your hog-trough.

"When I see a farmer subscribing for half a dozen political and miscellaneous papers, and spending all his leisure time in reading them, while he don't (sic) read a single agricultural or horticultural journal, thinks I to myself, poor man, you have got a large and wide crack in your hog trough.

"When I see a farmer attending all the political conventions, and coming down liberally with the 'dust' on all caucus conventions, and knowing every man in town that votes his ticket, and yet to save his neck, couldn't tell who is President of his County Agricultural Society, or where the fair was held last year, I 'unanimously' come to the conclusion that the poor soul has a crack in his hog-trough.

"When I see a farmer buying guano, but wasting ashes and hen manure, trying all sorts of experiments except in-

telligent hard work and economy, getting the choicest of seeds regardless of cost and planting them regardless of cultivation, growing the kind of fruit called 'sour tart seedling,' and sweetening it with sugar, pound for pound, keeping the front fields rich while the back lots are growing up with thistles, briars, and elders, contributing to the Choctaw Indian fund and never giving a cent to any agricultural society; such a man, I will give a written guarantee, has got a crack in his hog-trough, and in his head also.--Exchange."

#### AGRICULTURE AND THE PRESS FROM 1870 TO 1890

There is a wealth of material concerning agriculture available in all Kansas newspapers during this period. This was the time of great agricultural development in the state. Following the war into the early seventies there came a period of approximately ten years in which the area of land under cultivation increased  $4\frac{1}{2}$  million acres. This decade was a period of after-the-war rush to a new free land. It was followed then by a more sober, healthy growth of the state's agriculture.

Numerous trends are obvious in the period. The historian finds the center of population pushing further westward in the state. Newspapers in towns in the central section of the state--from east to west--seem to supple-

ment if not to substitute for publications earlier found in the eastern section of the commonwealth. By the end of the period newspapers as far west as Dodge City were thriving in bustling communities of which Dodge City probably was typical.

These two decades provided the agriculturally inclined editor ample reason and opportunity to use his pen. There was the farmer-labor movement of 1873, the Granger movement throughout much of the period, Greenbackism of the early eighties, Farmers' Alliances of the same decade, and with the steady extension of agricultural activity further westward this new territory was going through the same pioneer period through which the easternmost parts of the state had gone a quarter century before.

#### The Beginning Of The Farm Column

Noticeable in a study of this period is a strong tendency for newspapers to assemble agricultural material into a "farm column." Early editors usually gave the column a label heading such as "Farm Notes" or "Agricultural." Within this period (1870-90) papers used more and more the daily market reports.

One of the best of the early farm columns was that

conducted by Mr. W. Marlatt of Bluemont Farm, in the Manhattan Beacon. In the first instalment of the department (March 28, 1872, Vol. I, No. 3) Mr. Marlatt devoted one article of more than a column in length to the art of planting fruit trees, reprinted another on "Sweet Potato Culture," and another on covering materials.

Marlatt's column continued weekly, discussing subjects such as the following, chosen at random: Will It Pay to Sell Corn?, Mulch and Manure, Don't Fire the Prairies, A Plea for Boys on the Farm, Weeds, Cooperation. These subjects and especially their valuable content suggest that forward-looking farmers of the time were not inferior to present-day farmers in their ideas of scientific agriculture. Marlatt was a close observer and a fluent writer--who would argue that his articles were not an important factor in the development of agriculture in Riley county and surrounding communities?

The thoughtful farmers, largely substituting them for the agricultural experiment stations of today, furnished the farm experience and their analyses of them, while the early-day editors provided means of disseminating the wisdom acquired through experience and close study.

The Marysville Signal (Vol. I, No. 2, Sept. 8, 1881, and subsequent issues) carried a column of "Farm Notes" and

"Household Helps." The material in these columns gives some indication of being what newspapermen today call "canned-stuff" or ready-made copy secured from a newspaper syndicate. Nevertheless these two features contained much agricultural miscellany, as the following subjects, each of which was discussed briefly in one issue, indicate: specific gravity of cream, lard used in cheese making, consumption of poultry products in the United States, raising hogs on pasture, insects--the wheat midge, fattening cattle, sheep production, castor oil better than lard for greasing iron axles, nutritive matter in hay and corn, skilled and stable labor needed for agriculture, good farming--saving fertility--manuring, concentrated feeds--cottonseed and linseed cake, picking fruit, fowls in orchards, ensilage--controversial results.

While many newspaper editors of today prefer to publish agricultural material throughout the pages of their papers rather than in a column or department to itself, the placing of farm notes in a column or department in Kansas papers of the seventies and eighties had a different significance. It meant recognition for agriculture. That recognition by general newspapers, plus the establishment of distinct farm papers, (Kansas Farmer, Camp's



Emigrant's Guide, Spirit of Emigration, Southern Kansas Immigrant, and others) constituted the greatest impetus the press could give to agriculture of the state.

#### Press Urged Improved Methods

Of interest is the fact that the "Farm Notes" author (Marysville Signal) wrote repeatedly of conservation of soil fertility. Today, a half century later, agriculture is battling the same problems of soil fertility. But now farmers are facing the shortages which this writer predicted.

