

**LETTERS TO THE CONNECTICUT COURANT,
PENNSYLVANIA INDEPENDENT
REPUBLICAN, WASHINGTON
CHRONICLE, NORTH CAROLINA UNION
BANNER, NEMAHA COURIER, PITTSBURG
COMMERCIAL, AND TOPEKA RECORD**

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Letters to the Connecticut Courant, Pennsylvania Independent Republican, Washington Chronicle, North Carolina Union Banner, Nemaha Courier, Pittsburg Commercial, and Topeka Record by D. F. Drinkwater

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D. F. DRINKWATER

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Washington Chronicle, North Carolina Union Banner,
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and Topeka Record,

BY

D. F. DRINKWATER, Secretary

OF

The United Press Association.



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Sen. Thos. Sumner

(1868-1870)



1868 * SUMNER

FROM
The Connecticut Courant.

(Established at Hartford, Conn., October, 1764.)

A TRIP TO THE WEST.

The Camden & Amboy, Pennsylvania Central, Pittsburg, Columbus & Cincinnati Railways—Cincinnati—Ohio & Mississippi Railway—St. Louis—Missouri Pacific Railway—Kansas and its resources—Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division, and its rapid course of construction—Information for Emigrants, &c., &c.

Special correspondence of **THE HARTFORD COURANT.**

CEDAR POINT, CHASE COUNTY, KANSAS,
October 25, 1865.

I am now on the south-western frontier of Kansas—150 miles from the Missouri river, and 120 miles from Lawrence.

My last letter was dated the 5th inst., at Cincinnati, Ohio, where I arrived on the 4th from New York, via Camden & Amboy, Pennsylvania Central, and the Pittsburg, Columbus & Cincinnati Railways—a route that I can recommend as surpassed by none, if equalled by any.

From Cincinnati to St. Louis the ride over the Ohio and Mississippi railroad was really enjoyable; the road itself is an excellent one, a wide gauge and very smooth. It is well stocked, having all the late improvements in the way of ventilators, sleeping cars, &c. The distance from Cincinnati to St. Louis is 345 miles by this road, which runs almost on an air line directly west.

The prairie scenery through the great and fertile State of Illinois is somewhat varied and quite interesting. It consists, however, of broad prairies for the most part, alternated with quite extensive groves of timber. Villages and towns occur every few miles, and some of them assume the proportion and importance of cities.

These Illinois prairies are rather level. The soil is of good quality and produces large crops of the cereals, as well as vegetables and grass. As in other Western States, the sorghum is now raised abundantly, and with large profits to the cultivator. It has been but a very few years since this production was first introduced into the United States, and now millions of gallons of molasses and a good deal of sugar are manufactured annually in the Western States. The crop is heavy this year through Illinois, and indeed throughout the west. The corn and potato crops are also unusually good this season. It is an interesting sight to a New Englander who has always been accustomed to the rugged rocks and everlasting hills of the eastern States, to pass over the prairies of Illinois by the Ohio and Mississippi railroad. The boundless prairies, almost level, and the *successive miles of cornfields*, keep one on the constant alert.

At East St. Louis we crossed the mighty Mississippi and found ourselves in St. Louis, the metropolis of the west. The stream is crossed by ferry-boats. The railroad company, by an admirable arrangement, transfer passengers across the river in omnibuses to any part of the city *free*. The past season has been an extraordinary one for business at St. Louis; its tonnage has been one-third greater than in 1859, an unusual year for business. The reopening of trade with the late insurrectionary States has lent an impetus to commerce on the Mississippi; besides this, immigration to Mis-

souri and Kansas, and to the gold regions of the western territory has been greater the past season than ever before. These causes have contributed greatly to the unexampled prosperity of St. Louis.

The Missouri Pacific Railway is now in excellent order; trains are running regularly through from St. Louis to Wyandotte, making close connection with the Union Pacific, Eastern Division. This is of great importance to the traveling public, and especially to emigrants to that part of Missouri; also to Kansas, Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, the other territories, and California.

KANSAS.

My impressions of this ocean of prairies are not new. Your readers will please bear in mind that I, your humble correspondent, have lived in this State for a half score of years, having immigrated to the then territory in April, 1855. So I have personally experienced a goodly measure of its ups and downs. Under these considerations I propose, at the risk of worrying your patience and crowding your space, to give a brief synopsis of the possible good and evil of settling in Kansas.

Kansas, (extending 375 or 400 miles westward from the Missouri river) is a fine rolling prairie country. It is traversed by many streams, many of the smaller of which are dry during the summer months. Immediately on the margin of these creeks are belts of timber, consisting mostly of oak, black-walnut, and hackberry. The bottoms, (usually on only one side of the stream) varies in width from a third of a mile to 4 or 5 miles. These bottom lands are exceedingly rich, and bring large crops of corn, wheat, rye, oats, barley, sugar cane and vegetables, as well as hemp and cotton. The successful raising of the latter is no longer an experiment here. Rye and sugar cane are called sure crops in Kansas—they have never failed here except in

the season of the great drought in 1860. The cultivation of sugar cane and manufacturing molasses and sugar is getting to be quite extensively carried on here. The State already produces nearly enough of these "sweets" for home consumption.

But Kansas seems to have been made with special reference to

STOCK RAISING.

To this purpose it is perfectly adapted. The climate is mild, and the rich wild grasses that grow all over these prairie billows are natural food for quadrupeds of the bovine species, as well as for horses and sheep. To satisfy one's mind of this fact, let him consider what vast herds of fat buffaloes and wild horses these prairies once sustained. There were literally millions of them. The westward march of civilization has scared them away, and domestic animals are taking their place.

The cost of cutting, hauling and stocking hay, has been, since the increase of wages and everything else, from \$2 to \$3 a ton. It is cut with machines, and during the past two seasons horse pitchforks have been introduced. They are a good thing when skilfully used, and save a good deal of hard work.

The yield of prairie hay ranges from one-half to four tons per acre.

The market for cows and working oxen is good, and promises to be for many years to come.

The prairies are beautiful and fertile; timber and building stone are abundant; there are veins of coal (not much worked yet,) and beds of salt; the climate is mild and salubrious; we have "Italian skies," &c., &c.; yet there is some disagreeableness, which I must not fail to mention, lest some of your readers might come here to settle and find that they had not heard or thought of the dark side. The worst peculiarity about Kansas,