A typical agricultural item of the times is this from the Ford County Globe (Feb. 14, 1880):

"Mr. A. J. Anthony returned last Thursday evening from his trip to Hodgeman county where he made the purchase of a fine thoroughbred calf, ten months old, which weighs 370 pounds. A. J. has a great liking for thoroughbred stock, and is constantly adding to his herd. This is a step in the right direction and we hope other cattle men will follow suit."

The Globe carried a weekly market report giving prices of cattle, hogs, grain, general produce and horses and mules. It also printed an immense amount of news per-

taining to the Texas-to-Kansas cattle trade of the eighties. Dodge City then was the northern end of the long trek from the Lone Star country. In the summer of 1865, 300,000 cattle were driven into that cattle buying outpost-(Kansas Cowboy).

Like other papers referred to, the Globe gave much space to miscellaneous agricultural topics, including a signed item from "Gronger" (April 5, 1861). During a livestock men's convention in Dodge City, April 10-13, 1863, the Globe printed a daily edition called the Dodge City Daily Globe, giving proceedings of the convention and other news.

The Osborne County Farmer was another weekly paper to give much attention to the husbandry of the times. In its issue of January 9, 1879, appeared discussions of farm topics as follows:

A column headed "Agriculture" with a note to the reader that "all communications intended for this department should be addressed to G. B. Farwell, Corinth, Osborne County, Kan."--the column contained hints and suggestions for sheltering cattle in winter, a reprint on raising sheep, and a long reprint "How to Feed for Eggs;" what appeared to be a ready-print agricultural miscellany

department of two-column length; a reprint from the Western Homestead on the possibilities of Kansas as a stock raising country; an article arguing that mules are superior to horses for farm work; a reprint on the value of cobmeal for feeding milk cows; and a paragraph about a Mr. Cochran who lost 150 head of last year's lambs by crowding during a cold spell--others who sheltered their sheep carefully had no losses.

Conditions in the eighties were not such that farmers seriously needed timely helps nor expert advice on production methods. With a fertile soil and sufficient rainfall Kansas produced abundantly. Their problem was to dispose at profitable figures the abundant crops. Much was printed about prices of agricultural products and middlemen and capitalists who robbed the farmers. These subjects are treated later. However, in its handling of news--Kansas editors have always stressed the idea that they print NEWSpapers--the press overlooked no opportunity to chronicle news of an agricultural meeting or event. Advance stories, timely stories, and followup stories on meetings and the like were on the regular schedule of the reporter.

Editor F. H. Bernhart of the Osborne County Farmer apparently was not one of many newspaper writers who went

to extremes in locating their respective communities as ideal locations for fine farms and beautiful homes. He printed (Jan. 14, 1926) a very conservative article of some 800 words in length, headed "To Insurgents," describing but apparently not exaggerating the agricultural resources of his community. In the same issue he published the following sensible analysis of a perplexing situation:

"The problem in Kansas now is, what is to be done with this immense surplus of corn.--Ex.

"There is just now a sort of feeling of uneasiness among some farmers, as though so much corn was an elephant on their hands. Some people can't bear prosperity. Our advice in this matter is to keep cool and not get excited. Hang on to every bushel you own, remembering that each bushel represents just so much pork, beef, lard, cotton, poultry, eggs, wool, etc. The farmer who sells his corn before it is converted into the usual necessities of life is not much wiser than he would be to ship his wheat to market before it is 'threshed.'"

Graham wrote bluntly enough but editors of the times were characteristically terse.

### Too Much Newspaper Publicity

Newspaper persons are accustomed to being accused of frequent mistakes and it would be a mistake to point out none of their apparent shortcomings in such a study as this. The Frisco Pioneer, once published in Kansas county, later Morton county, in the hustling little center of Frisco, affords an example of a newspaper which may not only have failed to advance agricultural interests of its community but may have hindered the same considerably.

No ridicule for lack of effort to promote industries of Frisco could be made against the Pioneer editor. The fault lay rather in overplaying the possibilities and the resources of the community. Frisco citizens, numbering a dozen or so when the Pioneer was established, fought a valiant county-seat fight with two neighboring towns and lost, but while its boom days were on, Euphrates Boucher, Pioneer editor, gave to the world one of the hottest little boom town papers that Kansas ever saw.

Some references will convey the tone of his writings (Vol. I, No. 1, Jan. 6, 1886 of the Pioneer):

"Capitalists desiring to invest where they are certain of two hundred per cent profit in six months should

invest in Frisco." And then followed a full column of supercharged publicity in behalf of the new town which then needed only "a good dry goods, clothing, furniture, and boot and shoe store."

"The climate of Kansas is as wonderful as the great prosperity that has blessed its people," the Pioneer editor continued. "Today it is stormy and cold enough to drive you mad; tomorrow the calm, genial and balmy atmosphere casts sweet and loving kisses in your face; today it rains in torrents as if it never could stop; tomorrow the clouds are gone and the sun's gentle rays make you laugh with pleasure; today there is partial want, short crops; tomorrow her lap is filled so bounteously full of everything that the husbandmen know not what to do with his products and money flows into her coffers like streams of Ophir and all is joy. Such is Kansas."

Though the Pioneer editor did not always keep his antecedents straight, he was a first-class press agent. Page 1 of that first issue was about Frisco and nothing else and was reproduced in subsequent issues with only slight and timely revision. Agriculture was not overlooked. A column and a half was devoted to "Stock and Farming," calculated to enhance the reputation of the community agriculturally.

Kansas county was pictured (issue of Jan. 30, 1886) thus: "no better country in the world for wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, clover, and sorghum." Fruit was also thought to do well. However, only six months later (July 21, 1886) with corn still looking fine, the Pioneer declared: "While Colorado leads the world in the largest hailstones, weighing from four to eight pounds: southwest Kansas leads in the finest fruits of general varieties and species, the tallest and best corn, the largest beets, cabbage, potatoes, Irish and sweet and all other crops."

In the short period of six months the county had passed through its period of speculation, if the Pioneer account is to be interpreted literally, and had become definitely adapted to the culture of fruit, corn, and vegetables.

The instance of the Frisco Pioneer is cited as evidence in a belief that some harm may have been done by too much land booming in new territories of Kansas. The result in this case was that the Pioneer died, the Frisco boom died--leaving Frisco as flat as the prairie on which it was built--and Morton county still does not produce heavily of fruit, corn, nor even the vegetables mentioned. The progress that has been made there in 42 years since had come about by a saner, steadier growth in keeping with the needs

of the people living in the community.

#### Farmer Political Movements Of The Times

One can find plenty of evidence that the Kansas press devoted adequate attention to the Grange, the Farmers' Alliances, and other farmer movements of the period. The Sumner County Press of Wellington, the Oskaloosa Independent, the Sickle and Sheaf of Oskaloosa, the Ft. Scott Monitor, the Marion Record, and the Topeka Capital are perhaps typical of papers which most zealously guarded the interests of agriculture.

The Sumner County Press took an active part in the farmer-labor campaign of 1873. Granting that farmers should organize and maintain their clubs, a writer who called himself "Farmer" said, in part (Oct. 16, 1873):

"They should exist in every county and township in this and other states. But I hold that the legitimate object of such organizations, is to secure an interchange of ideas, the discussion of agricultural and horticultural topics, the formation of cooperative societies for the introduction of improved breeds of stock, the purchase of supplies and agricultural implements; and lastly but not least, to discuss and criticize the acts of public officers,



and be ready to speak in unmistakable tones upon every public measure that may come before us; and more especially those calculated to reach the pocketbook or entail a debt upon our prosperous new county." He concluded his article with the opinion that all classes--the mechanic, the lawyer, farmer, doctor, merchant--are indispensable and their interests inseparable; that the best talent for public office should be placed in office whether that talent be doctor, lawyer, merchant, or farmer.

A week later (Oct. 23, 1873) the Press said editorially:

"As we have heretofore predicted, the efforts made by Smith & Co., to unite the farmers of this county in a political movement, culminated last Saturday in a magnificent failure. The slogan of the originators of the enterprise, -----, met with no responsive echo from the great mass of the farmers of the county. But five townships of the fourteen in the county were represented by accredited delegates,-----.

"We urge no objection upon the gentlemen who composed the convention. The majority of them were representative farmers, and largely identified with the agricultural interests of the county--men who are olsar-headed enough to distinguish the demagogism that would blind them as to the

true objects of agricultural organizations, and precipitate them into a class political movement. Hence, we believe they can have no faith in the success of a scheme planned solely with a view to such a consummation."

In the same issue the Press editor, having been accused of being unwilling to print political views not in accord with his own, said in part:

"----We have opposed the so-called Farmers' Movement, because we have conscientiously believed it was inaugurated by those who cared more for the spoils of the office, than the true interest of the farmer.-----." The editor also devoted a full column to the proceedings of the farmers' caucus and the following week printed the resolutions, embodying the farmers' platform, as adopted by the farmers' meeting.

A week later (Oct. 30, 1873) in the last issue before election and along with much other political material, a short item headed "A Word to Farmers" and signed "Sykes," was printed. Sykes was a person who had travelled about the country, had found many farmers discouraged and wanting to sell their farms and go elsewhere. Sykes urged them to be strong in the face of adversity, urged them not to give up homes secured with so much toil and sacrifice, urged them to stay on their farms because better times were

coming. Five of the six candidates supported by the Press were elected and the sixth defeated by 16 votes.

The Press editor was not hostile to the Grangers. He asked the Granges--several had been organized--for their officers' names so they might be published and (Feb. 14, 1874) printed in its entirety a one-column letter from a Grange member. Committees had been appointed, one with the duty of securing "the most advantageous terms for Patrons in trade." The writer explained in part:

"It is not the purpose of the patrons to stir up local feeling; but it is presumable that they will trade where they will do best; so let Wellington be at least equal to her sister towns in this matter." In mentioning a big basket dinner farmers had held, the correspondent admitted that: "-----though the farmers of the southwest are suffering many inconveniences, the patrons of Pleasant Hill have not only the necessitiss, but the luxuries of life."

From February to December, 1874, and in January, 1875, the Sumner County Press published a historical sketch of the county. Its agricultural resources were never omitted and the history was intended (Vol. II, No. 30) to be "a valuable emigration document."

The Kansas farmer found a staunch friend in the person of J. W. Roberts, founder (in 1860) of the Oskaloosa Independent. His front page carried always the reminder that the Independent was "devoted to Agriculture, Mechanics, Arts, News and General Literature."

In the early seventies (Vol. XI, No. 3, Sept. 10, 1870) in response to many requests, the Independent published a column or more describing the Kansas climate, soil, and its products, timber, water, fruits, minerals, stone, schools, churches, improvements, railroads--principally these things concerning Jefferson county. While distinctly favorable to the county this description was not like many of the land-boom descriptions which the immigrant often received from Kansas. It was a conservative statement of the county's resources. Roberts promised more of such descriptive material and it came later in a series of long articles on the state's resources.

The Granger movement was being organized around Oskaloosa in the spring and summer of 1873. By October the Grange had a local organ in the Sickle and Sheaf, Vol. I, No. 1 of which was published by Jules L. Williams, October 9 of that year. Even before that, however, the Independent editor was writing editorials as counsel to the

farmers. Those who prophesied the failure of the farmers' movement were wrong, he maintained (June 21, 1873), provided the new party would steer shy of "the counsels of politicians, or permit political shysters to engineer their movement."

After reproducing both the cost and sales prices of sewing machines and various farm implements to show that manufacturers were profiteering at the expense of the farmer, the editor declared (July 5, 1873):

"That is \$497 profit on \$200 invested! Is it any wonder farmers are poor while manufacturers are rich? It requires all the profits of the farm to procure the machinery. A fair profit on the above would be \$100 or 50 per cent., at such prices, nearly every farmer could have his farm well provided with all modern improvements in machinery.

"Reform should be the watchword, and with it fair prices for all, the farmer, the manufacturer, the dealer."

Continuing his self-assumed duty of being an outlook for the farmers, Editor Roberts (July 12, 1873) wrote:

"Our farmers friends will do well to notice very carefully how many of the men who are active in Granges and clubs presently begin to talk about office and figure around to ascertain what may be their own chances for elec-

tion. It is already prophesied that some men have gone into the farmers' movement with the determination to 'rule or ruin it;' and if they cannot have things their own way they will do their best to breed discord and break up the organization. 'Forewarned is forearmed,' and if the farmers should keep both eyes open, and as soon as they discover a disposition on the part of any member of the Granges or clubs to run the institution in his own personal interest, or in the personal interest of some friend, to beware of his influence. If the movement is worth anything it is worth more than the advancement of any one person's interest, or any dozen men's preferences. Keep a wary eye on all political aspirants, and do not let them run the Granges, or any other farmers' organization, for selfish purposes; but be sure that good men, honest and well qualified, are selected to fill all the offices."

More than a year later (Nov. 14, 1874) the Independent recorded an editorial charging that the Granges had become more political societies. The editorial lambasted members of the organizations for allowing that condition to develop.

When the Sickle and Sheaf appeared in October its prospectus declared in part (Oct. 9, 1873):

"-----They (men) are led to do this by the almost in-

instinctive feeling that organization and concentration of effort give strength.

"While all other professions and occupations have thus secured harmony of purpose and unity of action in seeking after their welfare the Agricultural portion of our community has been, until recently, without organization of any kind. The need of such organization has long been felt by the farmers of the country.

"To supply that want the 'Order of the Patrons of Husbandry' was instituted. Of comparatively recent growth, this Society has spread into nearly all the Western States and territories. In Kansas they number thousands, in Jefferson county the majority of the rural population are members of the Order. Such a large body of intelligent people need an organ which shall be the exponent of their views, which shall advocate their claims, and which shall diffuse among them such information as will enable them to investigate for themselves the questions of the day which are being discussed, and to comprehend the ends at which they aim. The demand is for a paper that shall do this, and at the same time, being published at home, contain the local, county, and state news. To meet this demand the SICKLE and SHEAF is established.

"It will be the organ of no political party, but will

assume the ground that all political action should tend to securing the rights of the people, that all monopolies are dangerous, and that the same economy and business tact should be brought to bear upon governmental affairs that men exhibit in the management of their own concerns.

"The paper stands pledged to free discussion of every question which concerns the prosperity of the country. The work of reform belongs to all honest men, of whatever rank in life, let them work together and not against each other.

"To that end the columns of this paper will always be open to correspondence upon the topics of the day. Correspondents to be responsible for their own views."

The Sickle and Sheaf remained steadfast in its announced intention to give attention to agriculture. It had much to print about a cheese factory (Oct. 18, 1873, July 4, 1874) which its editor thought would be a blessing to the community because it would diversify the agriculture. He was opposed to inflation of the currency (Apr. 25, 1874) and in the same issue there appeared nine columns of delinquent tax lists.

The gradual decline of the Grange in Kansas may be seen in the following item reprinted in the Blue Rapids Times (July 26, 1877):



"The rapid decline of the Granger Movement has been noted. The St. Paul Press says the last annual report, which was kept secret for a good while, has at last seen the light, and according to this document over 9,000 local Granges that existed in 1875 had gone out of existence in 1876, and the membership reduced more than 180,000."--Chicago Journal of Commerce.

The Marysville Signal (Oct. 20, 1881) carried an article on the second annual meeting of the Farmers' Alliance in Chicago. There were then 245 Alliances in Kansas, more than in any other state excepting Nebraska, which had 291.

Eight years later the Topeka Daily Capital (Dec. 13, 1889) printed the information that there were then 1,200 Alliances in Kansas with a membership of more than 70,000 and increasing at the rate of 2,000 per month. Growth during 1889 had been rapid in Kansas. The Capital outlined in a news story the plans of the Alliance to get for farmers more money for their crops. The conditions existing were large crops, low farm prices, but high prices on commodities purchased by farmers. The Capital reported the failure of two banks. The Alliance was in session in Topeka at the time.

A week later (Dec. 18, 1889) with the state Grange in

annual meeting at Topeka, the Capital printed an editorial on the importance of agriculture, the dependence of others on it, and the farmers' consequent right to expect and demand a fair return for their labors. The closing paragraph of the article shows how Kansas papers were encouraging agriculture in its struggles:

"The farmers are all aware of these things and do not ask to be told of their existence but how to get rid of them (combines, trusts, etc.). By combination. Combination to study conditions and remedies, to present an organized body or bodies of men whom capitalists and legislatures must respect and demagogues cannot deceive, to exert an influence for the good of agriculture, which is the good of all, is where the farmer must seek the means of improving his condition. The Grange and the Alliance get the farmers together where they may compare notes and consult for the future. Such organization was never so necessary and popular as now. Farmers justly feel that something is wrong and that they must have a share in righting it."

Whether the Grange and the Alliance accomplished the immediate needs or not, such newspaper comment from many Kansas papers could not have hindered them in their work. In the next column the Capital published another editorial

on the bad plight of farmers in Pennsylvania and another on farm land values.

The Capital carried each day (Dec. 18, 19, 20, 1889) a detailed news story of the Grange meetings. It printed the opening speech of the Grand Master, printed resolutions and similar material, thus laying before its readers the opinions and platforms of the state and national Grange.

In the autumn of 1889 (Oct., Nov., and Dec.) the Capital also produced much news and comment on the beef combine--"the big four"--which was being investigated then. The Capital opposed the combine in the interests of Kansas cattle men and urged them (Dec. 15, 1889) to cling to the industry, inasmuch as the United States senatorial investigations committee seemed about to "break" the combine. Moreover, enormous numbers of cattle had been put on the market, depleting the supply, and ranches in the Indian strip of Oklahoma had been ordered to clear their herds out of that country. It seemed then that cattle prices were certain to improve.

Another instance in which the Kansas press demonstrated its willingness and ability to guard the interests of Kansas agriculture occurred in the late eighties. Old settlers will recall the troubles that grew out of the

sugar making industry in the state at this time. The Marion Record, Ft. Scott Monitor, Topeka Capital and other papers zealously guarded the interests of Kansas people against fraud in the establishment of cane sugar factories. The scheme of the promoters was to import sugar, represent it as made of Kansas cane sorghum (showing the possibilities of the industry), and then to sell stock in local companies which were doomed to failure.

It should be mentioned in passing that the Concordia Weekly Times and the Concordia Empire devoted much attention to agricultural problems of this decade.

#### AGRICULTURE AND THE PRESS FROM 1890 TO 1900

Changes in the type of agricultural news printed in Kansas during the period covered by this study are sometimes difficult to determine, especially any changes between one of the shorter periods discussed and the period following. For instance, differences in the agriculture of the state in the decade immediately following the war and the period from 1870 to 1890 are not always clearcut. However, to compare the last decade of the nineteenth century with the period before the war or immediately after the war--that is a different situation. The periods contrast as black and white.

Kansas was no longer a pioneer state in 1890. Her agriculture was firmly established. Her farm people had lived a generation on their homesteads and, despite many years of hard times, had created happy homes on every tillable section of land within her borders.

Similar changes had been brought about in newspaper offices of the state. The boom editor with his "shirt tail full" of type had given way to the conservative editor whose purpose he himself believed was to earn a respectable living for himself and family and to serve his community.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century no less attention was given to production of farm crops but more attention was devoted to selling at a profit the crops that were produced. This naturally involved the farmers' interests in politics through cooperative enterprises, the Grange, Farmers' Alliances, and such movements. Careful farmers placed more stress on diversified agriculture, having learned it is a dangerous policy to "carry all one's eggs in one basket." With gradually improving conditions farmers could afford to devote more attention to minimizing the drudgery and isolation of rural life. Farmers' institutes joined the newspaper and the farm papers and other agencies in promoting a better agriculture.

### An Agricultural Awakening

The period then from 1890 to the end of the century was one of agricultural awakening in Kansas. Many of the farming principles and practices first advocated during the decade have been adopted and form now a part or parts of recognized agricultural methods. The following references to newspapers of the period are presented to show the part played by the Kansas press in ushering in this new era in the state's agriculture.

The Ft. Scott Daily Tribune, that Bourbon county newspaper that has done so much for agriculture in its community, printed (July 6, 1897) a forward looking editorial typical of a spirit of the decade which urged farm people to pay greater attention to overcoming the drudgery and isolation experienced by Kansas farmers in earlier years. The editorial dealt with electrical power on the farm and possibly was written by its present able editor, George W. Marble, who then was its city editor. The writer of the editorial was able to look into the future of electricity on the farm. Parts of the comment--the first found in reference to Kansas agriculture and electricity--follow:

"What the well to do twentieth century farmer will be able to do almost everywhere has been shown on a large country place in Germany. All operations requiring power, except those of actual tillage of the soil, are performed by means of an electric plant run by the fall of water----. (The waterfall was constructed in a brook on the farm.)

"-----The house and all out buildings, as also the lawn and grounds, are brilliantly lighted by electricity. The current does not as yet seem to have been utilized for heating purposes, though it probably could be."

Much of the labor saving machinery and many devices for convenience on the farm referred to here have since come into common usage. They have not come only because the Ft. Scott Tribune printed this one editorial but because many another newspaper and magazine printed similar articles. Such articles carried to agriculture the latest information on the progress of electricity--its efficiency, its shortcomings, its best uses, its dangers, and information concerning many other phases of its possible utility. By reading this information people learned new things, saw new possibilities in their own farm life and business, found new encouragement in electrical power.

This reference to electricity is only typical--the same conditions apply to steam power, to the gasoline

engine, and to scores of farm implements and devices. As the printed newspaper page today carries the latest information concerning the automobile, the radio, the airplane, just so did it take to Kansas farm people during the last decade of the nineteenth century the current findings of the industry.

In the next issue of the Tribune (July 7, 1897) there appeared a splendid editorial maintaining that farmers should plant trees systematically on each farm. Such a practice had then and has since proved to be a good investment from a cash standpoint. The Tribune argued the planting of trees would be one of the very best farm investments.

#### A Journalistic Awakening, Too

A better brand of journalism was ushered into Kansas newspapers during the decade, 1890 to 1900. Agricultural news was reported in more detail and with greater accuracy. Newspapers treated agricultural events in news stories and reserved personal opinions for the editorial page, instead of combining the two in one and thus disseminating biased stories which were characteristic of earlier Kansas journalism.

For example, in the Hutchinson News (April 1, 1890)



there appeared a news story concerning a meeting of sugar growers, meeting to organize the Kansas Sugar Growers' Association. The story included resolutions effecting the organization. The following issue (April 2, 1890) contained an editorial and a news story about the sugar growers' meeting. Each was an effort on the part of the paper to help the sugar men to an understanding of their problems.

In its issue of April 3 (1890) the News devoted four columns to the doings of the sugar growers who had organized the Kansas Sugar Association. The stories dealing with the sugarmen's meetings included resolutions, the constitution adopted, speeches, and letters.

Beet sugar for Kansas was a new thing then but it was recommended that it would be a wise move to begin experimental study of beet sugar culture. The sugarmen desired a government experiment station to study also the best varieties of sugar cane. The News and other papers helped the sugar growers to become articulate concerning their mutual problems.

In the Hutchinson News (April 3, 1890) there appeared an editorial analyzing and encouraging the silk industry for Kansas, once thought likely to become one of the major industries of the commonwealth. The closing paragraph

gives the gist of the editorial:

"Of course nobody supposes that Kansas will throw aside all her other industries and go into the business of raising silk cocoons, but it is reasonable to expect, owing to the adaptability of the climate and the ease with which Osage and mulberry trees may be grown, that this will become a valuable auxiliary to other farming interests."

#### The Dairy Cow Comes To Kansas

The Abilene Daily Reflector (April 3 and 4, 1890) helped maintain the reputation of nineteenth century Kansas papers of giving ample space to farmers' meetings. A meeting of the state dairymen's association was being held in Abilene and the Reflector devoted three and four columns daily to the proceedings of the convention. It said editorially:

"The State Dairy Association which has honored Abilene with the first session of its existence under its new form brings to our city many representative men in the dairy field. Kansas has taken long steps forward in the direction of manufacture of dairy products during the past two years. Her farmers have begun to see how a diversified agriculture, with its accompanying benefits of regular

revenue, can aid them to a less speculative existence. In no county of the state has a greater success been made of dairying than in Dickinson. Our numerous creameries when properly managed have proved profitable and their products become widely known. For this reason, as well as out of regard for our visitors, the members of the dairy association from abroad will be welcomed. The practical hints given regarding modern methods and processes will be valued by our farmers and farmers' wives."

Among the things urged by the dairymen in their conference and reported in the Reflector were:

(1) Improvement of dairy cows--abolishment of the scrub cow. (2) Proper care of cream--good cream, good butter. (3) Greater use of the silo in Kansas. (4) That more mortgages on Kansas farms be paid off by the cow and the hog.

It must be a pleasant recollection to some of the older Kansas farmers who attended these meetings to survey the nearly four decades since and realize at least partial fulfillment of virtually all their hopes.

Further evidence of the extent to which papers of the decade were publishing agricultural material is an illustrated article on building a cow barn and silo in the Concordia Kansan (May 19, 1898). The article was reprinted

from the Country Gentleman. The Kansan printed many other agricultural paragraphs and short articles.

One of the interesting farm columns developed during the decade was that of the weekly Winfield Courier (March 30, April 6 and 13, 1899). Its boxed heading was attractive:

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.....
.      F ruit      .
.    l owers      .
.    a iring      .
.  By J.F. Martin, .
. Manager Martin Nurseries .
. Winfield, Kansas .
.....

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The author of the column, being a nurseryman, wrote much of fruit tree and flowers, but his ideas on planting trees--what and when and how--were interesting and of immeasurable value to farmer readers as well as "town folks." In one article, Martin explained the care needed by trees which had been uprooted for treeplanting, why they sometimes failed to grow, and how farmers could handle them best.

Some subjects discussed at various times by Martin (spring of 1899): Trimming fruit trees, how to protect garden plants from frost, formulae for spraying trees and garden truck, how to raise chickens free from lice. The directions for the latter were to put one camphorated ball

in each laying and setting hen's nest after which no mites nor lice would bother.

### Alfalfa Makes Its Appearance

In his history of Kansas Connelly has said the introduction of grain sorghums and alfalfa in the nineties marked an era of development and prosperity for Kansas farmers. In the Courier (May 11, 1899) Martin devoted considerable space to alfalfa, claiming it to be a crop that would take the place of wheat as a cash crop in Kansas. This was the earliest reference to alfalfa found in this study, although the legume was used in the state nearly a decade earlier.

Martin referred to some alfalfa that had been planted eight years previously and to some which had been planted for five years. In each case the crop had given several cuttings each year with no cultivation--only the expense of harvesting. He asked farmers to figure for themselves whether alfalfa or wheat was the most paying crop. Martin had some mistaken ideas upon the subject, as the last three decades have developed new knowledge concerning alfalfa. He expected it to be left to grow for many years, whereas time has demonstrated that it is best to use alfalfa only a very few years in a well planned crop rotation.

"When you get a stand of alfalfa you can for many years rest secure from damage from hail, drought, hot winds, and chinch bugs," the Courier farm editor wrote. "It will be the best kind of insurance against hog cholera. Hogs as well as other animals are kept in excellent condition during the winter season on alfalfa hay alone."

In urging farmers to plant alfalfa, Martin cautioned them to "remember your soil is becoming exhausted and may not endure another twenty years of like severe cropping.

"And when after twenty years the soil is again broken it will be richer in all of the constituents of plant food with the additional value of being well subsoiled by the deep roots of the alfalfa."

Martin felt that alfalfa, once a stand was obtained, would be left for as long as 20 years. To some extent at least, he was led to believe this because of his argument that the crop, being perennial, avoided the annual expense of purchasing seed, preparing the seedbed, and planting. He calculated a stand could be obtained with only one planting which was slightly more expensive than one planting of wheat but which would serve for many years. He figured the value of alfalfa hay at three times prairie hay or \$6 per ton, and with three tons per acre per season, the value of the crop he figured was about \$18 per

acre per year.

Martin may have been mistaken in some of his theories regarding alfalfa but he must certainly have got immense results through his advocacy of the legume in Kansas. The Courier enabled him to speak to hundreds or perhaps thousands where otherwise he would have passed along his ideas only by occasional conversation, letter, or public address.

Martin did not confine himself to crops entirely. In an editorial (May 18, 1899) he reminded his readers that knowledge is power, urged farmers to read more, study more, and to do their best to give their children an education.

Innumerable instances such as those cited here could be referred to as evidence of the so-called agricultural awakening and the better brand of journalism which came with the decade. But the few examples reproduced in part or in full will serve to illustrate what was typical of the agricultural news and comment of the Kansas press.

Kansas had in less than half a century been changed from a wilderness to a progressive, prospering commonwealth. Her agriculture had become well established, her towns were stable. Her government was stable. Moreover, her newspapers had kept pace with her other industries. Where towns were sufficiently large to justify them, daily

newspapers were established and provided their readers each day with news of the world, with market reports, as well as with local news. For smaller towns, weekly newspapers did as much, specializing more in news of the local community. Because Kansas was primarily an agricultural state, her newspapers printed material bearing upon this all important industry. That it was of a character which made it useful and important to a majority of the state's population already has been shown.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summarizing the results of this study--the purpose of which was to determine how the press helped develop Kansas agriculture--two facts stand out clearly. The study has shown, first, that newspapers came to Kansas with the earliest of white settlers after the region was designated Kansas territory. Whenever a new Kansas town was organized, a new Kansas paper was born. Second, because the founders of the town were invariably depending upon the agriculture of the community to prosper them, the newspapers as invariably printed material which enhanced the agricultural possibilities of the immediate vicinity.

Granting then that newspapers existed in every important community center of Kansas during the period 1854 to



1900 and that they printed much agricultural material, it remained to be determined whether this material was beneficial or harmful to the state's most important industry--agriculture.

It is evident from the tone of virtually every reference cited that the editors printed the agricultural material with one purpose in mind--that of aiding the industry. In the earliest newspapers, Kansas editors bragged of the wonderful agricultural possibilities of the state. Their articles of praise brought thousands to the new west to build their homes. Their coming hastened cultivation of the state's fertile soil.

Almost as soon as the earliest settlers had picked their claims, newspapers were printing ideas concerning crop varieties, giving their readers the benefits of other farmers' experiences, telling for the benefit of all the value of planting trees, passing along cooking recipes, ways of making soap, tips on marketing products grown by the early farmers, urging the citizens to help obtain railroads for their particular locality. These things were done by the newspaper editors to make their respective communities and the state as a whole a better place to live.

Occasionally there is evidence that a newspaper hind-

ered intelligent development of agriculture. The instance of the Frisco Pioneer was cited as a case where too much land booming was done by the local paper. But cases such as this are not numerous. Moreover, it might be argued that the Frisco Pioneer only hastened the ultimate demise of Frisco, founded unfortunately before the world was ready for it.

#### A Great Economic Error

The entire nation was at fault in the period following the Civil war, up to 1900, in encouraging agricultural expansion beyond the needs of the market. New land was brought under the plow before it was needed with the result that many settlers lost their entire fortunes. During this period mortgages on Kansas lands were in considerable disrepute in the east, a reputation that was not entirely overcome until well within the present century and perhaps not wholly until the passage of the Federal Farm Loan Act. This situation was the result of a mistaken policy on the part of the entire nation. It seems that the editors of Kansas of this period should assume a share of the responsibility for this gross economic error. So far as the editors are concerned, it was

a mistake of omission as much as, or more so than, one of commission.

It is established, then, that the newspapers were present in the state, their editors were willing to print such information as would be helpful to Kansas agriculture, and the material which was printed was the product of the state's best agriculturists. The last statement is true because most of the state's editors were well educated, had keen minds and common sense enough to analyze most problems. It is true also because much of the agricultural material was submitted by experienced farmers--men who studied their vocation as a science.

The newspapers, by their very nature, were from the beginning and are now in a position to pass along information of practical value to farmers. The situation is well stated in an editorial appearing recently in the Minneapolis (Minn.) Tribune. The editorial in part follows:

"A rather striking expression of opinion was that.....  
...to the effect that the newspapers of the country, by publishing statistics and information of value to farmers, have done more than any other agency to spread the doctrine and establish the habit of sound agricultural methods.....

"The Tribune has always been free to acknowledge the

part the agricultural colleges have played in extending applied science from school room and experimental tract to the farms of the land. The service thus rendered has been incalculably great, and it has grown greater in very recent years under the compulsion of economic circumstances that have affected the farm industry. Educational institutions, publishers, transportation officials, urban financiers, and governmental agencies have carried on a concerted work as never before to raise the efficiency of the farm plant. By their very nature the newspapers have provided the chief contact between those who have something of value to tell the farmer, and the farmers themselves.

".....'The farmer owes to his newspaper the fact that he is getting today a liberal education in agricultural economics and research without leaving his doorstep'."

This situation is not essentially different than it has been since the founding of the first newspapers in Kansas. Before the coming of agricultural experiment stations and other agencies which aided agriculture, there was not so much information and valuable scientific data available as there is today. But careful, observing, thoughtful farmers provided editors with helpful ideas on agriculture which the latter published for the benefit of others.

Moreover, before the Civil war was over a state agri-

cultural society had been organized. Simultaneously county agricultural societies were being founded, local fairs were started, and occasional farmers' meetings were making available certain valuable and important information on agricultural subjects. Then and at all times since, the press of Kansas has passed this information along to its readers, making them, as the foregoing reference states it, "the chief contact between those who have something of value to tell the farmer, and the farmers themselves."

#### Newspapers Minimized Isolation

Nothing has yet been said to stress the important part newspapers have played in simply bringing into rural homes news of the neighborhood and of the world. Farm persons are like other human beings--they want to know what the world about them is doing. In the early period of the state's settlement, when loneliness was a more vital factor than it is on Kansas farms today, this learning of the world news through the press was unquestionably a more important factor than at present. Today, the automobile, the telephone, and the radio have greatly reduced the isolation of the individual farm. But during the period covered by this study, the press certainly had no close rival as a carrier of world news events.

Another principal service done by the press of Kansas was the presentation of both sides of political and social differences. In times of political unrest, such as during the populist movement in the nineties, the press always presented both sides of the controversy, thus helping the voters to an understanding of their problems. The presentation of both sides of any controversial matter was assured because on no question do all persons agree--least of all perhaps, newspaper editors.

Neither is any reference made to the type and effect of newspaper advertising printed during the period studied. Advertising was not used then as now, was not the powerful factor in business that it has become in the twentieth century.

A volume could be written on the Kansas press and the railroads--the former never failed to promote the building of the railways into all corners of the state, though editors frequently cautioned their people to temper their railroad building with sound judgment. In the early days Kansas people often jumped headlong into bond issues to guarantee the coming of railroads, then paid later for their lack of foresight as they blamed the railroads for hard times.

Likewise a volume could be written of the press and its aid to the state board of agriculture, to the Kansas State Agricultural College, and to the United States Department of Agriculture. In each case the newspaper has been one of the best agents, if not the best, for transferring facts and information from these public institutions to the agricultural people of the state.

References noted in this study show that the press heartily cooperated with these institutions in disseminating valuable agricultural information. Numerous instances were noted where the state board of agriculture, the Kansas State Agricultural College and agricultural experiment station, and the United States Department of Agriculture were publicized. The greatest development of this publicity has come in the twentieth century, which is not included in the study.

As a final conclusion, the results of this study show beyond all shadow of doubt that the newspapermen of Kansas have been a vital factor in the development of the state's agriculture. They have given liberally of the space within their columns, they have printed always what seemed to them to be the most important and valuable information available upon agricultural topics. The publication of this infor-

mation has kept the Kansas farm population well informed at all times, and thus has contributed immeasurably to its material, spiritual, and social wealth.



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